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English Literature *and its Backgrounds*

BOOK
ONE

EDITED BY BERNARD D. N. GREBANIER, BROOKLYN COLLEGE, AND
STITH THOMPSON, INDIANA UNIVERSITY · A CORDON BOOK

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TO

DONALD G. WHITESIDE

Homo multarum literarum

Preface

In preparing a new kind of anthology, we have thought of our work less as pioneering than as supplying an important want. Even the proudest of Englishmen who has resisted

> "all temptations
> To belong to other nations,"

cannot be unaware, if he is at all familiar with it, that his country's literature has constantly gained new energy from fertilization by the literature of other lands. The fact that English literature is not autogenous is certainly no novelty to teachers of English literature, most of whom have, by their lectures, identified for their students the European or Oriental progenitors of English books. But though meant to encourage students to personal investigation, such information is likely to leave them satisfied with a set of names and titles, to be discussed glibly enough no doubt, without the substantiation of solid knowledge. The material in question has, thus far, been scattered through too many volumes to inspire any beginner but the most devout to hunt for it. Moreover, since there is never any intention of requiring a student to familiarize himself with the literature of the world while he is mastering the outlines of English literature, he stands in no need of more than an introduction to background prose and verse. It is very desirable, in short, to give the student of English literature enough of a view of its background to make him aware both of the existence of the latter and of its general character. This is the problem which the present work undertakes to meet by presenting in the same volume the great achievements of English writers and specimens of foreign works by which they have been influenced. Here, for example, when a student learns of Chaucer's indebtedness to *The Romance of the Rose*, he can read enough in that work to form a conception of the nature of Chaucer's debt.

In editing the first work of its kind, we naturally have found the gravest task that of making a choice of material. The present selections were fixed upon only after months of discussion and alteration. The very nature of the undertaking made it important to agree at last that whereas merit was a great consideration in the choice of the English pieces, it was influence rather than quality which must determine the inclusion of the others. Thus, while we are proud to have Sappho, Aristotle, Aeschylus, Dante, or Montaigne grace our pages, they are forced to keep company with Guevara and an immature Goethe. No one will assert that *The Diall of Princes* or *The Sorrows of Young Werther* is a great book; but no one can deny, either, that each exerted a powerful influence in its time, sometimes on greater writings—and so we have included it. Another consideration we faced was the necessity of printing only such "foreign" literature as would be comprehensible to a student entering upon his studies of English literature. We felt obliged, therefore, to exclude such important writings as those of the German transcendental philosophers who strongly impressed Carlyle's generation. Moreover, we deemed ourselves duty bound to print such background material as helped explain numerous English works rather than a single English book. We wished, on the whole, to represent *streams of influence*; only in a few cases will there be found a piece (always short) that makes plain the background of but a single English work (e.g. *Il Filostrato*). Finally, since this is an anthology of *English* literature, the translated selections have had to be limited to a small proportion of the total presented. The scholar will think of many European pieces that might have been included; we assure him that we did too.

A question which may arise is: "Though the influence of Vasari upon Browning is easy enough to establish, who can undertake to be as definite for most English writers?" To that our answer is that we find no need of proving a direct connection between a particular "foreign" and a particular English work here included. It would be, for example, beside the point to demonstrate that Burns read Rousseau. Rousseau's ideas were in the air when Burns was writing, and directly or indirectly he imbibed them, as his songs patently exhibited. And hence, the inclusion of Rousseau is justified for the light it throws not only on Burns, but on Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley as well. We feel confident that the acquaintance of the student with our carefully selected background material is certain to give him a firmer grasp of the English literature he is studying. On the other hand, who so chooses to ignore any or all of these translations may do so, for we offer a full and rich anthology of English literature.

While we were busy planning this book, we seized the opportunity of introducing some variations into the traditions of anthology-making. Aware that many teachers prefer to present a comprehensive survey of English literature, we have offered selections from the minor as well as the major writers. But we feel that it is urgent for the student to develop a sense of proportion, to understand which writers occupy the front ranks and which follow behind, and to this end we have deliberately decreased the representation of works by minor figures and *increased* the representation of works by major figures. The reader will find a wider selection than is usual of the works of Chaucer, Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Lamb, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. Such teachers, therefore, as desire to deal only with the masters (i.e. in a "masterpieces" course) will find the quantity and variety they demand.

In the choice of the English selections, we have tried to inject some freshness. The bulk of our material, of course, is common to most anthologies, as it should be because of the sanction of long usage and experience. Our compression of the minor authors, however, has made it possible to include, besides the *indispensables*, a number of long complete works usually not admitted to anthologies, and never, we believe, all collected in any survey anthology before: e.g. *Samson Agonistes, Absalom and Achitophel, An Essay on Criticism, Manfred, Prometheus Unbound, Saul,* and *Thyrsis.* From the major writers enumerated we have also introduced what we hope are pleasant additions: Book II of Chaucer's *Troilus, April* from Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar,* a selection from Milton's *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates,* the conclusion to Pope's *Dunciad,* selections from Johnson's *Dictionary* and from *Rasselas,* a part of Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* all three *Yarrow* poems of Wordsworth, several of Keats's letters, three of Lamb's *Popular Fallacies* and two of his letters. Other novel inclusions may also be welcome: Old English *Riddles, The Dream of the Rood,* the lively ballad *Our Goodman,* the selections from Lyly, a song by Queen Elizabeth, representative pieces from the Bible of 1611, poems by Crashaw and by Traherne, Characters by Earle, a selection from Paine and one from Godwin, a collection of eighteenth century letters, a piece from *Fingal,* selections from Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* and from Landor's *Pentameron,* Newman's *Dream of Gerontius,* an essay by Thackeray, poems by Christina Rossetti, a fresh poem each by Browning and Morris, Swinburne's *Ave Atque Vale,* a selection from Darwin, fresh poems of Meredith, poems by Lewis Carroll and by W. S. Gilbert, Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*—and poems by Dowson and by Gerard M. Hopkins.

We have also tried to give a significant collection of English drama—each play printed in entirety—to afford a true picture of the development of an important literary form. From each period we have taken a play in itself estimable and also representative. The Medieval period is represented by *Everyman,* the Elizabethan by *Doctor Faustus,* the Restoration by *The Way of the World,* the Eighteenth Century by *The School for Scandal,* and the Nineteenth Century by *The Importance of Being Earnest*; *Samson Agonistes* represents classic drama; and *Manfred* and *Prometheus Unbound* exhibit the "literary" or closet-drama of the Nineteenth Century. Besides these, *The Misanthrope* and *Prometheus Bound* are printed complete for background. Shakespeare as a dramatist is not represented because nearly everyone owns a reprint of his plays; whoever does not should be required to possess one. Moreover no single play can adequately indicate Shakespeare's scope. We have tried to atone for this enforced omission by printing a large number of his songs and sonnets, and by assigning a generous introduction to them.

As for the introductions to period, authors, and particular works, we have intended them to be informative enough to make superfluous the purchase of a survey history of English literature. Convinced that no sufficient understanding of a literature can be had when it is presented in a historical and social vacuum, we have tried to give enough of the history and social setting of each period to afford the student some perspective in his reading and a sense of the continuity of our literature. For the same reason we have, in our general summaries (proportioned according to the importance of the subject), dealt with works and writers that could not be represented in the anthology itself. The connections between the background and the English literature have been indicated throughout the study. The introductions to the authors and to particular works are biographical and critical; while avoiding the rhapsodic, we have thought it well to attempt to communicate something of our enthusiasm for the treasures of English literature. Remembering how valuable the contagion of honest affection proved to us in our student days, we agree that icy statistical objectivity, however it may steer clear of error, profits no undergraduate. Also we have tried to make good an omission in many anthologies by appending a small but highly selected bibliography to each period and author.

Wherever feasible we have used translations of the "foreign" literature made by notable English writers. Among the translators here presented will be found Cowper, Byron, Shelley, Landor, E. B. Browning, Rossetti, Swinburne, and Dowson. It is with pleasure that we here express our indebtedness to Miss Frances Winwar for her splendid renditions of Dante and of Baudelaire and to Dr. Isabel Gordon for her fine translation of Flaubert—both made especially for our text. Other translations will be found by our own humble hands. In addition, we are happy to be permitted to include a brilliant essay on *The Literary Medium* by Prof. Ralph Gordon of City College, himself a poet and an authority on his subject.

We acknowledge with thanks the careful criticism and valuable suggestions of Prof. Carleton Brown on the Old English material; of Prof. Thomas A. Knott, of the University of Michigan, on the Middle English; of Prof. Hoyt H. Hudson, of Princeton University, on the Renaissance; of Prof. James H. Hanford, of Western Reserve University, on the Seventeenth Century; of Prof. Theodore Zunder, of Brooklyn College, on the Eighteenth Century; of Prof. Russell Noyes, of Indiana University, on the Pre-Romantic and Romantic; and of Prof. E. L. Beck, of Ohio State University and Mrs. Eva A. Williamson of Brooklyn College, on the Victorian. We desire also to thank colleagues at Brooklyn College for many kindnesses: Prof. Donald G. Whiteside for his sympathetic interest in the progress of the work, Prof. Joseph F. Wickham for advice on Newman, Prof. Stanley Rypins for advice on Chaucer, Prof. Charlotte E. Morgan for advice on Milton, and Mr. Tom Waage and Miss Dorothy Cerino for help in proofreading galleys. Thanks are also due to Prof. C. J. Reynolds of the University of Maine for certain bibliographical verifications. It is a further pleasure to express our gratitude for the assistance of Mr. Wilbur Gaffney in the editorial production of these volumes. Finally we are grateful for the invaluable services of that prince of typists, Mr. Sanford Wolf, and of Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer, who caught in page-proof errata that everyone else had overlooked. The editors take this opportunity of thanking Mrs. Ruth B. McJimsey, Mr. Louis B. Salomon, and Mr. Phillip B. Shaw, all of Brooklyn College, for several valuable suggestions.

B. D. N. G.
S. T.

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THE OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

Beginnings

WHEN in 55 B.C. Julius Caesar set the fashion of crossing the Channel, he found a race of Celts dwelling in Britain. Although modern Englishmen in a patriotic mood are fond of referring to themselves as Britons, they have small claim to the title. The original Britons, the Celts, were destined to have their civilization virtually exterminated; so that they have left few traces upon England or its language. Welsh, Manx, Erse (native Irish), and the dialect of the Scottish Highlands are Celtic tongues still spoken in parts of the British Isles, but they have had little influence on English.

Caesar returned the next year, advancing in his conquest as far as St. Albans. Content with exacting tribute, the Romans left the Celts in peace until 43 A.D., when their legions commenced a siege of forty years that culminated in the subjection of Britain as far as the River Tyne. Some fifty years later they pushed Roman domination north to the Clyde. Theirs was a military occupation. They built roads, fortifications, and handsome buildings, remains of which are still in some places to be seen. The Celts, a quick, imaginative people, whose folklore well exhibits a delicate fancy and easy grace, gave in, after an initial fierce resistance, to the attractions of a superior culture. By the fourth century Britain had taken on at least the superficial aspects of a miniature Rome.

But by 410, Rome itself was trembling before the onslaughts of barbarian invasion. That year all the legions had been recalled from Britain to help save Rome. The testimony of their occupancy survives in many a town whose name ends in *caster* or *chester* (as in *Doncaster, Chester, Winchester*), for the Roman camp (*castra* in Latin) was inevitably the center of activity in a neighborhood. In the ending of Lin*coln* we find a derivative from the Latin *colonia*, colony; *vallum* gave us *wall*; from *strata* comes *street*, and from *portus*, *port.*

It is to another quarter that we look for the beginnings of the English people. Europe in the fourth century found itself harassed by irresistible invasions of fierce Germanic tribes who sailed the Mediterranean, passed over Alps and Pyrenees, and attacked the British, French, and African coasts. *Teutoni,* the Latins called them, adapting the Gothic root (in the German *Deutsch*) for *people.* Without remorse they destroyed and conquered wherever they attacked. The Britons, left defenseless without Roman protection, were having their hands full with raids by the Scots and Picts;

but civilized, as they now were, they were no match for their most terrible enemies, the Teutons. In 449 Hengist the Jute established himself in Kent. Angles, Saxons, and Jutes soon followed his example; and for a century and a half the Britons were subjected to ruthless destruction by these, the first Englishmen. The German conquerors set up various kingdoms throughout the country; when they had done, little of Roman civilization was left standing. Numbers of the Celts fled into Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Scotland; some remained to be lost in the new population; a vast proportion of them was slaughtered.

When one civilization is thus entirely supplanted by another, if anything at all is to remain of the original language, it is likely to be the names of places. The ancient Britons passing, though in a tragic manner, like the Romans from the history of Britain, have left on English, like their earlier conquerors, only geographic witness of their existence. The old Celtic name for the South Britons, *Cymry*, by which the Welsh now designate themselves, has been preserved in the Latinized form of *Cambria*. The Celtic word for *river* was *avon*, and England has many Avons; *car* (or *caer*), a castle, is found in *Carlisle*; *pen*, a mountain, in *Penzance*; *aber*, a mouth of a river, in *Aberdeen*; *ox*, water, in *Oxford*. Those borrowings from the Celtic like the Welsh *flannel*, the Irish *fun* and *shillelagh*, and the Highland *clan* and *whiskey* came later, when the English language was already a fact.

The English begin their traditions, then, with the barbarian Teutons (i.e., 449 A.D.). From the border lands of modern Germany and Denmark they came—the Angles from Schleswig, the Saxons from Holstein, and the Jutes from South Jutland. It was an ungracious soil they left, uninviting to cultivation. Foggy marsh, misty wood, stormy coast—such was the land they had called home. Small wonder that the creatures of their imagination, nothing like the Celtic fairy folk, were dragon and monster lurking in fen and cave. A stalwart untender race were these Teutons, gloomy and fierce. Characteristically they preferred to measure their years by winters, and the twenty-four hours by nights. Tempestuous sea and joyful battle were for them a passion that they sang in a language itself muscular and abounding in explosive consonants. Nothing stirred their fancy more than a ship or a sword. These men were fighters by profession, and above all things they sought glory and fame. Of these older ways we catch echoes in the great Old English epic *Beowulf*. At the head of each tribe stood the king, leader in war and magistrate in peace. No one was dearer to him than his *scop*, his poet, whose business it was to celebrate the deeds of master and warrior. Lesser poets, the *gleemen*, memorized the scop's creations, and sang them when required. From one of our earliest poems, *Widsith*, we learn of the bounty extended by lords to the singer of heroic exploits. The poet's notice was the warrior's chief hope for immortal fame.

Once settled in England, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes turned to the more peaceful pursuits of agriculture in this pleasanter land. Although the island came to be known as the "land of the Angles," England, there were at first many kingdoms, among the most important being Kent and Wessex in the south, Mercia in the midlands, and Northumbria in the north. Pre-eminence passed in the mid-seventh century from Kent to Northumbria, thence to Mercia; and finally under the Wessex kings in the ninth century, England began to give promise of some sort of unity.

At first, until the dynamic experience of their conversion to Christianity, the Teuton settlers worshiped their old gods. The ancient Britons, in Roman days, had been Christianized; one of them, Arthur, had fought so valiantly against the Germanic invaders that his memory was to linger and accumulate about it many legends of Christian heroism. The old Teutonic deities are still remembered in our days of the week: Tuesday was the day of Tiu, terrible god of war; Wednesday was the day of Woden, father of the gods; Thursday was named for Thor, god of thunder; Friday was the day for the lovely goddess of peace and fruitfulness, Frea. All-powerful was Wyrd, goddess of Fate, still to be remembered by the English even after the old religion had died. And the solemnities attendant upon the worship of the goddess of dawn, Eostre, were to be confused and commemorated in the Christian Easter. A simple stern ethic of retribution formed the basis of the old morals.

That stern rudimentary concept of justice was undoubtedly once a matter of personal application among the freemen who formed Old English society. But their earliest records show they had already developed the understanding of justice as involving all the community. Compensation for personal injury, fixed by law, took vengeance out of private hands. A definite sum was recognized legally as atonement for wrong, the freeman's life and limbs having each its stated evaluation. What is particularly noteworthy is that payments passed not between the individuals concerned, but from the family of the guilty to the family of the injured. We see here how binding the ties of blood were conceived to be by the first Englishmen; kinsmen thus became not only guardians of the family's well-being, but also restrainers from wrong-doing by those of their blood since they as well as the culprit must pay the penalty. This duty to one's house was reflected in the pursuit of glory and honor at home and in battle. The social unit, dwelling thus together, gave the name to their *ham* (Old English for *home*), their *wick*, their *tun*, or their *stead*; and these place-endings survive all over England to recall early family-communities.

Each freeman had his "holding" of land whereon he exercised fully his rights as a free member of the community. The early English were a "race of land-holders and land-tillers." Hospitality was a matter of honor; but no man invaded the property of another family without invitation, except at the peril of his life. In the typical English village were the freemen and the earls—the latter looked up to as leaders by virtue of blood and heredity, but enjoying no special privileges. From time to time the freemen would meet to pass laws for the community, to settle disputes, and to apportion lands. The rudiments of the Parliamentary system already existed.

The English were undergoing, during the century and a half since they had come to Britain, such modifications in their culture as would follow in the process of becoming an agricultural people. Then, in 597, Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine to convert them to Christianity. Augustine's complete success with Ethelbert, King of Kent, was but the beginning of the rapid acceptance of the new faith in England. From Ireland, too, missionaries now came to Northumbria where the new faith not only triumphed but also found literary expression. The new religion embodied a new philosophy, and a race that not long before had been savage was soon burning with religious exaltation. Differences that had sprung up between those who had been taught by the Irish and those who had been converted by the Italians, were resolved in 664 at the Synod of Whitby. England was united at last under one church.

The Christian religion brought to the English a new view of life as a discipline and a preparation for existence in a Hereafter. Old English literature (as scholars now prefer to call it rather than, as heretofore, Anglo-Saxon) is permeated with religious fervor. The new religion also brought with it the language of the Church, Latin, and a rich body of theological literature. This Latin, which was the universal language of learning in the Christian world, united England with the one culture of Europe, the culture of the Church. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, a scholar might travel on the continent and continue his studies without interruption in any number of Christian lands, and not, as today, be put to the necessity of always first mastering the national language.

The Old English language itself was enriched by the experience of Christianity. Words like *altar, font, candle,* and *creed* now made their appearance. And with the resulting cultural and commercial contact with the rest of Europe other words like *linen, cook, poppy, pear,* and *cheese* were also added to our vocabulary.

The monks being the bringers of learning, the monasteries naturally became the centers of learning. To these enthusiastic "clerks" (clerics) we owe the preservation of whatever remains to us of our earliest literature, for they copied out not only theological texts and some of the Latin classics but also the vernacular poetry; they also contributed to Old English literature. In the North, the monasteries of Jarrow and Whitby were famous. In the South, a school was established at Canterbury, and its success inspired the formation of one at York. In the eighth century the fame of one of the York scholars, Alcuin, reached the ears of the Emperor Charlemagne, who thereupon invited Alcuin to his court to superintend education in the Empire.

Of the Old English literature we possess, the earliest bulk is associated with Northumbria. There, at Jarrow, the Venerable Bede wrote his Latin *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, an invaluable record of the times, a book in which we read of the first Old English poet, Cædmon of Whitby monastery, who made poetical paraphrases of various parts of the Bible. Though Cædmon's paraphrases are not extant, later versions of *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel,* and *Judith* have come down to us. It is interesting to note in them how the old Teutonic zest for a fight remains unmodified by Christianity, for it is in passages dealing with the spilling of blood that the poet is at his best.

The greatest of Old English poets, Cynewulf, is thought to have been a Northumbrian too. We know little of him beyond that he wrote in the mid-eighth century. His lives of *St. Juliana* and *St. Elene*, and the *Christ* in particular, exhibit the authentic poetic imagination. To the Northumbrian School belong also *The Seafarer* and the beautiful elegy *The Wanderer.*

But the literary flowering of Northumbria was suddenly blasted by Danish invasion and conquest, towards the end of the eighth century. Bringing with them the gods whom their former kinsmen, the English, had forsaken, the Danes ruthlessly destroyed the treasures of Jarrow and Whitby, and within a century were ruling Northumbria.

The menace of the Danes brought about unity for resistance to them. Egbert, King of Wessex, united the central nations in an "English Kingdom" in 828. By heroic fighting, King Alfred the Great (r. 871-901) forced the Danes to remain in the North, where for a time they were quiescent and were being assimilated into the population. The Danes have left their mark upon our language with words like *sky, ugly, fellow, scant,* with the patronymic *-son* (in *Johnson*, etc.), and with geographic terminations for "town" in *thorp* and *by* (*Althorp, Derby,* etc.).

What was yet to be written of Old English literature comes from Wessex, and owes much to the personal patronage of Alfred. Acquainted in his boyhood with the more brilliant culture at the French court, Alfred invited all the scholars and clerks who would come to live under his protection. He had preserved all he could collect of the Northumbrian literature, which hence survives to us in the Wessex dialect, and authorized translations of many Latin works, among them Bede's *Ecclesiastical History.* He also directed the writing of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* a valuable document of the annals of English history, which was continued after his death by the monasteries of Peterborough, Winchester, and Ely. Under the year of 991 is entered the swan-song of Old English poetry, *The Battle of Maldon.*

The gradual elevation, through the centuries, of the King to a position of eminence as the smaller kingdoms were unified, and of the lord to a place of power over the people on his lands, was profoundly changing the structure of English society. Among Germanic tribes the war-lord had always rewarded his warriors; the King, now the supreme war-lord, dispensed gifts to his immediate dependents in the form of land-grants, titles in the government and church, and posts of honor in his court. The depredations of the Danes caused freemen to seek the protection of the thanes or lords, by surrendering their freeholds to the noblemen and receiving them back in fief. The freeman became the tenant and the villein, bound to his lord in service, and looking to him for justice. Thus the gradual degradation of the bulwark of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, the class of freemen, became coincidental with the development of an oligarchy out of touch with the needs of the average man. The end of Old English society was at hand.

The tenth century witnessed the collapse of the Wessex Kingdom, and England became subject to foreign domination. In the first half of the eleventh century Danish kings occupied the throne. In 1042 there was a brief English restoration which terminated in 1066 with the coming of William the Conqueror. By that time Old English literature was already dead. The last writer of significance had been Ælfric (at the end of the tenth century) whose *Homilies* possess a certain naïve charm.

For a full account of Old English history, the reader is directed to R. H. Hodgkin, *A History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1935).

The Old English Language and Its Poetry

Somewhere in the plains that sweep from Central Asia to Eastern Europe there dwelt thousands of years ago the original "Aryans"—that portion of humanity from which most of the inhabitants of Europe, Persia, and India are descended. Persian, Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin, Polish, Bohemian, Bulgarian, Russian, Lithuanian, Lettish, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Irish, Welsh, Gaelic, German, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic, Dutch, and English are Aryan languages, and they all come from the same source. The history of the peoples who speak these tongues has been sufficiently varied to have given different color to their cultures, but their common origin is rooted in their most needed vocabulary. The word is: *brother* in English, *broeder* in Dutch, *bródir* in Icelandic, *bróthar* in Gothic, *broder* in Swedish and Danish, *bruder* in German, *brathair* in Irish and Gaelic, *brawd* in Welsh, *brat* in Russian, *frater* in Latin, *fráter* in Greek, *bratru* in Slavonic, and *bhrátri* in Sanskrit. If in our study we must dwell on the differences between certain Aryan languages and cultures, let us begin by remembering these witnesses of our shared heritage, "witnesses," as Max Müller eloquently said, "not to be shaken by any cross-examination. The terms for God, for house, for father, mother, son, daughter, for dog or cow, for heart and tears, for axe and tree, identical in all the Indo-European [i.e. 'Aryan'] idioms, are like the watchwords of soldiers. We challenge the seeming stranger; and whether he answer with the lips of a Greek, a German, or an Indian [i.e. Hindu], we recognize him as one of ourselves."

Bringing with them to England old remembered Aryan words (like *night, star,* and *wind*), newer words they had coined out of their wanderings across Europe, and still newer words borrowed from Latin (as subjects of the Roman Empire) or made to fit experiences in Schleswig-Holstein days, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes gave us their particular Teutonic variation of the Aryan parent-tongue as the foundation for the English language.

Though lacking the variety of modern English vowels, Old English contained all the basic vowels and all our present consonantal sounds. As a Germanic language, it was inflected, but by the time it appears in literature, it had greatly reduced the forms. Nouns, pronouns, and adjectives were masculine, feminine, or neuter—the nouns, personal pronouns, and some adjectives being declined in four cases (Nominative, Genitive, Dative, and Accusative), singular and plural—and the other pronouns and adjectives in five (adding the Instrumental). Of these forms modern English has retained only the distinctive mark for the Genitive (i.e. the Possessive Case), except in some pronouns where the Accusative form survives (*him, her, whom*). Nearly all of the old conjugational forms have also disappeared.

Old English was a powerful language, much given to strong, explosive consonants and combinations of consonants. Very common were *sc, sp, st, str, hr, þ* and *ð* (the thorn: i.e *th*), and *þr*. (Cf. the essay on *The Literary Medium* in the Appendix, for a passage in Old English.) Verse or prose in Old English is as remarkable for its energy as for its lack of fluidity.

It was, as we have said, the monks who had taught the English how to write, and hence how to preserve their poems. Inevitably, therefore, nearly all the Old English literature we know possesses a Christian coloring. To guess what the earlier, the more primitive, literature must have been like, we must either read between the lines for memories and habits not easily extinguished (and there are many such), or go to other more plainly pagan Teutonic remains, such as the Icelandic *Eddas* and sagas. To read the *Lay of Sigurd*, for instance (cf. *below*), is to come as near as we can to having a taste of pre-Christian Teutonic literature.

Certain pieces of Old English literature, despite their being affected by Christian teaching, carry the echoes of a more primitive time. In the epic *Beowulf*, and such fragments as *Widsith, The Fight at Finnsburg,* and *Waldhere* we have the heroic style, which survives as late as two tenth-century poems celebrating the battles of *Brunanburh* and *Maldon.* The very nature of such poetry is to celebrate a great hero or great doings. And appealing, as it does, to a more or less unsophisticated society, the impersonality of its author is as characteristic as the communal interest attaching to its subject matter. The great hero is important to a social order that looks to leadership from the warrior. The fragments which form the poem *Waldhere* tell of the heartening of the hero for battle and his boasting of his sword. *Widsith* (i.e. *The Far-Traveler*) is not much more than a catalogue of the great princes and heroes who have honored a *scop* (poet) with their patronage. *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon* celebrate contests between the English and the invading Norsemen, the former an enthusiastic account of English victory, the latter a sombre relation of English defeat, but both acclaiming the ancient virtue of bravery in battle.

Christianity introduced new themes into Old English literature. The Venerable Bede is our first scholar and chronicler. It is from him that we learn of the first legendary English poet to be identified, Cædmon (cf. *below*). After Cædmon England became ardent with religious literary zeal. Some poets applied themselves to versifying the Bible and its commentaries, as in the so-called Cædmonian poems of *Genesis, Exodus,* and *Daniel,* and *Judith* and *The Fall of the Angels.*

Four other religious poems, *Elene* (which concerns the life of St. Helena and of the Emperor Constantine's vision of the Cross), *Juliana* (the story of a martyr-saint and her triumph over the demon Belial), *The Fates of the Apostles,* and *The Christ* (a poem on the Birth, Ascension, and Judgment of Christ)—all contain in acrostic the signature of Cynewulf. Of Cynewulf's life little is known (cf. *below*). From his works, he seems to have been a scholarly man, acquainted with the literature of the Church. His poetry is splendid in some passages, and weakly diffuse in others. To him have also been doubtfully ascribed *The Phoenix* (an allegory on the Death and Resurrection of Christ, remarkable for being the only Old English poem to take delight in Nature's kindlier moods), and the lives of two saints, *Andreas* and *Guthlac.*

Other Christian poems include *The Dream of the Rood* (an imaginative history of the Cross on which Christ was crucified—cf. *below*), the *Bestiary* (a versification of popular naïve notions of natural history), and the *Discourse of the Soul to its Body* (hymning somewhat savagely the triumph of the immortal soul over the decomposing body).

There are also some quasi-lyrical Old English poems: *The Lover's Message* (the sending of a carved wooden tablet by an exile to his love), *The Wife's Complaint* (the lament of a wife who has been falsely slandered), *The Seafarer* (telling of the old love of the sea), *The Wanderer* (a meditation on exile), and *Deor's Lament* (cf. *below*). Finally, there are Old English charms, Riddles (cf. *below*), and Gnomic Verses (or proverbs and maxims in verse).

Over all Old English literature there is the cast of gloom and sadness, a feeling that was doubtless as true of Anglo-Saxon piratical days as of later Christian days in England. The Old English view of life is perhaps best expressed in what has been called the most beautiful sentence in its literature: "The present life of man, O King, seems to me, in comparison to that time which is unknown to us, like the swift flight of a sparrow through the room wherein you sit at supper in winter, with your commanders and ministers, and a good fire in the midst, whilst the storms of rain and snow prevail abroad; the sparrow, flying in at one door, and immediately out at another, whilst he is within is safe from the wintry storm, but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, into the dark winter from which he had emerged."[1]

A study of Old English poetry will be found in W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, Vol. I (1895). Stopford Brooke has published two volumes containing modern translations, *History of Early English Literature to the Accession of King Alfred* (1892) and *English Literature from the Beginning to the Norman Conquest* (1898). Also valuable are: R. W. Chambers, *Widsith* (1912); B. Thorpe, *Cædmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Parts of the Holy Scriptures* (1832); F. A. Blackburn, *Exodus and Daniel* (1907); A. S. Cook, *The Dream of the Rood* (1905); L. H. Holt, *Elene* (1904); R. K. Root, *Andreas* (1899); and B. C. Williams, *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon* (1914). (Other suggested bibliography will be found in the introductions to the Old English selections in this volume.)

THE SHORT LAY OF SIGURD

(From the Elder Edda)

(*Translated by Eiríkr Magnusson and William Morris*)

The title of *Edda* has been given to two important collections of ancient Icelandic literature. The *Prose Edda* includes a valuable compendium of ancient Teutonic mythology, and accounts of the settling of Sweden by the Aesir (the gods) under Odin (or Woden), of the legends of the Aesir, and of the rules of old Icelandic verse. The so-called *Elder Edda*, written in verse, does not date in its present form from before the tenth century. Many of the poems are fragmentary, and it is obvious that the collection was made in order to preserve pieces that had been handed down from time immemorial. The *Elder Edda* deals not only with the gods, but with demigods, giants, dwarfs, and great heroes as well. From it the English poet Gray made a version of one of the poems.

Of particular interest in the *Elder Edda* is a series of poems treating of the two heroic families of the Volsungs and the Niblungs. Though there are twenty such poems, they are only the broken remains of a great poetic saga, probably the earliest of a story that has been often told among the Teutonic peoples. A later prose saga, the *Volsungasaga*, seems to have been based upon the material of the *Elder Edda*, and supplies many missing links in the plot.

As recounted in the *Volsungasaga*, the story is as follows:

The three gods, Asgard, Odin, and Loki, kill an otter, keep his skin, and take refuge for the night with the giant Rodmar. Rodmar, recognizing the skin as that of his son, demands enough gold to cover the skin from view. Loki goes out, captures the dwarf Andvari, who is guarding a great hoard of gold, makes him surrender the treasure, and brings it to Rodmar. But one hair of the skin remains uncovered by the gold. Loki goes back to Andvari, and forces him to yield a magic ring that can create gold. Andvari then lays a curse upon all who shall thereafter own the ring. Later Rodmar is slain by his sons Fafnir and Regin. Fafnir seizes the treasure, hides it in a barren heath, and assumes the form of a dragon to guard it.

To Regin, who is famous as a smith, comes Sigurd, son of Sigmundr (noted Volsung hero), to be trained in Regin's profession. Informed of Fafnir and the gold-hoard, Sigurd welds the broken pieces of the sword Gram (given Sigmundr by Odin). Sigurd's new sword is strong enough to cleave the anvil in two. With it, Sigurd goes forth and kills the dragon Fafnir. Taking out the dragon's heart and roasting it over a fire, he burns his finger in the fat. When he touches his lips to cool the burn, he finds he can understand the language of the birds, who warn him that Regin intends slaying him for the gold. Sigurd kills Regin, loads the treasure on a horse given him by Odin, and sets out on a journey.

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[1] From Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, translated by Stevens.

He comes upon the beautiful Valkyrie Brynhild, sleeping an enchanted sleep. He penetrates the wall of fire surrounding her, and awakens her. They fall in love. Later, Sigurd rides off, and comes to the court of Rhineland's king. The three sons of the king, Gunnar, Hogni, and Guthorm, wish Sigurd as an ally, and by a magic potion make Sigurd forget Brynhild. Thereupon the hero marries their sister Gudrun. Gunnar, however, desires to make Brynhild his own wife, and asks Sigurd to help him win her. At the circle of fire, Sigurd takes Gunnar's form, wins Brynhild, and exchanges the magic ring for one of hers. They all ride back to court, where Gunnar and Brynhild are married at the same time as Sigurd and Gudrun.

Brynhild begins to suspect a trick. When Gudrun shows Brynhild the ring Brynhild had given Sigurd and which he has given to Gudrun, Brynhild is enraged. She persuades Guthorm to stab Sigurd in his chamber at night. Before Sigurd dies, he flings his sword at Guthorm, and cuts him in two. Brynhild, still loving Sigurd, mounts the funeral pyre and dies with him. Destruction later overtakes the entire house of Gunnar at the hands of Atli (Attila), King of the Huns.

It is with such material that *The Lay of Sigurd* deals. The same part of the story forms the groundwork for Wagner's great music-drama *The Dusk of the Gods.*

Although *The Lay of Sigurd* in its extant form is, as we have said, much later than *Beowulf*, it can be read profitably in connection with the Old English epic, for it will give the reader a good idea of the kind of legend familiar to Angles, Saxons, and Jutes when they were still living on the continent. It is to be noticed that in Section XIII of *Beowulf* the gleeman relates an adventure of Sigurd's father, Sigmund. The Volsungs were the great family of Teutonic legend. In *Beowulf* we find that the poet, by weaving a thread of history into a mass of ancient fable, creates a hero worthy of his Teutonic ancestors.

In order to follow *The Lay of Sigurd*, the reader should remember that Sigurd has conquered Fafnir, and has come to the home of Giuki, King of the Rhineland, where he weds Gudrun, sister of Gunnar, Hogni, and Guthorm. This is the point at which the brisk narrative opens.

William Morris, the English Pre-Raphaelite poet, in collaboration with Erikr Magnusson, translated the *Volsungasaga* and some of the related poems from the *Elder Edda* (1870). A translation of the entire *Elder Edda* was made by H. A. Bellows (1923).

Sigurd of yore,
Sought the dwelling of Giuki,
As he fared, the young Volsung,[1]
After fight won;[2]

Troth he took
From the two brethren;
Oath swore they betwixt them,
Those bold ones of deed.

A may[3] they gave to him
And wealth manifold,
Gudrun the young,
Giuki's daughter:
They drank and gave doom[4]
Many days together,
Sigurd the young,
And the sons of Giuki.

Until they wended
For Brynhild's wooing,
Sigurd a-riding
Amidst their rout,
The wise young Volsung
Who knew of all ways—
Ah! he had wed her,
Had fate so willed it.

Southlander Sigurd
A naked sword,
Bright, well grinded,
Laid betwixt them;
No kiss he won
From the fair woman,
Nor in arms of his
Did the Hun King[5] hold her,
Since he gat the young maid
For the son of Giuki.

No lack in her life
She wotted[6] of now,
And at her death-day
No dreadful thing
For a shame indeed
Or a shame in seeming;
But about and betwixt
Went baleful fate.

[1] Sigurd's grandfather was Volsung.

[2] the fight with the dragon Fafnir, who guarded the hoard of gold

[3] maid.

[4] judgment.

[5] Sigurd

[6] knew.

Alone, abroad,
She sat of an evening,
Of full many things
She fell a-talking:
"O for my Sigurd!
I shall have death,
Or my fair, my lovely,
Laid in mine arms.

"For the word once spoken,
I sorrow sorely—
His queen is Gudrun,
I am wed to Gunnar;
The dread Norns wrought for us
A long while of woe."

Oft with heart deep
In dreadful thoughts,
O'er ice-fields and ice-hills
She fared a-night time,
When he and Gudrun
Were gone to their fair bed,
And Sigurd wrapped
The bed-gear round her.

"Ah! now the Hun King
His queen in arms holdeth,
While love I go lacking,
And all things longed for
With no delight
But in dreadful thought."

These dreadful things
Thrust her toward murder:
—"Listen, Gunnar,
For thou shalt lose
My wide lands,
Yea, me myself!
Never love I my life,
With thee for my lord—

"I will fare back thither
From whence I came,
To my nighest kin
And those that know me
There shall I sit
Sleeping my life away,
Unless thou slayest
Sigurd the Hun King,
Making thy might more
E'en than his might was!

"Yea, let the son fare
After the father,
And no young wolf
A long while nourish!
For on each man lieth
Vengeance lighter,
And peace shall be surer
If the son live not."

Adrad[7] was Gunnar,
Heavy-hearted was he,
And in doubtful mood
Day-long he sat.
For naught he wotted,
Nor might see clearly
What was the seemliest
Of deeds to set hand to;
What of all deeds
Was best to be done:
For he minded the vows
Sworn to the Volsung,
And the sore wrong
To be wrought against Sigurd.

Wavered his mind
A weary while,
No wont it was
Of those days worn by,
That queens should flee
From the realms of their kings.

"Brynhild to me
Is better than all,
The child of Budli
Is the best of women.
Yea, and my life
Will I lay down,
Ere I am twinned[8]
From that woman's treasure."

He bade call Hogni
To the place where he bided;
With all the trust that might be,
Trowed[9] he in him.

"Wilt thou bewray Sigurd
For his wealth's sake?—
Good it is to rule
O'er the Rhine's metal;
And well content
Great wealth to wield,
Biding in peace
And blissful days."

---

[7] afraid.
[8] separated.
[9] believed.

One thing alone Hogni
Had for an answer:
"Such doings for us
Are naught seemly to do;
To rend with sword
Oaths once sworn,
Oaths once sworn,
And troth once plighted.

"Nor know we on mould,
Men of happier days,
The while we four
Rule over the folk;
While the bold in battle,
The Hun King, bides living.

"And no nobler kin
Shall be known afield,
If our five sons
We long may foster;
Yea, a goodly stem
Shall surely wax.
—But I clearly see
In what wise it standeth,
Brynhild's sore urging
O'ermuch on thee beareth.

"Guttorm shall we
Get for the slaying,
Our younger brother
Bare of wisdom;
For he was out of
All the oaths sworn,
All the oaths sworn,
And the plighted troth."

Easy to rouse him
Who of naught recketh!
—Deep stood the sword
In the heart of Sigurd.

There, in the hall,
Gat the high-hearted vengeance;
For he cast his sword
At the reckless slayer:
Out at Guttorm
Flew Gram the mighty,
The gleaming steel
From Sigurd's hand.

Down fell the slayer
Smitten asunder;
The heavy head
And the hands fell one way,
But the feet and such like
Aback where they stood.

Gudrun was sleeping
Soft in the bed,
Empty of sorrow
By the side of Sigurd:
When she awoke
With all pleasure gone,
Swimming in blood
Of Frey's beloved.

So sore her hands
She smote together,
That the great-hearted
Gat raised in bed;
—"O Gudrun, weep not
So woefully,
Sweet lovely bride,
For thy brethren live for thee!

"A young child have I
For heritor;
Too young to win forth
From the house of his foes.—
Black deeds and ill
Have they been a-doing,
Evil rede[10]
Have they wrought at last.

"Late, late, rideth with them
Unto the Thing,[11]
Such sister's son,
Though seven thou bear,—
—But well I wot
Which way all goeth;
Alone wrought Brynhild
This bale against us.

"That maiden loved me
Far before all men,
Yet wrong to Gunnar
I never wrought;
Brotherhood I heeded
And all bounden oaths,
That none should deem me
His queen's darling."

Weary sighed Gudrun,
As the king gat ending,
And so sore her hands

---

[10] counsel.

[11] assembly place.

She smote together,
That the cups arow
Rang out therewith,
And the geese cried on high
That were in the homefield.

Then laughed Brynhild
Budli's daughter,
Once, once only,
From out her heart;
When to her bed
Was borne the sound
Of the sore greeting
Of Giuki's daughter.

Then, quoth Gunnar,
The king, the hawk-bearer,
"Whereas, thou laughest,
O hateful woman,
Glad on thy bed,
No good it betokeneth:
Why lackest thou else
Thy lovely hue?
Feeder of foul deeds,
Fey[12] do I deem thee,

"Well worthy art thou
Before all women,
That thine eyes should see
Atli[13] slain of us;
That thy brother's wounds
Thou shouldst see a-bleeding,
That his bloody hurts
Thine hands should bind."

"No man blameth thee, Gunnar,
Thou hast fulfilled death's measure
But naught Atli feareth
All thine ill will;
Life shall he lay down
Later than ye,
And still bear more might
Aloft than thy might.

"I shall tell thee, Gunnar,
Though well the tale thou knowest,
In what early days
Ye dealt abroad your wrong:
Young was I then,
Worn with no woe,
Good wealth I had
In the house of my brother!

"No mind had I
That a man should have me,
Or ever ye Giukings,
Rode into our garth;[14]
There ye sat on your steeds
Three kings of the people—
—Ah! that that faring[15]
Had never befallen!

"Then spake Atli
To me apart,
And said that no wealth
He would give unto me,
Neither gold nor lands
If I would not be wedded;
Nay, and no part
Of the wealth apportioned,
Which in my first days
He gave me duly;
Which in my first days
He counted down.

"Wavered the mind
Within me then,
If to fight I should fall
And the felling of folk,
Bold in byrny
Because of my brother;
A deed of fame
Had that been to all folk,
But to many a man
Sorrow of mind.

"So I let all sink
Into peace at the last:
More grew I minded
For the mighty treasure,
The red-shining rings
Of Sigmund's son;
For no man's wealth else
Would I take unto me.

"For myself had I given
To that great king
Who sat amid gold
On the back of Grani;[16]
Nought were his eyen

---

[12] fated.
[13] who contrived the marriage of Gunnar and Brynhild.
[14] home, dwelling.
[15] adventure, experience.
[16] Sigurd's horse.

Like to your eyen,
Nor in any wise
Went his visage with yours;
Though ye might deem you
Due kings of men.

"One I loved,
One, and none other,
The gold-decked may
Had no doubtful mind;
Thereof shall Atli
Wot full surely,
When he getteth to know
I am gone to the dead.

"Far be it from me,
Feeble and wavering,
Ever to love
Another's love—
—Yet shall my woe
Be well avenged."

Up rose Gunnar,
The great men's leader,
And cast his arms
About the queen's neck;
And all went nigh
One after other,
With their whole hearts
Her heart to turn.
But then all these
From her neck she thrust,
Of her long journey
No man should let her.

Then called he Hogni
To have talk with him:
"Let all folk go
Forth into the hall,
Thine with mine—
—O need sore and mighty!—
To wot if we yet
My wife's parting may stay.
Till with time's wearing
Some hindrance wax."

One answer Hogni
Had for all;
"Nay, let hard need
Have rule thereover,
And no man let[17] her
Of her long journey!
Never born again,
May she come back thence!

"Luckless she came
To the lap of her mother,
Born into the world
For utter woe,
To many a man
For heart-whole mourning."

Upraised he turned
From the talk and the trouble,
To where the gem-field
Dealt out goodly treasure;
As she looked and beheld
All the wealth that she had,
And the hungry bondmaids,
And maids of the hall.

With no good in her heart
She donned her gold byrny,
Ere she thrust the sword-point
Through the midst of her body:
On the bolster's far side
Sank she adown,
And, smitten with sword,
Still bethought her of redes.[18]

"Let all come forth
Who are fain[19] the red gold,
Or things less worthy
To win from my hands;
To each one I give
A necklace gilt over,
Wrought hangings and bed-gear,
And bright woven weed."[20]

All they kept silence,
And thought what to speak,
Then all at once
Answer gave:
"Full enow are death-doomed,
Fain are we to live yet,
Maids of the hall
All meet work winning."

From her wise heart at last
The linen-clad damsel,
The one of few years
Gave forth the word:
"I will that none driven

---

[17] prevent.

[18] counsels.

[19] desirous of.

[20] clothes.

By hand or by word,
For our sake should lose
Well-loved life.

"Thou on the bones of you
Surely shall burn,
Less dear treasure
At your departing
Nor with Menia's Meal[21]
Shall ye come to see me."

"Sit thee down, Gunnar,
A word must I say to thee
Of the life's ruin
Of thy lightsome bride—
—Nor shall thy ship
Swim soft and sweetly
For all that I
Lay life adown.

"Sooner than ye might deem
Shall ye make peace with Gudrun,
For the wise woman
Shall lull in the young wife
The hard memory
Of her dead husband.

"There is a may born
Reared by her mother,
Whiter and brighter
Than is the bright day;
She shall be Swanhild,[22]
She shall be Sunbeam.

"Thou shalt give Gudrun
Unto a great one,
Noble, well-praised
Of the world's folk;
Not with her goodwill,
Or love shalt thou give her;
Yet will Atli
Come to win her,
My very brother,
Born of Budli.

—"Ah! many a memory
Of how ye dealt with me,
How sorely, how evilly
Ye ever beguiled me,
How all pleasure left me
The while my life lasted!—

"Fain wilt thou be
Oddrun to win,
But thy good liking
Shall Atli let;
But in secret wise
Shall ye win together,
And she shall love thee
As I had loved thee,
If in such wise
Fate had willed it.

"But with all ill
Shall Atli sting thee,
Into the strait worm-close[23]
Shall he cast thee.

"But no long space
Shall slip away
Ere Atli too
All life shall lose.
Yea, all his weal
With the life of his sons,
For a dreadful bed
Dights Gudrun for him,
From a heart sore laden,
With the sword's sharp edge.

"More seemly for Gudrun,
Your very sister,
In death to wend after
Her love first wed;
Had but good rede
To her been given,
Or if her heart
Had been like to my heart.

—"Faint my speech groweth—
But for our sake
Ne'er shall she lose
Her life beloved;
The sea shall have her,
High billows bear her
Forth unto Jonakr's[24]
Fair land of his fathers.

"There shall she bear sons,
Stays of a heritage,
Stays of a heritage,
Jonakr's sons;
And Swanhild shall she
Send from the land,

---

[21] gold.
[22] daughter of Sigurd and Gudrun.
[23] the grave.
[24] Gudrun's third husband.

That may born of her,
The may born of Sigurd.

"Her shall bite
The rede of Bikki,[25]
Whereas for no good
Wins Jormunrek life;
And so is clean perished
All the kin of Sigurd,
Yea, and more greeting,
And more for Gudrun.

"And now one prayer
Yet pray I of thee—
The last word of mine
Here in the world—
So broad on the field
Be the burg of the dead
That fair space may be left
For us all to lie down,
All those that died
At Sigurd's death!

"Hang round that burg
Fair hangings and shields,
Web by Gauls woven,
And folk of the Gauls:
There burn the Hun King
Lying beside me.

"But on the other side
Burn by the Hun King
Those who served me
Strewn with treasure;
Two at the head,
And two at the feet,
Two hounds therewith,
And two hawks moreover:
Then is all dealt
With even dealing.

"Lay there amidst us
The ring-dight metal,
The sharp-edged steel,
That so lay erst;
When we both together
Into one bed went,
And were called by the name
Of man and wife.

"Never, then, belike
Shall clash behind him
Valhall's bright door
With rings bedight:
And if my fellowship
Followeth after,
In no wretched wise
Then shall we wend.

"For him shall follow
My five bondmaids,
My eight bondsmen,
No borel[26] folk:
Yea, and my fosterer,
And my father's dower
That Budli of old days
Gave to his dear child.

"Much have I spoken,
More would I speak,
If the sword would give me
Space for speech;
But my words are waning,
My wounds are swelling—
Naught but truth have I told—
—And now make I ending."

[25] After Swanhild has married the aged Ermanarich, she is accused of infidelity by Bikki, one of Ermanarich's followers. She is punished by being torn to pieces by wild horses.

[26] low born.

Beowulf

(In a modern version by J. Duncan Spaeth)

The most important of Old English poems, anonymous like most of the poetry of our Teutonic forebears and like many epics of other peoples, presents numerous puzzling questions. There exists no clue in Old English literature to the time, the place, the authorship, or the circumstances of the composition of *Beowulf.*

Written in the Wessex tongue, the manuscript (Cottonian collection, British Museum, *Vitellius A.xv*) dates from about 1000 A.D. How much earlier than this the poem was composed has been the subject of much conjecture.

Pagan and Christian elements are commingled in *Beowulf.* Plainly heathen and intolerable to Christian teaching are: the observing of omens, the attribution of power to Wyrd (i.e. fate), cremation, blood-revenge, and the praise of worldly glory—all woven into the poem. On the other hand, the assumption of God's dominion over the world, of the Devil's agency among men, of the existence of Heaven and Hell, of a Last Judgment, and of the noxiousness of Sin—are all Christian. The author's familiarity with the Bible—his references to the stories of Creation, Cain, and the Deluge—are striking. In some cases where pagan points of view survive in the poem, they are transformed by Christian thinking: the heathen curse on the treasure has been garbed in Christian language; and if Wyrd is still considered a power, God is shown controlling Wyrd. Some scholars have been quick to account for this seemingly inconsistent presence in *Beowulf* of pagan and Christian concepts and customs by suggesting that the poem was made during the continental days of the Teutons and revised imperfectly by Christian hands in England. But scholarly research has proved such a theory untenable. The setting of the poem is certainly one of a Christian society; and however pagan the materials of the plot may be, the interpretation of them bespeaks a Christian author. The Christian is the basic part of *Beowulf.*

The now discredited attempt to place the composition of this epic back in the pre-British days of the race, is born as much as anything else of a desire to make a truly national hero out of the hero of the poem, such as are the heroes of most folk-epics. But the central figure of this Old English epic seems to have been not an Angle, a Saxon, or a Jute. Beowulf was a Geat, and his people lived in what is now the southern part of Sweden. (Prof. Spaeth's otherwise splendid version of the poem erroneously assumes that the Geats were Jutes.) Hygelac, Beowulf's uncle, is an historical person known to us (in the chronicle of Gregory of Tours) as Chochilaicus; and we are able to date his raid on the Frisian coast, referred to in the epic, as having occurred about 516 A.D. If we may attempt a chronology of Beowulf's career, basing it on what is historically ascertainable, the hero would have been born about 490, visited the Danes to rid them of Grendel in 510, and ascended the throne in 530. Thereafter, we are told, he reigned for fifty years; though how literally we should accept that poetic formula is open to question. At any rate, before being acceptable for legendary treatment, our hero must have been considered as dead for an appreciable time—and by then the English had been long in possession of Britain. The Christian coloring of the poem would make impossible a date earlier than the late seventh century. Scholars have proved, by linguistic and other tests, that *Beowulf* was composed some time around 750.

Of the actual author of the epic one thing seems fairly certain: that he lived in some Anglian part of the island, in Mercia or Northumbria. His familiarity with court life, his broad Christian view, and his patent appeal to a royal audience would seem to make him some noble ecclesiastic. He was certainly a man well versed in Scandinavian heroic lore and the poetry of his own people, and he was a man of cultivated taste.

Why he should have chosen to celebrate a Scandinavian hero's exploits in Denmark and Sweden is the chief puzzle surrounding his poem. Acquaintance with the Scandinavian sagas makes it plain that he was not merely a translator. The violence and wildness of Scandinavian literature is nothing akin to his style, which greatly resembles other Old English poems in tone. Like many another poet since, he seems to have taken his material from an older time, where his imagination could have free heroic play.

For however historical the skeleton of his story may once have been, the three exploits, the recounting of which is the business of his poem, are fables out of folklore. The fights with Grendel and his dam are paralleled in a number of tales, particularly in the *Grettissaga*; the fight with the dragon at once brings to mind the similar combat of Sigmund the Volsung, itself recounted by the gleeman in the poem (XIII).

Beowulf thus must be admitted as curiously combined in contradiction. History and fable, the pagan and the Christian, the real (as in the descriptions of fights, banquets, and funeral rites) and the unreal (as in the idealization of hero and court) are found intermingling. Yet, for all that, there is no reason to postulate multiple authorship of the poem or to doubt that what we have is substantially the work its anonymous author composed. *Beowulf* is not comparable in artistic merit to the *Iliad* or the *Nibelungenlied*, nor can it be hailed as a national epos. But it is none the less a dignified noble poem, technically unexcelled in Old English poetry. And it affords us invaluable insight into the heroic ways of life of the Teutonic peoples, as well as into the best qualities of the newer culture they were building in England. If for no other reason than that it is the first poem of importance in our or any other modern literature, it is worthy of esteem.

Though not a national epic, *Beowulf* mirrors clearly the old Germanic ideals: valor, the love of glory, honor, duty, the loyalty of the retainer, and the generosity of the lord. The tone is vigorous and gloomy. It is on the darker emotions that the poet, typical of his people, dwells; even the scenic descriptions tend toward the grim. And, typically, it is the sea and the battle that enkindle the imagination of this descendant of sea-fighters.

The narrative is concerned with three exploits of its hero:

I. On behalf of the Scyldings, Beowulf fights Grendel and

II. slays Grendel's mother at the bottom of the sea.

III. Some fifty years elapse, during which Beowulf has returned to his people, the Geats, and has become their king. He engages in mortal combat with the Fire-Dragon.[1]

The best edition of *Beowulf* is F. Klaeber's (1928), which provides a full commentary. Also valuable are R. W. Chambers, *Beowulf* (1921); W. W. Lawrence, *Beowulf and Epic Tradition* (1932). Prof. Spaeth's full-blooded rendition of *Beowulf* is here reprinted, by kind permission of the Princeton University Press, from his *Old English Poetry* (1921).

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[1] An analysis of the versification of *Beowulf* will be found in the essay on *The Literary Medium* in the Appendix.

The Myth of the Sheaf-Child[1]

List to an old-time lay of the Spear-Danes,
Full of the prowess of famous kings,
Deeds of renown that were done by the heroes;
Scyld the Sheaf-Child from scourging foemen,
From raiders a-many their mead-halls[2] wrested.
He lived to be feared, though first as a waif,
Puny and frail he was found on the shore.
He grew to be great, and was girt with power
Till the border-tribes all obeyed his rule,
And sea-folk hardy that sit by the whale-path[3]
Gave him tribute, a good king was he.
Many years after, an heir was born to him,
A goodly youth, whom God had sent
To stay and support his people in need.
(Long time leaderless living in woe,
The sorrow they suffered He saw full well.)
The Lord of Glory did lend him honor,

---

[1] Scyld ("Shield") had been found as an outcast babe adrift in an open boat lying upon a sheaf of wheat. This story closely resembles that of the infant Moses.

[2] Home or palaces where they drank mead.

[3] Such metaphors as this one for the sea are very common in Old English poetry. They are known as "kennings."

Beowulf's[4] fame afar was borne,
Son of old Scyld in the Scandian lands.
A youthful heir must be open-handed,
Furnish the friends of his father with plenty,
That thus in his age, in the hour of battle,
Willing comrades may crowd around him
Eager and true. In every tribe
Honorable deeds shall adorn an earl.
The aged Scyld, when his hour had come,
Famous and praised, departed to God.
His faithful comrades carried him down
To the brink of the sea, as himself had bidden,
The Scyldings' friend, before he fell silent,
Their lord beloved who long had ruled them.
Out in the bay a boat was waiting
Coated with ice, 'twas the king's own barge.
They lifted aboard their bracelet-bestower,
And down on the deck their dear lord laid,
Hard by the mast. Heaped-up treasure
Gathered from far they gave him along.
Never was ship more nobly laden
With wondrous weapons and warlike gear.
Swords and corselets covered his breast,
Floating riches to ride afar with him
Out o'er the waves at the will of the sea.
No less they dowered their lord with treasure,
Things of price, than those who at first
Had launched him forth as a little child
Alone on the deep to drift o'er the billows.
They gave him to boot a gilded banner,
High o'er his head they hung it aloft.
Then set him adrift, let the surges bear him.
Sad were their hearts, their spirits mournful;
Man hath not heard, no mortal can say
Who found that barge's floating burden.

I

The Line of the Danish Kings and the Building of Heorot

Now Beowulf[5] was king in the burgs of the Scyldings,
Famed among folk. (His father had left
The land of the living.[6]) From his loins was sprung
Healfdene the royal, who ruled to old age,
Gray and battlegrim, the bold-hearted Scyldings.
Children four to this chief of the people
Woke unto life, one after another;
Heorogar and Hrothgar, and Halga the brave,
And winsome Sigeneow, a Scylfing she wedded;
Saewela's queen they say she became.
To Hrothgar was given such glory in battle,
Such fame he won, that his faithful band
Of youthful warriors waxed amain.
So great had grown his guard of kinsmen,
That it came in his mind to call on his people
To build a mead-hall, mightier far
Than any e'er seen by the sons of men,
Wherein to bestow upon old and young,
Gifts and rewards, as God vouchsafed them,
Save folk-share lands and freemen's lives.[7]
Far and wide the work was published;
Many a tribe, the mid-earth round,
Helped to fashion the folk-stead fair.
With speed they built it, and soon 'twas finished,
Greatest of halls. Heorot[8] he named it,
Whose word was law o'er lands afar;
Nor failed in his promise, but freely dealt
Gifts at the feast. The fair hall towered
Wide-gabled and high, awaiting its doom,
The sweep of fire; not far was the time
That ancient feuds should open afresh,
And sword-hate sunder sons from fathers.[9]

In the darkness dwelt a demon-sprite
Whose heart was filled with fury and hate,
When he heard each night the noise of revel
Loud in the hall, laughter and song.
To the sound of the harp the singer chanted
Lays he had learned, of long ago;
How the Almighty had made the earth,
Wonder-bright lands, washed by the ocean;
How he set, triumphant, sun and moon
To lighten all men that live on the earth.
He brightened the land with leaves and branches;
Life he created for every being,
Each in its kind, that moves upon earth.
So, happy in hall, the heroes lived,
Wanting naught, till one began
To work them woe, a wicked fiend.
The demon grim was Grendel called,
March-stalker huge, the moors he roamed.
The joyless creature had kept long time
The lonely fen, the lairs of monsters,

---

[4] Not the hero of the poem, but some ancestor of Hrothgar.

[5] Not the hero of the poem; the latter is first mentioned at line 192.

[6] died.

[7] He would not dispose of the property of the people or the lives of men.

[8] "Hart," probably named for its decoration of antlers.

[9] We know nothing of this final disaster to Heorot, here prophesied.

Cast out from men, an exile accurst.
On offspring of Cain, the killing of Abel
Was justly avenged by the Judge Eternal.
Nought gained by the feud the faithless murderer;[10]
He was banished unblest from abode of men.
And hence arose the host of miscreants,
Monsters and elves and eldritch sprites,
Warlocks and giants, that warred against God;
Jotuns and goblins;[11] He gave them their due.

II

The Ravaging of Heorot Hall by the Monster Grendel

When night had fallen, the fiend crept near
To the lofty hall, to learn how the Danes
In Heorot fared, when the feasting was done.
The aethelings[12] all within he saw
Asleep after revel, not recking of danger,
And free from care. The fiend accurst,
Grim and greedy, his grip made ready;
Snatched in their sleep, with savage fury,
Thirty warriors; away he sprang
Proud of his prey, to repair to his home,
His blood-dripping booty to bring to his lair.
At early dawn, when day-break came,
The vengeance of Grendel was revealed to all;
Their wails after wassail were widely heard,
Their morning-woe. The mighty ruler,
The aetheling brave, sat bowed with grief.
The fate of his followers filled him with sorrow,
When they traced the tracks of the treacherous foe,
Fiend accurst. Too fierce was that onset,
Too loathsome and long, nor left them respite.
The very next night, anew he began
To maim and to murder, nor was minded to slacken
His fury of hate, too hardened in crime.
'Twas easy to find then earls who preferred
A room elsewhere, for rest at night,
A bed in the bowers, when they brought this news
Of the hall-foe's hate; and henceforth all
Who escaped the demon, kept distance safe.
So Grendel wrongfully ruled the hall,
One against all till empty stood
That lordly mansion, and long remained so.
For the space of twelve winters the Scyldings' Friend[13]
Bore in his breast the brunt of this sorrow,
Measureless woe. In mournful lays
The tale became known; 'twas told abroad
In gleemen's songs, how Grendel had warred
Long against Hrothgar, and wreaked his hate
With murderous fury through many a year,
Refusing to end the feud perpetual,
Or decently deal with the Danes in parley,
Take their tribute for treaty of peace;
Nor could their leaders look to receive
Pay from his hands for the harm that he wrought.
The fell destroyer kept feeding his rage
On young and old. So all night long
He prowled o'er the fen and surprised his victims,
Death-shadow dark. (The dusky realms
Where the hell-runes haunt are hidden from men.)
So the exiled roamer his raids continued;
Wrong upon wrong in his wrath he heaped.
In midnights dark he dwelt alone
'Mongst Heorot's trophies and treasures rich.
Great was the grief of the gold-friend of Scyldings,
Vexed was his mood that he might not visit
His goodly throne, his gift-seat proud,
Deprived of joy by the judgment of God.
Many the wise men that met to discover
Ways of escape from the scourge of affliction.
Often they came for counsel together;
Often at heathen altars they made
Sacrifice-offerings, beseeching their idols
To send them deliverance from assault of the foe.
Such was their practice, they prayed to the Devil;[14]
The hope of the heathen on hell was fixed,
The mood of their mind. Their Maker they knew not,
The righteous Judge and Ruler on high.
The Wielder of Glory they worshipped not,
The Warden of Heaven. Woe be to him
Whose soul is doomed through spite and envy,
In utter despair and agony hopeless
Forever to burn. But blessed is he
Who, after this life, the Lord shall seek,
Eager for peace in the arms of the Father.

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[10] This legend that giants are descendants of Cain, the first murderer, was widely known.

[11] It is impossible to define clearly the various kinds of monsters here mentioned.

[12] nobles, retainers of the king.

[13] A kenning for "king."

[14] Note the Christian element in this passage.

III

The Voyage of Beowulf to the Hall of Hrothgar

Thus boiled with care the breast of Hrothgar;
Ceaselessly sorrowed the son of Healfdene,
None of his chieftains might change his lot.
Too fell was the foe that afflicted the people
With wrongs unnumbered, and nightly horrors.
Then heard in his home king Hygelac's thane,[15]
The dauntless Jute[16] of the doings of Grendel.
In strength he outstripped the strongest of men
That dwell in the earth in the days of this life.
Gallant and bold, he gave command
To get him a boat, a good wave-skimmer.
O'er the swan-road, he said, he would seek the king
Noble and famous, who needed men.
Though dear to his kin, they discouraged him not;
The prudent in counsel praised the adventure,
Whetted his valor, awaiting good omens.

So Beowulf chose from the bands of the Jutes
Heroes brave, the best he could find;
He with fourteen followers hardy,
Went to embark; he was wise in seamanship,
Showed them the landmarks, leading the way.
Soon they descried their craft in the water,
At the foot of the cliff. Then climbed aboard
The chosen troop; the tide was churning
Sea against sand; they stowed away
In the hold of the ship their shining armor,
War-gear and weapons; the warriors launched
Their well-braced boat on her welcome voyage.

Swift o'er the waves with a wind that favored,
Foam on her breast, like a bird she flew;
A day and a night they drove to seaward,
Cut the waves with the curving prow,
Till the seamen that sailed her sighted the land,
Shining cliffs and coast-wise hills,
Headlands bold. The harbor opened,
Their cruise was ended. Then quickly the sailors,
The crew of Weder-folk,[17] clambered ashore,
Moored their craft with clank of chain-mail,
And goodly war-gear. God they thanked
That their way was smooth o'er the surging waves.
High on the shore, the Scylding coast-guard
Saw from the cliff where he kept his watch,
Glittering shields o'er the gang-plank carried,
Polished weapons: it puzzled him sore,
He wondered in mind who the men might be.
Down to the strand on his steed came riding
Hrothgar's thane, with threatening arm
Shook his war-spear and shouted this challenge:
"Who are ye, men, all mailed and harnessed,
That brought yon ship o'er the broad sea-ways,
And hither have come across the water,
To land on our shores. Long have I stood
As coast-guard here, and kept my sea-watch,
Lest harrying foe with hostile fleet
Should dare to damage our Danish[18] land.
Armed men never from overseas came
More openly hither. But how do ye know
That law of the land doth give ye leave
To come thus near. I never have seen
Statelier earl upon earth than him,—
Yon hero in harness. No house-carl he,
In lordly array, if looks speak true,
And noble bearing. But now I must learn
Your names and country, ere nearer ye come,
Underhand spies, for aught I know,
In Danish land. Now listen ye strangers,
In from the sea, to my open challenge:
Heed ye my words and haste me to know
What your errand and whence ye have come."

IV

Beowulf's Words with the Coast-Guard

Him the hero hailed with an answer,
The war-troop's leader, his word-hoard unlocked:
"In truth we belong to the tribe of the Jutes;
We are Hygelac's own hearth-companions.
Far among folk my father was known,
A noble chieftain, his name was Ecgtheow.
Honored by all, he ended his days
Full of winters and famed in the land.
Wise men everywhere well remember him.
Hither we fare with friendly purpose
To seek thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
The land-protector. Instruct us kindly.
Bound on adventure we visit thy lord,
The prince of the Danes. Our purpose is open;
Nought keep we secret; thou surely wilt know
If the tale we were told is true or not:
That among the Scyldings a monster strange,

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[15] Beowulf, the hero of the poem.

[16] "Geat" (in the original) refers to a tribe in Sweden, not to the Jutes of southern Denmark or to those who settled southern England.

[17] Another name for the Geats.

[18] The action of Parts I and II of the poem takes place in Denmark; of Part III in Sweden.

A nameless demon, when nights are dark,
With cruel cunning, for cause unknown,
Works havoc and slaughter. I have in mind
A way to help your wise king Hrothgar,
Your ruler to rid of the ravening foe,
If ever his tide of troubles shall turn,
The billows of care that boil in his breast
Shall cool and subside, and his sorrow be cured;
Else, failing my purpose, forever hereafter
He shall suffer distress, while stands on its hill,
Mounting on high, his matchless hall."
Straight answered the coast-guard, astride his horse,
The warrior brave: "Twixt words and deeds
A keen-witted thane, if he thinks aright,
Must well distinguish and weigh the difference.
Your words I believe, that you wish no evil
To the Scylding lord. I will let you bring
Your shields ashore and show you the way.
My comrades here shall keep the watch,
From meddling foe defend your craft,
Your fresh-tarred boat, fast by the beach,
And faithfully guard her till again she bear
With curving bow, o'er the bounding main,
Her master well-loved to the Wedermark.
Fortune oft favors the fighter who yields not;[19]
Hero unflinching comes unhurt from the fray."
Landward they hastened, leaving behind them
Fast at her moorings the full-bosomed boat,
The ship at anchor. Shone the boar-heads,
Gleaming with gold, o'er the guards of their helmets;
Bright and fire-forged the beast kept watch.
Forward they pressed, proud and adventurous,
Fit for the fight, till afar they descried
The high-peaked radiant roof of the hall.
Of houses far-praised, 'neath heaven by the people
That inhabit the earth, this house was most famous,
The seat of King Hrothgar; its splendor gleamed bright
O'er many a land. Their leader well-armed
Showed them the shining shield-burg of heroes,
And set them right on the road to their goal.
Then, wheeling his steed, he wished them farewell:
" 'Tis time that I leave you; the Lord of Heaven,
The Father Almighty in mercy keep you
Safe on your journey; seaward I turn
Watch to keep and ward against foe."

V

Beowulf's Arrival at the Hall and the Manner of his Reception

The street was stone-paved; straight it led
To the goal of their journey. Glistened their byrnies[20]
Stout and strong-linked; sang the rings
Of their iron mail as they marched along,
In armor and helmet right up to the hall.
Sea-voyage-sated, they set their shields,
Their linden-woods broad, along the wall.
As they bent to the bench, their byrnies clattered.
They stacked their spears that stood in a row,
Ashwood tipped with iron above;
Well-equipped was the warlike band.
A stately Dane the strangers addressed,
Asked who they were and whence they had come:
"Whence do ye bear your burnished shields,
Your visored helmets and harness gray
Your heap of spear-shafts? A servant of Hrothgar's,
His herald, am I. Hardier strangers,
Nobler in mien, have I never seen.
'Tis clear you come to the court of Hrothgar,
Not outlaws and beggars, but bent on adventure."
To him gave answer the hero brave,
The lord of the Weders these words returned,
Bold 'neath his helmet: "We are Hygelac's men,
His board-companions. I am Beowulf called.
Ready am I the ruler to answer,
To say to thy lord, the son of Healfdene,
Why we have come his court to seek,
If he will graciously grant us a hearing."
Wulfgar replied: (he was prince of the Wendles,
His noble renown was known to many,
His courage in war, and wisdom in counsel)
"I will carry thy quest to the king of the Danes,
And ask him whether he wishes to grant
The boon thou dost ask of the breaker-of-rings,
To speak to himself concerning thy journey;
And straight will I bring thee the answer he sends."
Swiftly he hied him where Hrothgar sat,
White-haired and old, his earls around him.
Stately he strode, till he stood in the presence
Of the king of the Danes,—in courtly ways
Was Wulfgar skilled; he spoke to his lord:
"Hither have fared from a far country,

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[19] A good example of the strong belief in fate linked to an equally strong practical wisdom. A later expression is "Trust God and keep your powder dry."

[20] coats of mail.

A band of Jutes o'er the bounding sea.
Their leader and chief by his chosen comrades
Is Beowulf called; this boon they ask:
That they may find with thee, my lord,
Favor of speech; refuse them not,
But grant them, Hrothgar, gracious hearing
In armor clad, they claim respect
Of choicest earls; but chiefly their lord
Who lately hither hath led his comrades."

VI

Hrothgar's Welcome to Beowulf

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' protector:
"Beowulf I knew in his boyhood days;
His aged father was Ecgtheow named.
To him, to take home, did Hrethel give
His only daughter. Their dauntless son
Now comes to my court in quest of a friend.
My sea-faring men whom I sent afar
To the land of the Jutes, with generous gifts,
In token of friendship, have told me this,
That the power of his grip was so great it equalled
The strength of thirty stout-armed thanes.
Him bold in battle, the blessed God
Hath sent in his mercy, to save our people
—So I hope in my heart—from the horror of Grendel.
I shall offer him gold for his gallant spirit.
Go now in haste, and greet the strangers;
Bid to the hall the whole of the company;
Welcome with words the warrior band,
To the home of the Danes." To the hall door went
Wulfgar the courtly, and called them in:
"My master commands me this message to give you,
The lord of the Danes your lineage knows;
Bids me to welcome you, brave-hearted warriors,
Bound on adventure o'er the billowy main.
Ye may rise now and enter, arrayed in your armor,
Covered with helmets, the king to greet.
But leave your shields, and your shafts of slaughter,
Here by the wall to await the issue."
Then rose the leader, around him his comrades,
Sturdy war-band; some waited without,
Bid by the bold one their battle-gear to guard.
Together they hastened where the herald led them,
Under Heorot's roof. The hero went first,
Strode under helmet, till he stood by the hearth.
Beowulf spoke, his byrnie glistened,
His corslet chain-linked by cunning of smithcraft:
"Hail, king Hrothgar! Hygelac's thane
And kinsman am I. Known is the record
Of deeds of renown I have done in my youth.
Far in my home, I heard of this Grendel;
Sea-farers tell the tale of the hall:
How bare of warriors, this best of buildings
Deserted stands, when the sun goes down
And twilight deepens to dark in the sky.
By comrades encouraged, I come on this journey.
The best of them bade me, the bravest and wisest,
To go to thy succor, O good king Hrothgar;
For well they approved my prowess in battle,
They saw me themselves come safe from the conflict
When five of my foes I defeated and bound,
Beating in battle the brood of the monsters.
At night on the sea with nicors I wrestled,
Avenging the Weders, survived the sea-peril,
And crushed in my grip the grim sea-monsters[21]
That harried my neighbors. Now I am come
To cope with Grendel in combat single,
And match my might against the monster, alone.
I pray thee therefore, prince of the Scyldings,
Not to refuse the favor I ask,
Having come so far, O friend of the Shield-Danes,
That I alone with my loyal comrades,
My hardy companions, may Heorot purge.
Moreover they say that the slaughterous fiend
In wanton mood all weapons despises.
Hence,—as I hope that Hygelac may,
My lord and king, be kind to me,—
Sword and buckler I scorn to bear,
Gold-adorned shield, as I go to the conflict.
With my grip will I grapple the gruesome fiend,
Foe against foe, to fight for our life.
And he that shall fall his faith must put
In the judgment of God. If Grendel wins,
He is minded to make his meal in the hall
Untroubled by fear, on the folk of the Jutes,
As often before he fed on the Danes.
No need for thee then to think of my burial.
If I lose my life, the lonely prowler
My blood-stained body will bear to his den,
Swallow me greedily, and splash with my gore
His lair in the marsh; no longer wilt then
Have need to find me food and sustenance.
To Hygelac send, if I sink in the battle,
This best of corslets that covers my breast,
Heirloom of Hrethel,[22] rarest of byrnies,
The work of Weland.[23] So Wyrd will be done."

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[21] Cf. Part IX.

[22] His grandfather, once king of the Geats.

[23] The smith of Norse and English myth. Cf. *Deor's Lament.*

VII

The Feasting in Heorot and the Customs of the Hall

Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings' defender:
"Thou hast come, dear Beowulf, to bring us help,
For the sake of friendship to fight our battles.

Hrothgar recounts the exploits of Beowulf's father (15 lines).

Sad is my spirit and sore it grieves me
To tell to any the trouble and shame
That Grendel hath brought me with bitter hate,
The havoc he wrought in my ranks in the hall.
My war-band dwindles, driven by Wyrd
Into Grendel's grasp; but God may easily
End this monster's mad career.
Full often they boasted, my beer-bold warriors,
Brave o'er their ale-cups, the best of my fighters,
They'd meet in the mead-hall the mighty Grendel,
End his orgies with edge of the sword.
But always the mead-hall, the morning after,
The splendid building, was blood-bespattered;
Daylight dawned on the drippings of swords;
Soiled with slaughter were sills and benches,
My liege-men perished, and left me poor.
Sit down to the board; unbend thy thoughts;
Speak to my men as thy mood shall prompt."
For the band of the Jutes a bench was cleared;
Room in the mead-hall was made for them all.
Then strode to their seats the strong-hearted heroes.
The warriors' wants a waiting-thane served;
Held in his hand the highly-wrought ale-cup,
Poured sparkling mead, while the minstrel sang
Gaily in Heorot. There was gladness of heroes,
A joyous company of Jutes and of Danes.

VIII

Unferth Taunts Beowulf

Then up spoke Unferth, Ecglaf's son,
Who sat at the feet of the Scylding ruler;
He vented his jealousy. The journey of Beowulf,
His sea-adventure, sorely displeased him.
It filled him with envy that any other
Should win among men more war-like glory,
More fame under heaven than he himself:
"Art thou the Beowulf that battled with Brecca,
Far out at sea, when ye swam together,
What time you two made trial of the billows,
Risking your lives in reckless folly,
On the open sea? None might dissuade you,
Friend nor foe, from the fool-hardy venture,
When straight from the shore you struck for the open,
Breasted the waves and beat with your arms
The mounting billows, measured the sea-paths
With lusty strokes. Stirred was the ocean
By wintry storms. Seven days and nights
Your sea-strife lasted; at length he beat you,
His strength was the better; at break of day
He made the beach where the Battle-Reamas
Dwell by the shore; and straightway returned
To his people beloved in the land of the Brondings,
Where liegemen and towns and treasure were his.
In sooth I say, the son of Beanstan
His boast against thee made good to the full.
But now I ween a worse fate awaits thee,
Though thy mettle be proved in many a battle
And grim encounter, if the coming of Grendel
Thou darest abide, in the dead of the night."
Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"What a deal of stuff thou hast talked about Brecca,
Garrulous with drink, my good friend Unferth.
Thou hast lauded his deeds. Now listen to me!
More sea-strength had I, more ocean-endurance,
Than any man else, the wide earth round.
'Tis true we planned in the pride of our youth
This ocean-adventure, and vowed we would risk
Our lives in the deep, each daring the other.
We were both of us boys, but our boast we fulfilled.
Our naked swords as we swam from the land,
We held in our grasp, to guard against whales.
Not a stroke could he gain on me, strive as he would,
Make swifter speed through the swelling waves,
Nor could I in swimming o'ercome him at sea.
Side by side in the surge we labored
Five nights long. At last we were parted
By furious seas and a freezing gale.
Night fell black; the norther wild
Rushed on us ruthless and roughened the sea.
Now was aroused the wrath of the monsters,
But my war-proof ring-mail woven and hand-locked,
Served me well 'gainst the sea-beasts' fury;
The close-linked battle-net covered my breast.
I was dragged to the bottom by a blood-thirsty monster,
Firm in his clutch the furious sea-beast
Helpless held me. But my hand came free,
And my foe I pierced with point of my sword.
With my battle-blade good 'twas given me to kill
The dragon of the deep, by dint of my blow."

IX

Beowulf Completes the Story of his Swimming Adventure with Brecca. Hrothgar's Departure from the Hall

"Thus sore beset me sea-beasts thronging,
Murderous man-eaters. I met their charges,
Gave them their due with my goodly blade.
They failed of their fill, the feast they expected
In circle sitting on the sea-floor together
With me for their meal. I marred their pleasure.
When morning came, they were cast ashore
By the wash of the waves; their wounds proved fatal,
Bloated and dead on the beach they lay.
No more would they cross the course of the ships,
In the chop of the channel charge the sailors.
Day broke in the east, bright beacon of God;
The sea fell smooth. I saw bold headlands,
Windy walls; for Wyrd oft saveth
A man not doomed, if he dauntless prove.
My luck did not fail me, my long sword finished
Nine of the nicors. Ne'er have I heard
Of fiercer battle fought in the night,
Of hero more harried by horrors at sea.
Yet I saved my life from the sea-beasts' clutch.
Worn with the struggle, I was washed ashore
In the realm of the Finns by the run of the tide,
The heave of the flood. I have failed to hear
Of like adventure laid to thee,
Battle so bitter. Brecca did never,—
Neither of you was known to achieve
Deed so valiant, adventure so daring,
Sword-play so nimble; not that I boast of it,
But mark me Unferth, you murdered your brothers,
Your closest of kin. The curse of hell
For this you will suffer, though sharp be your wit.
In sooth I say to you, son of Ecglaf,
Never had Grendel such grim deeds wrought,
Such havoc in Heorot, so harried your king
With bestial fury, if your boasted courage
In deeds as well as in words you had proved.
But now he has found he need not fear
Vengeance fierce from the Victory-Scyldings,
Ruthless attack in return for his raids.
He takes his toll of your tribe as he pleases,
Sparing none of your spearmen proud.
He ravens and rages and recks not the Dane folk,
Safe from their sword-play. But soon I will teach him
How the Jute-folk fight. Then freely may go
To the mead-hall who likes, when the light of morning,
The next day's dawn, the dark shall dispel,
And the heaven-bright sun from the south shall shine."

Glad in his heart was the giver of rings,
Hoped to have help, the hoar-headed king;
The Shield-Danes' shepherd was sure of relief,
When he found in Beowulf so firm a resolve.
There was laughter of heroes. Loud was their revelry,
Words were winsome, as Wealhtheow rose,
Queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
Gold-adorned greeted the guests in the hall.
First to her lord, the land-defender,
The high-born lady handed the cup;
Bade him be gleeful and gay at the board,
And good to his people. Gladly he took it,
Quaffed from the beaker, the battle-famed king.
Then leaving her lord, the lady of the Helmings
Passed among her people in each part of the hall,
Offered the ale-cup to old and young,
Till she came to the bench where Beowulf sat.
The jewel-laden queen in courteous manner
Beowulf greeted; to God gave thanks,
Wise in her words, that her wish was granted,
That at last in her trouble a trusted hero
Had come for comfort. The cup received
From Wealhtheow's hand the hardy warrior,
And made this reply, his mind on the battle;
Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"I made up my mind when my mates and I
Embarked in our boat, outbound on the sea,
That fully I'd work the will of thy people,
Or fall in the fight, in the clutch of the fiend.
I surely shall do a deed of glory,
Worthy an earl, or end my days,
My morning of life, in the mead-hall here."
His words pleased well the wife of Hrothgar,
The Jutish lord's boast. The jewelled queen
Went to sit by the side of her lord.

Renewed was the sound of noisy revel,
Wassail of warriors. Brave words were spoken.
Mirth in the mead-hall mounted high,
Till Healfdene's son the sign did give
That he wished to retire. Full well he knew
The fiend would find a fight awaiting him,
When the light of the sun had left the hall,
And creeping night should close upon them,
And shadowy shapes come striding on

Dim through the dark. The Danes arose.
Hrothgar again gave greeting to Beowulf,
Wished him farewell; the wine-hall lofty
He left in his charge. These last words spoke he:
"Never before have I full entrusted
To mortal man this mighty hall,
Since arm and shield I was able to lift.
To thee alone I leave it now,
To have and to hold it. Thy hardihood prove!
Be mindful of glory; keep watch for the foe!
No reward shalt thou lack if thou live through this fight."

X

Beowulf's Watch in Heorot

Then Hrothgar went with his warrior-band,
The Arm-of-the-Scyldings, out of the hall.
Would the war-lord Wealhtheow seek,
The queen for his bed-mate. The best of kings
Had placed in the hall, so heroes report,
A watch against Grendel, to guard his house,
Deliverance bring to the land of the Danes.
But the lord of the Jutes, joyfully trusted
In the might of his arm and the mercy of God.
Off he stripped his iron byrnie,
Helmet from head, and handed his sword,
Choicest of blades, to his body-thane,
And bade him keep the battle armor.
Then made his boast once more the warrior,
Beowulf the bold, ere his bed he sought,
Summoned his spirit; "Not second to Grendel
In combat I count me and courage of war.
But not with the sword will I slay this foeman,
Though light were the task to take his life.
Nothing at all does he know of such fighting,
Of hewing of shields, though shrewd be his malice
Ill deeds to contrive. We two in the night
Shall do without swords, if he dare to meet me
In hand to hand battle. May the holy Lord
To one or the other award the victory,
As it seems to Him right, Ruler all-wise."
Then he sought his bed. The bolster received
The head of the hero. In the hall about him,
Stretched in sleep, his sailormen lay.
Not one of them thought he would ever return
Home to his country, nor hoped to see
His people again, and the place of his birth.
They had heard of too many men of the Danes
O'ertaken suddenly, slain without warning,
In the royal hall. But the Ruler on High
Through the woof of fate to the Wederfolk gave
Friendship and help, their foes to o'ercome,
By a single man's strength to slay the destroyer.
Thus all may learn that the Lord Almighty
Wields for aye the Wyrds of men.

. . . .

XI

Beowulf's Fight with Grendel

Now Grendel came, from his crags of mist
Across the moor; he was curst of God.
The murderous prowler meant to surprise
In the high-built hall his human prey.
He stalked neath the clouds, till steep before him
The house of revelry rose in his path,
The gold-hall of heroes, the gaily adorned.
Hrothgar's home he had hunted full often,
But never before had he found to receive him
So hardy a hero, such hall-guards there.
Close to the building crept the slayer,
Doomed to misery. The door gave way,
Though fastened with bolts, when his fist fell on it.
Maddened he broke through the breach he had made;
Swoln with anger and eager to slay,
The ravening fiend o'er the bright-paved floor
Furious ran, while flashed from his eyes
An ugly glare like embers aglow.
He saw in the hall, all huddled together,
The heroes asleep. Then laughed in his heart
The hideous fiend; he hoped ere dawn
To sunder body from soul of each;
He looked to appease his lust of blood,
Glut his maw with the men he would slay.
But Wyrd had otherwise willed his doom;
Never again should he get a victim
After that night. Narrowly watched
Hygelac's thane how the horrible slayer
Forward should charge in fierce attack.
Nor was the monster minded to wait:
Sudden he sprang on a sleeping thane,
Ere he could stir, he slit him open;
Bit through the bone-joints, gulped the blood,
Greedily bolted the body piecemeal.
Soon he had swallowed the slain man wholly,
Hands and feet. Then forward he hastened,
Sprang at the hero, and seized him at rest;
Fiercely clutched him with fiendish claw.
But quickly Beowulf caught his forearm,
And threw himself on it with all his weight.

Straight discovered that crafty plotter,
That never in all midearth had he met
In any man a mightier grip.
Gone was his courage, and craven fear
Sat in his heart, yet helped him no sooner.
Fain would he hide in his hole in the fenland,
His devil's den. A different welcome
From former days he found that night!
Now Hygelac's thane, the hardy, remembered
His evening's boast, and bounding up,
Grendel he clenched, and cracked his fingers;
The monster tried flight, but the man pursued;
The ravager hoped to wrench himself free,
And gain the fen, for he felt his fingers
Helpless and limp in the hold of his foe.
'Twas a sorry visit the man-devourer
Made to the Hall of the Hart that night.
Dread was the din, the Danes were frighted
By the uproar wild of the ale-spilling fray.
The hardiest blenched as the hall-foes wrestled
In terrible rage. The rafters groaned;
'Twas wonder great that the wine-hall stood,
Firm 'gainst the fighters' furious onslaught,
Nor fell to the ground, that glorious building.
With bands of iron 'twas braced and stiffened
Within and without. But off from the sill
Many a mead-bench mounted with gold
Was wrung where they wrestled in wrath together.
The Scylding nobles never imagined
That open attack, or treacherous cunning,
Could wreck or ruin their royal hall,
The lofty and antlered, unless the flames
Should some day swallow it up in smoke.
The din was renewed, the noise redoubled;
Each man of the Danes was mute with dread,
That heard from the wall the horrible wail,
The gruesome song of the godless foe,
His howl of defeat, as the fiend of hell
Bemoaned his hurt. The man held fast;
Greatest he was in grip of strength,
Of all that dwelt upon earth that day.

XII

The Defeat of Grendel

Loath in his heart was the hero-deliverer
To let escape his slaughterous guest.
Of little use that life he deemed
To human kind. The comrades of Beowulf
Unsheathed their weapons to ward their leader,
Eagerly brandished their ancient blades,
The life of their peerless lord to defend.
Little they deemed, those dauntless warriors,
As they leaped to the fray, those lusty fighters,
Laying on boldly to left and to right,
Eager to slay, that no sword upon earth,
No keenest weapon, could wound that monster:
Point would not pierce, he was proof against iron;
'Gainst victory-blades the devourer was charmed.
But a woful end awaited the wretch.
That very day he was doomed to depart,
And fare afar to the fiends' domain.

Now Grendel found, who in former days
So many a warrior had wantonly slain,
In brutish lust, abandoned of God,
That the frame of his body was breaking at last.
Keen of courage, the kinsman of Hygelac
Held him grimly gripped in his hands.
Loath was each to the other alive.
The grisly monster got his death-wound:
A huge split opened under his shoulder;
Crunched the socket, cracked the sinews,
Glory great was given to Beowulf.
But Grendel escaped with his gaping wound,
O'er the dreary moor his dark den sought,
Crawled to his lair. 'Twas clear to him then,
The count of his hours to end had come,
Done were his days. The Danes were glad,
The hard fight was over, they had their desire.
Cleared was the hall, 'twas cleansed by the hero
With keen heart and courage, who came from afar.
The lord of the Jutes rejoiced in his work,
The deed of renown he had done that night.
His boast to the Danes he bravely fulfilled;
From lingering woe delivered them all;
From heavy sorrow they suffered in heart;
From dire distress they endured so long;
From toil and from trouble. This token they saw:
The hero had laid the hand of Grendel
Both arm and claws, the whole forequarter
With clutches huge, 'neath the high-peaked roof.

XIII

The Celebration of the Victory and the Song of the Gleeman

When morning arrived, so runs the report,
Around the gift-hall gathered the warriors;
The folk-leaders fared from far and near,
The wide ways o'er, the wonder to view,
The wild beast's foot-prints. Not one of them felt
Regret that the creature had come to grief.

When they traced his retreat by the tracks on the moor;
Marked where he wearily made his way,
Harried and beaten, to the haunt of the nicors,[24]
Slunk to the water, to save his life. 821
There they beheld the heaving surges,
Billows abrim with bloody froth,
Dyed with gore, where the gruesome fiend,
Stricken and doomed, in the struggle of death 825
Gave up his ghost in the gloom of the mere,
His heathen soul for hell to receive it.
Then from the mere the thanes turned back,
Men and youths from the merry hunt,
Home they rode on their horses gray, 830
Proudly sitting their prancing steeds.
Beowulf's prowess was praised by all.
They all agreed that go where you will,
'Twixt sea and sea, at the south or the north,
None better than he, no braver hero, 835
None worthier honor could ever be found,
(They meant no slight to their master and lord,
The good king Hrothgar their ruler kind.)

Now and again the noble chiefs
Gave rein to their steeds, and spurred them to race, 840
Galloped their grays where the ground was smooth.
Now and again a gallant thane,
Whose mind was stored with many a lay,
With songs of battle and sagas old,
Bound new words in well-knit bars, 845
Told in verse the valor of Beowulf,
Matched his lines and moulded his lay.

Here is introduced an episode of the Nibelungen Legend. The gleeman tells how Sigmund the Volsung, with his son and nephew Fitela, ranged the forests and slew wild beasts. Later, when Fitela was no longer with him, Sigmund killed a dragon and won a great treasure.

When the lay was ended, they urged once more
Their racers fleet to fly o'er the plain.
As the morning sped, and the sun climbed higher,
Many went in, the marvellous sight 851
More closely to scan. The king himself,
With a troop of trusty retainers about him,
Strode from his bower; the bestower-of-rings
Came, and with him the queen, in state, 855
The meadow-path trod, by her maidens attended.

XIV

Hrothgar's Praise of Beowulf, and Beowulf's Reply

Hrothgar spoke when he reached the hall,
Stood on the step, and stared at the roof
Adorned with gold, and Grendel's hand:
"Prompt be my heart to praise the Almighty 860
For the sight I behold. Much harm have I suffered,
And grief from Grendel, but God still works
Wonder on wonder, the Warden of Glory.
But a little while since, I scarcely dared,
As long as I lived to look for escape 865
From my burden of sorrow, when blood-stained stood,
And dripping with slaughter, this stately hall.
Wide-spread woe my warriors scattered;
They never hoped this house to rid,
While life should last, this land-mark of people, 870
Of demons and devils. 'Tis done by the hero.
By the might of the Lord this man has finished
The feat that all of us failed to achieve
By wit or by war. And well may she say,
—Whoever she be,—that bore this son, 875
That the Ancient of Days dealt with her graciously,
And blest her in child-birth. Now Beowulf, hear!
I shall henceforth hold thee, hero beloved,
As child of my own, and cherish thee fondly
In kinship new. Thou shalt never lack 880
Meed of reward that is mine to give.
For deeds less mighty have I many times granted
Fullest reward to warriors feebler,
In battle less brave. Thy boldness and valor
Afar shall be known; thy fame shall live 885
To be great among men. Now God the Almighty
With honor reward thee, as ever he doth."

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow
"Gladly we fought this good fight through,
Fearlessly faced the foe inhuman, 890
Grappled him gruesome; it grieves me sore
That the man-beast himself you may not see,
Dead in the hall, fordone in the fray.
I meant to master the monster quickly,
To his death-bed pin him by power of my grip, 895
Hold him hard till my hand could strangle him,
Bringing him low, but he broke away.
In vain I tried to prevent his escape.
The Lord was unwilling; I lost my hold
On the man-destroyer; too strong was the monster,
Too swift on his feet. But to save his life 901
He left behind him the whole of his fore-paw,

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[24] sea-beasts.

Arm and shoulder. 'Twas a useless shift,
Profiting nothing. He ne'er will prolong
His life by the loss, the loathly slayer,
Sunk in sin; but sorrow holds him,
Caught in the grasp of its grip relentless,
In woful bonds to await in anguish,
Guilty wretch, the rest of his doom,
As the Lord Almighty shall mete it to him."

More silent seemed the son of Ecglaf,[25]
Less boastful in bragging of brave deeds done,
When all of them, looking aloft, beheld
The hand on high, where it hung 'neath the roof,
The claw of the fiend; each finger was armed
With a steel-like spur instead of a nail,
The heathen's handspikes, the horrible paw
Of the evil fiend. They all declared
No iron blade could e'er have bit
On the monstrous bulk of the man-beast's hide,
Or hewn away that woful talon.

XV

The Feasting and Giving of Treasure in the Hall

Now orders were given the guest-hall to cleanse,
And furnish it fresh. Forth went hurrying
Men and maids. To the mead-hall they went
And busily worked. Woven tapestries,
Glinting with gold, hung gay on the walls,
Marvellous wonders for men to look upon.
Ruin and wreck had been wrought in the building,
Though braced within by iron bands,
The hinges were wrenched, the roof alone stood
Undamaged and sound, when the sin-spotted wretch,
The demon destroyer, in despair of his life,
Turned and made off,—not easy it is
To escape from death, essay it who will.
(So each of us all to his end must come,
Forced by fate to his final abode
Where his body, stretched on the bier of death,
Shall rest after revel.) Now right was the hour
For Healfdene's heir to enter the hall;
The king himself would come to the feast.
I never have heard of nobler bearing
'Mongst ranks of liegemen surrounding their lord
As they took their seats, the trusty comrades,
And fell to feasting. Freely quaffed
Many a mead-cup the mighty kinsmen,
Hrothgar and Hrothulf, the high hall within.
Heorot was filled with a friendly host.
(Far was the day when the Scylding host
Should treachery plot, betraying each other.)
Then Healfdene's son bestowed on Beowulf
A gold-adorned banner for battle-reward,
A rich-broidered standard, breast-plate and helmet.
The swordmen assembled saw the treasures
Borne before the hero. Beowulf drank
The health of Hrothgar, nor had reason to feel
Ashamed before shieldmen to show his reward.
Never were offered by earls that I heard of,
In token of friendship four such treasures,
Never was equalled such ale-bench bounty.
Round the ridge of the helmet a rim of iron,
Wound with wire, warded the head,
That the offspring of files, with fearful stroke,
The hard-tempered sword-blade, might harm it not,
When fierce in the battle the foemen should join.
At a sign from the king, eight stallions proud,
Bitted and bridled, were brought into hall.[26]
On the back of one was a wondrous saddle,
Bravely wrought and bordered with jewels,
The battle-seat bold of the best of kings,
When Hrothgar himself would ride to the sword-play.
(Nor flinched from the foe the famous warrior
In the front of the fight where fell the slain.)
To the hero delivered the lord of the Scyldings,
The heir of Ing, both armor and horses,
Gave them to Beowulf, and bade him enjoy them.
Thus royally, the ruler famous,
The heroes' hoard-guard, heaped his bounty;
Repaid the struggle with steeds and trophies,
Praised by all singers who speak the truth.

XVI

The King's Gifts to Beowulf's Men, and the Gleeman's Lay of Finn

The Lord of the earls then added gifts,
At the mead-bench remembered the men, each one,
That Beowulf brought o'er the briny deep,
With ancient heirlooms and offered to pay
In gold for the man that Grendel had slain,
As more of them surely the monster had killed
Had not holy God and the hero's courage
Averted their doom. (So daily o'errules
The Father Almighty the fortunes of men.
Therefore is insight ever the best,
And prudence of mind; for much shall suffer

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[25] Unferth.

[26] Riding a horse directly into a hall was common. Cf. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, p. 71.

Of lief and of loath who long endures
The days of his life in labor and toil.)
Now music and song were mingled together,
In the presence of Hrothgar, ruler in war.
Harp was struck and hero-lays told.
Along the mead-bench the minstrel spread
Cheer in hall, when he chanted the lay
Of the sudden assault on the sons of Finn.

The episode which follows alludes obscurely to details of a feud between Frisians and Danes. The Finnsburg fragment contains a portion of the same story; and one of the heroes, Hnæf, is also mentioned in Widsith.

XVII

The Lay of Finn Ended. The Speech of the Queen

The lay was ended,
The gleeman's song. Sound of revelry
Rose again. Gladness brightened
Along bench and board. Beer-thanes poured
From flagons old the flowing wine.
Wealhtheow the queen walked in state,
Under her crown, where uncle and nephew
Together sat,—they still were friends.
There too sat Unferth, trusted counsellor,
At Hrothgar's feet; though faith he had broken
With his kinsmen in battle, his courage was proved.
Then the queen of the Scyldings spoke these words:
"Quaff of this cup my king and my lord,
Gold-friend of men. To thy guests be kind,
To the men of the Jutes be generous with gifts.
Far and near thou now hast peace.
I have heard thou dost wish the hero for son,
To hold as thy own, now Heorot is cleansed,
The jewel-bright hall. Enjoy while thou mayest,
Allotment of wealth, and leave to thy heirs
Kingdom and rule when arrives the hour
That hence thou shalt pass to thy place appointed.
Well I know that my nephew Hrothulf
Will cherish in honor our children dear,
If thou leavest before him this life upon earth;
He will surely requite the kindness we showed him,
Faithfully tend our two young sons,
When to mind he recalls our care and affection,
How we helped him and housed him when *he* was a child."
She turned to the bench where her two boys sat,
Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the rest of the youth,
A riotous band, and right in their midst,
Between the two brothers, Beowulf sat.

XVIII

The Queen's Gifts to Beowulf

With courteous bow the cup she offered,
Greeted him graciously and gave him to boot
Two armlets rare of twisted gold,
A robe and rings, and the rarest collar;
A better was never known among men,
Since Hama brought to his bright-built hall
The jewelled necklace, the gem of the Brisings.[27]

The narrative is interrupted for fourteen lines to tell of the subsequent history of Wealhtheow's gift; how Beowulf gave it to Hygelac, who wore it on his famous raid against the Frisians, in which he was slain by the Franks.

Before the warriors Wealhtheow spoke:
"Accept, dear Beowulf, this bright-gemmed collar;
Make happy use of this heirloom jewelled,
This ring and robe and royal treasure;
Be brave and bold. My boys instruct
In gentle manners; mine be the praise.
Thou hast done such a deed that in days to come
Men will proclaim thy might and valor
To the ends of the earth, where the ocean-wave
Washes the windy walls of the land.
I wish thee joy of thy jewelled treasure,
Long be thy life; enlarge thy prosperity,
Show thee a friend to my sons in deed.
Here each earl to the other is faithful,
True to his liege-lord, loyal and kind.
My warriors obey me, willing and prompt.
The Danes carousing, do as I bid."
She went to her seat, the wine flowed free;
'Twas a glorious feast. The fate that impended,
None of them knew, though near to them all.

When darkness came, the king of the Danes
Went to his rest in the royal bower;
But a throng of his kinsmen kept the hall
As they used to do in the days of old.
They cleared the boards and covered the floor
With beds and bolsters. One beer-thane there
Lay down to sleep with his doom upon him.
They placed by their heads their polished shields,
Their battle-boards bright, on the bench nearby.
Above each earl, within easy reach,
Was his helmet high and his harness of mail
And the spear-shaft keen. 'Twas their custom so,
That always at rest they were ready for war

[27] According to Norse mythology the Brising jewel belonged to the goddess Freya. In later times it was stolen from the king of the Ostrogoths by Hama. Beowulf's jewels are compared to this famous necklace.

At home or abroad, where'er they might be,
At what hour soever for aid might call
Their lord and king; they were comrades true.

END OF THE FIRST ADVENTURE

XIX

The Coming of Grendel's Dam to Avenge her Son

Then sank they to sleep, but sorely paid
One poor wretch for his sleep that night.
The same thing fell, as in former days
When Grendel his raids on the gold-hall made,
Before the fiend had found his match,
Caught in his sins. 'Twas seen that night
An avenger survived the villainous fiend,
Although they had ceased from their sorrow and care.
'Twas Grendel's mother, a monstrous hag.
She remembered her loss. She had lived in the deep,
In a water-hell cold, since Cain had become
The evil slayer of his only brother,
His kin by blood; accursed he fled,
Marked by murder, from men's delights,
Haunted the wilds; from him there sprung
Ghastly demon-shapes, Grendel was one.

The omitted lines break the narrative to turn back to the Grendel fight.

Now grim and vengeful
His mother set out on her errand of woe,
Damage to wreak for the death of her son.
Arrived at Heorot, the Ring-Danes she found
Asleep in the hall. Soon was to come
Surprise to the earls, when into the hall
Burst Grendel's dam. (Less grim was the terror,
As terror of woman in war is less,
—The fury of maidens, than full-armed men's,
When the blood-stained war-blade with wire-bound hilt,
Hard and hammer-forged, hurtling through air
Hews the boar from the helmet's crest.)
Many the swords that were suddenly drawn,
Blades from the benches; buckler and shield
Were tightly grasped; no time for the helmet,
For harness of mail, when the horror was on them.
The monster was minded to make for the open;
Soon as discovered, she sought to escape.
Quickly she seized a sleeping warrior,
Fast in her clutch to the fens she dragged him.
He was to Hrothgar of heroes the dearest,
Most trusted of liegemen between the two seas,
Comrade the nearest, killed in his sleep,
The bravest in battle. Nor was Beowulf there,
They had elsewhere quartered the earl that night,
After the giving of gifts in the hall.
There was shouting in Heorot; the hand she seized,
The bloody talon, she took away.
Sorrow was renewed in the nearby dwellings,
Bad was the bargain that both had made
To pay for their friends with further lives lost.
With grief overcome was the gray-haired king,
When he learned that his thane was alive no more,
His dearest comrade by death o'ertaken;
Quick from his bower was Beowulf fetched,
The hero brave. At break of dawn,
He with his comrades came to the place
Where the king in sorrow was waiting to see
Whether God the Wielder of All would grant him
A turn in his tide of trouble and woe.
Then entered the room the ready hero;
With his band of brave men the boards resounded.
He eagerly greeted the aged ruler,
Delayed not to ask the lord of the Ingwines
If his night had passed in peace and quiet.

XX

Hrothgar Describes the Haunt of the Monster and Asks Beowulf to Undertake a Second Adventure

Hrothgar spoke, the Scylding defender:
"Speak not of peace for pain is renewed
'Mongst all the Danes. Dead is Æschere,
Elder brother of Irmenlaf,
My comrade true and counsellor trusted,
My right-hand friend when in front of the combat
We stood shoulder to shoulder, when shieldburg broke,
And boar-crests crashed in battle together.
Earls should ever like Æschere be.
On Heorot's floor he was foully slain
By warlock wild. I wot not whither
The prey-proud fury hath fled to cover,
Glutted and gorged. With gruesome claws
And violence fierce she avenged thy deed,
The slaying of Grendel her son last night,
Because too long my loyal thanes
He had hunted and hurt. In the hall he fell,
His life was forfeit. To the fray returned
Another as cruel, her kin to avenge;
Faring from far, the feud re-opened.
Hence many a thane shall mourn and think
Of the giver of gifts with grief renewed,
And heart-woe heavy. The hand lies low

That fain would have helped and defended you all.
I have heard my people, the peasant folk
Who house by the border and hold the fens,
Say they have seen two creatures strange,
Huge march-stalkers, haunting the moorland,
Wanderers outcast. One of the two
Seemed to their sight to resemble a woman;
The other manlike, a monster misshapen,
But huger in bulk than human kind,
Trod an exile's track of woe.
The folk of the fen in former days
Named him Grendel. Unknown his father,
Or what his descent from demons obscure.
Lonely and waste is the land they inhabit,
Wolf-cliffs wild and windy headlands,
Ledges of mist, where mountain torrents
Downward plunge to dark abysses,
And flow unseen. Not far from here
O'er the moorland in miles, a mere expands:
Spray-frosted trees o'erspread it, and hang
O'er the water with roots fast wedged in the rocks.
There nightly is seen, beneath the flood,
A marvelous light. There lives not the man
Has fathomed the depth of the dismal mere.
Though the heather-stepper, the strong-horned stag,
Seek this cover, forspent with the chase,
Tracked by the hounds, he will turn at bay,
To die on the brink ere he brave the plunge,
Hide his head in the haunted pool.
Wan from its depths the waves are dashed,
When wicked storms are stirred by the wind,
And from sullen skies descends the rain.
In thee is our hope of help once more.
Not yet thou hast learned where leads the way
To the lurking-hole of this hatcher of outrage.
Seek, if thou dare, the dreaded spot!
Richly I pay thee for risking this fight,
With heirlooms golden and ancient rings,
As I paid thee before, if thou come back alive."

XXI

The Arrival of Hrothgar and Beowulf at Grendel's Mere

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Sorrow not, gray-beard, nor grieve o'er thy friend!
Vengeance is better than bootless mourning.
To each of us here the end must come
Of life upon earth: let him who may
Win glory ere death. I deem that best,
The lot of the brave, when life is over.
Rise, O realm-ward, ride we in haste,
To track the hag that whelped this Grendel.
I tell thee in truth, she may turn where she will,
No cave of ocean nor cover of wood,
No hole in the ground shall hide her from me.
But one day more thy woe endure,
And nurse thy hope as I know thou wilt."
Sprang to his feet the sage old king,
Gave praise to God for the promise spoken.
And now for Hrothgar a horse was bridled,
A curly-maned steed. The king rode on,
Bold on his charger. A band of shield-men
Followed on foot. Afar they saw
Footprints leading along the forest.
They followed the tracks, and found she had crossed
Over the dark moor, dragging the body
Of the goodliest thane that guarded with Hrothgar
Heorot Hall, and the home of the king.
The well-born hero held the trail;
Up rugged paths, o'er perilous ridges,
Through passes narrow, an unknown way,
By beetling crags, and caves of the nicors.
With a chosen few he forged ahead,
Warriors skilled, to scan the way.
Sudden they came on a cluster of trees
Overhanging a hoary rock,
A gloomy grove; and gurgling below,
A stir of waters all stained with blood.
Sick at heart were the Scylding chiefs,
Many a thane was thrilled with woe,
For there they beheld the head of Æschere
Far beneath at the foot of the cliff.
They leaned and watched the waters boil
With bloody froth. The band sat down,
While the war-horn sang its summons to battle.
They saw in the water sea-snakes a many,
Wave-monsters weird, that wallowed about.
At the base of the cliff lay basking the nicors,
Who oft at sunrise ply seaward their journey,
To hunt on the ship-trails and scour the main,
Sea-beasts and serpents. Sudden they fled,
Wrathful and grim, aroused by the hail
Of the battle-horn shrill. The chief of the Jutes,
With a bolt from his bow a beast did sunder
From life and sea-frolic; sent the keen shaft
Straight to his vitals. Slow he floated,
Upturned and dead at the top of the waves.
Eager they boarded their ocean-quarry;
With barb-hooked boar-spears the beast they gaffed,
Savagely broached him and brought him to shore,
Wave-plunger weird. The warriors viewed

The grisly stranger. But straightway Beowulf
Donned his corslet nor cared for his life. . . .

The narrative is here broken with a description of Beowulf's armor and the sword Hrunting, lent him by Unferth.

XXII

Beowulf's Fight with Grendel's Dam

To Hrothgar spoke the son of Ecgtheow:
"Remember, O honored heir of Healfdene,
Now that I go, thou noble king,
Warriors' gold-friend, what we agreed on,
If I my life should lose in thy cause,
That thou wouldst stand in stead of my father,
Fulfil his office when I was gone.
Be guardian, thou, to my thanes and kinsmen,
My faithful friends, if I fail to return.
To Hygelac send, Hrothgar beloved,
The goodly gifts thou gavest to me.
May the lord of the Jutes, when he looks on this treasure,
May Hrethel's son, when he sees these gifts,
Know that I found a noble giver,
And joyed, while I lived, in a generous lord.
This ancient heirloom to Unferth give,
To the far-famed warrior, my wondrous sword
Of matchless metal, I must with Hrunting
Glory gain, or go to my death."

After these words the Weder-Jute lord
Sprang to his task, nor staid for an answer.
Swiftly he sank 'neath the swirling flood;
'Twas an hour's time ere he touched the bottom.
Soon the sea-hag, savage and wild,
Who had roamed through her watery realms at will,
For winters a hundred, was 'ware from below,
An earthling had entered her ocean domain.
Quickly she reached and caught the hero;
Grappled him grimly with gruesome claws.
Yet he got no scratch, his skin was whole;
His battle-sark shielded his body from harm.
In vain she tried, with her crooked fingers,
To tear the links of his close-locked mail.
Away to her den the wolf-slut dragged
Beowulf the bold, o'er the bottom ooze.
Though eager to smite her, his arm was helpless.
Swimming monsters swarmed about him,
Dented his mail with dreadful tusks.
Sudden the warrior was 'ware they had come
To a sea-hall strange and seeming hostile,
Where water was not nor waves oppressed,
For the caverned rock all round kept back
The swallowing sea. He saw a light,
A flicker of flame that flashed and shone.
Now first he discerned the sea-hag monstrous,
The water-wife wolfish. His weapon he raised,
And struck with his sword a swinging blow.
Sang on her head the hard-forged blade
Its war-song wild. But the warrior found
That his battle-flasher refused to bite,
Or maim the foe. It failed its master
In the hour of need, though oft it had cloven
Helmets, and carved the casques of the doomed
In combats fierce. For the first time now
That treasure failed him, fallen from honor.
But Hygelac's earl took heart of courage;
In mood defiant he fronted his foe.
The angry hero hurled to the ground,
In high disdain, the hilt of the sword,
The gaudy and jewelled; rejoiced in the strength
Of his arm unaided. So all should do
Who glory would find and fame abiding,
In the crash of conflict, nor care for their lives.
The Lord of the Battle-Jutes braved the encounter;
The murderous hag by the hair he caught;
Down he dragged the dam of Grendel
In his swelling rage, till she sprawled on the floor.
Quick to repay in kind what she got,
On her foe she fastened her fearful clutches;
Enfolded the warrior weary with fighting;
The sure-footed hero stumbled and fell.
As helpless he lay, she leapt on him fiercely;
Unsheathed her hip-knife, shining and broad,
Her son to avenge, her offspring sole.
But the close-linked corslet covered his breast,
Foiled the stroke and saved his life.
All had been over with Ecgtheow's son,
Under the depths of the ocean vast,
Had not his harness availed to help him,
His battle-net stiff, and the strength of God.
The Ruler of battles aright decided it;
The Wielder all-wise awarded the victory:
Lightly the hero leaped to his feet.

XXIII

Beowulf's Victory and Return to Heorot

He spied 'mongst the arms a sword surpassing,
Huge and ancient, a hard-forged slayer,
Weapon matchless and warriors' delight,
Save that its weight was more than another
Might bear into battle or brandish in war;
Giants had forged that finest of blades.
Then seized its chain-hilt the chief of the Scyldings;

His wrath was aroused, reckless his mood,
As he brandished the sword for a savage blow.
Bit the blade in the back of her neck,
Cut the neck-bone, and cleft its way
Clean through her flesh; to the floor she sank;
The sword was gory; glad was the hero.
A light flashed out from the inmost den,
Like heaven's candle, when clear it shines
From cloudless skies. He scanned the cave,
Walked by the wall, his weapon upraised;
Grim in his hand the hilt he gripped.
Well that sword had served him in battle.
Steadily onward he strode through the cave,
Ready to wreak the wrongs untold,
That the man-beast had wrought in the realm of Danes. . . .
He gave him his due when Grendel he found
Stretched as in sleep, and spent with the battle.
But dead was the fiend, the fight at Heorot
Had laid him low. The lifeless body
Sprang from the blows of Beowulf's sword,
As fiercely he hacked the head from the carcass.

But the men who were watching the water with Hrothgar
Suddenly saw a stir in the waves,
The chop of the sea all churned up with blood
And bubbling gore. The gray-haired chiefs
For Beowulf grieved, agreeing together
That hope there was none of his home-returning,
With victory crowned, to revisit his lord.
Most of them feared he had fallen prey
To the mere-wolf dread in the depths of the sea.
When evening came, the Scyldings all
Forsook the headland, and Hrothgar himself
Turned homeward his steps. But sick at heart
The strangers sat and stared at the sea,
Hoped against hope to behold their comrade
And leader again.
Now that goodly sword
Began to melt with the gore of the monster;
In bloody drippings it dwindled away.
'Twas a marvellous sight: it melted like ice,
When fetters of frost the Father unlocks,
Unravels the ropes of the wrinkled ice,
Lord and Master of months and seasons.
Beheld in the hall the hero from Juteland
Treasures unnumbered, but naught he took,
Save Grendel's head, and the hilt of the sword,
Bright and jewelled,—the blade had melted,
Its metal had vanished, so venomous hot
Was the blood of the demon-brute dead in the cave
Soon was in the sea the slayer of monsters;
Upward he shot through the shimmer of waves;
Cleared was the ocean, cleansed were its waters,
The wolfish water-hag wallowed no more;
The mere-wife had yielded her miserable life.
Swift to the shore the sailors' deliverer
Came lustily swimming, with sea-spoil laden;
Rejoiced in the burden he bore to the land.
Ran to meet him his mailéd comrades,
With thanks to God who gave them their leader
Safe again back and sound from the deep.
Quickly their hero's helmet they loosened,
Unbuckled his breastplate. The blood-stained waves
Fell to a calm 'neath the quiet sky.
Back they returned o'er the tracks with the footprints,
Merrily measured the miles o'er the fen,
Way they knew well, those warriors brave;
Brought from the holm-cliff the head of the monster;
'Twas toil and labor to lift the burden,
Four of their stoutest scarce could carry it
Swung from a spear-pole, a staggering load. . . .
Thus the fourteen of them, thanes adventurous,
Marched o'er the moor to the mead-hall of Hrothgar.
Tall in the midst of them towered the hero;
Strode among his comrades, till they came to the hall.
In went Beowulf, the brave and victorious,
Battle-beast hardy, Hrothgar to greet.
Lifting by the hair the head of Grendel,
They laid it in the hall, where the heroes were carousing,
Right before the king, and right before the queen;
Gruesome was the sight that greeted the Danes.

XXIV, XXV

Beowulf's Story of his Fight, and Hrothgar's Counsel

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Gladly we offer this ocean-booty,
That here thou lookest on, lord of the Scyldings,
For sign of victory, son of Healfdene.
Hard was the fight I fought under water;
That combat nearly cost me my life.
Soon had been ended the ocean-encounter,
Had God in his mercy not given me aid.
No help I got from the good blade Hrunting;
The well-tried weapon worthless proved.
By the grace of God, who guided me friendless,

A splendid old sword I spied on the wall,
Hanging there, huge; by the hilt I grasped it,
And seeing my chance, I struck amain
At the sea-cave's wardens, when sudden the blade
Melted and burned, as the blood gushed out,
The battle-gore hot. The hilt I saved
From the villainous fiends, and avenged their crimes,
The murder of the Danes, as was meet and due.
I promise thee now, in peace thou shalt sleep
In Heorot hall, with the whole of thy band.
Thou and thy thanes may throng within
As ye used of yore, both young and old.
Thou need'st not fear renewal of strife,
Harm to thy folk at the hands of the fiends."
The golden hilt was given to the king;
The jewelled work of the giants of old
Came into hand of the hoary warrior.
On the death of the demons, the Danish lord kept it,
Wondersmiths' work. When the world was rid
Of the evil fiend, the enemy of God,
Guilty of murder, and his mother too,
The trophy passed to the peerless lord,
The goodliest king, that gave out treasure
Between the two seas on Scandia's isle.
Hrothgar gazed on the golden hilt,
Relic of old, where was writ the tale
Of a far-off fight, when the flood o'erwhelmed,
The raging sea, the race of the giants
(They wantonly dared to war against God;
Then rose in his wrath the Ruler Eternal,
'Neath the heaving billows buried them all.)
On the polished gold of the guard of the hilt,
Runes were writ that rightly told,
To him that read them, for whom that weapon,
Finest of sword-blades, first was made,
The splendid hilt with serpents entwined.
All were silent, when the son of Healfdene,
The wise king spoke: "Well may he say,
The aged ruler, who aye upholds
Truth and right, 'mid the ranks of his people,
Whose mind runs back to by-gone days,
This guest is born of a goodly breed.
Thy fame shall fly afar among men,
Beowulf my friend, firmly thou holdest
Both wisdom and might. My word will I keep,
The love that I proffered. Thou shalt prove a deliverer
To thy folk and followers in far-off years,
A help to the heroes. Not Heremod thus,
Ecgwela's heir, did offer at need
His strength to the Scyldings; instead, he brought
Slaughter and death on the sons of the Danes.
Swoln with wrath he slew his comrades,
His friends at the board and fled alone,
Ill-famed earl, an outcast from men.
Though God endowed him with gifts of strength,
With boldness and might above all men,
And prospered him greatly, yet he grew to be
Blood-thirsty and cruel. No bracelets he gave
To the Danes as was due, but dwelt in gloom,
Reaped the reward of the woful strife,
And wearisome feud. Take warning from him.

Hrothgar now delivers a long sermon to Beowulf on the dangers of pride, the fickleness of fortune, and the brevity of life, and ends by asking him to sit down to the feast, promising more gifts on the morrow.

Beowulf hastened, happy in mood,
To seek his bench as bid by the king.
Once more, as of old, for the earls in hall,
The famous in battle, the board was set
For feasting anew. When night with its shadows
O'erwhelmed the world, the heroes arose.
The gray-haired ruler his rest would seek,
The Scylding his bed; and Beowulf too,
The lusty warrior, longed for his sleep.
Soon an attendant showed the way
To the stranger from far, spent with his faring.
With courtly custom, he cared for his needs.
All that to warriors, overseas wandering,
Was due in those days, he did for the guest.
High-gabled and gold-decked, the gift-hall towered;
The stout-hearted hero slept soundly within,
Till the raven black, with blithe heart hailed
The bliss of heaven, and bright the sun
Came gliding o'er earth. Then, eager to start,
The warriors wakened; they wished to set out
On their homeward journey. The hero brave
Would board his ship, and back again sail.
The hardy one bade that Hrunting be brought
To the son of Ecglaf:[28] the sword he offered him;
Thanked him for lending the lovely weapon;
Called it a war-friend, keen in the battle;
Not a word in blame of the blade he uttered,
Great-hearted hero. Now hastened the guests,
Eager to part, and armed for their voyage.
Their dauntless leader, beloved of the Danes,
Came to the high-seat, and to Hrothgar the king
The bold-in-battle now bade farewell.

[28] Unferth.

XXVI

Beowulf's Leave-Taking of Hrothgar

Beowulf spoke, the son of Ecgtheow:
"Now we sea-farers would make known our desire;
Far-travelled wanderers, we wish to return
To Hygelac now. A hearty welcome
We here have found, thou hast harbored us well.
If ever on earth I may anywise win,
Master of men, more of thy love
Than now I have won, for another adventure
Of arms and war I am eager and willing.
If ever I hear, o'er the ocean-ways
That neighbor-tribes threaten annoyance or war,
As feud-seeking foemen afore time assailed thee,
A thousand thanes to thee will I bring,
Heroes to help thee. For Hygelac, I know,
Though young in years will yield me aid;
The people's Shepherd will surely help me
By word and deed to do thee service,
And bring thee spear-shafts to speed thee in battle,
Thy might to strengthen when men thou needest.
If ever Hrethric, heir of thy line,
Should come to sojourn at the court of the Jutes,
A host of friends he will find awaiting him.
Who boasts himself brave, abroad should travel."
The aged Hrothgar answering spoke:
"To utter these words, the All-wise Lord
Hath prompted thy heart; more prudent counsel
From one in years so young as thou,
I never have heard. Thou art hardy in strength,
And sage in spirit, and speakest well.
If ever it happen that Hrethel's heir
Be stricken by spear and slain in battle,
If sickness or sword assail thy lord,
And thou survive him, I think it likely
The Sea-Jutes in vain will seek for a better
As choice for their king, their chief to become
And rule o'er the thanes, if thou be willing
The lordship to hold. The longer I know thee
The better I like thee, Beowulf my friend.
Thou hast brought it about that both our peoples,
Jutes and the Spear-Danes, shall be joined in peace.
They shall cease from war, the strife shall be ended,
The feuds of aforetime, so fiercely waged.
While I rule this realm, our riches we share;
Many shall travel with treasure laden,
Each other to greet, o'er the gannet's bath;
O'er the rolling waves the ringéd prow
Tokens of friendship shall freely bring
And bind our people in peace together,
Toward friend and foe, in faith as of old."

Still other treasures, twelve in all,
Healfdene's heir in the hall bestowed
On Beowulf brave, and bade him take them
And seek his people, and soon return.
Then kissed the king, of kin renowned,
The thane beloved. The lord of the Scyldings
Fell on his neck. Fast flowed the tears
Of the warrior gray; he weighed both chances
But held to the hope, though hoary with years,
That each should see the other again,
And meet in the mead-hall. The man was so dear
That he could not restrain the storm in his breast.
Locked in his heart, a hidden longing
For the man he loved so, left him no peace,
And burnt in his blood. Beowulf went;
The gold-decked hero the grass-way trod,
Proud of his booty. The boat awaited
Its owner and master, where at anchor it rode.
As they went on their way, the warriors praised
The bounty of Hrothgar, the blameless king.
None was his equal till age snatched away
The joy of his manhood,—no mortal it spares.

XXVII

Beowulf's Return Voyage to Hygelac

Then came to the coast the comrades brave,
The lusty warriors, wearing their ring-nets,
Their chain-linked corslets. The coast-guard saw them,
The same that at first had spied them coming;
This time he chose not to challenge them harshly,
But gave them his greeting, galloping toward them.
Said the Weder-folk would welcome the sight of them,
Boarding their ship in shining armor.
Then by the sands, the seaworthy craft,
The iron-ringed keel, with arms was laden,
With horses and treasure. On high the mast
Towered above the treasures of Hrothgar.
To the man who had waited as watchman aboard,
Beowulf gave a gold-bound sword.
(Oft on the mead-bench that heirloom prècious
Its owner would honor.) When all had embarked,
They drove for the deep, from Daneland's shore.

Then soon did the mast its sea-suit wear,
A sail was unfurled, made fast with ropes,
The sea-wood sang as she sped o'er the ocean,
No baffling head-wind hindered her course;
The foamy-necked floater flew o'er the billows,
The sea-craft staunch o'er the salt-sea waves,
Till they came in sight of the cliffs of Jutland
The well known capes, and the wind-driven keel,
Grating the sand, stood still on the shore.
Soon was at hand the harbor-watch eager.
Long had he looked for his loved companions,
Scanning the sea for their safe return.
The broad-bosomed boat to the beach he moored
With anchor-ropes fast, lest the force of the waves
That comely craft should cast adrift.
Then Beowulf bade them bring ashore
His treasure-cargo of costly gold
And weapons fine; not far was the way
To Hygelac's hall, where at home he dwelt,
The king and his comrades, close by the sea.

END OF THE SECOND ADVENTURE

After the death of Hygelac and his son, Beowulf became king of the Jutes, and ruled over them fifty years. In his old age his people were harried by a fire-dragon, whom the hero went out to fight. It seems that an outlaw, banished and flying for shelter, had come upon a treasure hid in a deep cave or barrow, guarded by a dragon. Long years before, an earl, the last of his race, had buried the treasure. After his death the dragon, sniffing about the stones, had found it and guarded it three hundred years, until the banished man discovered the place, and carried off one of the golden goblets. In revenge the dragon made nightly raids on Beowulf's realm, flying through the air, spitting fire, burning houses and villages, even Beowulf's hall, the "gift-stool" of the Jutes. Beowulf had an iron shield made against the dragon's fiery breath, and with eleven companions, sought out the hill-vault near the sea. These events are related in Sections XXVIII-XXXV of the *Beowulf* MS.

XXXV

Beowulf's Fight with the Fire Dragon

Before attacking the fire-dragon, Beowulf once more, and for the last time, makes his "battle-boast" in the presence of his followers.

Beowulf said to them, brave words spoke he:
"Brunt of battles I bore in my youth,
One fight more I make this day.
I mean to win fame defending my people,
If the grim destroyer will seek me out,
Come at my call from his cavern dark."
Then he greeted his thanes each one,
For the last time hailed his helmeted warriors,
His comrades dear. "I should carry no sword,
No weapon of war 'gainst the worm should bear,
If the foe I might slay by strength of my arm,
As Grendel I slew long since by my hand.
But I look to fight a fiery battle,
With scorching puffs of poisonous breath.
For this I bear both breastplate and shield;
No foot will I flinch from the foe of the barrow.
Wyrd is over us, each shall meet
His doom ordained at the dragon-cliff!
Bold is my mood, but my boast I omit
'Gainst the battle-flier. Abide ye here,
Heroes in harness, hard by the barrow,
Cased in your armor the issue await:
Which of us two his wounds shall survive.
Not yours the attempt, the task is mine.
'Tis meant for no man but me alone
To measure his might 'gainst the monster fierce.
I get you the gold in glorious fight,
Or battle-death bitter shall bear off your lord."
  Uprose with his shield the shining hero,
Bold 'neath his helmet. He bore his harness
In under the cliff; alone he went,
Himself he trusted; no task for faint-heart.
Then saw by the wall the warrior brave,
Hero of many a hard-fought battle,
Arches of stone that opened a way;
From the rocky gate there gushed a stream,
Bubbling and boiling with battle-fire.
So great the heat no hope was there
To come at the hoard in the cavern's depth,
Unscathed by the blast of the scorching dragon.
He let from his breast his battle-cry leap,
Swoln with rage was the royal Jute,
Stormed the stout-heart; strong and clear
Through the gloom of the cave his cry went ringing.
Hate was aroused, the hoard-ward knew
The leader's hail. Too late 'twas now
To parley for peace. The poisonous breath
Of the monster shot from the mouth of the cave,
Reeking hot. The hollow earth rumbled.
The man by the rock upraised his shield,
The lord of the Jutes, 'gainst the loathly dragon.
Now kindled for battle the curled-up beast;
The king undaunted with drawn sword stood,
('Twas an heirloom olden with edge of lightning)
Each was so fierce he affrighted the other.
Towering tall 'neath tilted shield,
Waited the king as the worm coiled back,
Sudden to spring: so stood he and waited.
Blazing he came in coils of fire
Swift to his doom. The shield of iron
Sheltered the hero too short a while,—
Life and limb it less protected
Than he hoped it would, for the weapon he held

First time that day he tried in battle;
Wyrd had not willed he should win the fight.
But the lord of the Jutes uplifted his arm,
Smote the scaly worm, struck him so fierce
That his ancient bright-edged blade gave way,
Bent on the bone, and bit less sure
Than its owner had need in his hour of peril.
That sword-stroke roused the wrath of the cave guard;
Fire and flame afar he spurted,
Blaze of battle; but Beowulf there
No victory boasted: his blade had failed him,
Naked in battle, as never it should have,
Well-tempered iron. Nor easy it was
For Ecgtheow's heir,[29] honored and famous,
This earth to forsake, forever to leave it;
Yet he must go, against his will
Elsewhere to dwell. So we all must leave
This fleeting life.—Erelong the foes,
Bursting with wrath, the battle renewed.
The hoard-ward took heart, and with heaving breast
Came charging amain. The champion brave,
Strength of his people, was sore oppressed,
Enfolded by flame. No faithful comrades
Crowded about him, his chosen band,
All aethelings' sons, to save their lives,
Fled to the wood. One of them only
Felt surging sorrow; for nought can stifle
Call of kin in a comrade true.

XXXVI

Wiglaf's Reproach to his Comrades. Beowulf Mortally Wounded

The shield-thane beloved, lord of the Scylfings,
Wiglaf was called, 'twas Weohstan's son,
Ælfheré's kinsman. When his king he saw
Hard by the heat under helmet oppressed,
He remembered the gifts he had got of old,
Lands and wealth of the Waegmunding line,
The folk-rights all that his father's had been;
He could hold no longer, but hard he gripped
Linden shield yellow and ancient sword. . . .

The intervening lines tell the history of the sword and the feuds in which it has participated.

For the first time there the faithful thane,
Youthful and stalwart, stood with his leader,
Shoulder to shoulder in shock of battle.
Nor melted his courage, nor cracked his blade,
His war-sword true, as the worm found out
When together they got in grim encounter.

Wiglaf in wrath upbraided his comrades,
Sore was his heart as he spake these words:
"Well I mind when our mead we drank
In the princely hall, how we promised our lord
Who gave us these rings and golden armlets,
That we would repay his war-gifts rich,
Helmets and armor, if haply should come
His hour of peril; us hath he made
Thanes of his choice for this adventure;
Spurred us to glory, and gave us these treasures
Because he deemed us doughty spearmen,
Helmeted warriors, hardy and brave.
Yet all the while, unhelped and alone,
He meant to finish this feat of strength,
Shepherd of men and mightiest lord
Of daring deeds. The day is come,—
Now is the hour he needs the aid
Of spearmen good. Let us go to him now,
Help our hero while hard bestead
By the nimble flames. God knows that I
Had rather the fire should ruthlessly fold
My body with his, than harbor me safe.
Shame it were surely our shields to carry
Home to our lands, unless we first
Slay this foe and save the life
Of the Weder-king. Full well I know
To leave him thus, alone to endure,
Bereft of aid, breaks ancient right.
My helmet and sword shall serve for us both,
Shield and armor we share to-day."

Waded the warrior through welter and reek;
Buckler and helmet he bore to his leader;
Heartened the hero with words of hope:
"Do thy best now, dearest Beowulf,
Years ago, in youth, thou vowedst,
Living, ne'er to lose thine honor,
Shield thy life and show thy valor.
I stand by thee to the end!"
After these words the worm came on,
Snorting with rage, for a second charge;
All mottled with fire his foes he sought,
The warriors hated. But Wiglaf's shield
Was burnt to the boss by the billows of fire;
His harness helped not the hero young.
Shelter he found 'neath the shield of his kinsman,
When the crackling blaze had crumbled his own.
But mindful of glory, the mighty hero
Smote amain with his matchless sword.
Down it hurtled, driven by anger,

---

[29] Beowulf.

Till it stuck in the skull, then snapped the blade,
Broken was Naegling, Beowulf's sword,
Ancient and gray. 'Twas granted him never
To count on edge of iron in battle;
His hand was too heavy, too hard for his strokes,
As I have heard tell, for every blade
He brandished in battle: the best gave way,
And left him helpless and hard bestead.
Now for a third time neared the destroyer;
The fire-drake fierce, old feuds remembering,
Charged the warrior who wavered an instant;
Blazing he came and closed his fangs
On Beowulf's throat; and throbbing spurts
Of life-blood dark o'erdrenched the hero.

XXXVII

The Slaying of the Dragon

Then in the hour of utmost peril,
The stripling proved what stock he came of;
Showed his endurance and dauntless courage.
Though burnt was his hand when he backed his kinsman,
With head unguarded the good thane charged,
Thrust from below at the loathly dragon,
Pierced with the point and plunged the blade in,
The gleaming-bright, till the glow abated
Waning low. Ere long the king
Came to himself, and swiftly drew
The war-knife that hung at his harness' side,
And cut in two the coiléd monster.
So felled they the foe and finished him bravely,
Together they killed him, the kinsmen two,
A noble pair. So needs must do
Comrades in peril. For the king it proved
His uttermost triumph, the end of his deeds
And work in the world. The wound began,
Where the cave-dragon savage had sunk his teeth,
To swell and fever, and soon he felt
The baleful poison pulse through his blood,
And burn in his breast. The brave old warrior
Sat by the wall and summoned his thoughts,
Gazed on the wondrous work of the giants:
Arches of stone, firm-set on their pillars,
Upheld that hill-vault hoar and ancient.
Now Beowulf's thane, the brave and faithful,
Dashed with water his darling lord,
His comrade and king, all covered with blood
And faint with the fight; unfastened his helmet.
Beowulf spoke despite his hurt,
His piteous wound; full well he knew
His years on earth were ended now,
His hours of glad life, gone for aye
His days allotted, and death was near:
"Now would I gladly give to a son
These weapons of war, had Wyrd but granted
That heir of my own should after me come,
Sprung from my loins. This land have I ruled
Fifty winters. No folk-king dared,
None of the chiefs of the neighboring tribes,
To touch me with sword or assail me with terror
Of battle-threats. I bided at home,
Held my peace and my heritage kept,
Seeking no feuds nor swearing false oaths.
This gives me comfort, and gladdens me now,
Though wounded sore and sick unto death.
As I leave my life, the Lord may not charge me
With killing of kinsmen. Now quickly go,
Wiglaf beloved, to look at the hoard,
Where hidden it rests 'neath the hoary rock.
For the worm lies still, put asleep by his wound,
Robbed of his riches. Then rise and haste!
Give me to see that golden hoard,
Gaze on the store of glorious gems,
The easier then I may end my life,
Leave my lordship that long I held."

XXXVIII

The Rescue of the Hoard and the Death of Beowulf

Swiftly, 'tis said, the son of Weohstan
Obeyed the words of his bleeding lord,
Maimed in the battle. Through the mouth of the cave
Boldly he bore his battle-net in.
Glad of the victory, he gazed about him;
Many a sun-bright jewel he saw,
Glittering gold, strewn on the ground,
Heaped in the den of the dragon hoary,
Old twilight-flier,—flagons once bright,
Wassail cups wondrous of warriors departed
Stript of their mountings, many a helmet
Ancient and rusted, armlets a many,
Curiously woven. (Wealth so hoarded,
Buried treasure, will taint with pride,
Him that hides it, whoever it be.)
Towering high o'er the hoard he saw
A gleaming banner with gold inwoven,
Of broidure rare, its radiance streamed
So bright, he could peer to the bounds of the cave,
Survey its wonders; no worm was seen.
Edge of the sword had ended his life.
Then, as they say, that single adventurer

Plundered the hoard that was piled by the giants;
Gathered together old goblets and platters,
Took what he liked; the towering banner,
Brightest of beacons, he brought likewise.
The blade of Beowulf, his brave old chief,
With edge of iron had ended the life
Of him that had guarded the golden hoard
For many a year, and at midnight hour
Had spread the terror of surging flames
In front of the den, till death o'ertook him.
So Wiglaf returned with treasure laden,
The high-souled hero hastened his steps,
Anxiously wondered if he should find
The lord of the Weders alive where he left him
Sapped of his strength and stretched on the ground.
As he came from the hill he beheld his comrade,
His lord of bounty, bleeding and faint,
Near unto death. He dashed him once more
Bravely with water, till burden of speech
Broke from his breast, and Beowulf spoke,
Gazing sad at the gold before him:
"For the harvest of gold that here I look on,
To the God of Glory I give my thanks.
To the Ruler Eternal I render praise
That ere I must go, he granted me this,
To leave to my people this priceless hoard.
'Twas bought with my life; now look ye well
To my people's need when I have departed.
No more I may bide among ye here.
Bid the battle-famed build on the foreland
A far-seen barrow when flames have burnt me.
High o'er the headland of whales it shall tower,
A beacon and mark to remind my people.
And sailors shall call it in years to come
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from afar
O'er the glooming deep they drive their keels."

The great-hearted king unclasped from his neck
A collar of gold and gave to his thane,
The brave young warrior, his bright-gilt helmet,
Breastplate and ring. So bade him farewell:
"Thou art the last to be left of our house.
Wyrd hath o'erwhelmed our Waegmunding line,
Swept my kinsmen swift to their doom,
Earls in their prime. I must follow them."
These words were the last that the warrior gray
Found, ere the funeral-flames he chose.
Swift from his bosom his soul departed
To find the reward of the faithful and true.

In the following lines of Section XXXIX of the MS., the narrative doubles back upon itself to repeat the description of Beowulf and the Dragon lying dead before the cave, and to report Wiglaf's second reproach to the deserters.

XL

Beowulf's Death Announced to the People. The Speech of the Herald.

Then Wiglaf bade the battle-work tell
To the sorrowful troop that had sat all day
At the sea-cliff's edge, their shields in hand,
In dread and in hope, yet doubtful of either:
Their dear lord's return, or his death in the fight.
The herald that came to the headland riding,
Nought kept back of the news that befell,
But truthfully told them the tidings all:
"Now lies low the lord of the Weders;
The generous giver of gifts to the Jutes,
Sleeps his battle-sleep, slain by the worm.
At his side lies stretched his slaughterous foe,
Fordone by the dagger. The dragon fierce
Would take no wound from touch of sword;
Its blade would not bite. At Beowulf's side
Wiglaf sits, the son of Weohstan;
By the hero dead, the hero living
At his head keeps watch with woful heart
O'er friend and foe."

. . . .

The Herald now warns of renewed attacks on the Jutes by Franks and Frisians, and alludes to the origin of the feud in the famous raid in which Hygelac was slain. He further warns of renewed attacks by the Swedes, now that Beowulf is dead, and refers to the origin of the wars between Swedes and Jutes and to a famous battle at "Ravenswood." The episodic digression over, the Herald returns to present events.

XLI

The Herald's Speech Concluded

"'Tis time we hasten
To see where lies our lord and king,
Our giver of bounty, and bear him away
To the funeral pyre; of precious gems
Not a few shall melt in the fire with him.
The hoard he won, the wealth untold,
The priceless treasure he purchased so dear,
And bought with his life at the bitter end,
The flame shall enfold it, the fire consume.
No warrior one keepsake shall carry away,
No necklace be worn by winsome maid.
In sorrow rather, and reft of her gold,
Alone she shall tread the track of an exile,
Now our lord lies low, his laughter stilled,
His mirth and revel. Now many a spear
Shall morning-cold be clasped in the hand
And held on high. No harp shall sound
The warriors to wake, but the wan-hued raven

Shall croak o'er the carcass and call to the eagle,
To tell how he fared at the feast after battle
When he and the gray wolf gorged on the slain."
Thus ended his tale, his tidings of woe,
The faithful thane, nor falsely reported
Wyrd or word. The warriors rose;
To the Eagles' Cliff they came in sadness,
With welling tears, the wonder to see.
Lying helpless, their lord they found
Stretched on the ground, the giver of rings.
The end had come to him, open-handed
King of the Weders, warrior brave.
That day a fearful death he had found.
A stranger thing they saw near by:
The loathsome monster lying dead
On the field where they fought, the fiery dragon,
The gruesome beast was burnt and charred.
Fifty feet in full he measured
In length, as he lay, along the ground.
'Twas his wont at night to wing aloft
And dip to earth as his den he sought;
Now he lay dead, his night-revels over.
Scattered about were bowls and flagons,
Golden platters, and priceless swords,
With rust eaten through, as though they had lain
Winters a thousand in the womb of the earth.
O'er that heritage huge, the hoard of aforetime,
A spell had been woven to ward off despoilers,
And none might touch the treasure-vault hidden;
Save that God alone, the Lord of victory,
The Guardian of men, might grant the power
To unlock the hoard, and lift the treasure,
To such a hero as to Him seemed meet.

. . . .

XLII

Beowulf's Body Carried to the Funeral Pyre and the Dragon Cast into the Sea.

Wiglaf spoke, the son of Weohstan:
"Let us go once more to gaze at the marvels
Still left 'neath the rock; I will lead you in
Where your hands may touch great heaps of gold,
Bracelets and rings. Let the bier be ready
When out of the cave we come again,
To bear away the warrior brave,
Our lord beloved, where long he shall bide,
Kept in the sheltering care of God."
The son of Weohstan, warrior brave,
Called on the folk-men, far and wide,
From house and home to hasten and bring
Wood for the pyre of the peerless man,
His funeral pile. "Now fire shall consume,
The wan flame wax o'er the warrior strong,
Who oft stood firm in the iron shower,
When the storm of arrows, sent from the bow-string,
Flew o'er the shield-wall, and the fleet-winged shaft,
Feathered behind, pushed home the barb."
Now the wise young warrior, Weohstan's son,
Seven men called, of the king's own thanes,
The best of the band; the bravest he gathered,
Himself the eighth, they sought the den
Of the hateful beast; one bore in his hand
A lighted torch and led the way.
No lots were drawn for the dragon's hoard,
When they saw it lying, loose in the cave,
Uncared for, unguarded, unclaimed by a soul;
There was none to hinder as they hurried away,
Laden with spoils and splendid heirlooms.
O'er the edge of the cliff they cast the dragon,
Into the sea, the scaly worm;
Let the waves engulf the gold-hoard's keeper.
On a wagon they loaded the wondrous treasure,
Gold past counting. The gray-haired king
They bore to the pyre, on the Point of Whales.

XLIII

The Burning of Beowulf's Body

Then built for Beowulf the band of the Jutes
A funeral pyre; 'twas firmly based.
They hung it with helmets as he had bidden,
With shining byrnies and battle-shields.
In the midst they laid, with loud lament,
Their lord beloved, their leader brave.
On the brow of the cliff they kindled the blaze,
Black o'er the flames the smoke shot up;
Cries of woe, in the windless air,
Rose and blent with the roar of the blast,
Till the frame of the body burst with the heat
Of the seething heart. In sorrowing mood
They mourned aloud their leader dead.
Joined in the wail a woman old,[80]
With hair upbound for Beowulf grieved,
Chanted a dreary dirge of woe,
Dark forebodings of days to come,
Thick with slaughter and throes of battle,
Bondage and shame. The black smoke rose.
High on the headland they heaped a barrow,
Lofty and broad 'twas built by the Weders,
Far to be seen by sea-faring men.

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[80] Perhaps his wife.

Ten days long they toiled to raise it,
The battle-king's beacon. They built a wall
To fence the brands of the funeral burning,
The choicest and best their chiefs could devise.
In the barrow they buried the bracelets and rings,
All those pieces of precious treasure
That bold-hearted men had brought from the cave,
Returned to earth the heirloom of heroes,
The gold to the ground, again to become
As useless to men as of yore it had been.

Around the barrow the battle-brave rode,
Twelve in the troop, all true-born aethelings,
To make their lament and mourn for the king;
To chant a lay their lord to honor.
They praised his daring; his deeds of prowess
They mentioned in song. For meet it is
That men should publish their master's praise,
Honor their chieftain, and cherish him dearly
When he leaves this life, released from the body.
Thus joined the men of the Jutes in mourning
Their hero's end. His hearth-companions
Called him the best among kings of the earth,
Mildest of men, and most beloved,
Kindest to kinsmen, and keenest for fame.

The Venerable Bede

(673-735)

Account of the Poet Cædmon

To the Benedictine monastery at Wearmouth came a boy of seven to study in its school, and when, a few years later, the same order founded another monastery at Jarrow, he pursued his studies there, and there continued them for the rest of his holy days. Loving the life of "learning, teaching, and writing," the services in the church, and the routine of monastic discipline, Bede became the pre-eminent scholar of his time, and the first great one in England. The piety of his nature was such as to win him the title of *Venerable* after his death.

He wrote many books, all in Latin—among them *The Art of Meter, A Book of Hymns, On Orthography*. But most important was his *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* (731?), or the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*—a source second to none in furnishing us with valuable knowledge of Old English history. The fervor of Christianity is fresh in his writing, and his style is simple and unaffected. It is he who gives us the account of the first Old English poet, Cædmon. So highly did King Alfred prize this book, that he had it translated for his people into the West Saxon dialect.

It is by kind permission of Scott, Foresman and Co. that we print in this section Prof. Stith Thompson's translations of the Venerable Bede, *Deor's Lament, The Dream of the Rood, The Riddles,* and Alfred's *Preface*, from Faust and Thompson, *Old English Poems* (1918).

From *The Ecclesiastical History*[1]

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

In the monastery of this abbess [Hild] was a certain brother especially distinguished and gifted with the grace of God, because he was in the habit of making poems filled with piety and virtue. Whatever he learned of holy writ through interpreters he gave forth in a very short time in poetical language with the greatest of sweetness and inspiration, well wrought in the English tongue. Because of his songs the minds of many men were turned from the thoughts of this world and incited toward a contemplation of the heavenly life. There were, to be sure, others after him among the Angles who tried to compose sacred poetry, but none of them could equal him; because his instruction in poetry was not at all from men, nor through the aid of any man, but it was through divine inspiration and as a gift from God that he received the power of song. For that reason he was never able to compose poetry of a light or idle nature, but only the one kind that pertained to religion and was fitted to the tongue of a godly singer such as he.

This man had lived the life of a layman until he was somewhat advanced in years, and had never learned any songs. For this reason often at the banquets where for the sake of merriment it was ruled that they should all sing in turn at the harp, when he would see the harp approach him, he would arise from the company out of shame and go home to his house. On one occasion he had done this and had left the banquet hall and gone out to the stable to the cattle which it was his duty to guard that night. Then in due time he lay down and slept, and there stood before him in his dream a man who hailed him and greeted him and called him by name: "Cædmon, sing me something." Then he answered and said: "I can not sing anything; and for that reason I left the banquet and came here, since I could not sing." Once more the man who was speaking with him said: "No matter, you must sing for me." Then he answered: "What shall I sing?" Thereupon the stranger said: "Sing to me of the beginning of things." When he had received this answer he began forthwith to sing, in praise of God the Creator, verses and words that he had never heard, in the following manner:

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[1] From Alfred's Old English version of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People.*

Now shall we praise   the Prince of heaven,
The might of the Maker   and his manifold thought,
The work of the Father: of what wonders he wrought,
The Lord everlasting   when he laid out the worlds.
He first raised up   for the race of men
The heaven as a roof,   the holy Ruler.
Then the world below,   the Ward of mankind,
The Lord everlasting,   at last established
As a home for man,   the Almighty Lord.

Then he arose from his sleep, and all that he had sung while asleep he held fast in memory; and soon afterward he added many words like unto them befitting a hymn to God. The next morning he came to the steward who was his master and told him of the gift he had received. The steward immediately led him to the abbess and related what he had heard. She bade assemble all the wise and learned men and asked Cædmon to relate his dream in their presence and to sing the song that they might give their judgment as to what it was or whence it had come. They all agreed that it was a divine gift bestowed from Heaven. They then explained to him a piece of holy teaching and bade him if he could, to turn that into rhythmic verse. When he received the instruction of the learned men, he departed for his house. In the morning he returned and delivered the passage assigned him, turned into an excellent poem.

Thereupon, the abbess, praising and honoring the gift of God in this man, persuaded him to leave the condition of a layman and take monastic vows. And this he did with great eagerness. She received him and his household into the monastery and made him one of the company of God's servants and commanded that he be taught the holy writings and stories. He, on his part, pondered on all that he learned by word of mouth, and just as a clean beast chews on a cud, transformed it into the sweetest of poetry. His songs and poems were so pleasing that even his teachers came to learn and write what he spoke. He sang first of the creation of the earth, and of the origin of mankind, and all the story of Genesis, the first book of Moses; and afterwards of the exodus of the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt and the entry into the Promised Land; and many other stories of the Holy Scriptures; the incarnation of Christ, and his suffering and his ascension into heaven; the coming of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the apostles; and finally he wrote many songs concerning the future day of judgment and of the fearfulness of the pains of hell, and the bliss of heaven; besides these he composed many others concerning the mercies and judgments of God. In all of these he strove especially to lead men from the love of sin and wickedness and to impel them toward the love and practice of righteousness; for he was a very pious man and submissive to the rules of the monastery. And he burned with zeal against those who acted otherwise. For this reason it was that his life ended with a fair death.

Deor's Lament

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

An especial interest attaches to the Old English poem, *Deor's Lament.* Like its poetically inferior companion *Widsith,* it affords us a glimpse of the life of the scop, or poet, and shows his dependence on the lord's favor. But *Widsith* recounts with pride a singer's triumphs at many courts, while the scop in this poem reflects ruefully on an esteem now lost to him and is put to the hard necessity of remembering others whose day of glory was brief. It is this tone of personal expression which makes *Deor's Lament* an authentic lyric, probably the earliest in our literature.

To Weland[1] came woes   and wearisome trial,
And cares oppressed   the constant earl;
His lifelong companions   were pain and sorrow,
And winter-cold weeping: his ways were oft hard,
After Nithhad had struck   the strong man low,
Cut the supple sinew-bands   of the sorrowful earl.
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

Beadohild bore   her brothers' death
Less sorely in soul   than herself and her plight
When she clearly discovered   her cursed condition,
That unwed she should bear   a babe to the world.
She never could think   of the thing that must happen.
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

Much have we learned   of Mæthhild's[2] life:
How the courtship of Geat   was crowned with grief,
How love and its sorrows   allowed him no sleep.
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

Theodoric[3] held   for thirty winters
The town of the Mærings: that was told unto many.
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

We all have heard   of Eormanric[4]
Of the wolfish heart: a wide realm he had
Of the Gothic kingdom.   Grim was the king.
Many men sat   and bemoaned their sorrows,
Woefully watching   and wishing always
That the cruel king   might be conquered at last.
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

Sad in his soul   he sitteth joyless,
Mournful in mood.   He many times thinks
That no end will e'er come   to the cares he endures.
Then must he think   how throughout the world
The gracious God   often gives his help
And manifold honors   to many an earl
And sends wide his fame;   but to some he gives woes.
Of myself and my sorrows   I may say in truth
That I was happy once   as the Heodenings' scop,
Dear to my lord.   Deor was my name.
Many winters I found   a worthy following,
Held my lord's heart,   till Heorrenda came,
The skillful singer,   and received the land-right
That the proud helm of earls   had once promised to me!
  That has passed over: so this may depart!

---

[1] The blacksmith of the Norse gods. The story referred to in the first three stanzas of the poem is as follows: The crafty king, Nithhad, captures Weland, fetters him (according to some accounts, hamstrings him), and robs him of the magic ring that gives him power to fly. Beadohild, Nithhad's daughter, accompanied by her brothers, goes to Weland and has him mend rings for her. In this way he recovers his own ring and his power to fly. Before leaving he kills the sons of Nithhad, and, stupefying Beadohild with liquor, puts her to shame.

[2] The references in this stanza are obscure.

[3] King of the Goths.

[4] King of the Goths and uncle to Theodoric. He died about 375 A.D. He put his only son to death, had his wife torn to pieces, and ruined the happiness of many people.

Riddles

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

Among the best of Old English poems are the *Riddles*, which, however they lack the conciseness demanded of a modern riddle, afforded free imaginative play to their authors. As we find them in the *Exeter Book*, a manuscript of the eleventh century, they are without the titles that would answer the implied question; these have been furnished by scholars. The *Riddles* were probably intended to test the wits of guests at banquets; but the lively descriptions with which the poets embroidered the various subjects, involved a healthy poetic exercise, and have moreover given us many valuable clues to the daily habits and interests of our forebears.

Many of the *Riddles* have been shown to be free developments of Latin originals, and they all seem to be of Christian composition. Some critics have claimed, without much proof, that they are the work of Cynewulf. They are more likely the work of many hands.

Suggested readings: F. Tupper, *The Riddles of the Exeter Book* (1910), and A. J. Wyatt, *Old English Riddles* (1912).

A Storm

At times I am fast   confined by my Master,
Who sendeth forth   under the fertile plain
My broad bosom,   but bridles me in.
He drives in the dark   a dangerous power
To a narrow cave,   where crushing my back
Sits the weight of the world.   No way of escape
Can I find from the torment;   so I tumble about
The homes of heroes.   The halls with their gables,
The tribe-dwellings tremble;   the trusty walls shake,
Steep over the head.   Still seems the air
Over all the country   and calm the waters,
Till I press in my fury   from my prison below,
Obeying His bidding   who bound me fast
In fetters at first   when he fashioned the world,
In bonds and in chains,   with no chance of escape
From his power who points out   the paths I must follow.
Downward at times   I drive the waves,
Stir up the streams;   to the strand I press
The flint-gray flood: the foamy wave
Lashes the wall.   A lurid mountain
Rises on the deep: dark in its trail
Stirred up with the sea   a second one comes,
And close to the coast   it clashes and strikes
On the lofty hills.   Loud soundeth the boat,
The shouting of shipmen.   Unshaken abide
The stone cliffs steep   through the strife of the waters,
The dashing of waves,   when the deadly tumult
Crowds to the coast.   Of cruel strife
The sailors are certain   if the sea drive their craft
With its terrified guests   on the grim rolling tide;
They are sure that the ship   will be shorn of its power,
Be deprived of its rule,   and will ride foam-covered
On the ridge of the waves.   Then ariseth a panic,
Fear among folk   of the force that commands me,
Strong on my storm-track.   Who shall still that power?
At times I drive   through the dark wave-vessels
That ride on my back,   and wrench them asunder
And lash them with sea-streams;   or I let them again
Glide back together.   It is the greatest of noises,
Of clamoring crowds,   of crashes the loudest,
When clouds as they strive   in their courses shall strike
Edge against edge;   inky of hue
In flight o'er the folk   bright fire they sweat,
A stream of flame;   destruction they carry
Dark over men   with a mighty din.

Fighting they fare. They let fall from their bosom
A deafening rain of rattling liquid,
Of storm from their bellies. In battle they strive,
The awful army; anguish arises,
Terror of mind to the tribes of men,
Distress in the strongholds, when the stalking goblins,
The pale ghosts shoot with their sharp weapons.
The fool alone fears not their fatal spears;
But he perishes too if the true God send
Straight from above in streams of rain,
Whizzing and whistling the whirlwind's arrows,
The flying death. Few shall survive
Whom that violent guest in his grimness shall visit.
I always stir up that strife and commotion;
Then I bear my course to the battle of clouds,
Powerfully strive and press through the tumult,
Over the bosom of the billows; bursteth loudly
The gathering of elements. Then again I descend
In my helmet of air and hover near the land,
And lift on my back the load I must bear,
Minding the mandates of the mighty Lord.
So I, a tried servant, sometimes contend:
Now under the earth; now from over the waves
I drive to the depths; now dropping from heaven,
I stir up the streams, or strive to the skies,
Where I war with the welkin. Wide do I travel,
Swift and noisily. Say now my name,
Or who raises me up when rest is denied me,
Or who stays my course when stillness comes to me?

A Bible[1]

A stern destroyer struck out my life,
Deprived me of power; he put me to soak,
Dipped me in water, dried me again,
And set me in the sun, where I straightway lost
The hairs that I had. Then the hard edge
Of the keen knife cut me and cleansed me of soil;
Then fingers folded me. The fleet quill of the bird
With speedy drops spread tracks often
Over the brown surface, swallowed the tree-dye,
A deal of the stream, stepped again on me,
Traveled a black track. With protecting boards
Then a crafty one covered me, enclosed me with hide,
Made me gorgeous with gold. Hence I am glad and rejoice
At the smith's fair work with its wondrous adornments.
Now may these rich trappings, and the red dye's tracings,
And all works of wisdom spread wide the fame
Of the Sovereign of nations! Read me not as a penance!
If the children of men will cherish and use me,
They shall be safer and sounder and surer of victory,
More heroic of heart and happier in spirit,
More unfailing in wisdom. More friends shall they have,
Dear and trusty, and true and good,
And faithful always, whose honors and riches
Shall increase with their love, and who cover their friends
With kindness and favors and clasp them fast
With loving arms. I ask how men call me
Who aid them in need. My name is far famed.
I am helpful to men, and am holy myself.

A Bookworm

A moth ate a word. To me that seemed
A curious happening when I heard of that wonder,
That a worm should swallow the word of a man,
A thief in the dark eat a thoughtful discourse
And the strong base it stood on. He stole, but he was not
A whit the wiser when the word had been swallowed.

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[1] Here a codex, or manuscript, of a Bible is in the writer's mind. He discusses first the killing of the animal and the preparation of the skin for writing; next the writing and binding of the book; and finally the use the book will be to men.

The Dream of the Rood[1]

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

The monks had taught the English to write and it was the men of their calling who were the chief preservers of writings. Indeed the Church provided many authors of Old English letters. It is not strange, therefore, that the bulk of our early literature should be religious in character. Cædmon, the "first English poet" of whom Bede tells us, began with a Hymn, and proceeded to versify parts of the Bible, a practice in which he had imitators (the authors of *Genesis, Exodus, Daniel,* etc.).

Of the Old English religious poems we possess, none is more delicate than *The Dream of the Rood.* It has often been argued as coming from the pen of Cynewulf because of a certain passage in his *Elene.* One feels in this history of the Holy Cross, traced from the day when first it "was felled at the forest's edge" to the day when "a glory was given" it, the eloquence of profound devotion.

Lo, I shall tell you   the truest of visions,
A dream that I dreamt   in the dead of night
While people reposed   in peaceful sleep.
I seemed to see   the sacred tree
Lifted on high   in a halo of light,
The brightest of beams;   that beacon was wholly
Gorgeous with gold;   glorious gems stood
Fair at the foot;   and five were assembled,
At the crossing of the arms.   The angels of God looked on,
Fair through the firmament.   It was truly no felon's cross,
For beholding his sufferings   were the holy spirits,
The men of earth   and all of creation.
Wondrous was that victory-wood,   and I wounded and stained
With sorrows and sins.   I saw the tree of glory
Blessed and bright   in brilliant adornments,
Made joyous with jewels.   Gems on all sides
Full rarely enriched   the rood of the Savior.
  Through the sight of that cross   I came to perceive
Its stiff struggle of old,   when it started first
To bleed on the right side.   I was broken and cast down with sorrow;
The fair sight inspired me with fear.   I saw that fervid beacon
Change its clothing and color.   At times it was covered with blood
Fearful and grimy with gore.   At times with gold 'twas adorned.
Then I lay and looked   for a long time
And saw the Savior's   sorrowful tree
Until I heard it   lift high its voice.
The worthiest of the wood-race   formed words and spoke:
  "It was ages ago   —I shall always remember—
When first I was felled   at the forest's edge,
My strong trunk stricken.   Then strange enemies took me
And fashioned my frame to a cross;   and their felons I raised on high.
On their backs and shoulders they bore me   to the brow of the lofty hill.
There the hated ones solidly set me.   I saw there the Lord of Mankind
Struggling forward with courage   to climb my sturdy trunk.
I dared not then oppose   the purpose of the Lord,
So I bent not nor broke   when there burst forth a trembling
From the ends of the earth.   Easily might I
Destroy the murderers,   but I stood unmoved.
  "The Young Hero unclothed him   —it was the holy God—
Strong and steadfast;   he stepped to the high gallows,
Not fearing the look of the fiends,   and there he freed mankind.
At his blessed embrace I trembled,   but bow to the earth I dared not,
Or forward to fall to the ground,   but fast and true I endured.
As a rood I was raised up;   a royal King I bore,
The Head of heaven.   I held me unbending.
Dark nails through me they drove;   so that dastardly scars are upon me,

---

[1] The Rood was the cross on which Christ was crucified.

Wounds wide open;   but not one of them dared I to harm.
They cursed and reviled us together.   I was covered all over with blood,
That flowed from the Savior's side   when his soul had left the flesh.
Sorrowful the sights   I have seen on that hill,
Grim-visaged grief: the God of mankind I saw
And his frightful death.   The forces of darkness
Covered with clouds   the corpse of the Lord,
The shining radiance;   the shadows darkened
Under the cover of clouds.   Creation all wept,
The king's fall bewailed.   Christ was on the rood.
"Finally from afar   came faithful comrades
To the Savior's side,   and I saw it all.
Bitter the grief that I bore,   but I bowed me low to their hands;
My travail was grievous and sore.   They took then God Almighty,
From loathsome torment they lifted him.   The warriors left me deserted,
To stand stained with blood.   I was stricken and wounded with nails.
Limb-weary they laid him there,   and at their Lord's head they stood.
They beheld there the Ruler of heaven;   and he halted there a while to rest,
Tired after the terrible struggle.   A tomb then they began to make,
His friends in sight of his foes.   Of the fairest of stone they built it,
And set their Savior upon it.   A sorrowful dirge they chanted,
Lamented their Master at evening,   when they made their journey home,
Tired from their loved Lord's side.   And they left him with the guard.
We crosses stood there   streaming with blood,
And waited long   after the wailing ceased
Of the brave company.   The body grew cold,
The most precious of corpses.   Then they pulled us down,
All to the earth   —an awful fate!
They buried us low in a pit.   But the loved disciples of Christ,
His faithful friends made search   and found me and brought me to light,
And gorgeously decked me   with gold and with silver.
"Now mayst thou learn,   my beloved friend,
That the work of the wicked   I have worthily borne,
The most trying of torments.   The time is now come
When through the wide world   I am worshiped and honored,
That all manner of men,   and the mighty creation,
Hold sacred this sign.   On me the Son of God
Death-pangs endured.   Hence, dauntless in glory,
I rise high under heaven,   and hold out salvation
To each and to all   who have awe in my presence.
"Long ago I was the greatest   and most grievous of torments,
Most painful of punishments,   till I pointed aright
The road of life   for the race of men.
"Lo, a glory was given   by the God of Creation
To the worthless wood   —by the Warden of heaven—
Just as Mary, his mother,   the maiden blessed,
Received grace and glory   from God Almighty,
And homage and worship   over other women.
"And now I bid thee,   my best of comrades,
That thou reveal   this vision to men.
Tell them I am truly   the tree of glory,
That the Savior sorrowed   and suffered upon me
For the race of men   and its many sins,
And the ancient evil   that Adam wrought.
"He there tasted of death;   but in triumph he rose,
The Lord in his might   and gave life unto men.
Then he ascended to heaven,   and hither again
Shall the Savior descend   to seek mankind
On the day of doom,   the dreaded Ruler
Of highest heaven,   with his host of angels.
Then will he adjudge   with justice and firmness
Rewards to the worthy   whose works have deserved them,
Who loyally lived   their lives on the earth.
Then a feeling of fear   shall fill every heart
For the warning they had   in the words of their Master:
He shall demand of many   where the man may be found
To consent for the sake   of his Savior to taste
The bitter death   as He did on the cross.
They are filled with fear   and few of them think
What words they shall speak   in response to Christ.

Then no feeling of fright or fear need he have
Who bears on his breast the brightest of tokens,
But there shall come to the kingdom through the cross and its power
All the souls of the saved from the sorrows of earth,
Of the holy who hope for a home with their Lord."
Then I adored the cross with undaunted courage,
With the warmest zeal, while I watched alone
And saw it in secret. My soul was eager
To depart on its path, but I have passed through many
An hour of longing. Through all my life
I shall seek the sight of that sovereign tree
Alone more often than all other men
And worthily worship it. My will for this service
Is steadfast and sturdy, and my strength is ever
In the cross of Christ. My comrades of old,
The friends of fortune, all far from the earth
Have departed from the world and its pleasures and have passed to the King of Glory,
Now live in the heavens with the high Father,
Are waning in glory. And I wait daily
For the time to come when the cross of the Lord,
Which once so plainly appeared to my sight,
Shall summon my soul from this sorrowful life,
And bring me to that bourne where bliss is unending
And happiness of heaven, where the holy saints
All join in a banquet, where joy is eternal.
May he set me where always in after time
I shall dwell in glory with God's chosen ones
In delights everlasting. May the Lord be my friend,
Who came to earth and of old on the cross
Suffered and sorrowed for the sins of men.
He broke there our bonds and bought for us life
And a heavenly home. The hearts were now filled
With blessings and bliss, which once burned with remorse.
To the Son was his journey successful and joyful
And crowned with triumph, when he came with his troops,
With his gladsome guests into God's kingdom,
The Almighty Judge's, and brought joy to the angels,
And the host of the holy who in heaven before
Dwelt in glory when their God arrived,
The Lord Most High, at his home at last.

Cynewulf

Little is known concerning the greatest of Old English poets. Unsubstantiated claims have been made to connect his works with a Cynewulf, Bishop of Lindisfarne (d. 783?), or with a priest of the same name whom we know to have been living in 803. It is clear that he lived in the mid-eighth century, probably in Northumbria. His poems (cf. *Old English Literature, above*) prove him familiar with the world of the church and of the court. Like his ancestors, as we see from the passage here quoted, he loved the sea as well as the battle.

The *Christ* is a poem in three parts dealing respectively with the Birth of Christ, His Ascension, and the Last Judgment. Although obscure and difficult to follow, the poem is studded with splendid imaginative passages. We quote one such with the kind permission of the Princeton University Press, from Prof. Spaeth's *Old English Poetry* (1921).

Consult A. S. Cook, *The Christ of Cynewulf* (1900), and C. W. Kennedy, *The Poems of Cynewulf* (1910) for further study.

From *The Christ*

(*Translated by J. Duncan Spaeth*)

Our life is likest a long sea-voyage:
O'er the water cold in our keels we glide,
O'er Ocean's streams, in our stallions of the deep
We drive afar. 'Tis a dreary waste
Of ceaseless surges we sail across,
In this wavering world, o'er wind-swept tracts
Of open sea. Anxious the struggle,
Ere we bring at last our barks to land,
O'er the rough sea-ridges. Our rescue is near;
The Son of God doth safely guide us,
Helps us in to our harbor of refuge;
Shows from the deck the sheltered waters
Where smoothly to anchor our ancient chargers,
Hold with the hawsers our horses of the deep.
Then fix we our hope on that haven of safety
That the Prince of Glory prepared for us all,
The Ruler on high, when He rose to heaven.

King Alfred the Great

(849-901)

Today prose is likely to be thought of popularly as the "natural" means of literary expression, and poetry as the more pretentious and artificial. The fact is, however, that in the literature of most peoples recorded poetry will be found anteceding (often by centuries) any recorded literary prose. Thus it had been in Greece and Rome, and thus it was in Europe after the Fall of Rome. Singing is common to all mankind; the composition of written prose begins only under circumstances provided by a more sophisticated society. The swiftness and vividness of poetry stir the imagination—even of the illiterate; the logic and orderliness of prose appeal primarily to our reasoning faculties. In Old England, as we have seen, there had been a considerable bulk of poetry in the native tongue. But it is not until we come to Alfred that we find a literary man writing English prose.

When Alfred succeeded to the West-Saxon throne in 871, the Northumbrian and Mercian learning, which had produced the best part of Old English poetry, had been extinguished by the barbarian Danes, who were now threatening southern England. It was the historic courage of Alfred that kept them back, and saved for us whatever we now possess of the older literature. Having established peace for his kingdom, he set himself to educational tasks. Already a mature man, he studied Latin himself, and welcomed scholars to aid him in his work. With them, he translated books he thought most needful: Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, St. Augustine's *Soliloquies*, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, and Orosius' *Universal History*. Under his direction the invaluable *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was begun. And we are particularly indebted to his care for the preservation of *Beowulf*, the poems of Cynewulf, and the other fragments (like *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*, etc.), all which remain to us only in the Wessex dialect.

Consult: *The Cambridge History of English Literature* (1920), Vol. I, chapter 6; J. A. Giles, *The Whole Works of King Alfred the Great,* three vols. (1858); S. Brooke, *King Alfred as Educator of His People and Man of Letters* (1901); and G. F. Browne, *King Alfred's Books* (1920).

From the *Preface to His Translation of Gregory's "Pastoral Care"*

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

King Alfred sends greetings to Wærferth in loving and friendly words. I let thee know that it has often come to my mind what wise men there were formerly throughout England among both the clergy and the laity, and what happy times there were then throughout England, and how the kings who held sway over the people in those days obeyed God and his ministers; and how they preserved both their peace and their morality and good order at home and also extended their possessions abroad; and how prosperous they were both with war and with wisdom; and how zealous the clergy were both in teaching and in learning, and in all the services they owed to God; and how foreigners came to the land in search of wisdom and learning, and how we should now have to secure them from abroad if we were to have them. So complete was this decay in England that there were very few on this side of the Humber who could understand their rituals in English or translate a Latin letter into English; and I feel sure that there were not many beyond Humber. So few there were that I cannot remember a single one south of the Thames when I began to reign. Almighty God be thanked that we have any supply of teachers among us now. . . .

Then I considered all this, and brought to mind also how, before it had all been laid waste and burned, the churches throughout all England stood filled with treasures and books; and there was a great multitude of God's servants, but they knew very little about the books, for they could not understand anything in them, since they were not written in their own language—as if they spoke thus: "Our fathers who held these places of old loved wisdom and through it acquired wealth and bequeathed it to us. Here we may still see their tracks, but we cannot follow them, and hence we have now lost both the wealth and the wisdom, since we would not incline our hearts after their example."

When I called all this to mind, I wondered very much, considering all the good and wise men who were formerly throughout England and all the books that they had perfectly learned, that they had translated no part of them into their own language. But soon I answered myself and said: "They did not expect that men should ever become as careless and that learning should decay as it has; they neglected it through the desire that the greater increase of wisdom there should be in the land the more should men learn of foreign languages."

I then considered that the law was first found in the Hebrew tongue, and again when the Greeks learned it, they translated it all into their own language. And the Romans likewise when they had learned it, they translated it all through learned scholars into their own language. And all other Christian people have turned some part into their own language. Wherefore it seems to me best, if it seems so to you, that we should translate some books that are most needful for all men to know into the language which we can all understand, and that we should bring about what we may very easily do with God's help if we have tranquillity; namely, that all youths that are now in England of free birth, who are rich enough to devote themselves to it, be put to learning as long as they are not fitted for any other occupation, until the time that they shall be able to read English writing with ease: and let those that would pursue their studies further be taught more in Latin and be promoted to a higher rank. When I brought to mind how the knowledge of Latin had formerly decayed throughout England, and yet many knew how to read English writing, I began among other various and manifold troubles of this kingdom to turn into English the book that is called in Latin *Pastoralis* and in English *The Shepherd's Book*, sometimes word for word, sometimes thought by thought, as I had learned it from Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and Grimbald my priest, and John my priest. After I had learned it so that I understood it and so that I could interpret it clearly, I translated it into English. I shall send one copy to every bishopric in my kingdom; and in each is a book-mark worth fifty mancuses. And I command in God's name that no man take the book-mark from the book or the book from the monastery. It is not certain that there will be such learned bishops as, thanks be to God, we now have nearly everywhere. Hence I wish the books to remain always in their places, unless the bishop wishes to take them with him, or they be lent out anywhere, or any one be copying them.

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

The Norman Conquest

SCANDINAVIAN Vikings, of the same blood as those Danes whose invasions into southern England Alfred had checked, in the early tenth century conquered the strip of northern France still called, after these Northmen, Normandy. Intermarrying with the French, adopting the French language and civilization, they rapidly became in cultural respects Frenchmen. When William, Duke of Normandy, asserting his pretensions to the English crown, fought Harold at Hastings, it was the culture of France that he brought with him.

The victory of the Conqueror in 1066 was cataclysmic for England. Under William and his successors, England became a country of two peoples and two languages. The mass of the people, now in subjection, continued to speak the old English tongue. Their French rulers, the court, the nobility, and the clergy spoke and wrote French, which became the language of school and law-court. Only the illiterate used the English which was soon decaying in vocabulary and form. Written literature being for the wealthy with leisure to read, the elegant precise French tongue was for some while the language of letters. A number of the best writers of French literature lived at the English court, writing for a class that thought of itself as French. The self-confident critic of those days would probably have prophesied that henceforth the literature of England would be written in French or Latin.

The very division of England into French lord and English subject, as Sir Walter Scott points out in *Ivanhoe*, has been recorded on our language. The Englishman knew animals as he tended them in the fields; the Frenchman was interested in them only as they appeared on his table. And so we still refer to the live animals by the English word, and to the cooked flesh by the French: from Old English we get *ox, sheep, calf,* and *swine*; from the French come correspondingly *beef, mutton, veal,* and *pork*.

But living in England, the Norman lords could not continue being Frenchmen. Intermixing of the two cultures was bound to ensue. After two centuries the demarcations between Norman and Englishman became vague; by the fourteenth century one language and one nation had emerged. The common cause against the French in the wars of Edward III, with the great victories of Crécy and Poitiers in 1346 and 1356, nationalized sentiment in England and completed the fusion.

The new language, fundamentally the English we speak today, possessed a vocabulary larger than the French or the Old English, for it encompassed both. Words of intellectual, artistic, and theological significance came from the French, and these preponderated in number. But the basic part of our language—the common household words, the words of daily experience—these were from Old English. Thus, words of chivalric connotation (e.g. *banner, battle, captain, homage*), of the law (e.g. *baron, duke, reign, attorney*), of theology (e.g. *cloister, penance*), of sports (e.g. *chase, leveret*), of ideas (e.g. *art, nature, glory, science*) are French in origin. And those like *mother, father, home, house, love, hate, foot, head, heart, hand, cold, hot, sweet, bitter, eat, drink, sleep* etc. are from Old English. When the fusion was truly complete the two languages, in forming one language, had so modified each other that the powerful Old English lost its needless thunder, and the graceful French acquired greater strength. Both languages, too, in the process of inter-penetration, lost much of their inflection, so that English has become the most flexible of modern tongues, encumbered by few forms and rules. The total result of this union of Old English and Norman-French has been a language without equal as a sensitive instrument for literature. That, as much as anything else, explains why England's particular contribution to western civilization has been her poetry.

The Norman Conquest effected a reorganization of English society. The years preceding the Conquest had witnessed a gradual decay of the Old English order, and William was thus enabled the more readily to force by his sword a feudal system upon the country. Confiscating the land, the Conqueror redistributed it in the form of large estates to his more powerful lords; and lesser soldiers also shared in the spoils. But all these gifts came from the hand of the king, and placed the lords of the land under fealty to him. When the large estates were divided among the tenants, the latter were thus likewise bound in service to the lords. The feudal tenant, bareheaded, had to take the oath of becoming the lord's liege man "for life and limb and earthly regard," and swore to be faithful "for life and death." Thus the king by the very structure of feudalism had centralized English society in his own person.

It was a structure that inevitably doomed the traditions of Old English literature. The old heroic poetry had been made to immortalize exploits dear to the memory of the race; the new poetry was made for the entertainment of a court. In feudal society, the family of the lord of the manor was the nucleus of cultural interest. The necessities of life were provided by the labor of his tenants; his own duties consisted in his being ready to fight for his superior in the feudal scale. He was a man with much leisure, when at home; he did not stoop to becoming literate—reading and writing were well enough for men of the Church. Literature was for him an amusement, an escape from boredom, and he maintained his minstrel to dispel ennui and delight his guests by reciting poetry. With such an audience, literature left the "heroic" and became sophisticated and "polite" in tone.

In Provence a new impulse was given poetry by the development of Troubadour Poetry (cf. *below*)—a lyric art, light, decorative, and self-conscious. At about the same time in the North of France there appeared the poetry of the trouvères (the equivalent in northern French dialect of *troubadours*). The first creations of the trouvères bore some resemblance to the older heroic poetry. Thus *The Song of Roland* (cf. *below*), like *Beowulf*, has its base in historical fact, and sings the deeds of a hero of the people. On the other hand, all the medieval French epics (called *chansons de geste*, i.e. "songs of deeds") are products of a feudal age, and as such are conceived in the conventions of chivalry. The knightly code of *The Song of Roland* is of another civilization when compared with the simple ethics of *Beowulf.* And as time went on, the poets turned further away from the poetry of celebration towards a more refined poetry, a literature of sentiment and courtliness, aristocratic, ornate, and tending towards the artificial.

The meeting of East and West in the First (1095) and later Crusades, greatly affected the narrative art of the trouvères. *The Song of Roland* itself seems simple, direct, and primitive compared with subsequent French poetry. The Europeans' contact with Oriental magnificence and luxury, color and grace, accelerated the break with the values of the Dark Ages. The Oriental treatment of women as delicate creatures, the objects of romantic attention, also left its mark on the Christian knights; and the spread of the Provençal love poetry owes not a little to the Crusaders' experiences. Acquaintance with the East brought to Western Europe a taste for the marvelous, the imaginative, and the colorful.

The French narrative poems fall into three subject-groups: "The Matter of France," "The Matter of Britain," and "The Matter of Rome." "The Matter of France" is to be found in the epic poems dealing with the deeds of Charlemagne and his knights; of this category, the earliest of the three in time of composition, *The Song of Roland,* is the greatest. The other two classes of stories are much more imbued with feudal ideals; in them are to be found in full elaboration not only the conduct of chivalric relations, but, as well, the artifices of courtly love learned from the troubadours. They are plainly the literature of a leisured class that wishes to be entertained. "The Matter of Britain" deals with Celtic legend, particularly connected with Arthur and his knights. The medieval reinterpretations and distortions of the stories of classical antiquity, the legends about Troy being the chief, constitute "The Matter of Rome."

It must not be supposed from what we have said that popular literature was quite dead all this while. On the contrary, a fresh, pungent literature was having wide currency among the lower strata of feudal society, most important being the *fabliaux* (usually humorous stories and often aimed as satire at the clergy and women), the *beast-epics* (also put to satiric purposes, and admirably adapted to folk-lore), and the *ballads* (tragic, comic, and romantic narrative songs). But all these were communicated orally, and were not to be preserved in writing till a later date.

In short, the most important recorded literature of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of England is the aristocratic French art inspired and made by the troubadours and trouvères. Among the pieces of French literature written in England are some of considerable historical importance: Wace's *Roman de Brut* and *Roman de Rou.*

Important studies of this period are: W. H. Schofield, *History of English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer,* chapter III (1906) and J. Vising, *Anglo-Norman Language and Literature* (1923). A scholarly account of medieval French literature is to be found in Karl Voretsch, *Introduction to the Study of Old French Literature* (1931).

Middle English Literature

No traces of any literature in the English tongue are to be found for a century after the Conquest. And when, towards 1200, the first pieces of English writing did appear, they were chiefly sermons, homilies, prayers, and lives of saints—usually adapted from Latin or French. These religious works formed the bulk of English literature to the time of Chaucer. One of the earliest, the *Poema Morale* (c. 1170), urging a life of devoutness, is important for its form: it is not only the first English poem in rhymed couplets, but it also introduces the line of seven accents (the so-called "fourteener") which was to have wide currency throughout the Renaissance. A poet to use the same line, but unrhymed, is Orm in his *Ormulum* (c. 1200), a metrical translation of the Gospel, whose fantastic spelling (originating in its author's desire to record the exact values of each sound) is valuable indication of how Middle English was pronounced. The *Ancren Riwle* (1237?) is the best piece of early devotional prose: a series of careful instructions for women desirous of the ascetic life. The most vigorous religious poem of the next century is the *Handlyng Synne* (c. 1303), written in eight-syllable couplets: a collection of homilies and illustrative stories attacking luxurious clergy, greedy landlords, fashionable women, and knightly sports; particularly interesting is the vocabulary, which mixes French with English words. The taste for religious stories was perhaps responsible for the *Cursor Mundi* (1320); because most books are being made for the French and are only idle romances, the author undertakes the telling, in twenty-four thousand lines of four-stress couplets, of various Biblical tales; the number of manuscripts proves this work to have been very popular.

Of all these pious authors the identity of only one is known to us in any detail: Richard Rolle of Hampole (1290?-1349). At the age of nineteen he left Oxford to become a hermit, and his life was celebrated for its sanctity. An ardent mystic, his work is all inspired by his enthusiastic love of God. The author of many Latin and English works, he has been most remembered for a long poem, *The Pricke of Conscience*,[1] an uneven though vivid picture of the world's misery and the horrors of Hell, and on the importance to every man of the good life.

Perhaps the most beautiful of the mystical poems of the period is Thomas de Hales's *Love Rune*. Simple yet tender, and artistically wrought, the poem tells of mystic union with Christ. Its form is important, being stanzaic; each unit consists of eight lines.

Somewhat later than the religious writers, English secular poets began to make their entry on the literary scene, most of them taking the cue from what in French was amusing the feudal lords. There is some ironic justice in the fact that the first secular literature in the reawakened tongue of the old Teutons, should have been designed to immortalize an ancient Celtic hero, the Briton Arthur. The legends which had, during centuries, collected around the person of Arthur, make their first significant appearance in the Latin *History of the British Kings* (c. 1147) by the

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[1] Some recent scholars question Rolle's authorship of this poem.

Welsh chronicler Geoffrey of Monmouth. In what pretends to be history, there is chiefly fiction, including his attribution of the first British settlement to a descendant of Æneas, one Brutus. But what is of importance in Geoffrey's book is the particular attention he pays to Arthur, whom he rather amazingly makes conqueror of Pict, Scot, Anglo-Saxon, and Roman. This fabulous picture of Arthur was accepted by the Normans as historical. The first of them to make poetical capital of the Arthurian stories was the trouvère Gaimar, who added his bit to Arthur's splendor. Other French writers followed Gaimar's lead, each elaborating the legend. The Anglo-Norman, Robert Wace, made a free transcription of Geoffrey in the *Roman de Brut* (c. 1155), in which Arthur becomes the type chivalric hero. It is chiefly a paraphrasing of Wace which is the occasion (c. 1205) of the first English secular poem, Layamon's *Brut* (cf. *below*). With Layamon, who may be called the "first" English poet, the Arthurian legends become a part of English literature, in which they have played an important role in nearly every century since.

Following the *Brut*, there are a number of English narrative poems, mostly copies from the French, which we have styled *the metrical romances*. They owe their inspiration to the creations of the trouvères, and are, like their originals, concerned with knightly adventure and the aid of damsels in distress. *King Horn* (c. 1250) is a metrical romance of faithful and persevering love told with forceful directness; *Havelok the Dane* (c. 1300) deals with chivalric exploit and courage rewarded; *Guy of Warwick* (c. 1300) is somewhat religious in its account of a hero who leaves his wife so that he may deserve her love by noble achievement; and *Sir Bevis of Hampton* (c. 1300) is filled with characters and incidents confusingly thrown together to exhibit the prowess of a bold knight. If these did nothing more than pave the way for the later metrical romance, the beautiful *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, they served a noble function. For taken in terms of their own worth, these earlier romances fall short of their French antecedents in artistry. The reason is plain. It was not till the time of Chaucer that the English language had won its final victory over the French; in the thirteenth century courtly readers still preferred their literature in French. These English romances, therefore, aimed at a more popular audience. They did strive, it is true, after the tone of "high life"; they did incorporate the wonderful, the sentimental, and the magical. But the English audience, lower in the social scale, had less patience with refinements of style and subtleties of sentiment. The English romances, in consequence, are coarser than the French, more rapid in the telling, though just as unreal. They are superior only in their occasional insetting of descriptions of scenery, details which give them a kind of homeliness lacking in the French. So far as the versification goes, it is generally crude, however important to the future of English verse.

This absence of artifice is to be seen also in the first English lyrics (cf. *below*) extant. The French troubadours (cf. *below*) had evolved a highly elaborate lyric art in which the system of Courtly Love was developed—a complex system we can describe here only briefly. In feudal society marriage was too much bound up with matters of property and inheritance to be concerned with love; among the nobility marriage was an affair of business. Moreover, the medieval Church was not interested in encouraging romantic passion as a virtue. It is only in more recent times that marriage has been linked with romance. The channel provided by the Middle Ages for the expression of romantic attachment was the system of Courtly Love, originating, among the aristocracy, and having little relation to the everyday life of humbler folk. According to the conventions of Courtly Love, the poet is always the abject lover of his lady (usually the wife of some lord), and exemplifies in himself the virtues of complete obedience to her will, silence to her rebukes, consciousness of his unworthiness to have her return his love, and despair over his unsatisfied longing. "Humility, Courtesy, Adultery, and the Religion of Love," says a critic, are the characteristics of the system. The husband is never considered; if there is an enemy, it is a rival poet. The whole arrangement was often a game to amuse a noble lady; but undoubtedly it sometimes masked a real situation.

The Courtly Love poetry was to have an important influence on many great European lyrists, including Dante, Petrarch, and Chaucer. But the earliest English lyrics, though shaped by French form and sentiment, are notably free from artifice. Freshness and truth are in their welcome of the spring after hard winter, and sincerity in their protestations of love. And that seems to be because they are the poetry of the yeoman and the peasant, rather than of the courtier and the knight.

But by the fourteenth century the English language had greatly displaced French in courtly circles, and so we find later Middle English literature permeated with the traditions of Courtly Love, not only in the romances but also in such lyrics as Chaucer's. As the language gained in aristocratic favor, the literature took on the tone of its patronage. At this time, moreover, a variation of the romance, the Allegory, was already a form of great importance, and had become the most characteristic expression of Courtly Love ideals. In it virtues, vices, passions, and desires were personified; and thus all the subtleties of Courtly Love could be presented concretely. By far the most significant allegory of the Middle Ages was the French *Romance of the Rose* (cf. *below*). Against a setting of refinement and leisure, the first part of the poem presents the idealized life of love, singing, and dancing. The work had an enormous influence, and was translated into most European tongues. Chaucer, who himself translated part of it, shows everywhere its effect upon him. And *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is one of the great English poems that follow in its tradition. Even a satire so removed in purpose and subject as Langland's *Vision of Piers Plowman* adopts its personifications and its device of a dream-vision, as does the exquisite elegy *The Pearl.*

And here we have named the four great contributions to poetry in the fourteenth century, when English became at last the undisputed medium for the literature of Britain: *The Pearl, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Vision of Piers Plowman,* and the work of Chaucer. *The Pearl* (c. 1370), the first English elegy, a moving lament on the death of a little girl, is a mystical dream-allegory written in a complicated twelve-line stanza that employs both alliteration and rhyme; the poet, falling asleep at the grave of his lost Margaret, is transported in his dream to a radiant land where by her direction he has sight of the city of Heaven. It has been argued that the same anonymous poet is also author of the finest of the allegories, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (cf. *below*), which sets forth the qualities of the perfect knight. It is one of the most precious gems in our literature. Far different is the preoccupation with the injustices suffered by common-folk, to be read in the vigorous *Vision of Piers Plowman* (cf. *below*); yet even in this courageous pioneering the ties, as we have said, with French literature are to be seen. Finally, there stands the unique achievement of Chaucer, the first giant in English literature, the poet who, at once, embodies the tendencies of his time and far outdistances them.

The record of Middle English literature has been, thus far, one in which the populace finds little voice. And indeed the literature of the Church and of Chivalry, from the homily to the allegory, has little to do with the average man's daily experiences or interests. Nevertheless there were two important bodies of literature which found their patronage among the common people: the drama and the ballads. Arising in connection with services in the Church, the earliest drama developed in the hands of the clergy; but in the fourteenth century grocers, glovers, water-drawers, dyers, cappers, thatchers, tailors, cooks, and other tradesmen were putting aside their crafts on festival-days to enact for their fellow-citizens plays, whose themes were taken from the Bible and the lives of saints (cf. Introduction to *Everyman*). These were humble beginnings out of which grew one of the chief glories of English literature, its drama.

The Ballads (cf. *below*) form the second significant portion of Middle English popular literature. Many lovers of literature find them without rival in interest. Certainly they present a wide variety of appeal, for they include subjects that are tragic, heroic, romantic, humorous, and fanciful. They possess, in addition, a kind of charm peculiar to themselves—a delightful mixing of the crudely simple with the strangely subtle.

Chaucer died in 1400, a year that ushered in a fairly unproductive century in our literature. His genius cast its shadow over his successors, many of whom were content to imitate him. But there was a more vital reason why the fifteenth century is so uninteresting to the student of letters: England was torn by long civil strife during the War of the Roses. In the midst of such stress there was little leisure or desire for poetry among its patrons. The significant literature of this period is almost limited to the popular drama and the ballads. Of the fifteenth century courtly writers only one is of great importance, Thomas Malory. His *Morte Darthur,* a retelling of many of the Arthurian legends, is perhaps our first piece of great literary prose. It has been, moreover, the source-book for later writers on Arthur and his knights.

The end of the War of the Roses marks as well the termination of the English Middle Ages. After the peace, powerful new forces began to operate on English life, and new philosophies gave birth to a new literature.

In addition to the bibliographies in the various Introductions to this section, the following books are recommended:

J. E. Wells, *Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1400,* a full bibliography of the period; C. S. Baldwin, *English Medieval Literature* (1914); W. P. Ker, *English Literature, Medieval* (1912); and W. H. Schofield, *History of English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer* (1906)—excellent historical studies.

E. Verrier, *Richard Rolle* (1930); F. J. Furnivall, *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints* (1862).

J. D. Bruce, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance* (1923); C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* (1938); I. Gollancz, *The Pearl* (1921).

E. K. Chambers, *The English Folk Play* (1932); P. Kirwan, *The Dawn of English Drama* (1920); and K. Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (1933).

Three splendid collections of medieval lyrics have been made by Carleton Brown, *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century* (1932), *Religious Lyrics of the Fourteenth Century* (1924), and *Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century* (1939).

THE SONG OF ROLAND

(*Translated by John O'Hagan*)

We are told by the chronicler William of Malmesbury (d. 1142?) that when William, Duke of Normandy, dressed himself for battle at fateful Hastings, he began to sing "the song of Roland, that the warlike example of that man might stimulate the soldiers." Elsewhere the picture has been painted of the court singer, Taillefer, tossing up his sword like a dexterous *jongleur* as he rode at the head of the French forces, while he lustily chanted verses from *The Song of Roland.* Perhaps nothing could better typify than that picture all the new spirit of gallantry about to conquer Teuton England. Modern French scholars doubt that the poem could have been written in its present form much before 1100; but if it be true that the old chronicler was therefore guilty of fabrication, his imaginings have none the less presented the fundamental fact that a romantic, brilliant poetry was destined to effect great changes on English writing. Composed before or soon after the Norman Conquest, *The Song of Roland* was being sung and read by the victorious French all over England in the twelfth century.

The epic is based upon the historic expedition of Charlemagne against Emir Abderrahman of Spain in 778. On its journey home, the army of Charlemagne was attacked in a pass of the Pyrenees, and the rearguard was destroyed by bands of the Basques. Before legend had done with this unimportant skirmish, the scene of conflict had become as important as Troy had been to the Greeks. Of all the knights who fell there, it was Roland who emerged in song as the great hero. To dignify the story, the number of troops on both sides was greatly increased.

The story is a clear one. Roland has been left behind by Charlemagne in charge of 20,000, including the best of the French knights. Among the leaders are: Olivier, renowned for wisdom just as his dearest friend Roland is renowned for courage; Ganelon, the traitor; and the Archbishop Turpin. The French are attacked at Roncevaux in the defiles of the Pyrenees, through the treachery of Ganelon, by a vastly superior number of the Saracens. In vain Olivier pleads with Roland to send for aid. The hero refuses until it is too late to save himself and his army. Wounded, he blows his horn to summon Charlemagne. The passage we quote recounts his last combat and death. (It should be remembered that while the translator has chosen to use rhymed couplets, *The Song of Roland* is written in assonance—a device not common in English verse.)

The Song of Roland is entirely feudal in setting. Though we find none of the elegant manners of later medieval knights, the characters are barons and vassals of the Great Charles. But the traits of older heroic story linger. The heroes are strong and rough rather than "gentle," their family ties are almost tribal, and of the tender influence of women there is little mention. The tone is simple, unsophisticated, and often naive, though technically the poem has been composed with rare artistry.

The unifying theme of the poem is that of Christian knightly valor. From such a viewpoint it may be compared profitably with the Old English masterpiece, *Beowulf.* Both epics originate in a desire to celebrate a great hero's deeds, an impulse common to all heroic poetry; and both have the vigor and force of style that such a desire would exact. But the differences between the two are more remarkable than the resemblances. "To turn from *Beowulf,*" says M. Legouis, "to the *Chanson de Roland* is to come out of the darkness into light." Just as Old English poetry dealt typically with the gloomy, the dark, and the unhappy, so *The Song of Roland* is irradiated with sunlight dazzling on helm, shield, and spear, and with the clear light of noonday. The hero himself is a knight of clear laughing countenance. Colors flash through the descriptions of the hosts. The knights sit on "white silk stuffs" noisily playing at games. The Archbishop Turpin himself mocks the monk who is endlessly praying. The Old English loved the blood and the grimness of battle. Roland's peers seem to delight in the excitement and the color of knightly conflict. In the deaths of Beowulf and Roland similarities of tone may be noted, for their deaths are great losses to their people. But in the Old English poem there is no relief to the sadness and gloom; while in the background of the French epic there are grass, shining marble terraces, and the shade of pine trees. These distinctions are the more remarkable when it is remembered that *The Song of Roland* is neither ornate nor artificial as later medieval French poetry was to become. Both epics are of the heroic kind; their differences come from differences of culture and language.

They are differences which will give a clear idea of that new world of experience which the French conquerors brought to bear on English life and letters. By the time Chaucer was writing, the Old English traditions had become interfused with those of the French. English literature as we know it, is a healthy offspring of Teutonic and Norman-French parentage.

When Roland saw that life had fled,
And with face to earth his comrade dead,
He thus bewept him, soft and still:
"Ah, friend, thy prowess wrought thee ill!
So many days and years gone by
We lived together, thou and I:
And thou hast never done me wrong,
Nor I to thee, our lifetime long.
Since thou art dead, to live is pain."
He swooned on Veillantif[1] again,
Yet may not unto earth be cast,
His golden stirrups held him fast.

When passed away had Roland's swoon,
With sense restored, he saw full soon
What ruin lay beneath his view.
His Franks have perished all save two—
The archbishop and Walter of Hum alone.
From the mountain-side hath Walter flown,
Where he met in battle the bands of Spain,
And the heathen won and his men were slain.
In his own despite to the vale he came;
Called unto Roland, his aid to claim.
"Ah, count! brave gentleman, gallant peer!
Where art thou? With thee I know not fear,
I am Walter, who vanquished Maelgut of yore,
Nephew to Drouin, the old and hoar.
For knightly deeds I was once thy friend.
I fought the Saracen to the end;
My lance is shivered, my shield is cleft,
Of my broken mail are but fragments left.
I bear in my body eight thrusts of spear;
I die, but I sold my life right dear."
Count Roland heard as he spake the word,
Pricked his steed, and anear him spurred.

"Walter," said Roland, "thou hadst affray
With the Saracen foe on the heights today.
Thou wert wont a valorous knight to be:
A thousand horsemen gave I thee;
Render them back, for my need is sore."
"Alas, thou seest them never more!
Stretched they lie on the dolorous ground,
Where myriad Saracen swarms we found,—
Armenians, Turks, and the giant brood
Of Balisa, famous for hardihood,
Bestriding their Arab Coursers fleet,
Such host in battle 'twas ours to meet;
Nor vaunting thence shall the heathen go,—
Full sixty thousand on earth lie low.
With our brands of steel we avenged us well,
But every Frank by the foeman fell.
My hauberk plates are riven wide,
And I bear such wounds in flank and side,
That from every part the bright blood flows,
And feebler ever my body grows.
I am dying fast, I am well aware:
Thy liegeman I, and claim thy care.
If I fled perforce, thou wilt forgive,
And yield me succor while thou dost live."
Roland sweated with wrath and pain,
Tore the skirts of his vest in twain,
Bound Walter's every bleeding vein.

In Roland's sorrow his wrath arose,
Hotly he struck at the heathen foes,
Nor left he one of a score alive;
Walter slew six, the archbishop five.
The heathens cry, "What a felon three!
Look to it, lords, that they shall not flee.
Dastard is he who confronts them not;
Craven, who lets them depart this spot."
Their cries and shoutings begin once more,
And from every side on the Franks they pour.
Count Roland in sooth is a noble peer;
Count Walter, a valorous cavalier;
The archbishop, in battle proved and tried,
Each struck as if knight there were none beside.
From their steeds a thousand Saracens leap,
Yet forty thousand their saddles keep;
I trow they dare not approach them near,
But they hurl against them lance and spear,
Pike and javelin, shaft and dart.
Walter is slain as the missiles part;
The archbishop's shield in pieces shred,
Riven his helm, and pierced his head;
His corselet of steel they rent and tore;
Wounded his body with lances four;
His steed beneath him dropped withal:
What woe to see the archbishop fall!

When Turpin felt him flung to ground,
And four lance wounds within him found,
He swiftly rose, the dauntless man,
To Roland looked, and nigh him ran.
Spake but, "I am not overthrown—
Brave warrior yields with life alone."

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[1] his horse.

He drew Almace's burnished steel,
A thousand ruthless blows to deal.
In after time, the Emperor said
He found four hundred round him spread,—
Some wounded, others cleft in twain;
Some lying headless on the plain.
So Giles the saint, who saw it, tells,
For whom High God wrought miracles.
In Laon cell the scroll he wrote;
He little weets who knows it not.

Count Roland combateth nobly yet,
His body burning and bathed in sweat;
In his brow a mighty pain, since first,
When his horn he sounded, his temple burst;
But he yearns of Karl's approach to know,
And lifts his horn once more—but oh!
How faint and feeble a note to blow!
The Emperor listened, and stood full still.
"My lords," he said, "we are faring ill.
This day is Roland my nephew's last;
Like dying man he winds that blast.
On! Who would aid, for life must press.
Sound every trump our ranks possess."
Peal sixty thousand clarions high,
The hills re-echo, the vales reply.
It is now no jest for the heathen band.
"Karl!" they cry, "it is Karl at hand!"

They said, " 'Tis the Emperor's advance,
We hear the trumpets resound of France.
If he assail us, hope in vain;
If Roland live, 'tis war again,
And we lose for aye the land of Spain."
Four hundred in arms together drew,
The bravest of the heathen crew;
With serried power they on him press,
And dire in sooth is the count's distress.

When Roland saw his coming foes,
All proud and stern his spirit rose;
Alive he shall never be brought to yield:
Veillantif spurred he across the field,
With golden spurs he pricked him well,
To break the ranks of the infidel;
Archbishop Turpin by his side.
"Let us flee, and save us," the heathen cried;
"These are the trumpets of France we hear—
It is Karl, the mighty Emperor, near."

Count Roland never hath loved the base,
Nor the proud of heart, nor the dastard race,—
Nor knight, but if he were vassal good,—
And he spake to Turpin, as there he stood;
"On foot are you, on horseback I;
For your love I halt, and stand you by.
Together for good and ill we hold;
I will not leave you for man of mold.
We will pay the heathen their onset back,
Nor shall Durindana of blows be slack."
"Base," said Turpin, "who spares to smite:
When the Emperor comes, he will all requite."

The heathens said, "We were born to shame.
This day for our disaster came:
Our lords and leaders in battle lost,
And Karl at hand with his marshaled host;
We hear the trumpets of France ring out,
And the cry 'Montjoie!' their rallying shout.
Roland's pride is of such a height,
Not to be vanquished by mortal wight;
Hurl we our missiles, and hold aloof."
And the word they spake, they put in proof,—
They flung, with all their strength and craft,
Javelin, barb, and plumed shaft.
Roland's buckler was torn and frayed,
His cuirass broken and disarrayed,
Yet entrance none to his flesh they made.
From thirty wounds Veillantif bled,
Beneath his rider they cast him, dead;
Then from the field have the heathen flown:
Roland remaineth, on foot, alone.

The heathens fly in rage and dread;
To the land of Spain have their footsteps sped;
Nor can Count Roland make pursuit—
Slain is his steed, and he rests afoot;
To succor Turpin he turned in haste,
The golden helm from his head unlaced,
Ungirt the corselet from his breast,
In stripes divided his silken vest;
The archbishop's wounds hath he staunched and bound,
His arms around him softly wound;
On the green sward gently his body laid,
And, with tender greeting, thus him prayed:
"For a little space, let me take farewell;
Our dear companions, who round us fell,
I go to seek; if I haply find,
I will place them at thy feet reclined."
"Go," said Turpin; "the field is thine—
To God the glory, 'tis thine and mine."

Alone seeks Roland the field of fight,
He searcheth vale, he searcheth height.
Ivon and Ivor he found, laid low,

And the Gascon Engelier of Bordeaux,
Gerein and his fellow in arms, Gerier;
Otho he found, and Berengier;
Samson the duke, and Anseis bold,
Gerard of Roussillon, the old.
Their bodies, one after one, he bore,
And laid them Turpin's feet before.
The archbishop saw them stretched arow,
Nor can he hinder the tears that flow;
In benediction his hands he spread:
"Alas! for your doom, my lords," he said,
"That God in mercy your souls may give,
On the flowers of Paradise to live;
Mine own death comes, with anguish sore.
That I see mine Emperor never more."

Once more to the field doth Roland wend,
Till he findeth Olivier, his friend;
The lifeless form to his heart he strained,
Bore him back with what strength remained,
On a buckler laid him, beside the rest,
The archbishop assoiled them all, and blessed.
Their dole and pity anew find vent,
And Roland maketh his fond lament:
"My Olivier, my chosen one,
Thou wert the noble Duke Renier's son,
Lord of the March unto River vale.
To shiver lance and shatter mail,
The brave in council to guide and cheer,
To smite the miscreant foe with fear,—
Was never on earth such cavalier."
Dead around him his peers to see,
And the man he loved so tenderly,
Fast the tears of Count Roland ran,
His visage discolored became, and wan,
He swooned for sorrow beyond control.
"Alas," said Turpin, "how great thy dole!"

To look on Roland swooning there,
Surpassed all sorrow he ever bare;
He stretched his hand, the horn he took,—
Through Roncesvalles there flowed a brook,—
A draught to Roland he thought to bring;
But his steps were feeble and tottering,
Spent his strength, from waste of blood,—
He struggled on for scarce a rood,
When sank his heart, and drooped his frame,
And his mortal anguish on him came.

Roland revived from his swoon again;
On his feet he rose, but in deadly pain;
He looked on high, and he looked below,
Till, a space his other companions fro,
He beheld the baron, stretched on sward,
The archbishop, vicar of God our Lord.
Mea Culpa[2] was Turpin's cry,
While he raised his hands to heaven on high,
Imploring Paradise to gain.
So died the soldier of Carlemaine,—
With word or weapon, to preach or fight,
A champion ever of Christian right,
And a deadly foe of the infidel.
God's benediction within him dwell!

When Roland saw him stark on earth
(His very vitals were bursting forth,
And his brain was oozing from out his head),
He took the fair white hands outspread,
Crossed and clasped them upon his breast,
And thus plaint to the dead addressed,—
So did his country's law ordain:—
"Ah, gentleman of noble strain,
I trust thee unto God the True,
Whose service never man shall do
With more devoted heart and mind:
To guard the faith, to win mankind,
From the apostles' day till now,
Such prophet never rose as thou.
Nor pain or torment thy soul await,
But of Paradise the open gate."

Roland feeleth his death is near,
His brain is oozing by either ear.
For his peers he prayed—God keep them well;
Invoked the angel Gabriel.
That none reproach him, his horn he clasped;
His other hand Durindana[3] grasped;
Then, far as quarrel[4] from crossbow sent,
Across the march of Spain he went,
Where, on a mound, two trees between,
Four flights of marble steps were seen;
Backward he fell, on the field to lie;
And he swooned anon, for the end was nigh.

High were the mountains and high the trees,
Bright shone the marble terraces;
On the green grass Roland hath swooned away.
A Saracen spied him where he lay:
Stretched with the rest he had feigned him dead,
His face and body with blood bespread.
To his feet he sprang, and in haste he hied,—
In pride and wrath he was overbold,—
And on Roland, body and arms, laid hold.

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[2] My Sin (the beginning of a confession).
[3] his sword.
[4] an arrow with a four-edged head.

"The nephew of Karl is overthrown!
To Araby bear I this sword, mine own."
He stooped to grasp it, but as he drew,
Roland returned to his sense anew.

He saw the Saracen seize his sword;
His eyes he oped, and he spake one word—
"Thou art not one of our band, I trow,"
And he clutched the horn he would ne'er forego;
On the golden crest he smote him full,
Shattering steel and bone and skull,
Forth from his head his eyes he beat,
And cast him lifeless before his feet.
"Miscreant, makest thou then so free,
As, right or wrong, to lay hold on me?
Who hears it will deem thee a madman born;
Behold the mouth of mine ivory horn
Broken for thee, and the gems and gold
Around its rim to earth are rolled."

Roland feeleth his eyesight reft,
Yet he stands erect with what strength is left;
From his bloodless cheek is the hue dispelled,
But his Durindana all bare he held.
In front a dark brown rock arose—
He smote upon it ten grievous blows.
Grated the steel as it struck the flint,
Yet it brake not, nor bore its edge one dint.
"Mary, Mother, be thou mine aid!
Ah, Durindana, my ill-starred blade,
I may no longer thy guardian be!
What fields of battle I won with thee!
What realms and regions 'twas ours to gain,
Now the lordship of Carlemaine!
Never shalt thou possessor know
Who would turn from face of mortal foe;
A gallant vassal so long thee bore,
Such as France the free shall know no more."

He smote anew on the marble stair.
It grated, but breach nor notch was there.
When Roland found that it would not break,
Thus he his plaint to make.
"Ah, Durindana, how fair and bright
Thou sparklest, flaming against the light!
When Karl in Maurienne valley lay,
God sent his angel from heaven to say—
'This sword shall a valorous captain's be,'
And he girt it, the gentle king, on me.
With it I vanquished Poitou and Maine,
Provence I conquered and Aquitaine;
I conquered Normandy the free,
Anjou, and the marches of Brittany;
Romagna I won, and Lombardy,
Bavaris, Flanders from side to side,
And Burgundy, and Poland wide;
Constantinople affiance vowed,
And the Saxon soil to his bidding bowed;
Scotia, and Wales, and Ireland's plain,
Of England made he his own domain.
What mighty regions I won of old,
For the hoary-headed Karl to hold!
But there presses on me a grievous pain,
Lest thou in heathen hands remain.
O God our Father, keep France from stain!"

His strokes once more on the brown rock fell,
And the steel was bent past words to tell;
Yet it brake not, nor was notched the grain,
Erect it leaped to the sky again.
When he failed at the last to break his blade,
His lamentation he inly made.
"Oh, fair and holy, my peerless sword,
What relics lie in thy pommel stored!
Tooth of Saint Peter, Saint Basil's blood,
Hair of Saint Denis beside them strewed,
Fragment of holy Mary's vest.
'Twere shame that thou with the heathen rest;
Thee should the hand of a Christian serve
One who would never in battle swerve.
What regions won I with thee of yore,
The empire now of Karl the hoar!
Rich and mighty is he therefore."
That death was on him he knew full well;
Down from his head to his heart it fell.
On the grass beneath a pine-tree's shade,
With face to earth, his form he laid,
Beneath him placed he his horn and sword,
And turned his face to the heathen horde.
Thus hath he done the sooth to show,
That Karl and his warriors all may know,
That the gentle count a conqueror died.
Mea Culpa full oft he cried;
And, for all his sins, unto God above,
In sign of penance, he raised his glove.

Roland feeleth his hour at hand;
On a knoll he lies towards the Spanish land.
With one hand beats he upon his breast:
"In thy sight, O God, be my sins confessed.
From my hour of birth, both the great and small,
Down to this day, I repent of all."
As his glove he raised to God on high,
Angels of heaven descend him nigh.

Beneath a pine was his resting-place,
To the land of Spain hath he turned his face,

On his memory rose full many a thought—
Of the lands he won and the fields he fought;
Of his gentle France, of his kin and line;
Of his nursing father, King Karl benign;—
He may not the tear and sob control,
Nor yet forgets he his parting soul.
To God's compassion he makes his cry:
"O Father true, who canst not lie,
Who didst Lazarus raise unto life again,
And Daniel shield in the lions' den;
Shield my soul from its peril, due
For the sins I sinned my lifetime through."
He did his right-hand glove uplift—
Saint Gabriel took from his hand the gift;
Then drooped his head upon his breast,
And with clasped hands he went to rest.
God from on high sent down to him
One of his angel Cherubim—
Saint Michael of Peril of the sea,
Saint Gabriel in company—
From heaven they came for that soul of price,
And they bore it with them to Paradise.

TROUBADOUR POETRY

In medieval French the form for the word *yes* (modern French *oui*) was *oc* in the South of France and *oïl* in the North. Hence the dialects of these two regions have been designated respectively as the *langue d'oc* and the *langue d'oïl*. It was in the *langue d'oc* that the first lyric poetry of the middle ages was sung. Provence was the chief literary center of Europe from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries. The Provençal poets, the troubadours, developing the songs of country people into a very conscious and often artificial form, introduced into modern poetry the note of romantic attachment so foreign to Old English poetry. Tenderness and passion appeared in the troubadour lyrics as a new note. Though few of these songs have high literary merit, the troubadour's influence spread to the *langue d'oïl*, and thus into the poetry of the Norman conquerors, as well as into that of the Italian, Catalonian, Spanish, and German languages.

Himself in a servile position, the troubadour sang an art intended for the pleasure of the feudal lord at whose court he entertained, and his songs were often addressed as compliments to the wife of his patron. His situation naturally inclined him to address the lady of his songs with complete self-abasement; and the adoration for women which chivalry had made the rule, also tended to make his tone one of homage. A very elaborate set of rules, matched by the careful form of the verses, developed in the troubadour's craft. The lover, in the poems, is always patient and discreet; his lady, no matter how well known she actually was, must be theoretically anonymous or equipped with a pseudonym. The songs tell of the poet's love for an incomparable, unapproachable lady, the wife of someone else; they express hope for a reciprocation of affection, or complain of the cruelty of the lady or of love itself.

Bernart de Ventadorn (born 1125?), a son of peasants, became one of the greatest of the troubadours. In the service of Henry of Anjou, he went with his master to England when Henry became King of that country. His songs have a ring of sincerity rare in these poems, and his diction is unaffected and graceful.

The anonymous song which Frances Winwar has admirably translated for us belongs to a special type known as the *alba or aubade* (song of the dawn). In the *alba* the lovers always are fearful of the coming of dawn which must separate them; there is also usually the fiction of the watcher on the tower who warns the lovers of the coming of daybreak. The refrain is characteristic. It is interesting to note that the *alba* survives in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (III, 5, lines 1 seq.) where, by a beautiful transformation, the lark is made the watcher in the sky who warns Romeo to be gone.

H. J. Chaytor's *The Troubadours and England* (1923) is an excellent study.

BERNART OF VENTADORN (c. 1125—?)

TROUBADOUR SONG

(*Translated by Bernard D. N. Grebanier*)

'Tis no wonder if my songs
  Are the best songs sung
Since to Love my heart belongs;
  Love my harp has strung.
Heart and body, mind and soul,
  Strength, and pow'r, and wit
I have giv'n to Love's control;
  Naught else counts a whit.

Dead he is within whose core
  Is not love's taste sweet;
Sans love life's a bore,—
  Such a life's a cheat.
Lord of Heaven! Fate me not
  To live a month or hour

Desireless, love-forgot,
  Wearisome and sour!

Deepest faith and purest truth
  My lady takes from me;
Tears and sighs I give, in sooth—
  Gone's tranquillity.
What's to do? Love does me seize,
  Locks in dungeon low;
Mercy is the key that frees,—
  Mercy she'll not show!

Love my heart doth wound so sweet
  With its gentle savor;
Hundred deaths do I repeat,—
  And wake to joy the braver!
Yes, my grief is fair to see;
  I hold my grief adored;
So good is my grief to me,
  Good too the reward!

Lord! if we true love could know
  From false distinguishèd!
If liars, knaves were forced to grow
  Horns upon their head!
Had I all the world's bright gold,
  She should have it all;
So the tale might I unfold
  How I am her thrall.

Cheeks of mine no color take,
  Pale with fear I go,
As a leaf in wind I shake,
  Eyes and face not glow.
Silly I, and puerile,
  Quite by love o'erthrown.
Lady you must pity smile
  On me thus undone.

Nothing do I ask of you
  But to be your slave;
I will serve in manner true,—
  Take whate'er you gave.
Your command now see me swear,
  Humble, courteous;
You're not lion or savage bear
  To kill me helpless thus.

To my Dear, I send this song,
Hoping it will do no wrong.

Forgive, if I have tarried long.

ANONYMOUS

TROUBADOUR ALBA

(Translated by Frances Winwar)

'Neath leafy hawthorn in a garden gay,
  Her lover by her my fair lady lay,
Till that the watcher cried: Behold the day!
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

"O would there never came an end to night
  To part me from the friend of my delight!
O would the watcher ne'er saw day nor light!
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

O fair sweet friend, let's kiss us, you and I,
  Down in the field where songsters sweetly cry,
Aye, kiss us, though the jealous one deny.
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

O fair sweet friend, a new sport let us play
  In yonder garth, where birds sing roundelay,
Till that the watcher pipe the dawning day.
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

In gentle dawnlight from the morning fair
  I saw mine own sweet friend and debonair,
And from his lips I drained a potion rare."
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

So fair my lady, of such pleasing grace,
  That many gaze upon her lovely face,
And in her heart true love holds highest place.
  Alas! Alas! the dawn—it comes too soon!

Among the first flowerings of the new English tongue, awakened from a winter of Norman domination, are several lovely songs, spontaneous and simple. In them the voice of native sincerity is not restrained by a certain artistic grace and sweetness, learned from French lyrical poetry. From the French, too, has been learned not only the charm of rhyme, but also the love of spring and flowers. We hear in the *Cuckoo Song*, whose delightful music is extant, the joy with which the peasant greets the first sound of the season of growth. In the *Spring Song*, we listen to the timeless complaint of the lover who sees all things joy in the season of mating and rebirth, while he sorrows in lacking the one he loves. *Alysoun,* quaint though we may find it, tellingly describes what lovers feel, with more ingenuousness and grace than many troubadours could command. In contrast with the brightness of these three, stands the sober reflection on the vanity of human experience of *Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt.*

It was not until the great Elizabethan age that Englishmen were again to feel the impulse to sing thus sweetly and spontaneously.

Cuckoo Song

(c. 1240)

Sumer is icumen[1] in:
  Lhude[2] sing cuccu!
Groweth sed, and bloweth[3] med,
  And springth the wude nu.[4]
    Sing cuccu!

Awe[5] bleteth after lomb;
  Lhouth[6] after calve cu;[7]
Bulluc sterteth,[8] bucke verteth,[9]
  Murie[10] sing cuccu!

Cuccu, cuccu, well singes thu, cuccu:
  Ne swike[11] thu naver nu.
Sing cuccu, nu, sing cuccu!
  Sing cuccu, sing cuccu, nu!

Spring Song (modernized)

(c. 1300)

Spring is come to town with love
With blossom and with bird in grove,
  That all this bliss now bringeth.
There are daisies in the dales;
Notes full sweet of nightingales;
  Each bird song singeth.
The throstlecock out-sings them all;
Away is fled the Winter's thrall,
  When woodrow springeth.
Then chanting birds in wondrous throng
Thrill out their joy the glades among
  Till all the woodland ringeth.

The crimson rose is seen,
New leaves of tender green
  With good-will grow,
The moon shines white and clear,
Fennel and thyme are here,
  Fair lilies blow.
Their mates the wild drakes find,
Each creature seeks his kind.
  As stream that trickles slow,
We plain when life is drear,
For cruel love the tear
  Unchecked must flow.

[1] has come.
[2] loud.
[3] blossometh.
[4] now.
[5] ewe.
[6] loweth.
[7] cow.
[8] springs up.
[9] breaks wind
[10] pleasingly.
[11] cease.

The moon sends forth her light,
The goodly sun shines bright,
And birds sing well.
Dews drench the soft young grass,
And whispering lovers pass,
Their tale to tell;
Snakes woo beneath the clod,
Women grow wondrous proud
On field and fell.
If one shall say me no
Spring joy I will forgo
And banished dwell.

Alysoun

(c. 1300)

Bytuene Mersh[1] and Averil,
When spray biginneth to springe,
The lutel foul[2] hath hire wyl
On hyre lud[3] to synge.
Ich libbe[4] in love longinge
For semlokest[5] of alle thinge.
He[6] may me blisse bringe;
Icham[7] in hire baundoun.[8]
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent,[9]
Ichot,[10] from hevene it is me sent,
From alle wymmen mi love is lent[11]
And lyht[12] on Alysoun.

On heu[13] hire her is fayr ynoh,[14]
Hire browe broune, hire eye blake,—
With lossum chere he on me loh![15]—
With middel[16] smal, and wel ymake.[17]
Bote[18] he me wolle[19] to hire take,
Forte buen[20] hire owen make,[21]
Longe to lyuen ichulle[22] forsake,
And feye[23] fallen adoun.
An hendy hap, etc.

Nihtes when y wende[24] and wake;
Forthi[25] myn wonges[26] waxeth won.[27]
Levedi,[28] al for thine sake
Longinge is ylent[29] me on.
In world nis[30] non so wytermon,[31]
That al hire bounte[32] telle con.[33]
Hire swyre[34] is whittore then the swon,
And feyrest may[35] in toune.
An hendi, etc.

Icham for wowyng[36] al forwake,[37]
Wery so water in wore,[38]
Lest eny reve[39] me my make.[40]
Ychabbe y-yerned yore,[41]
Betere is tholien whyle sore[42]
Then[43] mournen evermore.
Geynest under gore,[44]
Herkne to my roun.[45]
An hendi, etc.

Ubi Sunt Qui Ante Nos Fuerunt?[1]

(c. 1350)

Were beth[2] they that biforen us weren,
Houndes ladden[3] and havekes beren,[4]
And hadden feld and wode?
The riche levedies[5] in here[6] bour,[7]
That wereden gold in here tressour,[8]
With here brighte rode;[9]

Eten and drounken, and maden hem glad;
Here lif was al with gamen[10] y-lad,
Men kneleden hem[11] biforen;
They beren hem wel swithe heye;[12]
And in a twincling of an eye
Here soules weren forloren.[13]

---

[1] March. [2] little bird. [3] language. [4] I live.
[5] fairest. [6] she. [7] I am. [8] power.
[9] I have received a good fortune. [10] I know.
[11] taken away. [12] placed. [13] color. [14] enough.
[15] With loving countenance she smiled at me.
[16] waist. [17] made. [18] unless. [19] will.
[20] to be. [21] mate. [22] I shall. [23] doomed.
[24] turn. [25] therefore. [26] cheeks. [27] pale, wan.

[28] lady. [29] come upon.
[30] is not. [31] wise man.
[32] goodness. [33] can tell. [34] neck. [35] maid.
[36] wooing. [37] worn out with wakefulness.
[38] Weary as water in a weir.
[39] deprive. [40] mate.
[41] I have yearned for a long time.
[42] suffer a while sorely. [43] than.
[44] loveliest one alive (literally, under a dress). [45] song

[1] Where are they who were before us?
[2] Where are. [3] led. [4] bore hawks. [5] ladies.
[6] their. [7] chamber. [8] tresses.
[9] with their fair complexions. [10] pleasures led.
[11] them. [12] They carried themselves very high.
[13] lost.

Were is that lawhing[14] and that song,
That trayling and that proude gong,[15]
Tho havekes and tho houndes?
Al that joye is went away,
That wele is comen to weylaway[16]
To manye harde stoundes.[17]

Here paradis they nomen here,[18]
And nou they lyen in helle y-fere;[19]
The fyr hit brennes[20] evere:
Long is ay, and long is o,
Long is wy, and long is wo;
Thennes ne cometh they nevere.

Layamon

(fl. 1200)

Layamon tells us of himself that he was a secular priest at the village church of King's Areley in North Worcestershire. We know little of him other than that his *Brut* is the first important English poem after the Norman Conquest, as well as the first of English writings to elaborate upon the Arthurian legends and to tell the stories of Lear and Cymbeline.

The French trouvère, Wace, had versified Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History* (cf. Introduction to *Middle English Literature, above*) in *Le Brut*, erroneously tracing the beginnings of British history from the supposed arrival of an ancient Brutus at the island. Layamon follows Wace fairly faithfully, except in the portions dealing with Arthur, where he freely introduces lively speeches and fresh incidents. His poem thus attains twice the length of Wace's. French was still the preferred language of courtly circles; it is therefore not surprising to find Layamon lacking the Frenchman's grace, since his audience must have been folk lower in the social scale. He is more direct, however, and is unashamedly enthusiastic over his subject. It is curious to note how partisan he is to the Britons, and how he dislikes the Saxons, in whose tongue he is writing.

The influence of French verse on this first English poem is interesting. Although basically Layamon's line is the Old English alliterative line with a break in the middle, he occasionally uses assonance and even rudimentary rhyme. The following passage, which coincides with the opening of our selection, will give the reader an idea of the state of English at the beginning of the thirteenth century:

Hit was in ane ȝeoldæȝe   þat Arþur in Lundene læi.
þa weoren him to icumen   of alle his kinerichen
Of Brutlonde, of Scotlonde,   of Irlonde, of Islonde,
And of al þan londe   þe Arþur hafde an honde
Alle þa hæxte þeines   mid horsen and mid sweines.
þer weoren seouen kingene sunes   mid seouen hundred cnihten icumen,
Wiþuten þan hired   þe Arþure herede.
Ælc hafde an heorte   læches hæȝe
And lette þat he weore   betere þan his ifere.
þat folc was of feole londe;   þer was muchel onde,
For þe an hine talde hæh,   þe oþer muche hærre.

(Note: þ = th; ȝ = y or g)

F. Madden edited *Brut* (1847).

From *The Brut*

The Round Table

(*Translated by Stith Thompson*)

It was a Yule Day that Arthur lay in London. Then there were come to him from all of his kingdoms, from Britain, from Scotland, from Ireland, from Iceland, and from all the lands which Arthur held, all the highest nobles with horses and with servants. There were come seven kings' sons with seven hundred knights, in addition to the host which Arthur commanded. Each one had in his heart proud thoughts and considered that he was better than his companion. The folk came from many lands; there was much envy, for one person would account himself high, another much higher.

Then they blew upon the trumpets and spread the tables. They brought water on to the floor in golden bowls; afterwards soft clothes, all of white silk. Then Arthur sat down and by him Wenhaver; next sat the earls and after them the barons; next the knights, as they were disposed in proper order. The high-born men carried the meat forthwith to the knights, then to the thanes, then to the swains, then to the porters seated at the table.

---

[14] laughing.
[15] That trailing (of garments) and that proud walk.
[16] Weal has come to woe.
[17] times.
[18] Their paradise they took here.
[19] together.
[20] burns.

The people became angered; blows there were rife. At first they threw loaves while they lasted and then silver bowls filled with wine and afterwards fists approached necks. Then there leapt forth a young man who came out of Winetland; he was given to Arthur to hold as a hostage. He was the son of Rumareth, the king of Winet. Thus said the knight then to King Arthur: "Lord Arthur, go quickly into thy chamber and thy queen with thee and thine own relatives, and we shall decide this combat against these foreign warriors."

Even with the word, he leapt to the table where lay the knives before the king of the people. Three knives he grasped and with the one he smote in the neck the knight who first began that fight, so that his head fell on the floor to the ground. Soon he slew another, the same knight's brother; before the swords came, he killed seven. There was a fight exceedingly great; each man smote another. There was great bloodshed; mischief was abroad among the folk.

Then came the king out of his chamber; with him a hundred nobles with helms and with burnies; each bore in his right hand a white steel brand. Then called out Arthur, noblest of kings: "Sit ye! Sit ye quickly, each man on his life! And whoever will not do so, he shall be put to death. Take me that same man who first began this fight and put a withy on his neck and draw him to a moor and put him in a low fen and there he shall lie. And take all his nearest kin that ye may find and strike off their heads with your broad swords. For the women of his nearest kin that ye may find, carve off their noses and let their beauty go to destruction; and so I will entirely destroy the race that he came of. And if I evermore afterward hear that any of my people, of high or of low, again raise up strife on account of this same slaughter, there will not suffice to ransom him neither gold nor any treasure, fine horses nor war garment, so that he should not meet his death or be drawn to pieces with horses, the lawful punishment for traitors.

Bring now the relics and I will swear upon them. And so, knights, shall ye also who were at this fight, earls and barons, that ye will not break it."

First swore Arthur, noblest of kings; next swore the earls; next swore the barons; next swore the thanes; next swore the swains, that they would never more raise strife.

Men took all the dead and carried them to the burial place. Afterwards they blew the trumpets with exceeding merry sound. Whether it pleased him or not, each man took water and cloth and afterwards sat down reconciled at the table, all for dread of Arthur, noblest of kings. Cupbearers there thronged, gleemen there sang, harps began to resound: the people were in joy. Thus fully seven nights was all the folk treated.

Afterwards it says in the tale that the king went to Cornwall; there came to him anon one who was a crafty workman and met the king and greeted him fairly: "Hail be thou, Arthur, noblest of kings! I am thine own man; through many a land have I gone. I know about carpentry wondrous many crafts. I heard report beyond the sea of new tidings, that thy knights fought at thy table; on a midwinter's day many fell there, for their great pride brought about murderous conflict and because of their high lineage each one would be inside. But I shall make thee a table exceeding fair and at it there may sit sixteen hundred and more, all turn about, so that no man shall be outside; without and within, man against man. And when thou wilt ride thou mayest take it with thee and set it where thou wilt after thy will. And then thou needest never fear to the end of the world that ever any moody knight shall stir up fight at thy table, for there shall the high be even like the low."

Timber was caused to be brought and the table was begun. In four weeks time the work was completed.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

(*Translated by Theodore Banks*)

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is one of the finest pieces of artistry of the English Middle Ages. Masterful in construction, subordinating many colorful details to the progress of the story, it is a poem that holds its place beside anything of its kind in our literature. Not the least notable of its achievements is that it succeeds in showing the qualities of the perfect knight—chastity in the castle incident, and courage and honor in the beheading episode—without ever seeming pedantic or didactic. It is a happy combination of the best traditions of the metrical romance and of the allegory (such as *The Romance of the Rose*, cf. *below*).

To Arthur's court comes the Green Knight, challenging the knights to strike off his giant head, if any of them is bold enough to do it and to receive in exchange the same treatment from him after a year and a day. Gawain accepts the challenge and leaps to the defence of the Round Table's honor. The Green Knight picks up his head after Gawain has severed it from the body, and departs, reminding Gawain of the promise to be fulfilled. Gawain sets out on his quest, and at last, on Christmas Eve, comes upon a beautiful castle. He is entertained there for three days by the master and his lovely wife. Every day, when the master goes forth to hunt, the wife comes to Gawain to tempt him with her love. He resists her, but accepts her present of a green girdle. When Gawain comes upon his adversary, and bends his head to the axe, he receives only a surface cut. The Green Knight proves to be his host, and the wife the sorceress Morgan le Fay.

In the sweetness of its telling, this romance gives promise of the Spenser to come. The descriptions of the passing of the year are vivid and sensitive. The versification, uniting Old English and French traditions, is particularly interesting: the poem is written in stanzas of four-stress alliterative lines with five short lines in rhyme (*ababa*) at the end of each unit.

G. L. Kittredge has written a valuable *Study of Gawain and the Green Knight* (1916). We print Mr. Banks's translation in the original meter by special permission of F. S. Crofts & Co., Inc., by whom it is copyrighted (1929).

When the siege and assault ceased at Troy,[1] and the city
Was broken, and burned all to brands and to ashes,
The warrior who wove there the web of his treachery
Tried was for treason,[2] the truest on earth.
'T was Æneas, who later with lords of his lineage
Provinces quelled, and became the possessors
Of well-nigh the whole of the wealth of the West Isles.
Then swiftly to Rome rich Romulus journeyed,
And soon with great splendor builded that city,
Named with his own name, as now we still know it.
Ticius to Tuscany turns for his dwellings;
In Lombardy Langobard lifts up his homes;
And far o'er the French flood fortunate Brutus
With happiness Britain on hillsides full broad
Doth found.
War, waste, and wonder there
Have dwelt within its bound;
And bliss has changed to care
In quick and shifting round.

And after this famous knight founded his Britain,
Bold lords were bred there, delighting in battle,
Who many times dealt in destruction. More mar-

[1] A tradition widely current in the Middle Ages held that Britain was settled by Brutus, the great grandson of Æneas. In this way the British considered themselves as having ultimately descended from the Trojans.

[2] Æneas was tried by the Greeks for the treachery by

Befell in those fields since the days of their finding
Than anywhere else upon earth that I know of.
Yet of all kings who came there was Arthur most comely;
My intention is, therefore, to tell an adventure
Strange and surprising, as some men consider,
A strange thing among all the marvels of Arthur.
And if you will list to the lay for a little,
Forthwith I shall tell it, as I in the town
Heard it told
As it doth fast endure
In story brave and bold,
Whose words are fixed and sure,
Known in the land of old.

In Camelot[3] Arthur the King lay at Christmas,
With many a peerless lord princely companioned,
The whole noble number of knights of the Round Table;
Here right royally held his high revels,
Care-free and mirthful. Now much of the company,
Knightly born gentlemen, joyously jousted,
Now came to the court to make caroles;[4] so kept they
For full fifteen days this fashion of feasting,
All meat and all mirth that a man might devise
Glorious to hear was the glad-hearted gaiety,
Dancing at night, merry din in the daytime;
So found in the courts and the chambers the fortunate
Ladies and lords the delights they best loved.
In greatest well-being abode they together:
The knights whose renown was next to the Savior's,
The loveliest ladies who ever were living,
And he who held court, the most comely of kings.
For these fine folk were yet in their first flush of youth
Seated there,
The happiest of their kind,
With a king beyond compare.
It would be hard to find
A company so fair.

And now while the New Year was young were the nobles
Doubly served as they sat on the dais,
When Arthur had come to the hall with his court,
In the chapel had ceased the singing of mass;
Loud shouts were there uttered by priests and by others,
Anew praising Noel, naming it often.
Then hastened the lords to give handsel,[5] cried loudly
These gifts of the New Year, and gave them in person;
Debated about them busily, briskly.
Even though they were losers, the ladies laughed loudly,
Nor wroth was the winner, as well ye may know.
All this manner of mirth they made till meat-time,
Then when they had washed, they went to be seated,
Were placed in the way that appeared most proper,
The best men above. And Guinevere, beautiful,
Was in the midst of the merriment seated
Upon the rich dais, adorned all about:
Fine silks on all sides, and spread as a canopy
Tapestries treasured of Tars and Toulouse,
Embroidered and set with stones most splendid—
They'd prove of great price if ye pence gave to buy them
Some day.
The comeliest was the Queen,
With dancing eyes of gray.
That a fairer he had seen
No man might truly say.

But Arthur would eat not till all were attended;
Youthfully mirthful and merry in manner,
He loved well his life, and little it pleased him
Or long to be seated, or long to lie down,
His young blood and wild brain were so busy and brisk.
Moreover, the King was moved by a custom
He once had assumed in a spirit of splendor:
Never to fall to his feast on a festival
Till a strange story of something eventful
Was told him, some marvel that merited credence
Of kings, or of arms, or all kinds of adventures;
Or someone besought him to send a true knight
To join him in proving the perils of jousting
Life against life, each leaving the other
To have, as fortune would help him, the fairer lot.
This, when the King held his court, was his custom
At every fine feast 'mid his followers, freemen,
In hall.
And so with countenance clear
He stands there strong and tall,

---

[3] Arthur's capital, located by different authors at various places in southern England.

[4] ring-dances accompanied by songs.

[5] New Year's gifts.

Alert on that New Year,
And makes much mirth with all.

At his place the strong King stands in person, full courtly
Talking of trifles before the high table.[6]
There sat the good Gawain by Guinevere's side,
And Sir Agravain, he of the Hard Hand, also,
True knights, and sons of the sister of Arthur.
At the top, Bishop Baldwin the table begins,
And Ywain beside him ate, Urien's son.
On the dais these sat, and were served with distinction;
Then many a staunch, trusty man at the side tables.
The first course was served to the sharp sound of trumpets,
With numerous banners beneath hanging brightly.
Then newly the kettledrums sounded and noble pipes;
Wild and loud warbles awakened such echoes
That many a heart leaped on high at their melody.
Came then the choice meats, cates rare and costly,
Of fair and fresh food such profusion of dishes
'T was hard to find place to put by the people
The silver that carried the various stews
On the cloth.
Each to his best loved fare
Himself helps, nothing loth;
Each two, twelve dishes share,
Good beer and bright wine both.

And now I will say nothing more of their service,
For well one may know that naught there was wanted.
Now another new noise drew nigh of a sudden,
To let all the folk take their fill of the feast.
And scarcely the music had ceased for a moment,
The first course been suitably served in the court,
When a being most dreadful burst through the hall-door,
Among the most mighty of men in his measure.
From his throat to his thighs so thick were his sinews,
His loins and his limbs so large and so long,
That I hold him half-giant, the hugest of men,
And the handsomest, too, in his height, upon horseback.
Though stalwart in breast and in back was his body,
His waist and his belly were worthily small;
Fashioned fairly he was in his form, and in features
Cut clean.
Men wondered at the hue
That in his face was seen.
A splendid man to view
He came, entirely green.

All green was the man, and green were his garments:
A coat, straight and close, that clung to his sides,
A bright mantle on top of this, trimmed on the inside
With closely-cut fur, right fair, that showed clearly,
The lining with white fur most lovely, and hood too,
Caught back from his locks, and laid on his shoulders,
Neat stockings that clung to his calves, tightly stretched,
Of the same green, and under them spurs of gold shining
Brightly on bands of fine silk, richly barred;
And under his legs, where he rides, guards of leather.
His vesture was verily color of verdure:
Both bars of his belt and other stones, beautiful,
Richly arranged in his splendid array
On himself and his saddle, on silken designs.
'T would be truly too hard to tell half the trifles
Embroidered about it with birds and with flies
In gay, verdant green with gold in the middle;
The bit-studs, the crupper, the breast-trappings' pendants,
And everything metal enameled in emerald.
The stirrups he stood on the same way were colored,
His saddle-bows too, and the studded nails splendid,
That all with green gems ever glimmered and glinted.
The horse he bestrode was in hue still the same,
Indeed;
Green, thick, and of great height,
And hard to curb, a steed
In broidered bridle bright
That such a man would need.

---

[6] A table raised on a dais or platform. The most distinguished persons sat there, while others were on a lower level.

This hero in green was habited gaily,
And likewise the hair on the head of his good horse;
Fair, flowing tresses enfolded his shoulders,
And big as a bush a beard hung on his breast.
This, and the hair from his head hanging splendid,
Was clipped off evenly over his elbows,
In cut like a king's hood, covering the neck,
So that half of his arms were held underneath it.
The mane of the mighty horse much this resembled,
Well curled and combed, and with many knots covered,
Braided with gold threads about the fair green,
Now a strand made of hair, now a second of gold.
The forelock and tail were twined in this fashion,
And both of them bound with a band of bright green.
For the dock's length the tail was decked with stones dearly,
And then was tied with a thong in a tight knot,
Where many bright bells of burnished gold rang.
In the hall not one single man's seen before this
Such a horse here on earth, such a hero as on him
Goes.
That his look was lightning bright
Right certain were all those
Who saw. It seemed none might
Endure beneath his blows.

Yet the hero carried nor helmet nor hauberk,
But bare was of armor, breastplate or gorget,
Spear-shaft or shield, to thrust or to smite.
But in one hand he bore a bough of bright holly,
That grows most greenly when bare are the groves,
In the other an ax, gigantic, awful,
A terrible weapon, wondrous to tell of.
Large was the head, in length a whole ell-yard,
The blade of green steel and beaten gold both;
The bit had a broad edge, and brightly was burnished,
As suitably shaped as sharp razors for shearing.
This steel by its strong shaft the stern hero gripped:
With iron it was wound to the end of the wood,
And in work green and graceful was everywhere graven.
About it a fair thong was folded, made fast
At the head, and oft looped down the length of the handle.
To this were attached many splendid tassels,
On buttons of bright green richly embroidered.
Thus into the hall came the hero, and hastened
Direct to the dais, fearing no danger.
He gave no one greeting, but haughtily gazed,
And his first words were, "Where can I find him who governs
This goodly assemblage? for gladly that man
I would see and have speech with." So saying, from toe
To crown
On the knights his look he threw,
And rolled it up and down;
He stopped to take note who
Had there the most renown.

There sat all the lords, looking long at the stranger,
Each man of them marveling what it might mean
For a horse and a hero to have such a hue.
It seemed to them green as the grown grass, or greener,
Gleaming more bright than on gold green enamel.
The nobles who stood there, astonished, drew nearer,
And deeply they wondered what deed he would do.
Since never a marvel they'd met with like this one,
The folk all felt it was magic or phantasy.
Many great lords then were loth to give answer,
And sat stone-still, at his speaking astonished,
In swooning silence that spread through the hall.
As their speech on a sudden was still, fast asleep
They did seem.
They felt not only fright
But courtesy, I deem.
Let him address the knight,
Him whom they all esteem.

This happening the King, ever keen and courageous,
Saw from on high, and saluted the stranger
Suitably, saying, "Sir, you are welcome.
I, the head of this household, am Arthur;
In courtesy light, and linger, I pray you,
And later, my lord, we shall learn your desire."
"Nay, so help me He seated on high," quoth the hero,
"My mission was not to remain here a moment;
But, sir, since thy name is so nobly renowned,
Since thy city the best is considered, thy barons
The stoutest in steel gear that ride upon steeds,
Of all men in the world the most worthy and brave,
Right valiant to play with in other pure pastimes,
Since here, I have heard, is the highest of courtesy—

Truly, all these things have brought me at this time.
Sure ye may be by this branch that I bear
That I pass as in peace, proposing no fight.
If I'd come with comrades, equipped for a quarrel,
I have at my home both hauberk and helmet,
Shield and sharp spear, brightly shining, and other
Weapons to wield, full well I know also.
Yet softer my weeds are, since warfare I wished not;
But art thou as bold as is bruited by all,
Thou wilt graciously grant me the game that I ask for
By right."
Arthur good answer gave,
And said, "Sir courteous knight,
If battle here you crave,
You shall not lack a fight."

"Nay, I ask for no fight; in faith, now I tell thee
But beardless babes are about on this bench.
Were I hasped in my armor, and high on a horse,
Here is no man to match me, your might is so feeble.
So I crave but a Christmas game in this court;
Yule and New Year are come, and here men have courage;
If one in this house himself holds so hardy,
So bold in his blood, in his brain so unbalanced
To dare stiffly strike one stroke for another,
I give this gisarme, this rich ax, as a gift to him,
Heavy enough, to handle as pleases him;
Bare as I sit, I shall bide the first blow.
If a knight be so tough as to try what I tell,
Let him leap to me lightly; I leave him this weapon,
Quitclaim it forever, to keep as his own;
And his stroke here, firm on this floor, I shall suffer,
This boon if thou grant'st me, the blow with another
To pay;
Yet let his respite be
A twelvemonth and a day.
Come, let us quickly see
If one here aught dare say."

If at first he had startled them, stiller then sat there
The whole of the court, low and high, in the hall.
The knight on his steed turned himself in his saddle,
And fiercely his red eyes he rolled all around,
Bent his bristling brows, with green gleaming brightly,
And waved his beard, waiting for one there to rise.
And when none of the knights spoke, he coughed right noisily,
Straightened up proudly, and started to speak:
"What!" quoth the hero, "Is this Arthur's household,
The fame of whose fellowship fills many kingdoms?
Now where is your vainglory? Where are your victories?
Where is your grimness, your great words, your anger?
For now the Round Table's renown and its revel
Is worsted by one word of one person's speech,
For all shiver with fear before a stroke's shown."
Then so loudly he laughed that the lord was grieved greatly,
And into his fair face his blood shot up fiercely
For shame.
As wroth as wind he grew,
And all there did the same.
The King that no fear knew
Then to that stout man came.

And said, "Sir, by heaven, strange thy request is;
As folly thou soughtest, so shouldest thou find it.
I know that not one of the knights is aghast
Of thy great words. Give me thy weapon, for God's sake,
And gladly the boon thou hast begged I shall grant thee."
He leaped to him quickly, caught at his hand,
And fiercely the other lord lights on his feet.
Now Arthur lays hold of the ax by the handle,
As if he would strike with it, swings it round sternly.
Before him the strong man stood, in stature
A head and more higher than all in the house.
Stroking his beard, he stood with stern bearing,
And with a calm countenance drew down his coat,
No more frightened or stunned by the ax Arthur flourished
Than if on the bench someone brought him a flagon
Of wine.
Gawain by Guinevere
Did to the King incline:
"I pray in accents clear
To let this fray be mine."

"If you now, honored lord," said this knight to King Arthur,
"Would bid me to step from this bench, and to stand there
Beside you—so could I with courtesy quit then
The table, unless my liege lady disliked it—
I'd come to your aid before all your great court.
For truly I think it a thing most unseemly
So boldly to beg such a boon in your hall here,
Though you in person are pleased to fulfill it,
While here on the benches such brave ones are seated,
Than whom under heaven, I think, none are higher
In spirit, none better in body for battle.
I am weakest and feeblest in wit, I know well,
And my life, to say truth, would be least loss of any.
I only since you are my uncle have honor;
Your blood the sole virtue I bear in my body.
Unfit is this foolish affair for you. Give it
To me who soonest have sought it, and let
All this court if my speech is not seemly, decide
Without blame."
The nobles gather round,
And all advise the same:
To free the King that's crowned,
And Gawain give the game.

The King then commanded his kinsman to rise,
And quickly he rose up and came to him courteously,
Kneeled by the King, and caught the weapon,
He left it graciously, lifted his hand,
And gave him God's blessing, and gladly bade him
Be sure that his heart and his hand both were hardy.
"Take care," quoth the King, "how you start, coz, your cutting,
And truly, I think, if rightly you treat him,
That blow you'll endure that he deals you after."
Weapon in hand, Gawain goes to the hero,
Who boldly remains there, dismayed none the more.
Then the knight in the green thus greeted Sir Gawain,
"Let us state our agreement again ere proceeding.
And now first, sir knight, what your name is I beg
That you truly will tell, so in that I may trust."
"In truth," said the good knight, "I'm called Sir Gawain,
Who fetch you this blow, whatsoever befalls,
And another will take in return, this time twelvemonth,
From you, with what weapon you will; with no other
I'll go."
The other made reply:
"By my life here below,
Gawain, right glad am I
To have you strike this blow.

"By God," said the Green Knight, "Sir Gawain, it pleases me—
Here, at thy hand, I shall have what I sought.
Thou hast rightly rehearsed to me, truly and readily,
All of the covenant asked of King Arthur;
Except that thou shalt, by thy troth, sir, assure me
Thyself and none other shalt seek me, wherever
Thou thinkest to find me, and fetch thee what wages
Are due for the stroke that today thou dost deal me
Before all this splendid assembly." "Where should I,"
Said Gawain, "go look for the land where thou livest?
The realm where thy home is, by Him who hath wrought me,
I know not, nor thee, sir, thy court nor thy name.
Truly tell me thy title, and teach me the road,
And I'll use all my wit to win my way thither.
And so by my sure word truly I swear."
" 'T is enough. No more now at New Year is needed,"
The knight in the green said to Gawain the courteous:
"If truly I tell when I've taken your tap
And softly you've struck me, if swiftly I tell you
My name and my house and my home, you may then
Of my conduct make trial, and your covenant keep;
And if no speech I speak, you speed all the better:
No longer need look, but may stay in your land.
But ho!
Take your grim tool with speed,
And let us see your blow."
Stroking his ax, "Indeed,"
Said Gawain, "gladly so."

With speed then the Green Knight took up his stand,

Inclined his head forward, uncovering the flesh,
And laid o'er his crown his locks long and lovely,
And bare left the nape of his neck for the business.
His ax Gawain seized, and swung it on high;
On the floor his left foot he planted before him,
And swiftly the naked flesh smote with his weapon.
The sharp edge severed the bones of the stranger,
Cut through the clear flesh and cleft it in twain,
So the blade of the brown steel bit the ground deeply.
The fair head fell from the neck to the floor,
So that where it rolled forth with their feet many spurned it.
The blood on the green glistened, burst from the body;
And yet neither fell nor faltered the hero,
But stoutly he started forth, strong in his stride;
Fiercely he rushed 'mid the ranks of the Round Table,
Seized and uplifted his lovely head straightway;
Then back to his horse went, laid hold of the bridle,
Stepped into the stirrup and strode up aloft,
His head holding fast in his hand by the hair.
And the man as soberly sat in his saddle
As if he unharmed were, although now headless,
Instead.
His trunk around he spun,
That ugly body that bled.
Frightened was many a one
When he his words had said.

For upright he holds the head in his hand,
And confronts with the face the fine folk on the dais.
It lifted its lids, and looked forth directly,
Speaking this much with its mouth, as ye hear:
"Gawain, look that to go as agreed you are ready,
And seek for me faithfully, sir, till you find me,
As, heard by these heroes, you vowed in this hall.
To the Green Chapel go you, I charge you, to get
Such a stroke as you struck. You are surely deserving,
Sir knight, to be promptly repaid at the New Year.
As Knight of the Green Chapel many men know me;
If therefore to find me you try, you will fail not;
Then come, or be recreant called as befits thee."
With furious wrench of the reins he turned round,
And rushed from the hall-door, his head in his hands,
So the fire of the flint flew out from the foal's hoofs.
Not one of the lords knew the land where he went to,
No more than the realm whence he rushed in among them.
What then?
The King and Gawain there
At the Green Knight laughed again;
Yet this the name did bear
Of wonder among men.

Though much in his mind did the courtly King marvel,
He let not a semblance be seen, but said loudly
With courteous speech to the Queen, most comely:
"Today, my dear lady, be never alarmed;
Such affairs are for Christmas well fitted to sing of
And gaily to laugh at when giving an interlude,
'Mid all the company's caroles, most courtly.
None the less I may go now to get my meat;
For I needs must admit I have met with a marvel."
He glanced at Sir Gawain, and gladsomely said:
"Now, sir, hang up thine ax; enough it has hewn."
O'er the dais 't was placed, to hang on the dosser,[7]
That men might remark it there as a marvel,
And truly describing, might tell of the wonder.
Together these two then turned to the table,
The sovereign and good knight, and swiftly men served them
With dainties twofold, as indeed was most fitting,
All manner of meat and of minstrelsy both.
So the whole day in pleasure they passed till night fell
O'er the land.
Now take heed Gawain lest,
Fearing the Green Knight's brand,
Thou shrinkest from the quest
That thou hast ta'en in hand.

II

This sample had Arthur of strange things right early,
When young was the year, for he yearned to hear boasts.
Though such words when they went to be seated were wanting,
Yet stocked are they now with hand-fulls of stern work.
In the hall glad was Gawain those games to begin,

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[7] a tapestry wall-hanging.

But not strange it would seem if sad were the ending;
For though men having drunk much are merry in mind,
Full swift flies a year, never yielding the same,
The start and the close very seldom according.
So past went this Yule, and the year followed after,
Each season in turn succeeding the other.
There came after Christmas the crabbed Lenten,[8]
With fish and with plainer food trying the flesh;
But then the world's weather with winter contends;
Down to earth shrinks the cold, the clouds are uplifted;
In showers full warm descends the bright rain,
And falls on the fair fields. Flowers unfold;
The ground and the groves are green in their garments;
Birds hasten to build, blithesomely singing
For soft summer's solace ensuing on slopes
Everywhere.
The blossoms swell and blow,
In hedge-rows rich and rare,
And notes most lovely flow
From out the forest fair.

After this comes the season of soft winds of summer,
When Zephyrus sighs on the seeds and the green plants.
The herb that then grows in the ground is right happy,
When down from the leaves drops the dampening dew
To abide the bright sun that is blissfully shining.
But autumn comes speeding, soon grows severe,
And warns it to wax full ripe for the winter.
With drought then the dust is driven to rise,
From the face of the fields to fly to the heaven.
With the sun the wild wind of the welkin is struggling;
The leaves from the limbs drop, and light on the ground;
And withers the grass that grew once so greenly.
Then all ripens that formerly flourished, and rots;
And thus passes the year in yesterdays many,
And winter, in truth, as the way of the world is,
Draws near,
Till comes the Michaelmas[9] moon
With pledge of winter sere.
Then thinks Sir Gawain soon
Of his dread voyage drear.

Till the tide of Allhallows[10] with Arthur he tarried;
The King made ado on that day for his sake
With rich and rare revel of all of the Round Table,
Knights most courteous, comely ladies,
All of them heavy at heart for the hero.
Yet nothing but mirth was uttered, though many
Joyless made jests for that gentleman's sake.
After meat, with sorrow he speaks to his uncle,
And openly talks of his travel, saying:
"Liege lord of my life, now I ask of you leave.
You know my case and condition, nor care I
To tell of its troubles even a trifle.
I must, for the blow I am bound to, tomorrow
Go seek as God guides me the man in the green."
Then came there together the best in the castle:
Ywain, Eric, and others full many,
Sir Dodinel de Sauvage, the Duke of Clarence,
Lancelot, Lyonel, Lucan the good,
Sir Bors and Sir Bedevere, both of them big men,
Mador de la Port, and many more nobles.
All these knights of the court came near to the King
With care in their hearts to counsel the hero;
Heavy and deep was the dole in the hall
That one worthy as Gawain should go on that errand,
To suffer an onerous stroke, and his own sword
To stay.
The knight was of good cheer:
"Why should I shrink away
From a fate stern and drear?
A man can but essay."

He remained there that day; in the morning made ready.
Early he asked for his arms; all were brought him.
And first a fine carpet was laid on the floor,
And much was the gilt gear that glittered upon it.
Thereon stepped the strong man, and handled the steel,
Dressed in a doublet of Tars that cost dearly,
A hood made craftly, closed at the top,
And about on the lining bound with a bright fur.
Then they set on his feet shoes fashioned of steel,
And with fine greaves of steel encircled his legs.
Knee-pieces to these were connected, well polished,
Secured round his knees with knots of gold.

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[8] unpleasant because of the restrictions on eating.

[9] September 29.

[10] All Saints Day, November 1.

Then came goodly cuisses, with cunning enclosing
His thick, brawny thighs; with thongs they attached them.
Then the man was encased in a coat of fine mail,
With rings of bright steel on a rich stuff woven,
Braces well burnished on both of his arms,
Elbow-pieces gay, good, and gloves of plate,
All the goodliest gear that would give him more succor
That tide:
Coat armor richly made,
His gold spurs fixed with pride,
Girt his unfailing blade
By a silk sash to his side.

When in arms he was clasped, his costume was costly;
The least of the lacings or loops gleaned with gold.
And armed in this manner, the man heard mass,
At the altar adored and made offering, and afterward
Came to the King and all of his courtiers,
Gently took leave of the ladies and lords;
Him they kissed and escorted, to Christ him commending.
Then was Gringolet ready, girt with a saddle
That gaily with many a gold fringe was gleaming,
With nails studded newly, prepared for the nonce.
The bridle was bound about, barred with bright gold;
With the bow of the saddle, the breastplate, the splendid skirts.
Crupper, and cloth in adornment accorded,
With gold nails arrayed on a groundwork of red,
That glittered and glinted like gleams of the sun.
Then he caught up his helm, and hastily kissed it;
It stoutly was stapled and stuffed well within,
High on his head, and hasped well behind,
With a light linen veil laid over the visor,
Embroidered and bound with the brightest of gems
On a silken border; with birds on the seams
Like painted parraquets preening; true love-knots
As thickly with turtle doves tangled as though
Many women had been at the work seven winters
In town.
Great was the circle's price
Encompassing his crown;
Of diamonds its device,
That were both bright and brown.

Then they showed him his shield, sheer gules, whereon shone
The pentangle painted in pure golden hue.
On his baldric he caught and about his neck cast it;
And fairly the hero's form it befitted.
And why that great prince the pentangle suited
Intend I to tell, in my tale though I tarry.
'T is a sign that Solomon formerly set
As a token, for so it doth symbol, of truth.
A figure it is that with five points is furnished;
Each line overlaps and locks in another,
Nor comes to an end; and Englishmen call it
Everywhere, hear I, the endless knot.
It became then the knight and his noble arms also,
In five ways, and five times each way still faithful.
Sir Gawain was known as the good, refined gold,
Graced with virtues of castle, of villainy void,
Made clean.
So the pentangle new
On shield and coat was seen,
As man of speech most true,
And gentlest knight of mien.

First, in his five wits he faultless was found;
In his five fingers too the man never failed;
And on earth all his faith was fixed on the five wounds
That Christ, as the creed tells, endured on the cross.
Wheresoever this man was midmost in battle,
His thought above everything else was in this,
To draw all his fire from the fivefold joys
That the fair Queen of Heaven felt in her child.
And because of this fitly he carried her image
Displayed on his shield, on its larger part,
That whenever he saw it his spirit should sink not.
The fifth five the hero made use of, I find,
More than all were his liberalness, love of his fellows,
His courtesy, chasteness, unchangeable ever,
And pity, all further traits passing. These five
In this hero more surely were set than in any.
In truth now, fivefold they were fixed in the knight,
Linked each to the other without any end,
And all of them fastened on five points unfailing;
Each side they neither united nor sundered,
Evermore endless at every angle,
Where equally either they ended or started.
And so his fair shield was adorned with this symbol,
Thus richly with red gold wrought on red gules,

So by people the pentangle perfect 't was called
As it ought.
Gawain in arms is gay;
Right there his lance he caught,
And gave them all good-day
For ever, as he thought.

He set spurs to his steed, and sprang on his way
So swiftly that sparks from the stone flew behind him.
All who saw him, so seemly, sighed, sad at heart;
The same thing, in sooth, each said to the other,
Concerned for that comely man: "Christ, 't is a shame
Thou, sir knight, must be lost whose life is so noble!
To find, faith! his equal on earth is not easy.
'T would wiser have been to have acted more warily,
Dubbed yonder dear one a duke. He seems clearly
To be in the land here a brilliant leader:
So better had been than brought thus to naught,
By an elf-man beheaded for haughty boasting.
Who e'er knew any king such counsel to take,
As foolish as one in a Christmas frolic?"
Much was the warm water welling from eyes
When the seemly hero set out from the city
That day.
Nowhere he abode,
But swiftly went his way;
By devious paths he rode,
As I the book heard say.

Through the realm of Logres[11] now rides this lord,
Sir Gawain, for God's sake, no game though he thought it.
Oft alone, uncompanioned he lodges at night
Where he finds not the fare that he likes set before him.
Save his foal, he'd no fellow by forests and hills;
On the way, no soul but the Savior to speak to.
At length he drew nigh unto North Wales, and leaving
To left of him all of the islands of Anglesey,
Fared by the forelands and over the fords
Near the Holy Head; hastening hence to the mainland,
In Wyral he went through the wilderness. There,
Lived but few who loved God or their fellows with good heart.
And always he asked of any he met,
As he journeyed, if nearby a giant they knew of,
A green knight, known as the Knight of the Green Chapel.
All denied it with nay, in their lives they had never
Once seen any hero who had such a hue
Of green.
The knight takes roadways strange
In many a wild terrene;
Often his feelings change
Before that chapel's seen.

Over many cliffs climbed he in foreign countries;
From friends far sundered, he fared as a stranger;
And wondrous it were, at each water or shore
That he passed, if he found not before him a foe,
So foul too and fell that to fight he could fail not.
The marvels he met with amount to so many
Too tedious were it to tell of the tenth part.
For sometimes with serpents he struggled and wolves too,
With wood-trolls sometimes in stony steeps dwelling,
And sometimes with bulls and with bears and with boars;
And giants from high fells hunted and harassed him.
If he'd been not enduring and doughty, and served God,
These doubtless would often have done him to death.
Though warfare was grievous, worse was the winter,
When cold, clear water was shed from the clouds
That froze ere it fell to the earth, all faded.
With sleet nearly slain, he slept in his armor
More nights than enough on the naked rocks,
Where splashing the cold stream sprang from the summit,
And hung in hard icicles high o'er his head.
Thus in peril and pain and desperate plights,
Till Christmas Eve wanders this wight through the country
Alone.
Truly the knight that tide
To Mary made his moan,
That she direct his ride
To where some hearth-fire shone.

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[11] A term used vaguely for the south of England. Gawain's itinerary is not entirely clear though it certainly extended through North Wales and probably as far north as Cumberland, where he found the Green Chapel.

By a mount on the morn he merrily rides
To a wood dense and deep that was wondrously wild;
High hills on each hand, with forests of hoar oaks
Beneath them most huge, a hundred together.
Thickly the hazel and hawthorn were tangled,
Everywhere mantled with moss rough and ragged,
With many a bird on the bare twigs, mournful,
That piteously piped for pain of the cold.
Sir Gawain on Gringolet goes underneath them
Through many a marsh and many a mire,
Unfriended, fearing to fail in devotion,
And see not His service, that Sire's, on that very night
Born of a Virgin to vanquish our pain.
And so sighing he said: "Lord, I beseech Thee,
And Mary, the mildest mother so dear,
For some lodging wherein to hear mass full lowly,
And matins, meekly I ask it, tomorrow;
So promptly I pray my pater and ave
And creed."
Thus rode he as he prayed,
Lamenting each misdeed;
Often the sign he made,
And said, "Christ's cross me speed."

He scarcely had signed himself thrice, ere he saw
In the wood on a mound a moated mansion,
Above a fair field, enfolded in branches
Of many a huge tree hard by the ditches:
The comeliest castle that knight ever kept.
In a meadow 't was placed, with a park all about,
And a palisade, spiked and pointed, set stoutly
Round many a tree for more than two miles.
The lord on that one side looked at the stronghold
That shimmered and shone through the shapely oak trees;
Then duly his helm doffed, and gave his thanks humbly
To Jesus and Julian, both of them gentle,
For showing him courtesy, hearing his cry.
"Now good lodging," quoth Gawain, "I beg you to grant me."
Then with spurs in his gilt heels he Gringolet strikes,
Who chooses the chief path by chance that conducted
The man to the bridge-end ere many a minute
Has passed.
The bridge secure was made,
Upraised; the gates shut fast;
The walls were well arrayed.
It feared no tempest's blast.

The hero abode on his horse by the bank
Of the deep, double ditch that surrounded the dwelling.
The wall stood wonderfully deep in the water,
And again to a huge height sprang overhead;
Of hard, hewn rock that reached to the cornices,
Built up with outworks under the battlements
Finely; at intervals, turrets fair fashioned,
With many good loopholes that shut tight; this lord
Had ne'er looked at a barbican better than this one.
Further in he beheld the high hall; here and there
Towers were stationed set thickly with spires,
With finials wondrously long and fair fitting,
Whose points were cunningly carven, and craftily.
There numerous chalk-white chimneys he noticed
That bright from the tops of the towers were gleaming.
Such pinnacles painted, so placed about everywhere,
Clustering so thick 'mid the crenels, the castle
Surely appeared to be shaped to cut paper.
The knight on his foal it fair enough fancies
If into the court he may manage to come,
In that lodging to live while the holiday lasts
With delight.
A porter came at call.
His mission learned, and right
Civilly from the wall
Greeted the errant knight.

Quoth Gawain: "Good sir, will you go on my errand,
Harbor to crave of this house's high lord?"
"Yea, by Peter, I know well, sir knight," said the porter,
"You're welcome as long as you list here to tarry."
Then went the man quickly, and with him, to welcome
The knight to the castle, a courteous company.
Down the great drawbridge they dropped, and went eagerly
Forth; on the frozen earth fell on their knees
To welcome this knight in the way they thought worthy;
Threw wide the great gate for Gawain to enter.
He bid them rise promptly, and rode o'er the bridge.

His saddle several seized as he lighted,
And stout men in plenty stabled his steed.
And next there descended knights and esquires
To lead to the hall with delight this hero.
When he raised his helmet, many made haste
From his hand to catch it, to care for the courtly man.
Some of them took then his sword and his shield both.
Then Gawain graciously greeted each knight;
Many proud men pressing to honor that prince,
To the hall they led him, all hasped in his harness,
Where fiercely a fair fire flamed on the hearth.
Then came the lord of this land from his chamber
To fittingly meet the man on the floor,
And said: "You are welcome to do what your will is;
To hold as your own, you have all that is here
In this place."
"Thank you," said Gawain then
"May Christ reward this grace."
The two like joyful men
Each other then embrace.

Gawain gazed at the man who so graciously greeted him;
Doughty he looked, the lord of that dwelling,
A hero indeed huge, hale, in his prime;
His beard broad and bright, its hue all of beaver;
Stern, and on stalwart shanks steadily standing;
Fell faced as the fire, in speech fair and free.
In sooth, well suited he seemed, thought Gawain,
To govern as prince of a goodly people.
To his steward the lord turned, and strictly commanded
To send men to Gawain to give him good service;
And prompt at his bidding were people in plenty.
To a bright room they brought him, the bed nobly decked
With hangings of pure silk with clear golden hems.
And curious coverings with comely panels,
Embroidered with bright fur above at the edges;
On cords curtains running with rings of red gold;
From Tars and Toulouse were the tapestries covering
The walls; under foot on the floor more to match.
There he soon, with mirthful speeches, was stripped
Of his coat of linked mail and his armor; and quickly
Men ran, and brought him rich robes, that the best
He might pick out and choose as his change of apparel.
When lapped was the lord in the one he selected,
That fitted him fairly with flowing skirts,
The fur by his face, in faith it seemed made,
To the company there, entirely of colors,
Glowing and lovely; beneath all his limbs were.
That never made Christ a comelier knight
They thought.
On earth, or far or near,
It seemed as if he ought
To be a prince sans peer
In fields where fierce men fought.

A chair by the chimney where charcoal was burning
For Gawain was fitted most finely with cloths,
Both cushions and coverlets, cunningly made.
Then a comely mantle was cast on the man,
Of a brown, silken fabric bravely embroidered,
Within fairly furred with the finest of skins,
Made lovely with ermine, his hood fashioned likewise.
He sat on that settle in clothes rich and seemly;
His mood, when well he was warmed, quickly mended.
Soon was set up a table on trestles most fair;
With a clean cloth that showed a clear white it was covered,
With top-cloth and salt-cellar, spoons too of silver.
When he would the man washed, and went to his meat,
And seemly enough men served him with several
Excellent stews in the best manner seasoned,
Twofold as was fitting, and various fishes;
In bread some were baked, some broiled on the coals,
Some seethed, some in stews that were savored with spices;
And ever such subtly made sauces as pleased him.
He freely and frequently called it a feast,
Most courtly; the company there all acclaimed him
Well-bred.
"But now this penance take,
And soon 't will mend," they said.
That man much mirth did make,
As wine went to his head.

They enquired then and queried in guarded questions
Tactfully put to the prince himself,
Till he courteously owned he came of the court

The lord Arthur, gracious and goodly, alone holds,
Who rich is and royal, the Round Table's King;
And that Gawain himself in that dwelling was seated,
For Christmas come, as the case had befallen.
When he learned that he had that hero, the lord
Laughed loudly thereat so delightful he thought it.
Much merriment made all the men in that castle
By promptly appearing then in his presence;
For all prowess and worth and pure polished manners
Pertain to his person. He ever is praised;
Of all heroes on earth his fame is the highest.
Each knight full softly said to his neighbor,
"We now shall see, happily, knightly behavior,
And faultless terms of talking most noble;
What profit 's in speech we may learn without seeking,
For nurture's fine father has found here a welcome;
In truth God has graciously given His grace
Who grants us to have such a guest as Gawain
When men for His birth's sake sit merry and sing.
To each
Of us this hero now
Will noble manners teach;
Who hear him will learn how
To utter loving speech."

When at length the dinner was done, and the lords
Had risen, the night-time nearly was come.
The chaplains went their way to the chapels
And rang right joyfully, just as they should do,
For evensong solemn this festival season.
To this goes the lord, and the lady likewise;
She comes in with grace to the pew closed and comely,
And straightway Gawain goes thither right gaily.
The lord by his robe took him, led to a seat,
Acknowledged him kindly and called him by name,
Saying none in the world was as welcome as he was.
He heartily thanked him; the heroes embraced,
And together they soberly sat through the service.
Then longed the lady to look on the knight,
And emerged from her pew with many fair maidens;
In face she was fairest of all, and in figure,
In skin and in color, all bodily qualities;
Lovelier, Gawain thought, even than Guinevere.
He goes through the chancel to greet her, so gracious.
By the left hand another was leading her, older
Than she, a lady who looked as if aged,
By heroes around her reverenced highly.
The ladies, however, unlike were to look on:
If fresh was the younger, the other was yellow;
Rich red on the one was rioting everywhere,
Rough wrinkled cheeks hung in rolls on the other;
One's kerchiefs, with clear pearls covered and many,
Displayed both her breast and her bright throat all bare,
Shining fairer than snow on the hillsides falling;
The second her neck in a neck-cloth enswathed,
That enveloped in chalk-white veils her black chin;
Her forehead in silk was wrapped and enfolded
Adorned and tricked with trifles about it
Till nothing was bare but the lady's black brows,
Her two eyes, her nose, and her lips, all naked,
And those were bleared strangely, and ugly to see.
A goodly lady, so men before God
Might decide!
Her body thick and short
Her hips were round and wide;
One of more pleasant sort
She led there by her side.

When Gawain had gazed on that gay one so gracious
In look, he took leave of the lord and went toward them,
Saluted the elder, bowing full lowly,
The lovelier lapped in his two arms a little,
And knightly and comely greeted and kissed her.
They craved his acquaintance, and quickly he asked
To be truly their servant if so they desired it.
They took him between them, and led him with talk
To the sitting-room's hearth; then straightway for spices
They called, which men sped to unsparingly bring,
And with them as well pleasant wine at each coming.
Up leaped right often the courteous lord,
Urged many a time that the men should make merry,
Snatched off his hood, on a spear, gaily hung it,
And waved it, that one for a prize might win it
Who caused the most mirth on that Christmas season.

"I shall try, by my faith, to contend with the finest
Ere hoodless I find myself, helped by my friends."
Thus with laughing speeches the lord makes merry
That night, to gladden Sir Gawain with games.
So they spent
The evening in the hall.
The king for lights then sent,
And taking leave of all
To bed Sir Gawain went.

On the morn when the Lord, as men all remember,
Was born, who would die for our doom, in each dwelling
On earth grows happiness greater for His sake;
So it did on that day there with many a dainty:
With dishes cunningly cooked at meal-times,
With doughty men dressed in their best on the dais.
The old lady was seated the highest; beside her
Politely the lord took his place, I believe;
The gay lady and Gawain together sat, mid-most,
Where fitly the food came, and afterward fairly
Was served through the hall as beseemed them the best,
Of the company each in accord with his station.
There was meat and mirth, there was much joy, too troublous
To tell, though I tried in detail to describe it;
Yet I know both the lovely lady and Gawain
So sweet found each other's society (pleasant
And polished their converse, courtly and private;
Unfailing their courtesy, free from offense)
That surpassing, in truth, any play of a prince was
Their game.
There trumpets, drums and airs
Of piping loudly came.
Each minded his affairs,
And those two did the same.

Much mirth was that day and the day after made,
And the third followed fast, as full of delight.
Sweet was the joy of St. John's day[12] to hear of,
The last, as the folk there believed, of the festival.
Guests were to go in the gray dawn, and therefore
They wondrously late were awake with their wine,
And danced delightful, long lasting caroles.
At length when 't was late they took their leave,
Each strong man among them to start on his way.
Gawain gave him good-day; then the good man laid hold of him,
Led to the hearth in his own room the hero;
There took him aside, and gave suitable thanks
For the gracious distinction that Gawain had given
In honoring his house that holiday season,
And gracing his castle with courteous company.
"I'll truly as long as I live be the better
That Gawain at God's own feast was my guest."
"Gramercy," said Gawain, "by God, sir, not mine
Is the worth, but your own; may the high King reward you.
I am here at your will to work your behest,
As in high and low it behooves me to do
By right."
The lord intently tries
Longer to hold the knight;
Gawain to him replies
That he in no way might.

Then the man with courteous question enquired
What dark deed that feast time had driven him forth,
From the King's court to journey alone with such courage,
Ere fully in homes was the festival finished.
"In sooth," said the knight, "sir, ye say but the truth;
From these hearths a high and a hasty task took me.
Myself, I am summoned to seek such a place
As to find it I know not whither to fare.
I'd not fail to have reached it the first of the New Year,
So help me our Lord, for the whole land of Logres;
And therefore, I beg this boon of you here, sir;
Tell me, in truth, if you ever heard tale
Of the Chapel of Green, of the ground where it stands,
And the knight, green colored, who keeps it. By solemn
Agreement a tryst was established between us,
That man at that landmark to meet if I lived.
And now there lacks of New Year but little;
I'd look at that lord, if God would but let me,
More gladly than own any good thing, by God's Son.
And hence, by your leave, it behooves me to go;
I now have but barely three days to be busy.
As fain would I fall dead as fail of my mission."
Then laughing the lord said: "You longer must stay,
For I'll point out the way to that place ere the time's end,

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[12] December 27.

The ground of the Green Chapel. Grieve no further;
For, sir, you shall be in your bed at your ease
Until late, and fare forth the first of the year,
To your meeting place come by mid-morning, to do there
Your pleasure.
Tarry till New Year's day,
Then rise and go at leisure.
I'll set you on your way;
Not two miles is the measure."

Then was Gawain right glad, and gleefully laughed.
"Now for this more than anything else, sir, I thank you.
I have come to the end of my quest; at your will
I shall bide, and in all things act as you bid me."
The lord then seized him, and set him beside him,
And sent for the ladies to better delight him.
Seemly the pleasure among them in private.
So gay were the speeches he spoke, and so friendly,
The host seemed a man well-nigh mad in behavior.
He called to the knight there, crying aloud:
"Ye have bound you to do the deed that I bid you.
Here, and at once, will you hold to your word, Sir?"
"Yes, certainly, sir," the true hero said;
"While I bide in your house I obey your behest."
"You have toiled," said the lord; "from afar have traveled,
And here have caroused, nor are wholly recovered
In sleep or in nourishment, know I for certain.
In your room you shall linger, and lie at your ease
Tomorrow till mass-time, and go to your meat
When you will, and with you my wife to amuse you
With company, till to the court I return.
You stay
And I shall early rise,
And hunting go my way."
Bowing in courteous wise,
Gawain grants all this play.

"And more," said the man, "let us make an agreement:
Whatever I win in the wood shall be yours;
And what chance you shall meet shall be mine in exchange.
Sir, let's so strike our bargain and swear to tell truly
Whate'er fortune brings, whether bad, sir, or better."
Quoth Gawain the good: "By God, I do grant it.
What pastime you please appears to me pleasant."
"On the beverage brought us the bargain is made,"
So the lord of the land said. All of them laughed,
And drank, and light-heartedly reveled and dallied,
Those ladies and lords, as long as they liked.
Then they rose with elaborate politeness, and lingered,
With many fair speeches spoke softly together,
Right lovingly kissed, and took leave of each other.
Gay troops of attendants with glimmering torches
In comfort escorted each man to his couch
To rest.
Yet ere they left the board
Their promise they professed
Often. That people's lord
Could well maintain a jest.

III

Betimes rose the folk ere the first of the day;
The guests that were going then summoned their grooms,
Who hastily sprang up to saddle their horses,
Packed their bags and prepared all their gear.
The nobles made ready, to ride all arrayed;
And quickly they leaped and caught up their bridles,
And started, each wight on the way that well pleased him.
The land's beloved lord not last was equipped
For riding, with many a man too. A morsel
He hurriedly ate when mass he had heard,
And promptly with horn to the hunting field hastened.
And ere any daylight had dawned upon earth,
Both he and his knights were high on their horses.
The dog-grooms, accomplished, the hounds then coupled,
The door of the kennel unclosed, called them out,
On the bugle mightily blew three single notes;
Whereupon bayed with a wild noise the brachets,[18]
And some they turned back that went straying, and punished.
The hunters, I heard, were a hundred. To station
They go,
The keepers of the hounds,
And off the leashes throw.
With noise the wood resounds
From the good blasts they blow.

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[18] hounds that hunt by scent.

At the first sound of questing, the wild creatures quaked;
The deer fled, foolish from fright, in the dale,
To the high ground hastened, but quickly were halted
By beaters, loud shouting, stationed about
In a circle. The harts were let pass with their high heads,
And also the bucks, broad-antlered and bold;
For the generous lord by law had forbidden
All men with the male deer to meddle in close season.
The hinds were hemmed in with hey! and ware!
The does to the deep valleys driven with great din.
You might see as they loosed them the shafts swiftly soar—
At each turn of the forest their feathers went flying—
That deep into brown hides bit with their broad heads;
Lo! they brayed on the hill-sides, bled there, and died,
And hounds, fleet-footed, followed them headlong.
And hunters after them hastened with horns
So loud in their sharp burst of sound as to sunder
The cliffs. What creatures escaped from the shooters,
Hunted and harried from heights to the waters,
Were pulled down and rent at the places there ready;
Such skill the men showed at these low-lying stations,
So great were the greyhounds that quickly they got them
And dragged them down, fast as the folk there might look
At the sight.
Carried with bliss away,
The lord did oft alight,
Oft gallop; so that day
He passed till the dark night.

Thus frolicked the lord on the fringe of the forest,
And Gawain the good in his gay bed reposed,
Lying snugly, till sunlight shone on the walls,
'Neath a coverlet bright with curtains about it.
As softly he slumbered, a slight sound he heard
At his door, made with caution, and quickly it opened.
The hero heaved up his head from the clothes;
By a corner he caught up the curtain a little,
And glanced out with heed to behold what had happened.
The lady it was, most lovely to look at,
Who shut the door after her stealthily, slyly,
And turned toward the bed. Then the brave man, embarrassed,
Lay down again subtly to seem as if sleeping;
And stilly she stepped, and stole to his bed,
There cast up the curtain, and creeping within it,
Seated herself on the bedside right softly,
And waited a long while to watch when he woke.
And the lord too, lurking, lay there a long while,
Wondering at heart what might come of this happening,
Or what it might mean—a marvel he thought it.
Yet he said to himself, " 'T would be surely more seemly
By speaking at once to see what she wishes."
Then roused he from sleep, and stretching turned toward her,
His eyelids unlocked, made believe that he wondered,
And signed himself so by his prayers to be safer
From fall.
Right sweet in chin and cheek,
Both white and red withal,
Full fairly she did speak
With laughing lips and small.

"Good morrow, Sir Gawain," that gay lady said,
"You're a sleeper unwary, since so one may steal in.
In a trice you are ta'en! If we make not a truce,
In your bed, be you certain of this, I shall bind you."
All laughing, the lady delivered those jests.
"Good morrow, fair lady," said Gawain the merry,
"You may do what you will, and well it doth please me,
For quickly I yield me, crying for mercy;
This method to me seems the best—for I must!"
So the lord in turn jested with laughter right joyous.
"But if, lovely lady, you would, give me leave,
Your prisoner release and pray him to rise,
And I'd come from this bed and clothe myself better;
So could I converse with you then with more comfort."
"Indeed no, fair sir," that sweet lady said,
"You'll not move from your bed; I shall manage you better;
For here—and on that side too—I shall hold you,
And next I shall talk with the knight I have taken.
For well do I know that your name is Sir Gawain,

By everyone honored wherever you ride;
Most highly acclaimed is your courtly behavior
With lords and ladies and all who are living.
And now you're here, truly, and none but we two;
My lord and his followers far off have fared;
Other men remain in their beds, and my maidens;
The door is closed, and secured with a strong hasp;
Since him who delights all I have in my house,
My time, as long as it lasts, I with talking
Shall fill,
My body's gladly yours;
Upon me work your will.
Your servant I, perforce,
And now, and shall be still."

"In faith," quoth Sir Gawain, "a favor I think it,
Although I am now not the knight you speak of;
To reach to such fame as here you set forth,
I am one, as I well know myself, most unworthy.
By God, should you think it were good, I'd be glad
If I could or in word or action accomplish
Your ladyship's pleasure—a pure joy 't would prove."
"In good faith, Sir Gawain," the gay lady said,
"Ill-bred I should be if I blamed or belittled
The worth and prowess that please all others.
There are ladies enough who'd be now more delighted
To have you in thraldom, as here, sir, I have you
To trifle gaily in talk most engaging,
To give themselves comfort and quiet their cares
Than have much of the gold and the goods they command.
But to Him I give praise that ruleth the heaven
That wholly I have in my hand what all wish."
So she
Gave him good cheer that day,
She who was fair to see.
To what she chanced to say
With pure speech answered he.

Quoth the merry man, "Madam, Mary reward you,
For noble, in faith, I've found you, and generous.
People by other pattern their actions,
But more than I merit to me they give praise;
'T is your courteous self who can show naught but kindness."
"By Mary," said she, "to me it seems other!
Were I worth all the host of women now living,
And had I the wealth of the world in my hands,
Should I chaffer and choose to get me a champion,
Sir, from the signs I've seen in you here
Of courtesy, merry demeanor, and beauty,
From what I have heard, and hold to be true,
Before you no lord now alive would be chosen."
"A better choice, madam, you truly have made;
Yet I'm proud of the value you put now upon me.
Your servant as seemly, I hold you my sovereign,
Become your knight, and Christ give you quittance."
Thus of much they talked till mid-morning was past.
The lady behaved as if greatly she loved him,
But Gawain, on guard, right gracefully acted.
"Though I were the most lovely of ladies," she thought,
"The less would he take with him love." He was seeking,
With speed,
Grief that must be: the stroke
That him should stun indeed.
She then of leaving spoke,
And promptly he agreed.

Then she gave him good-day, and glanced at him, laughing,
And startled him, speaking sharp words as she stood:
"He who blesses all words reward this reception!
I doubt if indeed I may dub you Gawain."
"Wherefore?" he queried, quickly enquiring,
Afraid that he'd failed in his fashion of speech.
But the fair lady blesses him, speaking a
lows:
"One as good as is Gawain the gracious c
(And courtly behavior's found wholly
Not lightly so long could remain w
Without, in courtesy, craving a ki
At some slight subtle hint at t
"Let it be as you like, lovely
"As a knight is so bound, I"
And lest he displease yo
Then closer she comes
In her arms, and s
fably.
Kindly each oth
She goes fort
And he qu
Calls to
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None knew
A knight to better fare
With dames so worthy, two:
One old, one younger. There
Much mirth did then ensue.

Still was absent the lord of that land on his pleasure,
To hunt barren hinds in wood and in heath.
By the set of the sun he had slain such a number
Of does and different deer that 't was wondrous.
Eagerly flocked in the folk at the finish,
And quickly made of the killed deer a quarry;
To this went the nobles with numerous men;
The game whose flesh was the fattest they gathered;
With care, as the case required, cut them open.
And some the deer searched at the spot of assay,
And two fingers of fat they found in the poorest.
They slit at the base of the throat, seized the stomach,
Scraped it away with a sharp knife and sewed it;
Next slit the four limbs and stripped off the hide;
Then opened the belly and took out the bowels
And flesh of the knot, quickly flinging them out.
They laid hold of the throat, made haste to divide, then,
The windpipe and gullet, and tossed out the guts;
With their sharp knives carved out the shoulders and carried them
Held through a small hole to have the sides perfect.
e breast they sliced, and split it in two;
then they began once again at the throat,
ickly as far as its fork they cut it;
t the pluck, and promptly thereafter
ibs swiftly severed the fillets,
off readily right by the backbone,
the haunch, all hanging together.
whole, and hewed it off there,
name of the numbles—and

They knew.
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hew,

ck off they

y sun-

es.
They ran through each thick side a hole by the ribs,
And hung up both by the hocks of the haunches,
Each fellow to have the fee that was fitting.
On the fair beast's hide, they fed their hounds
With the liver and lights[14] and the paunch's lining,
Among which bread steeped in blood was mingled.
They blew boldly the blast for the prize; the hounds barked.
Then the venison took they and turned toward home,
And stoutly many a shrill note they sounded.
Ere close of the daylight, the company came
To the comely castle where Gawain in comfort
Sojourned.
And when he met the knight
As thither he returned,
Joy had they and delight,
Where the fire brightly burned.

In the hall the lord bade all his household to gather,
And both of the dames to come down with their damsels.
In the room there before all the folk he ordered
His followers, truly, to fetch him his venison.
Gawain he called with courteous gaiety,
Asked him to notice the number of nimble beasts,
Showed him the fairness of flesh on the ribs.
"Are you pleased with this play? Have I won your praise?
Have I thoroughly earned your thanks through my cunning?"
"In faith," said Sir Gawain, "this game is the fairest
I've seen in the season of winter these seven years."
"The whole of it, Gawain, I give you," the host said;
"Because of our compact, as yours you may claim it."
"That is true," the knight said, "and I tell you the same:
That this I have worthily won within doors,
And surely to you with as good will I yield it."
With both of his arms his fair neck he embraced,
And the hero as courteously kissed as he could.
"I give you my gains. I got nothing further;
I freely would grant it, although it were greater."
"It is good," said the good man; "I give you my thanks.
Yet things so may be that you'd think it better

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[14] lungs.

To tell where you won this same wealth by your wit."
"'T was no part of our pact," said he; "press me no more;
For trust entirely in this, that you've taken
Your due."
With laughing merriment
And knightly speech and true
To supper soon they went
With store of dainties new.

In a chamber they sat, by the side of the chimney,
Where men right frequently fetched them mulled wine.
In their jesting, again they agreed on the morrow
To keep the same compact they came to before:
That whatever should chance, they'd exchange at evening,
When greeting again, the new things they had gotten.
Before all the court they agreed to the covenant;
Then was the beverage brought forth in jest.
At last they politely took leave of each other,
And quickly each hero made haste to his couch.
When the cock but three times had crowed and cackled,
The lord and his men had leaped from their beds.
So that duly their meal was dealt with, and mass,
And ere daylight they'd fared toward the forest, on hunting
Intent.
The huntsmen with loud horns
Through level fields soon went,
Uncoupling 'mid the thorns
The hounds swift on the scent.

Soon they cry for a search by the side of a swamp.
The huntsmen encourage the hounds that first catch there
The scent, and sharp words they shout at them loudly;
And thither the hounds that heard them hastened,
And fast to the trail fell, forty at once.
Then such clamor and din from the dogs that had come there
Arose that the rocks all around them rang.
With horn and with mouth the hunters heartened them;
They gathered together then, all in a group,
'Twixt a pool in that copse and a crag most forbidding.
At a stone-heap, beside the swamp, by a cliff,
Where the rough rock had fallen in rugged confusion,
They fared to the finding, the folk coming after.
Around both the crag and the rubble-heap searched
The hunters, sure that within them was hidden
The beast whose presence was bayed by the bloodhounds.
Then they beat on the bushes, and bade him rise up,
And wildly he made for the men in his way,
Rushing suddenly forth, of swine the most splendid.
Apart from the herd he'd grown hoary with age,
For fierce was the beast, the biggest of boars.
Then many men grieved, full grim when he grunted,
For three at his first thrust he threw to the earth,
And then hurtled forth swiftly no harm doing further.
They shrilly cried hi! and shouted hey! hey!
Put bugles to mouth, loudly blew the recall.
The men and dogs merry in voice were and many;
With outcry they all hurry after this boar
To slay.
He maims the pack when, fell,
He often stands at bay.
Loudly they howl and yell,
Sore wounded in the fray.

Then to shoot at him came up the company quickly.
Arrows that hit him right often they aimed,
But their sharp points failed that fell on his shoulders'
Tough skin, and the barbs would not bite in his flesh;
But the smooth-shaven shafts were shivered in pieces,
The heads wherever they hit him rebounding.
But when hurt by the strength of the strokes they struck,
Then mad for the fray he falls on the men,
And deeply he wounds them as forward he dashes.
Then many were frightened, and drew back in fear;
But the lord galloped off on a light horse after him,
Blew like a huntsman right bold the recall
On his bugle, and rode through the thick of the bushes,
Pursuing this swine till the sun shone clearly.
Thus the day they passed in doing these deeds,

While bides our gracious knight Gawain in bed,
With bed-clothes in color right rich, at the castle
Behind.
The dame did not forget
To give him greetings kind.
She soon upon him set,
To make him change his mind.

Approaching the curtain, she peeps at the prince,
And at once Sir Gawain welcomes her worthily.
Promptly the lady makes her reply.
By his side she seats herself softly, heartily
Laughs, and with lovely look these words delivers:
"If you, sir, are Gawain, greatly I wonder
That one so given at all times to goodness
Should be not well versed in social conventions,
Or, made once to know, should dismiss them from mind.
You have promptly forgotten what I in the plainest
Of talk that I knew of yesterday taught you."
"What is that?" said the knight. "For truly I know not;
If it be as you say, I am surely to blame."
"Yet I taught you," quoth the fair lady, "of kissing;
When clearly he's favored, quickly to claim one
Becomes each knight who practices courtesy."
"Cease, dear lady, such speech," said the strong man;
"I dare not for fear of refusal do that.
'T would be wrong to proffer and then be repulsed."
"In faith, you may not be refused," said the fair one;
"Sir, if you pleased, you have strength to compel it,
Should one be so rude as to wish to deny you."
"By God, yes," said Gawain, "good is your speech;
But unlucky is force in the land I live in,
And every gift that with good will's not given.
Your word I await to embrace when you wish;
You may start when you please, and stop at your pleasure."
With grace,
The lady, bending low,
Most sweetly kissed his face.
Of joy in love and woe
They talked for a long space.

"I should like," said the lady, "from you, sir, to learn,
If I roused not your anger by asking, the reason
Why you, who are now so young and valiant,
So known far and wide as knightly and courteous
(And principally, picked from all knighthood, is praised
The sport of true love and the science of arms;
For to tell of these true knights' toil, it is surely
The title inscribed and the text of their deeds,
How men their lives for their real love adventured,
Endured for their passion doleful days,
Then themselves with valor avenged, and their sorrow
Cast off, and brought bliss into bowers by their virtues),
Why you, thought the noblest knight of your time,
Whose renown and honor are everywhere noted,
Have so let me sit on two separate occasions
Beside you, and hear proceed from your head
Not one word relating to love, less or more.
You so goodly in vowing your service and gracious
Ought gladly to give to a young thing your guidance,
And show me some sign of the sleights of true love.
What! know you nothing, and have all renown?
Or else do you deem me too dull, for your talking
Unfit?
For shame! Alone I come;
To learn some sport I sit;
My lord is far from home;
Now, teach me by your wit."

"In good faith," said Gawain, "God you reward;
For great is the happiness, huge the gladness
That one so worthy should want to come hither,
And pains for so poor a man take, as in play
With your knight with looks of regard; it delights me.
But to take up the task of telling of true love,
To touch on those themes, and on tales of arms
To you who've more skill in that art, I am certain,
By half than a hundred men have such as I,
Or ever shall have while here upon earth,
By my faith, 't would be, madam, a manifold folly.
Your bidding I'll do, as in duty bound,
To the height of my power, and will hold myself ever
Your ladyship's servant, so save me the Lord."
Thus the fair lady tempted and tested him often
To make the man sin—whate'er more she'd in mind;
But so fair his defense was, no fault was apparent,
Nor evil on either side; each knew but joy

On that day.
At last she kissed him lightly,
After long mirth and play,
And took her leave politely,
And went upon her way.

The man bestirs himself, springs up for mass.
Then made ready and splendidly served was their dinner;
In sport with the ladies he spent all the day.
But the lord through fields oft dashed as he followed
The savage swine, that sped o'er the slopes,
And in two bit the backs of the best of his hounds
Where he stood at bay; till 't was broken by bowmen,
Who made him, despite himself, move to the open,
The shafts flew so thick when the throng had assembled.
Yet sometimes he forced the stoutest to flinch,
Till at last too weary he was to run longer,
But came with such haste as he could to a hole
In a mound, by a rock whence the rivulet runs out.
He started to scrape the soil, backed by the slope,
While froth from his mouth's ugly corners came foaming.
White were the tushes he whetted. The bold men
Who stood round grew tired of trying from far
To annoy him, but dared not for danger draw nearer.
Before,
So many he did pierce
That all were loth a boar
So frenzied and so fierce
Should tear with tusks once more,

Till the hero himself came, spurring his horse,
Saw him standing at bay, the hunters beside him.
He leaped down right lordly, leaving his courser,
Unsheathed a bright sword and strode forth stoutly,
Made haste through the ford where that fierce one was waiting.
Aware of the hero with weapon in hand,
So savagely, bristling his back up, he snorted
All feared for the wight lest the worst befall him.
Then rushed out the boar directly upon him,
And man was mingled with beast in the midst
Of the wildest water. The boar had the worse,
For the man aimed a blow at the beast as he met him,
And surely with sharp blade struck o'er his breast bone,
That smote to the hilt, and his heart cleft asunder.
He squealing gave way, and swift through the water
Went back.
By a hundred hounds he's caught,
Who fiercely him attack;
To open ground he's brought,
And killed there by the pack.

The blast for the beast's death was blown on sharp horns,
And the lords there loudly and clearly hallooed.
At the beast bayed the brachets, as bid by their masters,
The chief, in that hard, long chase, of the hunters.
Then one who was wise in woodcraft began
To slice up this swine in the seemliest manner.
First he hews off his head, and sets it on high;
Then along the back roughly rends him apart.
He hales out the bowels, and broils them on hot coals,
With these mixed with bread, rewarding his brachets.
Then slices the flesh in fine, broad slabs,
And pulls out the edible entrails properly.
Whole, though, he gathers the halves together,
And proudly upon a stout pole he places them.
Homeward they now with this very swine hasten,
Bearing in front of the hero the boar's head,
Since him at the ford by the force of his strong hand
He slew.
It seemed long till he met
In hall Sir Gawain, who
Hastened, when called, to get
The payment that was due.

The lord called out loudly, merrily laughed
When Gawain he saw, and gladsomely spoke.
The good ladies were sent for, the household assembled;
He shows them the slices of flesh, and the story
He tells of his largeness and length, and how fierce
Was the war in the woods where the wild swine had fled.
Sir Gawain commended his deeds right graciously,
Praised them as giving a proof of great prowess.
Such brawn on a beast, the bold man declared,
And such sides on a swine he had ne'er before seen.
Then they handled the huge head; the courteous hero
Praised it, horror-struck, honoring his host.

Quoth the goodman, "Now, Gawain, yours is this game
By our covenant, fast and firm, you know truly."
"It is so," said the knight; "and as certain and sure
All I get I'll give you again as I pledged you."
He about the neck caught, with courtesy kissed him,
And soon a second time served him the same way.
Said Gawain, "We've fairly fulfilled the agreement
This evening we entered on, each to the other
Most true."
"I, by Saint Giles, have met
None," said the lord, "like you.
Riches you soon will get,
If you such business do."

And then the tables they raised upon trestles,
And laid on them cloths; the light leaped up clearly
Along by the walls, where the waxen torches
Were set by the henchmen who served in the hall.
A great sound of sport and merriment sprang up
Close by the fire, and on frequent occasions
At supper and afterward, many a splendid song,
Conduits[15] of Christmas, new carols, all kinds
Of mannerly mirth that a man may tell of.
Our seemly knight ever sat at the side
Of the lady, who made so agreeable her manner,
With sly, secret glances to glad him, so stalwart,
That greatly astonished was Gawain, and wroth
With himself; he in courtesy could not refuse her,
But acted becomingly, courtly, whatever
The end, good or bad, of his action might be.
When quite
Done was their play at last,
The host called to the knight,
And to his room they passed
To where the fire burned bright.

The men there make merry and drink, and once more
The same pact for New Year's Eve is proposed;
But the knight craved permission to mount on the morrow:
The appointment approached where he had to appear.
But the lord him persuaded to stay and linger,
And said, "On my word as a knight I assure you
You'll get to the Green Chapel, Gawain, on New Year's,
And far before prime,[16] to finish your business.
Remain in your room then, and take your rest.
I shall hunt in the wood and exchange with you winnings,
As bound by our bargain, when back I return,
For twice I've found you were faithful when tried:
In the morning 'best be the third time,' remember.
Let's be mindful of mirth while we may, and make merry,
For care when one wants it is quickly encountered."
At once this was granted, and Gawain is stayed;
Drink blithely was brought him; to bed they were lighted.
The guest
In quiet and comfort spent
The night, and took his rest.
On his affairs intent,
The host was early dressed.

After mass a morsel he took with his men.
The morning was merry; his mount he demanded.
The knights who'd ride in his train were in readiness,
Dressed and horsed at the door of the hall.
Wondrous fair were the fields, for the frost was clinging;
Bright red in the cloud-rack rises the sun,
And full clear sails close past the clouds in the sky.
The hunters unleashed all the hounds by a woodside:
The rocks with the blast of their bugles were ringing.
Some dogs there fall on the scent where the fox is,
And trail oft a traitoress using her tricks.
A hound gives tongue at it; huntsmen call to him;
Hastens the pack to the hound sniffing hard,
And right on his track run off in a rabble,
He scampering before them. They started the fox soon;
When finally they saw him, they followed fast,
Denouncing him clearly with clamorous anger.
Through many a dense grove he dodges and twists,
Doubling back and harkening at hedges right often;
At last by a little ditch leaps o'er a thorn-hedge,
Steals out stealthily, skirting a thicket
In thought from the wood to escape by his wiles
From the hounds; then, unknowing, drew near to a hunting-stand.

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[15] part songs in celebration of Christmas.

[16] the first of the canonical hours or fixed times for repeating certain prayers; about six o'clock in the morning.

There hurled themselves, three at once, on him strong hounds,
All gray.
With quick swerve he doth start
Afresh without dismay.
With great grief in his heart
To the wood he goes away.

Huge was the joy then to hark to the hounds.
When the pack all met him, mingled together,
Such curses they heaped on his head at the sight
That the clustering cliffs seemed to clatter down round them
In heaps. The men, when they met him, hailed him,
And loudly with chiding speeches hallooed him;
Threats were oft thrown at him, thief he was called;
At his tail were the greyhounds, that tarry he might not.
They rushed at him oft when he raced for the open,
And ran to the wood again, reynard the wily.
Thus he led them, all muddied, the lord and his men,
In this manner along through the hills until midday.
At home, the noble knight wholesomely slept
In the cold of the morn within comely curtains.
But the lady, for love, did not let herself sleep,
Or fail in the purpose fixed in her heart;
But quickly she roused herself, came there quickly,
Arrayed in a gay robe that reached to the ground,
The skins of the splendid fur skillfully trimmed close.
On her head no colors save jewels, well-cut,
That were twined in her hair-fret in clusters of twenty.
Her fair face was completely exposed, and her throat;
In front her breast too was bare, and her back.
She comes through the chamber-door, closes it after her,
Swings wide a window, speaks to the wight,
And rallies him soon in speech full of sport
And good cheer.
"Ah! man, how can you sleep?
The morning is so clear."
He was in sorrow deep,
Yet her he then did hear.

In a dream muttered Gawain, deep in its gloom,
Like a man by a throng of sad thoughts sorely moved
Of how fate was to deal out his destiny to him
That morn, when he met the man at the Green Chapel,
Bound to abide his blow, unresisting.
But as soon as that comely one came to his senses,
Started from slumber and speedily answered,
The lovely lady came near, sweetly laughing,
Bent down o'er his fair face and daintily kissed him.
And well, in a worthy manner, he welcomed her.
Seeing her glorious, gaily attired,
Without fault in her features, most fine in her color,
Deep joy came welling up, warming his heart.
With sweet, gentle smiling they straightway grew merry;
So passed naught between them but pleasure, joy,
And delight.
Goodly was their debate,
Nor was their gladness slight.
Their peril had been great
Had Mary quit her knight.

For that noble princess pressed him so closely,
Brought him so near the last bound, that her love
He was forced to accept, or, offending, refuse her:
Concerned for his courtesy not to prove caitiff,
And more for his ruin if wrong he committed,
Betraying the hero, the head of that house.
"God forbid," said the knight; "that never shall be";
And lovingly laughing a little, he parried
The words of fondness that fell from her mouth.
She said to him, "Sir, you are surely to blame
If you love not the lady beside whom you're lying,
Of all the world's women most wounded in heart,
Unless you've one dearer, a lover you like more,
Your faith to her plighted, so firmly made fast
You desire not to loosen it—so I believe.
Now tell me truly I pray you; the truth.
By all of the loves that in life are, conceal not
Through guile."
The knight said, "By Saint John,"
And pleasantly to smile
Began, "In faith I've none,
Nor will have for a while."

"Such words," said the lady, "the worst are of all;
But in sooth I am answered, and sad it seems to me.

Kiss me now kindly, and quickly I'll go;
I on earth may but mourn, as a much loving mortal."
Sighing she stoops down, and kisses him seemly;
Then starting away from him, says as she stands,
"Now, my dear, at parting, do me this pleasure:
Give me some gift, thy glove if it might be,
To bring you to mind, sir, my mourning to lessen."
"On my word," quoth the hero, "I would that I had here,
For thy sake, the thing that I think the dearest
I own, for in sooth you've deserved very often
A greater reward than one I could give.
But a pledge of love would profit but little;
'T would help not your honor to have at this time
For a keepsake a glove, as a gift of Gawain.
I've come on a mission to countries most strange;
I've no servants with splendid things filling their sacks:
That displeases me, lady, for love's sake, at present;
Yet each man without murmur must do what he may
Nor repine."
"Nay, lord of honors high,
Though I have naught of thine,"
Quoth the lovely lady, "I
Shall give you gift of mine."

She offered a rich ring, wrought in red gold,
With a blazing stone that stood out above it,
And shot forth brilliant rays bright as the sun;
Wit you well that wealth right huge it was worth.
But promptly the hero replied, refusing it,
"Madam, I care not for gifts now to keep;
I have none to tender and naught will I take."
Thus he ever declined her offer right earnest,
And swore on his word that he would not accept it;
And, sad he declined, she thereupon said,
"If my ring you refuse, since it seems too rich,
If you would not so highly to me be beholden,
My girdle, that profits you less, I'll give you."
She swiftly removed the belt circling her sides,
Round her tunic knotted, beneath her bright mantle;
'T was fashioned of green silk, and fair made with gold,
With gold, too, the borders embellished and beautiful.
To Gawain she gave it, and gaily besought him
To take it, although he thought it but trifling.
He swore by no manner of means he'd accept
Either gold or treasure ere God gave him grace
To attain the adventure he'd there undertaken.
"And, therefore, I pray, let it prove not displeasing,
But give up your suit, for to grant it I'll never
Agree.
I'm deeply in your debt
For your kind ways to me.
In hot and cold I yet
Will your true servant be."

"Refuse ye this silk," the lady then said,
"As slight in itself? Truly it seems so.
Lo! it is little, and less is its worth;
But one knowing the nature knit up within it,
Would give it a value more great, peradventure;
For no man girt with this girdle of green,
And bearing it fairly made fast about him,
Might ever be cut down by any on earth,
For his life in no way in the world could be taken."
Then mused the man, and it came to his mind
In the peril appointed him precious 't would prove
When he'd found the chapel, to face there his fortune.
The device, might he slaying evade, would be splendid.
Her suit then he suffered, and let her speak;
And the belt she offered him, earnestly urging it
(And Gawain consented), and gave it with good will,
And prayed him for her sake ne'er to display it
But, true, from her husband to hide it. The hero
Agreed that no one should know of it ever.
Then he
Thanked her with all his might
Of heart and thought; and she
By then to this stout knight
Had given kisses three.

Then the lady departs, there leaving the lord,
For more pleasure she could not procure from that prince.
When she's gone, then quickly Sir Gawain clothes himself,
Rises and dresses in noble array,
Lays by the love-lace the lady had left him,
Faithfully hides it where later he'd find it.
At once then went on his way to the chapel,
Approached in private a priest, and prayed him
To make his life purer, more plainly him teach
How his soul, when he had to go hence, should be saved.
He declared his faults, confessing them fully,

The more and the less, and mercy besought,
And then of the priest implored absolution.
He surely absolved him, and made him as spotless,
Indeed, as if doomsday were due on the morrow.
Then among the fair ladies he made more merry
With lovely caroles, all kinds of delights,
That day than before, until darkness fell.
All there
Were treated courteously,
"And never," they declare,
"Has Gawain shown such glee
Since hither he did fare."

In that nook where his lot may be love let him linger!
The lord's in the meadow still, leading his men.
He has slain this fox that he followed so long;
As he vaulted a hedge to get view of the villain,
Hearing the hounds that hastened hard after him,
Reynard from out a rough thicket came running,
And right at his heels in a rush all the rabble.
He, seeing that wild thing, wary, awaits him,
Unsheaths his bright brand and strikes at the beast.
And he swerved from its sharpness and back would have started;
A hound, ere he could, came hurrying up to him;
All of them fell on him fast by the horse's feet,
Worried that sly one with wrathful sound.
And quickly the lord alights, and catches him,
Takes him in haste from the teeth of the hounds,
And over his head holds him high, loudly shouting,
Where brachets, many and fierce, at him barked.
Thither huntsmen made haste with many a horn,
The recall, till they saw him, sounding right clearly.
As soon as his splendid troop had assembled,
All bearing a bugle blew them together,
The others having no horns all hallooed.
'T was the merriest baying that man ever heard
That was raised for the soul of reynard with sounding
Din.
They fondle each dog's head
Who his reward did win.
Then take they reynard dead
And strip him of his skin.

And now, since near was the night, they turned homeward,
Strongly and sturdily sounding their horns.
At last at his loved home the lord alighted,
A fire on the hearth found, the hero beside it,
Sir Gawain the good, who glad was withal,
For he had 'mong the ladies in love much delight.
A blue robe that fell to the floor he was wearing;
His surcoat, that softly was furred, well beseemed him;
A hood of the same hue hung on his shoulders,
And both were bordered with white all about.
He, mid-most, met the good man in the hall,
And greeted him gladly, graciously saying:
"Now shall I first fulfill our agreement
We struck to good purpose, when drink was not spared."
Then Gawain embraced him, gave him three kisses,
The sweetest and soundest a man could bestow.
"By Christ, you'd great happiness," quoth then the host,
"In getting these wares, if good were your bargains."
"Take no care for the cost," the other said quickly,
"Since plainly the debt that is due I have paid."
Said the other, "By Mary, mine's of less worth.
The whole of the day I have hunted, and gotten
The skin of this fox—the fiend take its foulness!—
Right poor to pay for things of such price
As you've pressed on me here so heartily, kisses
So good."
"Say no more," Gawain saith;
"I thank you, by the rood!"[17]
How the fox met his death
He told him as they stood.

With mirth and minstrelsy, meat at their pleasure
They made as merry as any men might
(With ladies' laughter, and launching of jests
Right glad were they both, the good man and Gawain)
Unless they had doted or else had been drunken.
Both the man and the company make many jokes,
Till the time is come when the two must be parted,
When finally the knights are forced to go bedward.
And first of the lord his respectful leave
This goodly man took, and graciously thanked him:
"May God you reward for the welcome you gave me
This high feast, the splendid sojourn I've had here.
I give you myself, if you'd like it, to serve you.
I must, as you know, on the morrow move on;

[17] the cross on which Christ died.

Give me someone to show me the path, as you said,
To the Green Chapel, there, as God will allow me,
On New Year the fate that is fixed to perform."
"With a good will, indeed," said the good man; "whatever
I promised to do I deem myself ready."
He a servant assigns on his way to set him,
To take him by hills that no trouble he'd have,
And through grove and wood by the way most direct
Might repair.
The lord he thanked again
For the honor done him there.
The knight his farewell then
Took of those ladies fair.

To them with sorrow and kissing he spoke,
And besought them his thanks most sincere to accept;
And they, replying, promptly returned them,
With sighings full sore to the Savior commended him.
Then he with courtesy quitted the company,
Giving each man that he met his thanks
For kindness, for trouble he'd taken, for care
Whereby each had sought to serve him right eagerly.
Pained was each person to part with him then,
As if long they in honor had lived with that noble.
With people and lights he was led to his chamber,
To bed gaily brought there to be at his rest;
Yet I dare not say whether soundly he slept,
For much, if he would, on the morn to remember
Had he.
Let him lie stilly there
Near what he sought to see.
What happened I'll declare,
If you will silent be.

IV

The New Year draws near, and the nighttime now passes;
The day, as the Lord bids, drives on to darkness.
Outside, there sprang up wild storms in the world;
The clouds cast keenly the cold to the earth
With enough of the north sting to trouble the naked;
Down shivered the snow, nipping sharply the wild beasts;
The wind from the heights, shrilly howling, came rushing,
And heaped up each dale full of drifts right huge.
Full well the man listened who lay in his bed.
Though he shut tight his lids, he slept but a little;
He knew by each cock that crowed 't was the tryst time,
And swiftly ere dawn of the day he arose,
For there shone then the light of a lamp in his room;
To his chamberlain called, who answered him quickly,
And bade him his saddle to bring and his mail-shirt.
The other man roused up and fetched him his raiment,
Arrayed then that knight in a fashion right noble.
First he clad him in clothes to ward off the cold,
Then his other equipment, carefully kept:
His pieces of plate armor, polished right cleanly,
The rings of his rich mail burnished from rust.
All was fresh as at first; he was fain to give thanks
To the men.
He had on every piece
Full brightly burnished then.
He, gayest from here to Greece,
Ordered his steed again.

He garbed himself there in the loveliest garments
(His coat had its blazon of beautiful needlework
Stitched upon velvet for show, its rich stones
Set about it and studded, its seams all embroidered,
Its lovely fur in the fairest of linings),
Yet he left not the lace, the gift of the lady:
That, Gawain did not, for his own sake, forget.
When the brand on his rounded thighs he had belted,
He twisted the love-token two times about him.
That lord round his waist with delight quickly wound
The girdle of green silk, that seemed very gay
Upon royal red cloth that was rich to behold.
But Gawain the girdle wore not for its great price,
Or pride in its pendants although they were polished,
Though glittering gold there gleamed on the ends,
But himself to save when he needs must suffer
The death, nor could stroke then of sword or of knife
Him defend.
Then was the bold man dressed;
Quickly his way did wend;

To all the court expressed
His great thanks without end.

Then was Gringolet ready that great was and huge,
Who had safely, as seemed to him pleasant, been stabled;
That proud horse pranced, in the pink of condition.
The lord then comes to him, looks at his coat,
And soberly says, and swears on his word,
"In this castle's a company mindful of courtesy,
Led by this hero. Delight may they have;
And may love the dear lady betide all her lifetime.
If they for charity cherish a guest,
And give so great welcome, may God reward them,
Who rules the heaven on high, and the rest of you.
Might I for long live my life on the earth,
Some repayment with pleasure I'd make, if 't were possible."
He steps in the stirrup, strides into the saddle,
Receives on his shoulder the shield his man brings him,
And spurs into Gringolet strikes with his gilt heels;
Who leaps on the stones and lingers no longer
To prance.
The knight on his horse sits,
Who bears his spear and lance,
The house to Christ commits,
And wishes it good chance.

Then down the drawbridge they dropped, the broad gates
Unbarred, and on both sides bore them wide open.
He blessed them quickly, and crossed o'er the planks there
(He praises the porter, who knelt by the prince
Begging God to save Gawain, and gave him good-day),
And went on his way with but one man attended
To show him the turns to that sorrowful spot
Where he must to that onerous onset submit.
By hillsides where branches were bare they both journeyed;
They climbed over cliffs where the cold was clinging.
The clouds hung aloft, but 't was lowering beneath them.
On the moor dripped the mist, on the mountains melted;
Each hill had a hat, a mist-cloak right huge.
The brooks foamed and bubbled on hillsides about them,
And brightly broke on their banks as they rushed down.
Full wandering the way was they went through the wood,
Until soon it was time for the sun to be springing.
Then they
Were on a hill full high;
White snow beside them lay.
The servant who rode nigh
Then bade his master stay.

"I have led you hither, my lord, at this time,
And not far are you now from that famous place
You have sought for, and asked so especially after.
Yet, sir, to you surely I'll say, since I know you,
A man in this world whom I love right well,
If you'd follow my judgment, the better you'd fare.
You make haste to a place that is held full of peril;
One dwells, the worst in the world, in that waste,
For he's strong and stern, and takes pleasure in striking.
No man on the earth can equal his might;
He is bigger in body than four of the best men
In Arthur's own household, Hestor or others.
And thus he brings it about at the chapel:
That place no one passes so proud in his arms
That he smites him not dead with a stroke of his hand.
He's a man most immoderate, showing no mercy;
Be it chaplain or churl that rides by the chapel,
Monk or priest, any manner of man,
Him to slay seems as sweet as to still live himself.
So I say, as sure as you sit in your saddle
You're killed, should the knight so choose, if you come here;
That take as the truth, though you twenty lives had
To spend.
He's lived in this place long
In battles without end.
Against his strokes right strong
You cannot you defend.

"So let him alone, good Sir Gawain, and leave
By a different road, for God's sake, and ride
To some other country where Christ may reward you.
And homeward again I will hie me, and promise
To swear by the Lord and all his good saints
(So help me the oaths on God's halidom[18] sworn)

[18] holiness.

That I'll guard well your secret, and give out no story
You hastened to flee any hero I've heard of."
"Thank you," said Gawain, and grudgingly added,
"Good fortune go with you for wishing me well.
And truly I think you'd not tell; yet though never
So surely you hid it, if hence I should hasten,
Fearful, to fly in the fashion you tell of,
A coward I'd prove, and could not be pardoned.
The chapel I'll find whatsoever befalls,
And talk with that wight the way that I want to,
Let weal or woe follow as fate may wish.
Though the knave,
Hard to subdue and fell,
Should stand there with a stave,
Yet still the Lord knows well
His servants how to save."

Quoth the man, "By Mary, you've said now this much:
That you wish to bring down your own doom on your head.
Since you'd lose your life, I will stay you no longer.
Put your helm on your head, take your spear in your hand,
And ride down this road by the side of that rock
Till it brings you down to the dale's rugged bottom;
Then look at the glade on the left hand a little:
You'll see in the valley that self-same chapel,
And near it the great-limbed knight who is guarding it.
Gawain the noble, farewell now, in God's name!
I would not go with thee for all the world's wealth,
Nor in fellowship ride one more foot through the forest."
The man in the trees there then turns his bridle,
As hard as he can hits his horse with his heels,
And across the fields gallops, there leaving Sir Gawain
Alone.
"By God," the knight said, "now
I'll neither weep nor groan.
Unto God's will I bow,
And make myself his own."

He strikes spurs into Gringolet, starts on the path;
By a bank at the side of a small wood he pushes in,
Rides down the rugged slope right to the dale.
Then about him he looks, and the land seems wild,
And nowhere he sees any sign of a shelter,
But slopes on each side of him, high and steep,
And rocks, gnarled and rough, and stones right rugged.
The clouds there seemed to him scraped by the crags.
Then he halted and held back his horse at that time,
And spied on all sides in search of the chapel;
Such nowhere he saw, but soon, what seemed strange,
In the midst of a glade a mound, as it might be,
A smooth, swelling knoll by the side of the water,
The falls of a rivulet running close by;
In its banks the brook bubbled as though it were boiling.
The knight urged on Gringolet, came to the glade,
There leaped down lightly and tied to the limb
Of a tree, right rugged, the reins of his noble steed,
Went to the mound, and walked all about it,
Debating what manner of thing it might be:
On the end and on each side an opening; everywhere
Over it grass was growing in patches,
All hollow inside, it seemed an old cave
Or a crag's old cleft: which, he could not decide.
Said the knight,
"Is this the chapel here?
Alas, dear Lord! here might
The fiend, when midnight's near,
His matin prayers recite.

"Of a truth," said Gawain, "the glade here is gloomy;
The Green Chapel's ugly, with herbs overgrown.
It greatly becomes here that hero, green-clad,
To perform in the devil's own fashion his worship.
I feel in my five senses this is the fiend
Who has made me come to this meeting to kill me.
Destruction fall on this church of ill-fortune!
The cursedest chapel that ever I came to!"
With helm on his head and lance in his hand
He went right to the rock of that rugged abode.
From the high hill he heard, from a hard rock over
The stream, on the hillside, a sound wondrous loud.
Lo! it clattered on cliffs fit to cleave them, as though
A scythe on a grindstone someone were grinding.
It whirred, lo! and whizzed like a water-mill's wheel;
Lo! it ground and it grated, grievous to hear.

"By God, this thing, as I think," then said Gawain,
"Is done now for me, since my due turn to meet it
Is near.
God's will be done! 'Ah woe!'
No whit doth aid me here.
Though I my life forego
No sound shall make me fear."

And then the man there commenced to call loudly,
"Who here is the master, with me to hold tryst?
For Gawain the good now is going right near.
He who craves aught of me let him come hither quickly;
'T is now or never; he needs to make haste."
Said somebody, "Stop," from the slope up above him,
"And promptly you'll get what I promised to give you."
Yet he kept up the whirring noise quickly a while,
Turned to finish his sharpening before he'd descend.
Then he came by a crag, from a cavern emerging,
Whirled out of a den with a dreadful weapon,
A new Danish ax to answer the blow with;
Its blade right heavy, curved back to the handle,
Sharp filed with the filing tool, four feet in length,
'T was no less, by the reach of that lace gleaming brightly.
The fellow in green was garbed as at first,
Both his face and his legs, his locks and his beard,
Save that fast o'er the earth on his feet he went fairly,
The shaft on the stone set, and stalked on beside it.
On reaching the water, he would not wade it;
On his ax he hopped over, and hastily strode,
Very fierce, through the broad field filled all about him
With snow.
Sir Gawain met the man,
And bowed by no means low,
Who said, "Good sir, men can
Trust you to tryst to go."

Said the green man, "Gawain, may God you guard!
You are welcome indeed, sir knight, at my dwelling.
Your travel you've timed as a true man should,
And you know the compact we came to between us;
A twelvemonth ago you took what chance gave,
And I promptly at New Year was pledged to repay you.
In truth, we are down in this dale all alone;
Though we fight as we please, here there's no one to part us.
Put your helm from your head, and have here your payment;
Debate no further than I did before,
When you slashed off my head with a single stroke."
"Nay," quoth Gawain, "by God who gave me my spirit,
I'll harbor no grudge whatever harm happens.
Exceed not one stroke and still I shall stand;
You may do as you please, I'll in no way oppose
The blow."
He left the flesh all bare,
Bending his neck down low
As if he feared naught there,
For fear he would not show.

Then the man in green raiment quickly made ready,
Uplifted his grim tool Sir Gawain to smite;
With the whole of his strength he heaved it on high,
As threateningly swung it as though he would slay him.
Had it fallen again with the force he intended
That lord, ever-brave, from the blow had been lifeless.
But Gawain a side glance gave at the weapon
As down it came gliding to do him to death;
With his shoulders shrank from the sharp iron a little.
The other with sudden jerk stayed the bright ax,
And reproved then that prince with proud words in plenty:
"Not Gawain thou art who so good is considered,
Ne'er daunted by host in hill or in dale;
Now in fear, ere thou feelest a hurt, thou art flinching;
Such cowardice never I knew of that knight.
When you swung at me, sir, I fled not nor started;
No cavil I offered in King Arthur's castle.
My head at my feet fell, yet never I flinched,
And thy heart is afraid ere a hurt thou feelest,
And therefore thy better I'm bound to be thought
On that score."
"I shrank once," Gawain said,
"And I will shrink no more;
Yet cannot I my head,
If it fall down, restore.

"But make ready, sir, quickly, and come to the point;
My destiny deal me, and do it forthwith;
For a stroke I will suffer, and start no further
Till hit with thy weapon; have here my pledged word."
Quoth the other, heaving it high, "Have at thee!"
As fierce in his manner as if he were mad,
He mightily swung but struck not the man.
Withheld on a sudden his hand ere it hurt him.
And firmly he waited and flinched in no member,
But stood there as still as a stone or a stump
In rocky ground held by a hundred roots.
Then the Green Knight again began to speak gaily:
"It behooves me to hit, now that whole is thy heart.
Thy high hood that Arthur once gave you now hold back,
Take care that your neck at this cut may recover."
And Gawain full fiercely said in a fury,
"Come! lay on, thou dread man; too long thou art threatening.
I think that afraid of your own self you feel."
"In sooth," said the other, "thy speech is so savage
No more will I hinder thy mission nor have it
Delayed."
With puckered lips and brow
He stands with ready blade,
Not strange 't is hateful now
To him past hope of aid.

He lifts his ax lightly, and lets it down deftly,
The blade's edge next to the naked neck.
Though he mightily hammered he hurt him no more
Than to give him a slight nick that severed the skin there.
Through fair skin the keen ax so cut to the flesh
That shining blood shot to the earth o'er his shoulders.
As soon as he saw his blood gleam on the snow
He sprang forth in one leap, for more than a spear length;
His helm fiercely caught up and clapped on his head;
With his shoulders his fair shield shot round in front of him,
Pulled out his bright sword, and said in a passion
(And since he was mortal man born of his mother
The hero was never so happy by half),
"Cease thy violence, man; no more to me offer,
For here I've received, unresisting, a stroke.
If a second thou strikest I soon will requite thee,
And swiftly and fiercely, be certain of that,
Will repay.
One stroke on me might fall
By bargain struck that way,
Arranged in Arthur's hall;
Therefore, sir knight, now stay!"

The man turned away, on his weapon rested,
The shaft on the ground set, leaned on the sharp edge,
And gazed at Sir Gawain there in the glade;
Saw that bold man, unblenching, standing right bravely,
Full-harnessed and gallant; at heart he was glad.
Then gaily the Green Knight spoke in a great voice,
And said to the man in speech that resounded,
"Now be not so savage, bold sir, for towards you
None here has acted unhandsomely, save
In accord with the compact arranged in the King's court.
I promised the stroke you've received, so hold you
Well payed. I free you from all duties further.
If brisk I had been, peradventure a buffet
I'd harshly have dealt that harm would have done you.
In mirth, with a feint I menaced you first,
With no direful wound rent you; right was my deed,
By the bargain that bound us both on the first night,
When, faithful and true, you fulfilled our agreement,
And gave me your gain as a good man ought to.
The second I struck at you, sir, for the morning
You kissed my fair wife and the kisses accorded me.
Two mere feints for both times I made at you, man,
Without woe.
True men restore by right,
One fears no danger so;
You failed the third time, knight,
And therefore took that blow.

"'Tis my garment you're wearing, that woven girdle,
Bestowed by my wife, as in truth I know well.
I know also your kisses and all of your acts
And my wife's advances; myself, I devised them.
I sent her to try you, and truly you seem
The most faultless of men that e'er fared on his feet.

As a pearl compared to white peas is more precious,
So next to the other gay knights is Sir Gawain.
But a little you lacked and loyalty wanted, 2366
Yet truly 't was not for intrigue or for wooing,
But love of your life; the less do I blame you."
Sir Gawain stood in a study a great while, 2369
So sunk in disgrace that in spirit he groaned;
To his face all the blood in his body was flowing;
For shame, as the other was talking, he shrank.
And these were the first words that fell from his lips:
"Be cowardice cursed, and coveting! In you
Are vice and villainy, virtue destroying." 2375
The lace he then seized, and loosened the strands,
And fiercely the girdle flung at the Green Knight.
"Lo! there is faith-breaking! evil befall it.
To coveting came I, for cowardice caused me
From fear of your stroke to forsake in myself 2380
What belongs to a knight: munificence, loyalty.
I'm faulty and false, who've been ever afraid
Of untruth and treachery; sorrow betide both
And care!
Here I confess my sin; 2385
All faulty did I fare.
Your good will let me win,
And then I will beware."

Then the Green Knight laughed, and right graciously said, 2389
"I am sure that the harm is healed that I suffered.
So clean you're confessed, so cleared of your faults,
Having had the point of my weapon's plain penance,
I hold you now purged of offense, and as perfectly
Spotless as though you'd ne'er sinned in your life.
And I give to you, sir, the golden-hemmed girdle,
As green as my gown. Sir Gawain, when going
Forth on your way among famous princes, 2397
Think still of our strife and this token right splendid,
'Mid chivalrous knights, of the chapel's adventure.
This New Year you'll come to my castle again,
And the rest of this feast in revel most pleasant
Will go." 2402
Then pressed him hard the lord:
"My wife and you, I know
We surely will accord, 2405
Who was your bitter foe."

"No indeed," quoth the hero, his helm seized and doffed it
Graciously, thanking the Green Knight; "I've stayed
Long enough. May good fortune befall you; may He
Who all fame doth confer give it fully to you, sir.
To your lady, gracious and lovely, commend me,
To her and that other, my honored ladies, 2412
That so with their sleights deceived their knight subtly.
But no marvel it is for a fool to act madly,
Through woman's wiles to be brought to woe.
So for certain was Adam deceived by some woman, 2416
By several Solomon, Samson besides;
Delilah dealt him his doom; and David
Was duped by Bath-sheba, enduring much sorrow.
Since these were grieved by their guile, 't would be great gain 2420
To love them yet never believe them, if knights could.
For formerly these were most noble and fortunate,
More than all others who lived on the earth;
And these few
By women's wiles were caught 2425
With whom they had to do.
Though I'm beguiled, I ought
To be excused now too.

"But your girdle," said Gawain, "may God you reward! 2429
With a good will I'll use it, yet not for the gold,
The sash or the silk, or the sweeping pendants,
Or fame, or its workmanship wondrous, or cost,
But in sign of my sin I shall see it oft.
When in glory I move, with remorse I'll remember
The frailty and fault of the stubborn flesh, 2435
How soon 't is infected with stains of defilement;
And thus when I'm proud of my prowess in arms,
The sight of this sash shall humble my spirit.
But one thing I pray, if it prove not displeasing;
Because you are lord of the land where I stayed
In your house with great worship (may He now reward you 2441
Who sitteth on high and upholdeth the heavens),
What name do you bear? No more would I know."
And then "That truly I'll tell," said the other;
"Bercilak de Hautdesert here am I called. 2445
Through her might who lives with me, Morgan le Fay,
Well-versed in the crafts and cunning of magic
(Many of Merlin's arts she has mastered,
For long since she dealt in the dalliance of love

With him whom your heroes at home know, that sage
Without blame.
'Morgan the goddess,' so
She's rightly known by name.
No one so proud doth go
That him she cannot tame).

"I was set in this way to your splendid hall
To make trial of your pride, and to see if the people's
Tales were true of the Table's great glory.
This wonder she sent to unsettle your wits,
And to daunt so the Queen as to cause her to die
From fear at the sight of that phantom speaker
Holding his head in his hand at the high table.
Lives she at home there, that ancient lady;
She's even thine aunt, King Arthur's half-sister,
Tyntagel's duchess's daughter, whom Uther
Made later the mother of mighty Lord Arthur.
I beg thee, sir, therefore, come back to thine aunt;
In my castle make merry. My company love thee,
And I, sir, wish thee as well, on my word,
As any on earth for thy high sense of honor."
He said to him, nay, this he'd never consent to.
The men kiss, embrace, and each other commend
To the Prince of Paradise; there they part
In the cold.
Gawain on his fair horse
To Arthur hastens bold;
The bright Green Knight his course
Doth at his pleasure hold.

Through the wood now goes Sir Gawain by wild ways
On Gringolet, given by God's grace his life.
Oft in houses, and oft in the open he lodged,
Met many adventures, won many a victory:
These I intend not to tell in this tale.
Now whole was the hurt he had in his neck,
And about it the glimmering belt he was bearing,
Bound to his side like a baldric obliquely,
Tied under his left arm, that lace, with a knot
As a sign that with stain of sin he'd been found.
And thus to the court he comes all securely.
Delight in that dwelling arose when its lord knew
That Gawain had come; a good thing he thought it.
The King kissed the lord, and the Queen did likewise,
And next many knights drew near him to greet him
And ask how he'd fared; and he wondrously answered,
Confessed all the hardships that him had befallen,
The happenings at chapel, the hero's behavior,
The lady's love, and lastly the lace.
He showed them the nick in his neck all naked
The blow that the Green Knight gave for deceit
Him to blame.
In torment this he owned;
Blood in his face did flame;
With wrath and grief he groaned,
When showing it with shame.

Laying hold of the lace, quoth the hero, "Lo! lord!
The band of this fault I bear on my neck;
And this is the scathe and damage I've suffered,
For cowardice caught there, and coveting also,
The badge of untruth in which I was taken.
And this for as long as I live I must wear,
For his fault none may hide without meeting misfortune,
For once it is fixed, it can ne'er be unfastened."
To the knight then the King gave comfort; the court too
Laughed greatly, and made this gracious agreement:
That ladies and lords to the Table belonging,
All of the brotherhood, baldrics should bear
Obliquely about them, bands of bright green,
Thus following suit for the sake of the hero.
For the Round Table's glory was granted that lace,
And he held himself honored who had it thereafter,
As told in the book, the best of romances.
In the days of King Arthur this deed was done
Whereof witness is borne by Brutus's book.[19]
Since Brutus, that bold man, first came here to Britain,
When ceased, indeed, had the siege and assault
At Troy's wall,
Full many feats ere now
Like this one did befall.
May He with thorn-crowned brow
To His bliss bring us all. Amen.

HONY SOYT QUI MAL PENCE[20]

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[19] General reference to the various chronicles or romances telling of the founding of Britain by Brutus; e.g. the *Brut* of Layamon.

[20] The motto of the Order of the Garter, founded about 1345. (Evil be to him who evil thinks of it.)

DANTE ALIGHIERI (1265-1321)

THE DIVINE COMEDY

(Translated by Frances Winwar)

The greatest of Italian poets was of an ancient family, and claimed descent from the warrior, Cacciaguida, who prophesied to him in Paradise. In his ninth year he met Beatrice Portinari, a child of eight, at the home of her father. "At that moment," he says, "I saw truly that the spirit of life which has its abode in the most secret chamber of the heart began to tremble so violently that the smallest pulses of my body shook." After that he saw her again only once or twice. But Dante's devotion to her never ceased for the rest of his life. She died in 1290, and the poet wrote the story of his love from the first meeting till after her death, in *The New Life.* In it he told the world: "I shall yet write concerning her what has never before been written of any woman." This promise he fulfilled later in *The Divine Comedy.*

His passion, rooted in his soul, was none the less real for being entirely within the traditions of courtly love. Indeed it is fortunate for literature that the fashion for worshipping an unattainable lady (Beatrice had married Simone de' Bardi) was an inducement to Dante to seek poetic expression of a love that was almost saintly. He himself married Gemma Donati, had four children, and took an active part in the politics of his native Florence; but he had consecrated his heart to Beatrice, and nothing he did in the world touched this love.

A man of action, he despised "those sorry souls who lived without infamy and without renown." He had a voice in the deliberations of the city councils, was employed in an important embassy, and held the office of prior. As a result of the bitter partisan feuds in Florence, Dante was banished in 1302 by his enemies then in power, and never again saw the city he loved. Wandering from court to court, the poet sickened at the quarrels and factionalism he found everywhere, and began to dream of an Italy united under a just ruler and a Church uncontaminated by political intrigue. Towards the end of his life, he was offered the opportunity of returning to Florence on the payment of a fine, but he rejected coming back on any terms but those of honor. He died, after much homeless sojourning, in Ravenna, where his body still lies.

Of his many writings, *The Comedy* (called "Divine" only two centuries later) is the one by which he earns his place among the world's greatest poets. It is a work truly unique in literature, the supreme poetic expression of the Middle Ages. Like all high works of art, no catalogue of its qualities can entirely account for it. But what can be said is that it is encyclopedic in its summation of medieval knowledge and life. Dante had been an ardent student, had mastered all the sciences of his age as well as music and painting (the great painter, Giotto, was a close friend of his), and his masterpiece is a storehouse of what the Middle Ages held to be true in all the fields of thought and belief. For the poet himself it was more than this: it was an allegory on the life of a Christian, his mystical vision of life after death, and his spiritual autobiography.

The poem is divided into three parts: *Inferno, Purgatory,* and *Paradise.* On the morning of Good Friday, 1300, lost in the forest of worldly concerns, the poet, in his search for the mountain of felicity, finds himself threatened by the wolf of greed, the lion of pride, and the leopard of sensuality. Beatrice in heaven sends Virgil to act as his guide. Together they enter the gates of Inferno—a region in the form of an inverted cone, narrowing as they descend from the Elysian Fields (where the noble pagans abide), to the circles where venial sins are punished, and thence to the lowest circles of those whose sins have been deadly; the point of the cone is at the centre of the earth, a frozen lake where Lucifer resides. In Inferno, Dante beholds many persons of former and present times—emperors, kings, popes, poets, and citizens. Nothing in the poem is more moving than Dante's encounter with Paolo and Francesca in Canto V; the story the poet is the first to tell has been retold many times since. Canto XIII, which takes place in the "Dolorous Forest" and narrates the tragic story of Pier Delle Vigne, is one of the most masterful.

Virgil shows Dante a secret passage by which they can make a rapid ascent and as they emerge from Hell, Easter has dawned. Up the hill of Purgatory they make their way, past the seven terraces where those who too long delayed repenting their sins, expiate their crimes before their admission to Paradise. It is in this portion of the poem that Dante relates his famous Dream.

At the summit of the mountain, Virgil must leave Dante because as a pagan he cannot enter Paradise. Beatrice takes his place and leads Dante through sphere after sphere of Heaven, up to the Empyrean where

God dwells, and where the poet is vouchsafed a vision of Deity and the understanding of all mysteries. There his will is made one with God. And there the poem ends.

Dante made much of the mystic number three in his form. The three parts of the poem are each divided into thirty-three cantos, in addition to the Canto Introductory. For a poem such as had never been before attempted, Dante had to forge his own medium—the *terza rima,* a stanza of three lines in which the first and third rhyme, and the second gives the rhyme for the first and third of the next stanza (*aba, bcb, cdc,* etc.); thus each rhyme (except the first) is sounded thrice. (Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* and Browning's *The Statue and the Bust* are among the examples in English poetry of *terza rima.*)

We include Dante in our study not only because he is the best intellectual key to the aspirations of the Middle Ages, but because, as Ten Brink has pointed out, his was the greatest influence on Chaucer, our chief Middle English poet. To others Chaucer's indebtedness is more plainly visible; but his debt to Dante lies deeper; his work is permeated with what he has learned from him in spirit and form. Specific parallels in Chaucer are, of course, easy to trace in *The Canterbury Tales, The Parlement of Fowls,* and the *House of Fame.* In the last-named Chaucer has a dream resembling Dante's in the *Purgatory.* But it cannot be supposed that Dante's influence ceases with Chaucer. Many of our poets knew him well and some of their growth is due to his radiance.

Perhaps no poet is harder to translate than Dante, nor any verse-form more difficult to re-present than this. The most popular of English translations, Cary's, is notably deficient in the two qualities in which Dante excels—terseness and concreteness. Frances Winwar, most expert of Boccaccio's translators, has been generous enough to make a translation almost literal in *terza rima* expressly for this text.

A Study of Dante by J. A. Symonds, *Shadow of Dante* by Maria Rossetti, and *Dante Alighieri* by P. Toynbee (1910) will be found helpful to the student.

Miss Winwar's translation is copyrighted by her.

INFERNO

CANTO V

(MINOS, CARNAL SINNERS, FRANCESCA DA RIMINI)

From the first circle[1] I made my descent
Down to the second,[2] girdling lesser pale
Yet major griefs, and ringing with lament.
Here Minos,[3] snarling at the souls that quail
Near to the entry, holds his awful state,
Dispensing judgment with his circling tail.
No hapless spirit that on him must wait,
But bares himself of sinfulness and crime,
Till Minos, judging each unto his fate
From knowledge dark, seeks out his fittest clime.
So many downward grades the soul must go
As Minos winds his tail—one ring each time.
Yet is it ever full, that place of woe,
Where one by one the souls for hearing stand,
Confess and hearken—and are hurled below.
"O thou that comest to this dolorous land,"
Minos addressed as he beheld me there,
Ceasing his solemn office toward the band,
"Take heed how thou dost enter,—in whose care:
Be not deluded by the passage wide!"
Then spake my Guide,[4] "Why howlest *thou*?[5] Beware
Thou hinder not his going, for 'twas cried
Where all wish is fulfilled, and all must pass
That is decreed. Ask no more in thy pride."
And now commence the doleful sounds, alas,
To fill the air; now am I in that place
Of ceaseless lamentation, where the glass
Of heaven shines not, where bereft of grace,
The blinded air roars like a sea in pain
By quarreling winds assailed. No moment's trace
Does that unholy storm subside; amain
The damnèd souls are by its fury borne
And whirled and crashed together till they gain
That ruinous swell wherein their cries forlorn,
Their shrieks of anguish and despairing wails,
Damn His decree and curse His name in scorn.[6]
Now did I learn that to such dire travails
Are doomed the victims of their body's bane
Whose appetite over their will prevails.
Even as starlings through the chilly lane
Of wintry skies in swarms are hurried fast
On stiffened wings, the sinful souls are ta'en
In every sense by that infernal blast,
With never respite to their endless woe,
Without a hope that they shall rest at last.
Like cranes that through the air together go
In stretchèd files, and making mournful moan,

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[1] Limbo.

[2] The Circle for carnal sinners.

[3] Minos, son of Jove and Europa, had ruled as king over Crete. Pagan mythology had already appointed him judge of Hades, so that Dante had only to follow tradition.

[4] Virgil, who escorted Dante.

[5] *Thou* as well as Charon who had also raised his voice in the vestibule of the Inferno.

[6] In their anguish the damned souls curse the Almighty Power that moves the wind by which they are tossed about.

Those shades I saw come toward me, in the throe
Of that fell wind, with many a sequent groan;
Wherefore I spake, "O Master, tell me, pray,
What shades are these by blackest wind so strown?"
And he made answer, "She that leads the way
Among those weary shades, in days of yore
As empress over many tongues held sway.
So much did vice corrupt her to the core
That luxury came lawful in law's stead
To clear her of the sinful stain she bore.
Semiramis[7] is she, of whom 'tis said
That she wed Ninus and from him did hold
That land where now the Soldan rules instead.
That other[8] slew herself, by love made bold
And to Sichaeus's ashes broke her faith.
There Cleopatra[9] comes in manifold
Vices luxurious. See Helen,[10] wraith
For whose sweet sake much evil did betide;
And great Achilles,[11] to whom love brought death.
Paris[12] behold, and Tristan."[13] Thus my Guide
More than a thousand in that host of shade
Named me and told that all for love had died.
And as I marked each knight and antique maid
Whereof my Master spake, such pity fell
Upon me that my senses seemed bewrayed,
And I began, "O Poet, I would well
Speak to those twain[14] that clasped together lie
So light, it seems, upon the wind of hell."
And he to me, "Stay thee till they draw nigh;
Then by the love that brought them here implore
Their near approach, and hither they will fly."
Soon as the wind these spirits toward us bore,
I lifted up my voice: "O travailled wights,
Come speak to us, if other's sterner lore
Forbid ye not." As doves desire incites
Toward their sweet nest, with high-uplifted wing
And effortless and firm, e'en so these sprites
Out of Queen Dido's train together spring
Forward to us through the malignant air—
So mightily my piteous cry did ring.
"O creature, gracious and benign, who dare
Enter upon our lost dread universe
To speak with us who stained the world, so fair,
With blood; if He on high were not averse
To hear our prayers, we would implore thy peace
Since thou hast pity on our evil curse.
Question us, therefore, on what thou wouldst please
To hear us tell, and then, as it beseems,
We'll answer, whilst the wind, as now, doth cease.
My native land[15] is that fair strand where gleams
The Po, meandering until at last
It findeth peace with its sequaceous streams.
Love, that to gentle heart soon clingeth fast,
Seized my companion[16] for my lovely form
So rudely ta'en,[17] that I am yet aghast.
Love, that return of love holds as a norm,
So seized me for my loved one's loving faith
That, see, he cannot yet from me be torn.
Love was it that us brought to the one death;
Caina[18] waits who[19] quenched our mortal flame."
Their words were borne us on the low wind's breath.
The while I heard those souls their sorrows frame,
For so long space did I my head abase
That "Whereon broodest?" did my Bard exclaim.
When I made answer I began, "Alas,
By how sweet thoughts and by what yearning deep
Were led these twain unto the woeful pass!"[20]
Then unto them I turned, and thus did speak:
"Francesca, at thy woes such tides arise
Within my bosom, that I fain must weep.
But tell me, in the springtime of sweet sighs,
How, by what token, did Love find it lief
That ye betray your amorous surmise?"
And she to me, "There is no greater grief
Than to remember happy days gone by

---

[7] Semiramis, the Assyrian queen who ruled c. 800 B.C.

[8] Dido who swore to be faithful to Sichaeus even beyond death, but who nevertheless fell in love with Æneas.

[9] Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, first Caesar's love and then Marc Antony's. See Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women* for her and Dido.

[10] Helen, wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta. She was abducted by Paris and for her sake the Trojan war was fought. Marlowe:

> "Was this the face that lancht a thousand shippes?
> And burnt the toplesse Towres of Ilium?"

[11] Achilles, king of the Myrmidons.

[12] Priam's son who abducted Helen of Troy.

[13] Tristan, one of the Knights of the Round Table who after drinking the magic love potion fell in love with Isolde the Fair, wife of King Mark, his uncle.

[14] Francesca da Rimini and Paolo Malatesta, her brother-in-law and lover who, for his beauty, was called Paolo il Bello.

[15] Ravenna. Francesca was the daughter of Guido Minore da Polenta. She was married by proxy to Gianciotto Malatesta, a brave warrior but as ugly and malformed as his brother Paolo was handsome.

[16] Paolo.

[17] By the violent death inflicted upon her by Gianciotto.

[18] Caina is one of the divisions of Hell where fratricides and traitors are punished. It is named appropriately after Cain who killed Abel, his brother.

[19] Gianciotto who in a jealous fury slew them.

[20] Their violent death which brought about their eternal damnation.

In time of sorrow;[21] this knows well thy chief.
But if it be thy pleasure to descry
The first root of our love, and of its might,
I'll be as one that must both speak and cry.
We were reading one day for our delight,
Of Launcelot and how love held him fast;[22]
Alone we were, without suspicion's blight.[23]
Betimes our eyes were toward each other cast
By this our reading, and our cheeks on fire,
But one sole point our innocence o'ercast.
When that we read, how full of his desire,
The loving knight kissed that so longed for laughter,[24]
He who forevermore none can conspire
To part from me, my mouth kissed, trembling after.
A Galehault[25] was the book, and he that wrote;
That day—ah me,—we read no more thereafter."[26]
The while one spirit spake, with mournful note
The other wept; till, as one pity thralls,
I lost all sense, and swooned as death had smote,
And down I fell as a dead body falls.

INFERNO

Canto XIII

THE DOLOROUS FOREST, PIER DELLE VIGNE AND THE SUICIDES, LANO DA SIENA, GIACOMO DA S. ANDREA AND THE WASTRELS, A FLORENTINE SUICIDE.

Not yet had Nessus crossed the narrow ford
When we 'gan wandering through a forest dread
Unmarked by track or path. No fronds afford
Green shadow in that blackness; dull as lead,
Dark leaves on gnarled and twisted branches grow,
Wherefrom not fruit but poisonous thorns are shed.
No savage beast that loathes the fields men sow
'Twixt Cecina[1] and Corneto[2] hath more dense
And evil boscage than is here below.
'Mid this strange wood weird, shrieking Harpies[3] fence
Their nests about—they who with loathly wiles
And auguries of ill, and foul offense
The Trojans scattered from th' Ionian Isles.[4]
Broadwinged are they, with talon'd claws and vast
Thick-feathered paunches, tho' their face reviles
The human countenance. "Ere we have passed
Farther within, know," here my Guide commands,
"That this, the second round's extent, will last
Till thou art come to the horrendous sands.[5]
Look well about, for here thine eyes will gaze
On that which baffles credence and demands
Thy fullest faith." Indeed, from everyways
Wails and lamenting rose, though I could see
No human thing or form; and in amaze
I stoppèd short. And here meseems that he
Thought that I thought[6] these voices did arise
From men that hid from us behind each tree.
Here spake my Master: "If thou but excise
Some little twig from any plant about,
Whate'er thy thoughts, thou wilt think otherwise."
A little way my hand, like one in doubt,
I thrust, and brake a branch from off a thorn,
When, "Why dismember me?" the trunk cried out.
When blood had darkened where my hand had torn,
Again it cried, "Ah, wherefore rendest me?
Hast thou no pity in thy heart? Men born
We once were all who stocks, as thou dost see,
Are now become. Yet were we souls of snakes,
Thy hand should still have dealt more piteously."
Like to a greenling log that fire takes
At hither end, while from the other air
Moaning and hissing with the sap escapes,
So from the broken branch together were
Blood and words mingled; whereon I let fall
The twig I held, and stood as one in fear.
"Had he believed all that did now befall

---

[21] Tennyson, in "Locksley Hall":
"This is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering
happier things."

[22] Launcelot, one of King Arthur's knights, was enamored of Queen Guinevere, but being honorable, he did not declare his passion.

[23] Without suspicion of each other's love which might have marred their innocent enjoyment.

[24] The laughing mouth of Queen Guinevere.

[25] In the romaunt of Launcelot which the two were reading, it is Galehault who urges Launcelot and the queen to their sin. Francesca here would convey that the book and its author were their Galehault, or their inciter.

[26] This verse has been admired for its eloquent modesty.

[1] A narrow stream known to Dante.

[2] A little town near the Roman marshes.

[3] The Harpies were mythical monsters with the face and breast of a woman and the feathered body of a vulture. According to writers later than Hesiod there were three Harpies: Ocypeta, Celeno, and Aëllo, or Speed, Darkness and Storm.

[4] They are said to have warned the Trojans of their future suffering and want.

[5] The second ring of the third circle of the Inferno.

[6] It. *Io credo ch'ei credette ch'io credesse.* An example of the style of the day.

From mine own rime alone,"[7] my Sage[8] made plain,
"His hand would not have dared, O maimèd soul
To do thee hurt; but so excessive strain
On human credence led me to incite
Him to the thing I now deplore. But deign
To tell him who thou wast, how thou wert hight,
And as a recompense he will renew
Thy fame on earth, whither he hath the right
To make return." "So sweetly do you sue,"
Returned the trunk, "that I would speak, so please
Ye bear with me if I do weary you.
He am I[9] that did hold the double keys
Of Frederick's heart, and that did turn them deep,
Locking, unlocking, with such gentle ease,
That from his secrets I nigh all did keep:
So great the faith the glorious charge I bore,
That thereby I did lose both pulse and sleep.
The evil one,[10] that never yet forbore
From Caesar's house her gloating eyes to roll,
The common death and vice of courts, the whore,
Did flame against me every courtier's soul;
Till they, inflamed, so flamed my lord august
That my glad honors turned to dismal dole;
Whereon my soul, through scornfullest disgust,
Thinking the bitter scorn by death to flee,
Toward my just self did render me unjust.[11]
I swear by the strange roots that hold this tree,
That to my liege, worthy of honors high,
Never broke I my staunch fidelity.
If any to the world again should hie,
Comfort let him the memory of my name,
That yet from envy's blow doth prostrate lie."
Awhile he paused whereon the Poet came
Toward me and said, "Since he is silent now,
Waste not the hour, but speak if thou wouldst fain
Know more." And I to him, "I pray ask *thou*
Whate'er thou think'st would pleasure me; too great
Compassion fills me for his bitter woe."
Hence he began anew, "If without bate
And freely as thou ask'st, O spirit pent,
This man will do thy bidding, pray relate
How to these gnarlèd trunks the soul is sent
To be imprisoned. And, if thou may'st tell,
Is ever soul from such enchaining rent?"
A heavy breathing as of windy swell
Rose from the trunk, and it became a voice:
"Briefly I shall make answer. When the fell
Soul leaves the body, spurned of its own choice,
Minos condemns it to the seventh deep
Of Hell's dread gulphs. For better or for worse,
Down to the wood it sinks, where none may keep
A designated place, but where it falls,
There like a grain of spelt it sprouts, to leap
To sapling's or to wild shrub's height. Befalls.
It then, that Harpies feeding on the leaves,
Cause pain, and vent for pain, till it appals.[12]
Like all the rest we, too, shall claim our sheaths,[13]
But none may wear again his body's dress:
Unjust to have what from oneself one cleaves.
Hither we drag our bodies, through the press
Of the black forest, here to hang them high,
Each to the thorn tree of its soul's distress."
Still were we listening to the trunk's reply,
Thinking, perhaps, it were fain more to say,
When we were startled by a noise that nigh
And nigher drew, as when, the boar at bay,
The air is rent by howling of the pack
And crash of branches at the last affray.
And lo! two men at our left hand,—alack!—
Naked and torn, wild through the forest fly
So desperately that branch and tree they hack.
"Come quickly, quickly, Death!" the first man's[14] cry
Rings out, whereon the other,[15] scant of breath,
Tho' gaining little on him, makes reply:
"Lano, less agile were thy limbs when Death
Caught thee at Toppo's fray!" Forspent he seemed,
And made one with a bush upon the heath.
Behind, the forest with black bitches teemed
Ravenous, wild and running free and fleet
As blooded greyhounds from their chains redeemed.
Of him that crouchèd there they made their meat,
Rending and tearing with their cruel jaws,

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[7] Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book III.

[8] Virgil.

[9] Pier delle Vigne was born in Capua of humble parents toward the end of the twelfth century. After distinguishing himself at the University of Bologna, he joined the court of Frederick II, Emperor of the Two Sicilies. For many years he served as the Emperor's prothonotary. In a highly literary court Pier was one of the chief ornaments for his graceful verses, some of which still survive. He is said to have invented the sonnet. In 1248, on the unjust accusation of his enemies, he was blinded and imprisoned. A year later he committed suicide.

[10] Envy.

[11] This verse and the two preceding offer another example of the style admired by Dante's contemporaries.

[12] Cause pain and create an outlet for its expression.

[13] These souls, too, on the day of Judgment, will come to claim their bodies, but they may nevermore wear them since they once cast them off by the violent means of suicide.

[14] Lano da Siena who met his death at the battle of Toppo in 1287. According to Boccaccio Lano wilfully sought death to escape from the poverty to which his wasteful life had reduced him.

[15] Giacomo da Sant'Andrea, a notorious spendthrift of Padua who was slain by order of Ezzelino IV in 1239.

Then with his tortured limbs they made retreat.
Leading me by the hand my Guide did pause
Before that bush[16] so direfully assailed,
Weeping its blood in vain in many woes.
"O Giacomo of Sant'Andrea," it wailed,
"What gained it thee to make of me thy shield?
What blame have I thy foul life nought availed?"
Whereon my Master, standing firm, appealed:
"Who wert thou that from many wounds and dire
Dost rail and moan with such a bloody yield?"
And he to us, "O souls that saw transpire
The reckless ravage that my limbs have borne,
I pray ye gather them and make a pyre
Here at the foot of my unhappy thorn.
My town was that[17] which its first patron Mars
Abandoned for the Baptist,[18] whence in scorn
With warlike arts he saddens her and scars.
Were it not that at Arno still remain
Some attributes of him,[19] those who from war's
Dread dereliction raised her, and from bane
Of Attila's destruction, would, I say,
Have wrought and builded on her ruin in vain.
I made a shambles of my house one day."[20]

PURGATORY

Canto IX

DANTE'S DREAM

Already was Tithonus' mistress fair
All whitely gleaming on the Orient sash,
Fresh from the arms of her love debonair;
Lucent her brow with many a sudden flash
Of precious gems, inwrought to represent
That chilly beast which of its tail a lash
Makes to strike people.[1] Night in her ascent
Had compassed but two steps above our way
And of the third the wings were downward bent,
When I, admixtured still of Adam's clay,[2]
Felt sleep upon me; therefore where we sate,
All five[3] of us, upon the grass I lay.
Toward morningrise, when at the eastern gate
The swallow plaintively begins to sing,
Perchance in memory of its woeful fate,[4]
Upon that hour[5] when the mind sojourning
Forth from the flesh is less to thought a prey,
And nigh divine in its envisioning,
Methought I dreamed that, lifted up midway
Upon the heavens, an eagle plumed with gold,
With wings unfurled, to swoop upon me lay
In wait; and that I stood where[6] once of old
Fair Ganymede forsook all he held dear
When to the high consistory[7] extolled.
And inwardly I thought, "Perchance 'tis here
Alone the bird is wont to strike its own,
Scorning to lift its prey from otherwhere."
And then meseemed that having somewhat flown
Circling, it sank like bolt of heavenly ire,
Snatching me upward toward the mighty throne
Of flame,[8] wherein it seemed as in a pyre
We were consumed together. Such the heat
That scorchèd us of the imagined fire,
That sleep was sundered.[9]

PARADISE

Canto XVII

CACCIAGUIDA'S PROPHECY TO DANTE

"As once Hippolytus from Athens fled
Forth from his stepdame's cruel perfidy,
Thus forth from Florence wilt thou too be sped.
Ay, willed and sought for is thine injury
And soon 'twill come to pass as by him[1] planned

---

[16] In which Giacomo had sought to conceal himself.

[17] Florence. The soul imprisoned in the bush does not identify itself except to say that it was once an inhabitant of Florence and that it brought about its own death.

[18] Here a veiled reproach is intended. In other words, Florence abandoned Mars for the sake of the Baptist, stamped on the coins.

[19] Of Mars, in the form of a statue on the Ponte Vecchio over the Arno.

[20] Thus abruptly, leaving the suggested horror to the reader's imagination, the canto ends.

[1] According to Moore, this elaborate passage would signify that "the Aurora before moonrise was lighting up the eastern sky, the brilliant stars of the sign Scorpio were on the horizon, and finally, it was shortly after 8.30 P.M."

[2] Still human, therefore prey to fatigue.

[3] Dante, Virgil, the bard Sordello, Nino and Corrado.

[4] Dante here alludes to the story of Procne and Philomela who were metamorphosed to a swallow and a nightingale.

[5] Before sunrise, when the ancients believed that one dreams true.

[6] On Mount Ida.

[7] The company of the gods.

[8] The fiery sphere which according to the ancients surrounded the sphere of air.

[9] See *The House of Fame,* Book II, by Chaucer, who was inspired by this passage to elaborate upon a similar episode.

[1] Pope Boniface VIII.

Where[2] Christ is daily bartered for a fee.
As custom wills, blame will pursue the banned
In loudest outcry, but avenging fame
Will vouch the truth of the dispensing hand.
Whatever most thou cherishest, the same
Needs must thou leave—and this the first dart sped
From exile's bow. Then wilt thou know amain
What bitter taste of salt hath other's bread,
How full of hardship 'tis on other's stairs
The trudging up and down, all wearièd.
But heaviest of all the heavy cares
That bow thee down within this bitter vale,[3]
Will be the evil company[4] whose snares
Are set for thee, and senseless, full of bale,
Will meed thee with ingratitude. But soon
They, and not thou, will bleed therefor. The tale
Of their own deeds will witness to their doom,
Whilst thou, to all men justified, canst say
That of thy loneliness thou mad'st a boon.
First refuge and first hostel on thy way
Will be that mighty Lombard's[5] grace, whose flags
The ladder with the holy bird display.
So courteous he to thee whom exile drags,
That in your intercourse, 'tween quest and deed,
That shall come first which with all others lags.[6]
With him thou'lt see another[7] of his seed,
One whom at birth the strong star[8] so imprest
That valorous feats will mark him, though no heed
Men take of him as yet, he being blest
With few years only; for nine times these wheels
Have circled round him. But ere Gascon quest
To trick the mighty Henry,[9] the first seals
Of virtue's power will mark him for her own,
He caring nought for dross or life's ordeals.
So widely shall his excellence be strown
That even by the tongues of bitter foe
His praises shall be sung. To him make known
Thyself and thy necessity; aye, go
To him beneficent, for by his might
Fortunes shall change of rich and poor. And lo!
Upon thy mind thou'lt bear what there I write
Of him, yet shalt thou speak not." And he told
Things past believing in the future's light.[10]
Whereon he added, "Son, of that foretold,
This is the glossing, this the painful part
That waits thee ere more suns their course unfold.
Yet must thou not bear envy in thy heart
Toward others' lot, for high thy future life
Beyond the reach of their perfidious dart."

GUILLAUME DE LORRIS AND JEAN DE MEUNG

THE ROMANCE OF THE ROSE

(Translated by Bernard D. N. Grebanier)

No allegory of the Middle Ages, with the possible exception of *The Divine Comedy*, is greater than the *Roman de la Rose*, and none was more popular. Over two hundred manuscripts of it survive, and it was frequently printed from 1480 to 1538. Comprising in all some twenty-two thousand octosyllabic verses, the work is in two parts so distinct as almost to constitute two separate poems. The first part of about four thousand lines, was written (1225-1230) by Guillaume de Lorris; the second part, five times longer, was composed some forty years later by Jean Clopinel from Meung-sur-Loire. It would be hard to mention two other poets of such antithetical genius as De Lorris and De Meung. In De Lorris the very culmination in literature of the courtly ideal is to be found; his story is delicately constructed, full of grace and fancy, and sensitive to color and form. De Meung was a mordant satirist, ruthless in his bourgeois common-sense; his continuation of *The Romance of the Rose* converts it into an impassioned invective against the corruptions of medieval society. Yet, strange to say, the work has unity, the same kind of unity that we find in Gothic architecture where saint and gargoyle are not incongruous with each other.

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[2] Rome, where things of God are bought and sold.

[3] The bitter vale of exile.

[4] The other Florentine exiles who belonged to the party of the Whites.

[5] Bartolomeo della Scala of Verona whose bearings were an eagle on a ladder—hence the name Scala (It. ladder).

[6] More simply, "He will be so courteous to you, an exile, that your every wish, unlike what happens in ordinary human relations, will be answered before it is expressed."

[7] Can Grande della Scala, Bartolomeo's youngest brother, who succeeded him in 1312.

[8] The planet Mars.

[9] Emperor Henry VII whom the Gascon Pope Clement V tried to deceive by false promises of support.

[10] He told of things that even those who would witness them in the future would find past belief.

De Lorris tells us that in his youth he dreamed a dream which the God of Love has commanded him to record in verse: On a May morning full of the song of birds, the Lover was wandering among leaves and flowers, till he came to a high wall surrounding a vast garden. There are marvelous paintings of various evils on the wall, but, unafraid, he knocks on a wicket-gate and is admitted by the Lady Idleness. Led by her over paths fragrant with fennel and mint, and shaded with trees haunted by birds, he reaches a lawn where Mirth, Gladness, Beauty, Richesse, Bounty, Candor, and Youth are dancing about Cupid. Farther on, he finds a fountain, crystal-clear, in whose depths he sees mirrored a rose-tree with the fairest of buds. When he lifts his hand to pick the rose, Cupid pierces his heart with the arrows of Beauty, Simplicity, and Courtesy, making the Lover his vassal. Cupid then locks the Lover's heart with a golden key, and expounds to him the laws of Courtly Love. The poem continues with the Lover's finding himself left alone and disconsolate, Welcome's coming to aid his quest of the Rose, and Welcome's being locked in a tower by the guardians of the Rose. The memory of the Rose's fragrance increases the Lover's grief.—And here death cut short De Lorris' poem.

His description of the Lady Idleness was to be imitated by poets for more than two centuries. Other French poets, as well as Boccaccio and Chaucer, remembered his fountain and redescribed it again and again. From De Lorris' work Chaucer, not including the long fragment which he translated from *The Romance of the Rose*, paraphrased a number of passages of description in *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Parlement of Fowls,* the *Prologue* to *The Legend of Good Women*, and took many hints for the character of Troilus in *Troilus and Criseyde*. De Lorris succeeded in incorporating in his poem the very quintessence of over a hundred years of French poetry and poetic sentiment. The dream, the May morning, the garden, the garden's company, the carole are to be found again and again. *The Pearl* (cf. *Introduction to Middle English Literature, above*) opens in almost the same way as De Lorris' poem, as do *Piers the Plowman* and various minor English poems up through the early Elizabethan age. The great Spenser constantly echoes De Lorris' sentiments. Even Petrarch, the "first of the moderns," uses the same dream-form in his *Trionfi*.

As we come to the continuation by Jean de Meung, all values change. The Lover is at once rebuked by Reason for his attachment to Love (i.e. The Rose): to desire Love for pleasure is base, to desire Love for the continuation of the race is sensible. Better forms of Love are love of humanity and of one's children. Since these do not interest the Lover, Reason offers herself as his mistress. The Lover, unconvinced, is treated by Reason to an attack on the prudery of women. Friendship further instructs the Lover on how all men were once equal, but have long since lost their freedom. The poem returns to Cupid who, gathering his forces, lays siege to the tower where Welcome is imprisoned. Follows a long passage, containing much physical, astronomical, and geographical data, in which we see that of all Nature's creations, Man alone refuses to obey her laws. Genius, joining Cupid's army, bids Man seek for love that is natural. They take the tower. Welcome is set free, and grants the rose to the Lover, who picks it.

It will be seen that in De Meung's poem there is little action, and that his eighteen thousand lines are a series of discussions and invectives. As an artist, he is much inferior to his predecessor. There is no unity or harmony in what he writes. But what he lacks in beauty, he makes up for in power and thrust. He is like an earlier Voltaire in the energy of his satire. In the person of a jealous husband one of the world's most savage attacks on women is made—destructive of all the poetic idealizations of De Lorris. Another tirade deals racily with the hypocrisy of friars. In another there is a second exposé on the folly of women. The longest of the dialogues, between Nature and Genius, treats of Art, Nature, Predestination and Free-Will, the Degeneration of the Human Race, and the Golden Age. Just as the form of De Lorris' poem became important to succeeding poets, the ideas of De Meung became a storehouse often pilfered by them. *Piers the Plowman* found precedence there for its attacks on the clergy. To De Meung Chaucer went again and again for his philosophy, his history, his mythology, his references to persons and places, his attacks on the clergy, the discourse of Reason in *The Book of the Duchess*, and for several portraits, including those of the Friar and Pardoner in *The Canterbury Tales.* If the reader will compare our translation below of *Table Manners for the Hostess* with the portrait of the Prioress in the *Prologue* to *The Canterbury Tales*, he will realize something of Chaucer's indebtedness.

A splendid discussion of *The Romance of the Rose* will be found in Gaston Paris, *Medieval French Literature* (1903). The only available translation of the poem is by F. S. Ellis (1900), though it is not entirely satisfactory. Chaucer's debt to De Meung and De Lorris is examined fully in Dean S. Fansler, *Chaucer and the Roman de la Rose* (1914). The excerpts here printed are in the original rhyme and meter and are copyrighted by the translator.

GUILLAUME DE LORRIS

Chapter I has the motto:

> "This is the Romance of the Rose,
> Which Art of Love doth here enclose."

Chapter II has the motto:

> "In several leaves the lover writes
> About the several seven sights
> He saw upon the garden wall.
> Before our eyes he paints them all,
> Their bearing, manner, and their form,
> Their faces, dress diversiform.
> Before depicting he names each one;
> And thus with *Hate* he is begun:"

This chapter first describes, as promised, these figures (who turn out to be ten in number, after all!) painted on the garden wall: Hate, Felony, Villainy, Covetousness, Avarice, Envy, Sorrow, Eld, Hypocrisy, and Poverty. The chapter then proceeds:

Well I looked upon each face
And gazed on each a little space,
Resplendent gold or azure all,
Painted on this garden wall,—
The wall so strongly built with rock
Knit to enclose and tightly lock,
Encircling round a garden vast,
Where never through a shepherd passed.
A site surpassing, without doubt,
To which, had there been made a route,
(Whether by ladder or by stair)
Of gratitude I'd give my share.
Delight I knew, and joy full rare
As knew no man, I dare declare;
Such joy this garden did display,
With sheltered birds who flit alway;
It worthy was, nor spared its good;
No place there is of richer wood
With plaintive song of piping bird.
More than thrice, as I have heard,
There were of birds than in all France;
Most lovely, too, their accordance;
The saddest man had but to hear
These songs, to make him full of cheer.
For me, so boundless was my glee
That if there had been way for me,
I gladly would have given pay,
A hundred pounds to give away,
If I could see those birds assembled
(God save them!) as the leaflets trembled,
Twittering in this lovely place
In such sweet tunes as lovers pace,
Such beguiling little airs,
Full of grace and soothing cares.

When I heard these birds to sing,
It to me did torment bring
To find the means, to find the stay
By which within to make my way.
But I did search, and could not find
The means to satisfy my mind;
And had I somehow missed to see
Some entry to that garden free,
No one came to me to show
How within a man might go.
Thus I stood in solitude,
Darkened with inquietude;
Until at last I thought me well
That never yet on earth it fell
That such a garden had no port
Or means of entry of some sort.

Thus I went with surer pace,
Encircling round that vast closed space;
With careful eye I marked each spot.
Then, in fine, a door forgot
I spied, low of wicket, small,—
And here alone was entrance all.
Anon, I would no longer wait.
I knocked full hard upon that gate.

Chapter III

How Idleness did here decide
To let the lover come inside.

Right many times with hand assured
I knocked; and then my ear allured
Heard someone come to my demand.
The wicket oped at some command,
And showed a noble damosel
Of grace and beauty mingled well;
Her hair as bright as brazen bowl,
Her skin as tender as young fowl;
Her mouth petite and sweet; her chin
Did hide a dimple fair within.
A polished brow; the eyebrows arqued,
Well spaced and clearly marked,
Not small, not large, of ample weight;
The nose full straight and delicate;

The eyes so live that falcon's eye
In vain with hers would try to vie;
Her breath full sweet, by perfume fed;
Her face snow-white and colorèd;
Her neck was such as please the wise,
Full tall and of a perfect size;
No blemish stained that skin so fine;
There was, from here to Palestine
No lady of a neck so fair,
That gave the touch such softness rare;
Her throat as well, did shine so bright
As doth the branch with snow bedight
When snow's new-fallen on the trees;
Her form well-knit and borne with ease;
Of others such there is a dearth
Of beauteous women on the earth.

A chaplet gilded o'er she wore,
Sure, such a damsel earth ne'er bore,
So full of grace, so wondrous fair!
Her charms to paint I must despair,
Though all my days I gave to it!
A wondrous robe she wore full fit.
And on her brow, just freshly blown,
A wreath of roses brightly shone;
In her hand a mirror bright;
The fairest comb, all richly dight
Upon her richly braided hair
Held the golden tresses there.
And last, the coat she wore, I ween
Was of the hue of Ghentish green.

JEAN DE MEUNG

From CHAPTER LII

LOVE vs. MARRIAGE

THE FRIEND

Love will die that very hour
When the lover seizeth power.

Love can live not, nor endure
But in hearts frank, free, and pure;
Thus it is that one doth see
Within those souls where love was free
And unstinted ere they wed
That after they are marrièd
Full rarely then it doth befall
This love shall hold them still in thrall.
The lover of his dearest friend
Did love her once without an end,
He called himself her servitor,—
Now master he would be all o'er.
Her claims she now would set above
The man's whom once she called her love.

THE LOVER

Her love?

THE FRIEND

Indeed.

THE LOVER

Yet tell me why.

THE FRIEND

Full much! If she but once did sigh
A wish, command; or to him spake:
"Love, go, all speed I wish you make
To bring me this,"—at once he sped;
Her wish to him was hallowèd.
She saw him run without request;
A smile would make him do his best,
For he was ever then on fire
To bring to her her least desire.
But once together they are bound,
As I have said, the wheel turns round:

The slave who once was low and humble
Doth change, begins to grumble,
Commands that she account to him,—
He who slaved it to her whim!
As if she were his slave today,
Declares that she must now obey,—
For heart once frank, for joy intense,
She now doth weep her pain immense
When thus in clearer light she knows
Her open lover causing woes;
Betraying now the love he had,
He seeks to make the good the bad.
She knows no pride more in her heart,
Her lover acts an evil part;
And in her dolefullest position
Her state is one of deep contrition;
And e'en to laugh she cannot dare;
How can she all this sorrow bear?
She must obey, or suddenly
He storms, and if in tears she be,
Just see him as in wrath he rages,
And with the household war he wages.
My friend, in days that long since be,
From bondage base all men were free;

In peace and kindness men did dwell,
Knowing friendship's sweetness well;
Nor, in truth, would they agree
For gold to sell their liberty;
Not all the gold of Araby
Or Frisia would pay that fee.

From CHAPTER LXXIII

TABLE MANNERS FOR THE HOSTESS

It suiteth well that when at table
She be of bearing convenable.

Before she goes to take her seat
She will the household fairly greet,
And make it known to all who sit
That she to tend their needs is fit;
She comes and goes about, a bit,
And is the last at meat to sit;
A while she makes the guests to wait
Before she rests before her plate;
And when at last her place she makes,
On all around a glance she takes.

Before her guests she now will wish
To break the bread, hand round the dish,
Will know that (to their thanks obtain)
She must before the board be fain
To serve their plates with such a thing
As juicy leg of fowl or wing,
Slice of pork, of lamb or beef,—
Be it meat, or fish as lief
That is served upon this day;
If their wish doth lie that way,
Of her serving she is free.

Let no finger soilèd be
In the sauce up to the joint,
Nor on her lips be seen a point
Of grease or soup, of oil no spot;
The pieces she will heap up not,
Nor in her mouth put pieces large;
The ends of fingers she will charge
Within the sauce to dip meat down,
Sauce of yellow, green or brown.
To her mouth she bears it well,
So that her mouth no story tell
Of sauce or spices on its brink.

Right neatly now she takes her drink
So that no drop upon her fall;
For greedy and a glutton, all
There gathered needs must deem her then
If they should see such happen. When
Indeed she raises now her cup,
No morsels still her mouth doth sup;
Her lips she then will wipe so clean
That spot of grease will not be seen
To rest upon her upper lip;
For if a spot be on the tip,
That grease will float upon the wine,
And there repugnant it will shine.

GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO (1313-1375)

THE DECAMERON

(Translated by Frances Winwar)

Whether Florence, Certaldo (a town twenty miles from Florence), or Paris was Boccaccio's birthplace has never been settled. The illegitimate son of a wealthy Italian merchant and a Parisian woman of good family, he was raised with great care by his father, whose desire to have him continue in commerce was highly distasteful to the young poet. Not till his father's death in the plague of 1348, was Boccaccio able to follow freely his bent for literature. Till then the hours he spent writing were stolen from other occupations.

Just as Dante had his Beatrice, and Petrarch his Laura, Boccaccio had his Fiammetta, whom he met at Naples—and quite in the tradition of courtly love, she was someone else's wife. But his love, of which he talks fairly openly, was returned with equal warmth, and after an interval, she yielded to him. She died long before him, but he never ceased to love her. His first work, the prose tale *Filocopo*, a typically knightly romance, was written at her behest—as was his next, the *Teseide*, the first heroic epic poem in Italian, on the story of Palemon and Arcite. The latter is of particular interest as making the first use of *ottava rima*, a meter employed by Ariosto and Tasso, and by Byron in his *Don Juan*, and also as the source for the *Knight's Tale* in *The Canterbury Tales.* The severely self-critical Boccaccio, after reading Petrarch's sonnets, would have burned his own had not the great sonneteer prevented him. Without the grandeur of Dante, or the mastery of Petrarch, Boccaccio's verse is rather unambitious, but graceful. He is a deft story-teller, however, and the ease that makes his verse casual, becomes a rare quality in his prose.

Forced to return to Florence at his father's command in 1341, Boccaccio bitterly resented his separation from Fiammetta. At this time he composed three works, of which the most important to English literature was *Ameto*, lauding the power of love in a story in alternate verse and prose. In 1344 he was allowed to return to Naples, where he attracted the notice of Giovanna, Queen of Naples. It was at her desire and Fiammetta's that he wrote (1344-1350) the stories for the *Decameron.* At Naples he also wrote the *Filostrato*, Chaucer's source for *Troilus and Criseyde* (cf. *below*).

After his father's death, he removed in 1350 to Florence, where he entered the service of the Republic and was sent to various courts on missions of state. The most important result of his position was the close friendship he formed with Petrarch, an intimacy that did not end till Petrarch's death. The identity of their interests made their friendship one of the most fruitful in literary annals. Together they performed signal service for the humanism which they fathered. All over Italy were countless forgotten treasures of classical literature lost and mutilated in monastic libraries. Purchasing and copying with his own hand numerous manuscripts, he labored assiduously to revive the Greek language, which was by then virtually unknown in western Europe. He studied Greek fairly late in life, to aid him in his researches, and was instrumental in having the first chair of Greek founded in an Italian university (in Florence). He also wrote a life of Dante, and gave a series of public lectures on *The Divine Comedy*, by way of commentary.

In 1353 appeared his greatest work, the *Decameron*, by which he has earned the title of "Father of Italian Prose." For this collection of one hundred tales, Boccaccio uses a framework similar to that of the *Arabian Nights* (cf. *below*), and also to that which Chaucer was to choose for *The Canterbury Tales.* To escape the plague (powerfully described by the author), three young men and seven girls leave Florence for a villa in the country, where on ten successive days each tells a story to while away the time. Drawn from the *fabliaux* and from anecdotes of real life, the tales cover a wide range from deep pathos to ribaldry; all kinds of men and women, and characters from all walks of life enter into the plots of the narrative. The *Decameron* is a feast, and a varied one: there are love stories, stories of adventure, shrewd satires on the corruption of the monks, and stories that show a deep respect for kindliness and goodness. The book has had an unfortunate and unjust reputation for licentiousness. It is true that Boccaccio lived in an age outspoken and free in its morals. But no discerning reader will call any of the stories pornographic: even the most ribald of them is done with much wit and racy good-humor, and if they are sometimes gross, they differ in this respect in no way from much folk-humor. At any rate, it is one of the greatest treasure-houses for European literature. Among the great English poets who have borrowed from it are Shakespeare, Dryden, Keats, and Tennyson. Considering the setting and several of Chaucer's stories, we find it tempting to suppose that *The Canterbury Tales* are also somewhat indebted to the *Decameron.* Such an assumption, however, is untenable, for there is no reason to suppose that Chaucer could have had access to Boccaccio's masterpiece. It should be added, however, that to some scholars the question is not a closed one. The reader, at any rate, may choose to make his own comparative study of the tale we print and the *Pardoner's Prologue* from *The Canterbury Tales.* Not only for the *Decameron's* great importance to English literature in general, but as representative of the *kind* of story current in Italian and French collections, available to Chaucer, we print this tale from it.

Unhappily English readers of the *Decameron* have had to be content with translations either expurgated or too archaic to catch Boccaccio's racy flavor. In 1930 Frances Winwar made the first complete modern translation in what T. C. Chubb hailed as "likely to become the standard version"; but it was made for the Limited Editions Club and hence has been unobtainable by the general public. We are privileged to reprint, for the first time in any other edition, a tale from that translation, and do so by the kind permission of Mr. George Macy and the Limited Editions Club by whom it is copyrighted (1930). T. C. Chubb's life of Boccaccio (1930) is excellent.

THE SIXTH DAY: THE TENTH STORY

Friar Onion promises to show some peasants a feather from the wings of Angel Gabriel. Finding coals in its place, he claims they are of the brazier on which Saint Lawrence was roasted.

Now that each of the company had told a story, Dioneo knew his turn had come; so without waiting for a formal invitation, he began when the rest, who were still praising Guido's pregnant answer, were silent:

Enchanting ladies, although it is my privilege to speak on whatever strikes my fancy, today, however, I don't intend to depart from the subject all of you have so ably treated. No, I shall follow in your footsteps, and show how skilfully one of the little brothers of Saint Anthony applied his nimble wit to avoid the trap two young rogues had set at his feet. You won't be bored, I hope, if I enlarge somewhat upon the story to do it justice, for see, the sun is still high in the heavens.

Now then! Certaldo, as you have heard, is a hamlet of Val d'Elsa in our own section of the country, and though a tiny place, it was once inhabited by noble and prosperous gentlemen. It was a field of plentiful harvest for a certain little monk of the order of Saint Anthony, and for a long time he made it a practice to visit it once a year, and garner the fruits which the simple of soul gave to him and the rest of his brotherhood. He was called Friar Onion, and was a very welcome figure there, perhaps no less by virtue of his name than for more spiritual reasons; for as you know, the soil of that part of the country yields onions that are famous all over Tuscany. He was a meager little person, was Friar Onion, carrot-haired and jolly-faced, and the merriest scamp in the world. Moreover, despite the gaps in his education, he was so eloquent and witty a talker, that anyone who did not know him well might have thought him not only an accomplished rhetorician, but a Tully—even Quintilian himself! In fine, there was not a soul in the whole district for whose children he had not acted as godfather, or to whom he was not bound by ties of friendship and sympathy.

One fine Sunday morning in the month of August, he visited the town as usual, and when all the good gossips and gaffers had gathered from the villages round about to hear mass, he stepped forward at the proper moment and addressed them:

"Sisters and brethren, you all know it's customary, every year, to send an offering of your grain and oats to the poor folks of our master Saint Anthony. Some of you send a great deal, and some a few handfuls, according to your means and devotion, in return for the protection the blessed Saint Anthony gives your asses and oxen, your pigs and your sheep. Over and above this, all of you, especially those who registered in our holy company, pay the little trifle you are scheduled to pay, once a year. It's for the collection of these dues that I've been sent among you by my chief, that is, by my master, the abbot, so—may the good Lord lay his blessing upon you!—when you hear the little bells tinkling this afternoon, come and meet me outside the church, where I'll preach to you as usual, and give you the Cross to kiss. There's one special attraction besides. Since I know you're all faithful followers of our master Saint Anthony, I'm going to reward you by a special favor, and show you a most wonderful holy relic, that I brought back myself from the Holy Land across the sea. It is a feather of the Angel Gabriel, my friends, one of those he dropped in the Virgin Mary's room, when he came to make the Annunciation to her in Nazareth."

Then his message delivered, he was silent and continued with the mass.

While he was speaking, there happened to be among his numerous flock in the church two very clever rogues, one called Giovanni del Bragomiera and the other Biagio Pizzini. For some time they laughed together at this relic of Friar Onion's, but then, though they were his friends and boon-companions, they decided to play him a trick through this precious feather. That afternoon, they knew, the friar was to lunch with a friend of his at the hamlet. Accordingly, when they thought he must be at table, they slipped into the street and went to the hostelry where he had his lodgings, intending that while Biagio engaged Friar Onion's servant in conversation, Giovanni was to ransack the holy man's trappings in search of this feather, whatever it was, and take it away. The fun would come when the friar tried to explain the loss of his relic to the faithful.

Now Friar Onion had as servant, a fellow who had as many attributes as he had nicknames: Guccio the Whale was one, Guccio Greaser another, and some even called him Guccio the Pig. So mischievous and arrant a rascal was he, that even the notorious Lippo Topo couldn't have held a candle to him. Indeed, Friar Onion would sometimes expatiate upon his virtues, to his friends, and say, "I have a servant, my friends, who has nine such qualities, that if the least of them had been in Solomon, Aristotle, or Seneca, it would have been enough to discount all their goodness, wisdom or piety!"

Sometimes, when he was asked what these nine qualities were, he would answer, enumerating them in doggerel: "What are they, you ask? I'll tell you. He is lazy, dirty, thoughtless; ill bred, foul-tongued, careless; lazy, crackbrained, heedless, not to mention other little flaws which I had better suppress. But the funniest thing about him is that wherever he may be, he's forever anxious to get himself a wife and go into housekeeping, thinking he's so handsome and irresistible with his thick, greasy beard, that all the women who clap eyes on him immediately fall victim to his charms. Really, if he were left to his own devices, he'd lose his belt-strap, chasing after them. He's useful enough to me, though, to be truthful, for no matter how confidentially anybody wants to speak to me, Guccio must be there to get an earful. If I should ever be asked a question, he's so afraid I won't know how to answer, that he immediately blurts out Yes, or No, as he sees fit."

This was the gentleman Friar Onion had left at the inn, with the explicit command to see that nobody tampered with his belongings, especially his saddle-bags, that contained his most sacred possessions. But Guccio Greaser hankered more after the kitchen than does the nightingale after the green arbor, especially when he scented some jolly slut about, and as it was, he made a find in mine host's kitchen. A fat, dumpy, clumsy wench she was, with a brace of paps the size of two garbage cans, and a sweaty, oily, sooty mug that was a match for the Baronci's. Upon making his discovery, Guccio had swooped down upon her in the kitchen like a vulture on his carrion, leaving Friar Onion's room and baggage under the custody of heaven. Though it was August, he sat hugging the hearth, and struck up conversation with my lady Nuta, telling her he was a gentleman, he was, and had piles and piles of money, all belonging to him in his own right, plus what he had for other folks, which was even more than he owned himself. Yes, and he could do lots of things, and had as clever a tongue in his head as anyone, the Lord knows. Indeed, regardless of his hood, that was larded with more grease than would have served to baste Altopascio's capon, despite his patched cloak, that hung in tatters and shone with sweat about the collar and armpits and was adorned, besides, with more spots and splashes than any plaid or Indian weave, unmindful of his shoes, all down at the heel and torn, and his yawning socks, he pursued her with a grandeur that would have done honor to a Sire de Chatillon. "I'll dress you up, and set you up fine, I will, girl," said he. "Indeed, I'll get you out of slavin' for others, and give you hopes of a better fortune, even if you have no dowry or anything."

He made many other magnificent promises: but for all his magnificent delivery, wind were his words, and wind they remained, like most of his undertakings.

Well, the two scamps found Guccio the Pig mighty busy courting Nuta, which gave them no little satisfaction, seeing that their trouble was then over. No one stood in their way, so slipping into Friar Onion's room, the door of which was open, they made for his saddle-bags, which contained the precious feather. When they spread them open before them, they came upon a clumsy bundle of silk, inside of which they discovered a small box. They opened it quickly and found—a feather of a parrot's tail, the very feather, they were sure, that Friar Onion had promised to show his faithful at Certaldo.

In his day, it would have been easy for the friar to make the people believe his trumpery. The luxuries of the Orient had made but small headway into Tuscany, though since then, they have been introduced with a vengeance, to the ruin of all Italy. But if these eastern refinements were known anywhere in Italy, they were certainly unfamiliar to the people of that hamlet. Indeed, the primitive honesty of the ancients was so much alive, that the inhabitants had never heard of parrots, much less set eyes upon such creatures at all.

Now the youths, overjoyed at their find, spirited away the feather, and not to leave the case empty, filled it with a few coals, that lay in a corner of the room. Closing it again, and rearranging everything as before, they went away unperceived with their prize, all impatience to hear what Friar Onion would have to say, on finding the coals instead of the feather.

Meanwhile, the good folk on hearing that they were to be shown a feather of the Angel Gabriel in the afternoon, betook themselves to their homes after mass. By the time they had had their dinner and the information had passed from goodman to goodman and gossip to gossip, so vast a crowd had flocked to the hamlet to be shown this marvelous feather, that there wasn't room enough left to admit a fly. Friar Onion, too, had had a good meal, after which he took a short nap. On rising in the afternoon and hearing the hubbub of the multitude of peasants swarming for a sight of the feather, he sent Guccio Greaser to fetch the bells and the saddle-bags. It was a great struggle for the amorous fellow to wrench himself away from Nuta and the kitchen, but he went with the necessary paraphernalia to the place his master had indicated, puffing and panting mightily, for the gallons of water he had drunk had swelled his bowels considerably. Once at the church, he stationed himself in front of the door and set up a vigorous jangling of the bells. The parish folk had gathered to a man, whereupon Friar Onion, unaware that anything had been tampered with, plunged into his sermon, with many a covert hint of his personal needs. Soon the time came for the unveiling of the Angel Gabriel's feather. With a solemn voice, he began by intoning the service; then, after two torches had been lighted, he uncovered his head, carefully undid the silken wrapper, and produced the box. Before thinking of opening it, however, he delivered himself of a few words in praise of the Angel Gabriel and his relic, and then pulled up the lid of the coffer. It was full of coals. At the revelation, he did not dream of suspecting Guccia the Whale—the fellow was not clever enough to have thought of it; nor did he curse him for not preventing others from playing the trick. No, he cursed himself inwardly for committing the scapegrace to the care of his belongings, knowing him as he did to be negligent, disobedient, crackbrained and heedless. Outwardly, he did not even change color, however, but raising his face and his hands to heaven, exclaimed loud enough for everyone to hear: "Almighty God, may Thy might be praised forever!" After which, closing the casket and turning to the populace, he said:

"Sisters and brothers, you must know that while I was still a mere youth, I was sent by my superior to those far lands where the sun rises, and was expressly commissioned to look for the dispensations for making porcelain, which, though they're cheap enough to seal, are more useful to others than to us. Well, setting out on this enterprise, I left Venice and journied through the Borgo de' Greci. From there, I rode through the Kingdom of Algarve and Baldacca, until I came to Parione, out of which, not without a dry gullet, I arrived in Sardinia. But why should I mention all the lands I traveled? After I had passed the Strait of Saint George I landed in Truffle and Buffle, great regions, both of them teeming with folk; from there I came to the land of Trumpery, where I found many of our brethren and monks of other orders, all of them going about easily and freely, avoiding annoyance for the good Lord's sake, and caring not a whit for other people's woes, provided their own gains were assured. No coin did they spend, but what was unminted.

"From this territory, I passed into the district of Abruzzi, where men and women clatter about the mountains on wooden pattens, and dress the pigs in the pigs' own gutskins. Still farther, I came across people who carried breads in staves and wine in bags. Then, from those regions, I reached the mountains of the Baschi, where all the streams run perpendicularly. In short, I got entangled so far inland, that I traveled as far as India Pastinaca, where—and I swear to the truth of this by the gown I'm wearing—I even saw feathered creatures fly, a wonder too strange to be believed by those who have not seen it! But Maso del Saggio will support my statement—Maso whom I found established as a powerful merchant there, cracking nuts and carrying on a retail business in the shells.

"However, since I couldn't find what I was looking for, and as from that point on it is only possible to travel by water, I retraced my steps and came to those holy lands where, in the summer of the year, stale bread is worth four pence a loaf and the warm can be had for nothing. It's here that I met the venerable Father Blamenotme Ifyouplease, the most worshipful patriarch of Jerusalem, who, out of respect for the gown of my master Saint Anthony's order, which I have always worn, insisted on showing me all the precious relics he had collected. What a wealth of them! There were so many, that if I were to enumerate them, I'd have to talk for days before I reached the end of the tale! But I don't want to disappoint you, my friends, so I shall tell you about a few of them. First, he showed me the finger of the Holy Ghost, as perfect and as solid as you please, a ringlet of the seraph who appeared to Saint Francis, and one of the fingernails of the cherubim. Yes, he also let me see a rib of the Verbum Caro Look-out-of-the-Window, and the clothes of the Holy Catholic Faith, a number of rays of the star that shone for the three Magi in the East, and a bottle containing the sweat shed by Saint Michael when he fought with the devil. Besides, he showed me the jawbone of Saint Lazarus' Death, and many, many other wonderful things. Well, after that, because I told him a lot of things gratuitously in our dialect, about the slopes of Mount Moretto, and recited to him a few chapters of the Caprezio, which he had long been seeking, high and low, he divided his holy relics with me. He gave me one of the teeth of the Holy Cross, an echo of the bells of Solomon's temple, shut up in a tiny bottle, the feather of the Angel Gabriel which I've already told you about, and one of the clods of Saint Gerard of Villa Magna. That relic, however, I presented to Gerard of Bonsi in Florence a little while ago, for his great devotion to that saint. Among other things, the Patriarch also gave me some of the coals on which the blessed martyr Saint Lawrence was roasted, and all of these treasures I faithfully brought back with me. In fact, I have them, each and every one.

"Now, to tell the truth, I must inform you that my superior never allowed me to display them, until he had made sure whether they were the real article or not. Recently, because of certain miracles that have been performed by their virtue, and because of some certificates sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem, he's been convinced of their authenticity, and has given me permission to exhibit them. However, in my nervousness over entrusting them to others, I always carry them about with me—the feather of the Angel Gabriel, in a box by itself, so that it won't be ruffled, and the coals that roasted Saint Lawrence in another. Now these two boxes are so much alike, that I've often mistaken one for the other, which is now the case, for thinking I had brought you the casket containing the feather, I find it's the one that holds the coals.

"I'm convinced it was no error that created the con fusion. Indeed, I verily believe it was the manifest will of God, that guided my hand to the coals, for now that I think of it, the feast of Saint Lawrence will be around in two days. Yes, it was the Lord's will. He intended me to show you the coals on which the blessed martyr was roasted, that I might rekindle in your souls the devotion you ought to feel for that saint. Therefore, it was not the feather He let me take, as I had intended, but the blessed coals, quenched by the agonized sweat of that holiest of bodies. Take off your hats now, O my blessed children, as you approach to gaze upon these coals. But first, I'd like you to know that whoever has the sign of the cross marked on him by one of these coals, may rest easy all through the year that no fire will touch him, but he'll feel the sting of it."

His harangue over, he intoned a *laud* in honor of Saint Lawrence and opened the box, revealing the coals to the throng. Awed at the wonder of them, the sheepish multitude stared wide-eyed at the lumps, and flocked about Friar Onion, begging him, for a more generous consideration than usual, to mark them with the relics. Obligingly, the friar took the coals in his hand, and began scratching the biggest crosses he could on the men's white shirts and jerkins and the women's veils, reassuring them that though the lumps were used up in the marking, they always grew again in the box, as he had often had occasion to observe.

In this fashion, he decorated the good folks of Certaldo much to his own advantage, and so with nimble cunning he played a prank on those who had sought to embarrass him by stealing his feather. As for the two rogues, they had been present at his sermon. So amused were they at his novel and far-fetched expedient, and at the style of his harangue, that they laughed almost to the point of lock-jaw. But later, when the crowd had dispersed, they hilariously confessed to him what they had done, and gave him back his feather, which profited him as much the following year, as the lumps of coal had done that day.

Geoffrey Chaucer

(1340?-1400)

The son of a wealthy wine-merchant with powerful friends, Chaucer was fortunate in his birth. His family was such as to enable him to shape a career helpful to the growth of his poetic art; nor was he less lucky in being born into the merchant class, whose vitality and interests were making for that reinterpretation of life known to us as the Renaissance. His circumstances made it unnecessary for him to enter upon the pursuit of letters through the gateway of the Church, where his temperament would have found itself ill-suited; his merchant background aided him in casting beyond the artifices of courtly poetry to become the first English modern. If it became necessary to name the five greatest English poets, one of them would be Chaucer; in variety of interest and accomplishment only Shakespeare has surpassed him. It is indeed unfortunate that the changes experienced by the English language since 1400 have deprived many lovers of poetry of Chaucer's rich hoard. For there is difficulty in mastering the English of Chaucer's day, though it is by no means as great as it seems at first. But, as Professor Lowes truly observes, "A bare fraction of the time which we spend in learning to read Homer or Virgil or Dante or Molière or Goethe will enable any of us to read Chaucer as he is meant to be read, to wit, with delight."

As a boy he became first a page to the Countess of Ulster, and later a valet in the royal household. In 1359 he was with the military in France, was taken prisoner by the French, and ransomed. Thereafter many years of his life were spent in the King's service. He was sent to Genoa in 1372-3 as a commissioner on trade relations. Whether he there began to learn Italian, or was appointed because he already knew Italian must be a matter of conjecture. What is important is that the England in which he had been bred was a medieval country, and the Italy he visited several times was full of the excitement of the Renaissance. In 1374 he was appointed Comptroller of the Customs of wools, hides, and wines in the Port of London. In 1376 and in 1377 he was again abroad on missions, and in the latter year was sent also to France, probably on peace negotiations. About this time he was made Comptroller of the Customs. The next year, it would seem, he was in France again, as well as in Milan on the King's business. He was appointed justice of the peace for Kent in 1385, and in 1386 was elected its Member of Parliament. His last years he spent at Greenwich, outside of London. He died in 1400 and his body lies in Westminster Abbey in what is now the Poets' Corner.

It will be seen that Chaucer, far from satisfying the sentimental notion of the poet as a man shrinking from contact with the world, was a busy man of affairs. Indeed it would be difficult to name any great English poet who did not play an active part among men. In Chaucer's case this participation in his country's business did not prevent his being, what he admits himself to have been, a bookworm. He was an eager and impressionable reader, and his poetry shows the impress of many influences.

His career has usually been divided by scholars, according to the predominating literary influence, into his "French" period (to 1372), his "Italian" period (1372-c.1385), and his "English" period (c.1385-1400), though it should be remembered that this is an arbitrary division, for our dating of his works is largely conjectural. To the "French" period belong: his translation, *The Romaunt of the Rose,* a fragment; *The Book of the Duchess* (1369), an elegy on the Duchess of Lancaster, in the form of a dream-allegory; and various minor "Complaints." The "Italian" period contains: *The House of Fame* (1379-1384), an uncompleted dream-vision (showing influence from the French as well as from Dante); *The Parliament of Fowls* (1377-1382); *Troilus and Criseyde* (1382-1385), Chaucer's most finished work; and the never completed *Legend of Good Women* (1384?-1386?), introduced by a dream-vision, and telling the love stories of Cleopatra, Thisbe, Medea, Lucretia, Phyllis, Dido, and Ariadne—all heroines of antiquity who were faithful to their lovers. Of the "English" period, *The Canterbury Tales* (1387-1400) and a number of minor poems are representative.

Chaucer's scope is a matter of increasing wonder. He wrote on science, religion, philosophy, ethics, rhetoric. But, more important, he wrote the "human comedy"; like his great precursor, Dante, Chaucer both sums up his age and reveals people as they are in all times.

His growth was gradual. Of the books he read, many left their mark on his work, but some few more than others. *The Romance of the Rose,* that medieval "Bible of poetry," exerted a lifelong influence upon him; it disciplined his style, and led his early writings to the field of the allegorical. In his "French" period Chaucer is a descendant of the trouvères; their clarity, ease, and fluency, as well as their prolixity, are to be found in the poems of this period. Their light pictures of flowers, birds, song, and the spring are to be seen revivified in all his poetry. From the great Italians, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, the gifts were even greater. Dante's influence was the deepest, but is the hardest to trace: the ideal of a chiseled form, the eye for striking detail and expression—these he learned from Dante. From Petrarch, whose story of Griselda he retells, Chaucer acquired the taste for the new philosophy of humanism. But to Boccaccio Chaucer's debt is as great as it is specific: from his *Teseide* came the plot for the *Knight's Tale*, from his *De Casibus Virorum* came much of the *Monk's Tale*, and from *Il Filostrato* came the story for *Troilus and Criseyde.*

But whatever his formative influences, Chaucer was in every sense an original poet, with a genius for the dramatic, the comic, the pathetic, and the witty. An expert technician, he introduced the *rime royal*, the decasyllabic couplet, and *terza rima*, and popularized French forms like the *roundel* and *ballade*. It is worth the reader's effort to *hear* Chaucer's verse as it would have sounded to his contemporaries, for it is not without justice that this man of many melodies has been called "the golden-tongued." The following rules for reading him should be observed:

1. All long vowels have the values of continental languages (i.e. *a* as in *father*, *e* = *a* in *state*, *i* or *y* as in *machine*, *o* as in *throne*, and *u* as in the French *su*); short vowels (except short *e* as in the French *le*) are the same sounds, only more rapid. Doubling a vowel makes it long but does not alter its sound.

2. Diphthongs are as follows: *ai* or *ay* as in *day*; *au* or *aw* = *ou* in *house*; *ei* or *ey* as in *vein*; *oi* or *oy* as in *boy*; *ou* or *ow* = *oo* in *loose*.

3. Consonants are as in modern English, except *gh* which is like the German *ch*, and *r* which is trilled.

4. Every letter is pronounced, except final unaccented *e* which is elided before a vowel or *h*.

The standard edition, which we follow, has been for years that of W. Skeat, in seven volumes (1896-7). More recent is the excellent edition of F. N. Robinson (1933). Engrossing studies of Chaucer are: G. L. Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry* (1927); J. L. Lowes, *Geoffrey Chaucer and The Development of His Genius* (1934); R. K. Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer* (1926); J. M. Manly, *Some New Light On Chaucer* (1925); E. Legouis, *Chaucer* (tr. L. Lailavoix, 1913); R. Krauss, H. Braddy, and C. R. Kase, *Three Chaucer Studies* (1932). A valuable book on Chaucer's influence is C. Spurgeon, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion* (1918-22).

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The Canterbury Tales

The triumph of his career, his last major work, is Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Turning his attention from his audience at court to the wider reading public, he hit upon a masterful scheme for this collection of stories. Something similar is indeed to be found in *The Arabian Nights* and *The Decameron*, but there is little reason to suppose Chaucer knew either of those works; moreover, their settings are static, Chaucer's is dynamic.

At the Tabard Inn Chaucer finds a group of pilgrims en route to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Thomas à Becket. The host and the poet join them, making thirty in all (though the Prologue seems to list thirty-one), and they agree to tell four stories each, two on the way to Canterbury, and two on the way home. Of the contemplated one hundred and twenty tales only twenty-two were completed. Some discrepancy or alteration in his plan is clear from the connecting links between stories, where it would seem that each pilgrim is expected to tell only one tale.

The Prologue presents the pilgrims in a series of portraits unmatched in medieval poetry. It is indeed a picture of contemporary society Chaucer has drawn. Excluding royalty and nobility on the one hand, and the impoverished on the other, we have here representatives from the mass of English society. Yet each portrait, besides being typical, is individualized too. No master-artist ever painted his subject more completely than does Chaucer, who by cunning detail has caught in each portrait the revealing facts of their characters. And here Chaucer, in one step, in the very act of recording his times, becomes a man of the Renaissance. Personality was a matter of no concern to the medieval mind fastening on a world to come. Dante might be called the exception, but even he attempts no such completeness of presentation as does Chaucer. Chaucer's profound interest in the human values of this world, already seen in the delineation of Criseyde, here voices itself clear and bold.

The depictions of the pilgrims' characters are continued in the tales. Many of the tales help us further to understand their narrators. Also he allows his pilgrims to digress from their stories and to paint themselves (cf. the conclusion to *The Pardoner's Tale*). The links connecting the tales reveal the Miller to be drunk and quarrelsome, the Shipman impatient, the Host profane, the Prioress gracious, the Clerk thoughtful. Chaucer has some fun at his own corpulence and abstracted mood, and puts in his own mouth a doggerel burlesque of chivalric adventure—a tale so intolerable that the Host stops him in the middle of it.

A critical edition of *The Canterbury Tales* is being prepared under the direction of J. M. Manly, whose previous edition of 1928 is full of important suggestion. There are many special studies of individual tales and of the collection as a whole.

The Prologue

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote[1]
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich[2] licour,
Of which vertu[3] engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek[4] with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes[5] and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,[6]
And smale fowles[7] maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):[8]
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers[9] for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes[10] couthe[11] in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir[12] for to seke,
That hem[13] hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
  Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk[14] at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle,[15]
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed[16] atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward[17] erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.[18]
  But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun[19]
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

  A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom[20] and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And thereto hadde he riden (no man ferre)[21]
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
  At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.[22]
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,[23]
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade[24] at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir,[25] and riden in Belmarye.[26]
At Lyeys[27] was he, and at Satalye,[28]
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See[29]
At many a noble armee[30] hadde he be.

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[1] sweet showers.
[2] such liquid (sap).
[3] through the strength of which.
[4] the West Wind also.
[5] shoots.
[6] The young sun has run his half course in the Ram. The year at Chaucer's time began at the spring equinox and the sun was therefore young. The Ram (Aries) was the first of the signs of the Zodiac through which the sun passed after the beginning of the year.
[7] birds.
[8] So nature stirs them up in their hearts.
[9] pilgrims who went to the Holy Land and brought back palm branches as tokens.
[10] shrines.
[11] known.
[12] St. Thomas à Becket.
[13] them. Chaucer's personal pronouns differ from modern English in some respects. Note the following forms: his (its), hir(e) (their), hem (them).
[14] Southwark was a village just across the bridge from the heart of London. The Tabard inn was so called from the sign of the tabard, or sleeveless jacket, which distinguished it. This village was the beginning of the road to Canterbury and a good place to join others and get an early start.
[15] fallen. The *y-* before the verb-form indicates the past participle. Cf. German *gefallen*.
[16] eased, put at our ease.
[17] agreement.
[18] to the place I shall tell you of.
[19] station, rank.
[20] generosity.
[21] farther.
[22] In Prussia he had sat at the head of the table above the representatives of all other nations.
[23] In Lithuania he had been on expeditions and in Russia.
[24] Granada.
[25] Algeciras, taken from the Moors in 1344.
[26] a Moorish kingdom in Africa.
[27] in Armenia, captured 1367.
[28] on the south coast of Asia Minor, captured 1361.
[29] Mediterranean.
[30] expedition.

At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene[31]
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his fo.
This ilke[32] worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatye,[33]
Ageyn[34] another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.[35]
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye[36] ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.[37]
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors[38] were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian[39] he wered a gipoun[40]
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;[41]
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYER,
A lovyere, and a lusty bacheler,[42]
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.[43]
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene[44] lengthe,
And wonderly deliver,[45] and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,[46]
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,[47]
And born him wel, as of so litel space,[48]
In hope to stonden in his lady[49] grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge,[50] al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,[51]
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he loved, that by nightertale,[52]
He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
And carf[53] biforn his fader at the table.

A YEMAN[54] hadde he, and servaunts namo[55]
At that tyme, for him liste[56] ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
(Wel coude he dresse his takel[57] yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed[58] hadde he, with a broun visage.
Of wode-craft wel coude[59] he al the usage.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,[60]
And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,[61]
And on that other syde a gay daggere,
Harneised[62] wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre[63] on his brest of silver shene.[64]
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy[65]
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy[66]
And she was cleped[67] madame Eglentyne.
Ful wel she song the service divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,[68]
After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,[69]
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
That no drop ne fille up-on her brest.
In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.[70]
Hir over-lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe ther was no ferthing[71] sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte

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[31] a Moorish kingdom in Africa. [32] same.
[33] in Asiatic Turkey. [34] against. [35] high praise.
[36] discourteous speech. [37] unto any kind of person.
[38] horses. [39] cotton cloth.
[40] coat worn under the armor.
[41] all soiled by his coat of mail.
[42] candidate for knighthood.
[43] curled as if they had been in a press.
[44] good proportions. [45] agile. [46] cavalry raid.
[47] in expeditions against the French.
[48] considering the little time.
[49] lady's. Some feminine nouns still made their genitive case without *s*.
[50] playing the flute. [51] compose songs. [52] night-time.
[53] carved.
[54] yeoman, a servant of degree next below the squire.
[55] no more. [56] it pleased him to.
[57] implements.
[58] close-cropped head. [59] knew.
[60] an arm-guard to protect against the bow-string.
[61] buckler: a small shield. [62] equipped.
[63] a figure of St. Christopher. [64] bright.
[65] quiet, modest.
[66] St. Eligius (a lady-like oath).
[67] called, named. [68] elegantly.
[69] a nunnery near London. [70] pleasure, joy. [71] bit.

Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,[72]
And sikerly[73] she was of greet disport,[74]
And ful plesaunt and amiable of port,[75]
And peyned hir[76] to countrefete chere
Of Court, and been estatlich of manere,
And to ben holden digne[77] of reverence.
But for to speken of hir consciënce,
She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes hadde she that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel breed;[78]
But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde[79] smerte;
And al was consciënce and tendre herte.
  Ful semely hir wimpel pinched[80] was;
Hire nose tretys;[81] hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal and there-to[82] softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed.
It was almost a spanne brood I trowe,[83]
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis[84] was hir cloke, as I was war;
Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes[85] gauded al with grene,
And ther-on heng a brooch of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after *Amor vincit omnia*.[86]

  Another NONNE with hire hadde she
That was hir Chapeleyne, and PRESSTES thre.
  A monk ther was, a fair for the maistrye,[87]
An out-rydere,[88] that lovede venerye;[89]
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable,
And whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wynd als clere,
And eek as loude, as doth the chapel belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.[90]
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,[91]
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,[92]
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And held after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled[93] hen
That seith that hunters been nat holy men,
Ne that a monk whan he is cloisterlees
Is likned til a fish that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie and make himselven wood,[94]
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken[95] with his handes and laboure,
As Austin bit?[96] How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour[97] aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight:
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
I seigh his sleves purfiled[98] at the hond
With grys,[99] and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a ful curious pin,
A love knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he hadde been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;[1]
His eyen stepe[2] and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;[3]
His botes souple,[4] his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelat.
He was nat pale, as a for-pyned[5] goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

  A FRERE ther was, a wantown[6] and a merye,

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[72] reached. [73] certainly. [74] good humor.

[75] bearing.

[76] And took pains to imitate courtly behavior and to be stately in her manners.

[77] worthy. [78] fine white bread. [79] stick.

[80] the linen covering for her neck was carefully pleated.

[81] well-proportioned. [82] moreover. [83] believe.

[84] neat.

[85] A rosary. Every eleventh bead in the rosary was larger than the others and was called a "gaud." These were green.

[86] Love conquers all things.

[87] an extremely good-looking (one).

[88] an inspector of the monastic property.

[89] hunting.

[90] where this lord was head of the subordinate monastery.

[91] St. Benedict and his disciple, St. Maurus, who established the rules for monasteries of the Benedictine order in 529 A.D.

[92] somewhat strict.

[93] He didn't give a plucked hen for that text.

[94] mad. [95] toil.

[96] as St. Augustine commands. [97] hard rider.

[98] I saw his sleeves trimmed. [99] fur.

[1] in good physical condition. [2] prominent.

[3] gleamed like a furnace under a caldron.

[4] boots soft. [5] tormented. [6] uncouth.

A limitour,[7] a ful solempne[8] man,
In alle the ordres foure[9] is noon that can
So moche of daliaunce[10] and fair langage;
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen at his owne cost.
Unto his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
With frankeleyns[11] over-al in his contree;
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun,
For he hadde power of confessioun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
For of his ordre he was licenciat.[12]
Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun.
He was an esy man to yeve[13] penaunce
Ther as he wiste to have a good pitaunce;
For unto a povre[14] ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive;[15]
For, if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt[16]
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
For many a man so hard is of his herte
He may not wepe al though him sore smerte.[17]
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyeres
Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
His tipet[18] was ay farsed[19] full of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven yonge wyves;
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote:[20]
Of yeddinges[21] he bar utterly the prys;[22]
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys,
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes well in all the toun,
And everich hostiler[23] and tappestere[24]
Bet than a lazar[25] or a beggestere;[26]
For unto swich a worthy man as he
Accorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with sicke lazars aqueyntaunce;
It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
For to delen with no swiche poraille;[27]
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.[28]
And over al, ther as[29] profit sholde aryse,
Curteis he was and lowly of servyse.[30]
Ther nas no man nowher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,[31]
So plesaunt was his *In principio*,[32]
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente:
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.[33]
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.[34]
In love-dayes[35] ther coude he muchel helpe.
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scoler,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,[36]
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.[37]
Somewhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee,[38] and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons[39] he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge[40] always th'encrees of his winning.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing[41]
Bitwixe Middleburgh and Orewelle.[42]

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[7] He had a definite territory to beg in.

[8] important.

[9] The four orders of friars referred to were the Dominicans (Black Friars), the Franciscans (Grey Friars), the Carmelites (White Friars), and the Augustin or Austin Friars.

[10] flattery, "blarney."

[11] rich farmers.

[12] a licensed hearer of confessions.

[13] give. Chaucer's present is *yeve*; the past *yaf*.

[14] poor.

[15] shriven.

[16] For if he (the man) gave, the friar dared boast that he (the friar) knew. . . .

[17] it pains him sorely.

[18] hood.

[19] stuffed.

[20] a violin-like instrument.

[21] songs.

[22] prize.

[23] inn-keeper.

[24] female tapster.

[25] leper.

[26] beggar woman.

[27] poor people.

[28] food.

[29] everywhere wherever profit should arise.

[30] humble and obeisant.

[31] shoe.

[32] In the beginning (the opening verse of the Gospel of John).

[33] What he got by begging was more than his payment for the privilege.

[34] romp like a puppy.

[35] days on which disputes were settled without going to law.

[36] short cape.

[37] mold.

[38] parti-colored costume, the livery of his guild.

[39] opinions.

[40] tending always to the increase of his profit.

[41] at any cost.

[42] Middleburgh in the Netherlands and the river Orwell on the east coast of England. This route was important for the wool trade.

Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes[43] selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;[44]
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,[45]
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.[46]
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot[47] how men him calle.

A Clerk[48] ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.[49]
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas[50] nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;[51]
For he had geten him yet no benefyce,[52]
Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.[53]
For him was lever[54] have at his beddes heed
Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
Than robes riche, or fithele,[55] or gay sautrye.[56]
But al be that he was a philosophre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;[57]
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,[58]
On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.[59]
Of studie took he most cure[60] and most hedè.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.[61]
Souninge in[62] moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,[63]
Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;[64]
For his science, and for his heigh renoun
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour[65] was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,[66]
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.[67]
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,[68]
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Thereto he coude endyte, and make a thing,[69]
Ther coude no wight pinche[70] at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.[71]
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint[72] of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

A Frankeleyn[73] was in his companye;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesye.
Of his complexioun[74] he was sangwyn.
Wel loved he by the morwe[75] a sop in wyn.[76]
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owne sone,[77]
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian[78] he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon,[79]
A bettre envyned[80] man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,

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[43] He knew how to sell French crowns at a profit.
[44] used.
[45] demeanor.
[46] borrowings.
[47] know not.
[48] scholar.
[49] gone; i.e., devoted himself to, studied.
[50] was not.
[51] uppermost short coat.
[52] church office.
[53] secular office.
[54] he would rather.
[55] fiddle.
[56] psaltery, a harp-like stringed instrument.
[57] Although he was a philosopher he was not an alchemist (and was therefore unable to make gold).
[58] get.
[59] go to school.
[60] care.
[61] lofty meaning.
[62] tending towards.
[63] the porch of St. Paul's cathedral in London, where lawyers consulted with their clients.
[64] either by special appointment or by unlimited authorization.
[65] buyer of land.
[66] with a clear, unlimited title.
[67] invalid.
[68] He had in set form all cases and decisions.
[69] draw up a document.
[70] find fault with.
[71] by heart.
[72] girdle.
[73] rich farmer.
[74] temperament. According to the system of medicine founded by the Greek physician Galen, a man's temperament was determined by the proportion of the four humors in his body: blood, phlegm, bile, and black bile. The sanguine temperament was caused by an oversupply of blood.
[75] in the morning.
[76] bread soaked in wine.
[77] He was a follower of Epicurus (342?-270 B.C.), who held that the greatest good was identical with pleasure. Chaucer, like most men of the Middle Ages, interpreted this philosophy to mean nothing more than to "eat, drink, and be merry."
[78] the patron saint of hospitality.
[79] according to the best standard.
[80] supplied with wine.

Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,[81]
And many a breem and many a luce[82] in stewe.[83]
Wo was his cook, but-if[84] his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.[85]
His table dormant[86] in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas[87] and a gipser[88] al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve[89] hadde he been, and a countour;[90]
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.[91]

An HABERDASSHER and a CARPENTER,
A WEBBE,[92] a DYERE, and a TAPICER[93]
Were with us eek, clothed in o[94] liveree,
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked[95] was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped[96] noght with bras,
But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.[97]
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,[98]
To sitten in a yeldhalle[99] on a deys.[1]
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply[2] for to been an alderman.
For catel[3] hadde they y-nogh and rente,[4]
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles certein were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept[5] *"ma dame,"*
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

A COOK they hadde with hem for the nones[6]
To boille the chiknes with the marybones,
And poudre-marchant tart,[7] and galingale.[8]
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
Maken mortreux,[9] and wel bake a pye.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal[10] hadde he;
For blankmanger,[11] that made he with the beste

A SHIPMAN was ther, woning[12] fer by weste:
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy,[13] as he couthe,[14]
In a gowne of falding[15] to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas[16] hadde he
About his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.[17]
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.[18]
Of nyce[19] conscience took he no keep.
If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
By water he sente hem hoom[20] to every land.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe[21] and his mone, his lodemenage,[22]
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.[23]
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond[24] to the cape of Finistere,[25]
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

With us ther was a DOCTOUR OF PHISYK,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
For he was grounded in astronomye.[26]
He kepte[27] his pacient a ful greet del

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[81] coop. [82] pickerel. [83] a fish-pond.
[84] unless. [85] utensils.
[86] a permanent table, not merely boards laid on trestles.
[87] dagger. [88] purse, pouch.
[89] sheriff, principal officer of the county.
[90] accountant.
[91] a landowner below the rank of baron.
[92] weaver. [93] upholsterer.
[94] one, the same.
[95] equipment was adorned. [96] capped with metal.
[97] entirely. [98] citizen. [99] guild-hall.
[1] dais, where the officers sat. [2] suitable.
[3] property. [4] income. [5] called.
[6] for the occasion.

[7] sharp flavoring powder. [8] a spice. [9] a soup.
[10] a sore.
[11] chicken minced with rice, milk, sugar, and almonds.
[12] dwelling. [13] nag.
[14] as best he could.
[15] coarse woolen cloth. [16] string or cord.
[17] rascal, scoundrel. [18] while the merchant was asleep.
[19] scrupulous. [20] made them walk the plank.
[21] harbor, anchorage. [22] pilotage.
[23] Hull on the east coast of England and Cartagena on the coast of Spain.
[24] off the coast of Sweden. [25] a cape in Spain.
[26] astrology. [27] watched.

In houres,[28] by his magik naturel.[29]
Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent[30]
Of his images for his pacient.
He knew the cause of everich maladye,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,
And where engendred, and of what humour;[31]
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.[32]
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,[33]
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he th'olde Esculapius,[34]
And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras,[35] Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Damascien,[36] and Constantyn;[37]
Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.[38]
Of his diete mesurable[39] was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestible.
His studie was but litel on the bible.
In sangwin[40] and in pers[41] he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendal;[42]
And yet he was but esy of dispence;[43]
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.[44]
For gold in phisik is a cordial,[45]
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

A good WYF was ther of bisyde BATHE,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.[46]
Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,[47]
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.[48]
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to th' offring[49] bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs[50] ful fyne were of ground;[51]
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoes ful moiste and newe.
Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,
Housbondes at chirche dore[52] she hadde fyve,
Withouten[53] other compaignye in youthe,—
But ther of nedeth nat to speke as nouthe,—[54]
And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice[55] at Seint Iame, and at Coloigne.
She coude moche of wandring by the weye.
Gat-tothed[56] was she, soothly for to seye.
Upon an amblere[57] esily she sat,
Y-wimpled[58] wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot mantel aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felaweshipe wel coude she laughe and carpe;[59]
Of remedies of love she knew per-chaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.[60]

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a povre PERSOUN[61] of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk;
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,

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[28] the proper times, according to astrology, for the treatment of the patient.
[29] good magic, as distinguished from black magic.
[30] He devised magic images at the moment when astrologically favorable planets were rising.
[31] see note 74 to line 333. The humors were described as follows: sanguine, hot and moist; phlegmatic, cold and moist; choleric, hot and dry; melancholic, cold and dry.
[32] remedy.
[33] syrups.
[34] the Greek god of medicine.
[35] Deiscorides, Rufus, and Galen were Greek physicians of the first and second centuries A.D.; Hippocrates of the fourth century B.C.
[36] Haly, Serapion, Rhazis, Avicenna, Averoes, and Damascene were Arabian physicians.
[37] native of Carthage and a founder of the medical school of Salerno, Italy, during the eleventh century.
[38] the last three names belong to physicians of Chaucer's own century.
[39] moderate.
[40] blood-red.
[41] light blue.
[42] thin silk.
[43] moderate in expenditure.
[44] epidemic, plague.
[45] that which stimulates the heart.
[46] a pity.
[47] skill.
[48] Ypres and Ghent, the two cities of Flanders best known for their cloth-making.
[49] when she went to have bread and wine consecrated.
[50] kerchiefs.
[51] texture.
[52] Marriages took place at the church door.
[53] not counting.
[54] just now.
[55] the shrine of St. James of Compostella in Spain. All other places mentioned were famous shrines.
[56] with teeth set far apart.
[57] horse with an easy, ambling gait.
[58] with a pleated head-covering.
[59] talk.
[60] She knew all the old tricks of the art of love.
[61] Parson, parish priest.

That Cristes Gospel trewely wolde preche:
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful pacient;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.[62]
Ful looth were him to cursen[63] for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Unto his povre parisshens aboute,
Of his offring and eek of his substaunce.
He coude in litel thing have suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer asonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknesse nor in meschief[64] to visyte
The ferreste[65] in his parisshe, moche and lyte,[66]
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That firste he wroghte and afterward he taughte.
Out of the gospel he tho[67] wordes caughte,
And this figure he added eek therto,
That if gold ruste, what shal yren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed[68] man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,[69]
And leet his shepe encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, unto Sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterie[70] for soules;
Or with a bretherhed to been withholde,[71]
But dwelte at hoom and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie,—
He was a shepherde, and noght a mercenarie.
And though he holy were and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous[72] ne digne,[73]
But in his teching discreet and benigne,
To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
By good ensample, this was his bisynesse:
But it were any persone obstinat,
What so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben[74] sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher non is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced[75] conscïence,
But Cristes lore, and his Apostles twelve,
He taughte, but first he folwed it himselve.

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad[76] of dong ful many a fother,[77]
A trewe swinkere[78] and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best, with al his hole herte,
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,[79]
And thanne his neighebour right as himselve.
He wolde thresshe, and therto dyke[80] and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
In a tabard[81] he rood upon a mere.

Ther was also a REVE[82] and a MILLERE,
A SOMNOUR[83] and a PARDONER[84] also,
A MAUNCIPLE[85] and myself,—ther were namo.[86]
The MILLER was a stout carl,[87] for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.[88]
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,[89]
Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,[90]
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd, as any sowe or fox, was reed,
And therto brood, as though it were a spade.
Upon the cop[91] right of his nose he hade
A werte, and theron stood a toft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and a bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as wyde was as a greet forneys.

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[62] many times.
[63] to excommunicate for non-payment of tithes.
[64] misfortune.
[65] farthest.
[66] high and low (socially).
[67] those.
[68] unlearned.
[69] He did not hire someone else to do his work while he went up to London.
[70] the easy task of singing masses for the repose of souls.
[71] to be a chaplain for a guild.
[72] arrogant.
[73] haughty.
[74] rebuke.
[75] over-punctilious.
[76] pulled.
[77] load.
[78] laborer.
[79] though it pleased or hurt him.
[80] dig a ditch.
[81] a short cloak.
[82] steward or manager of an estate.
[83] an officer who summoned offenders to the ecclesiastical court.
[84] one who had license to sell pardons.
[85] a purchasing agent for a college of law.
[86] no more.
[87] fellow.
[88] the prize given at a wrestling-match.
[89] with knotted muscles.
[90] from the hinges.
[91] top

He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,[92]
And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
Wel coude he stelen corn and tollen thryes,[93]
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold,[94] pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And therwithal he broghte us out of towne.

A gentil Mauncipal was ther of a temple,[95]
Of which achatours[96] mighte take exemple,
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
For, whether that he payde, or took by taille,[97]
Algate[98] he wayted so in his achat,[99]
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace
That swich a lewed[1] mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
That weren of lawe expert and curious,
Of which ther weren a doseyn in that hous,
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To maken him live by his propre good
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,[2]
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this Maunciple sette hir aller cappe.[3]

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner[4] and a binne,
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.[5]
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet,[6] his dayerye,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor,[7] and his pultrye,
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.[8]
There nas baillif, ne herde, nor other hyne,[9]
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;[10]
They were adrad[11] of him as of the deeth.
His woning[12] was ful fair upon an heeth,
With grene trees shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lorde purchace.
Ful riche he was a-stored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly
To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;[13]
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat upon a ful good stot,[14]
That was al pomely[15] grey, and highte[16] Scot.
A long surcote[17] of pers upon he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawceflem[18] he was, with eyen narwe.
As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe,
With scaled[19] browes blake and piled[20] berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge,[21] ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of Tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of the whelkes[22] whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood;
Thanne woulde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or thre,
That he had lerned out of som decree;
No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel how that a jay

---

[92] He was a loud talker and a teller of coarse stories.
[93] take triple toll.
[94] He was an expert in judging flour.
[95] a college of law.
[96] buyers.
[97] on credit.
[98] in any case.
[99] buying; cf. French *acheter*.
[1] unlearned.
[2] unless he were crazy.
[3] made fools of them all.
[4] granary.
[5] get ahead of him.
[6] cattle.
[7] livestock.
[8] catch him in arrears.
[9] farm servant.
[10] tricks.
[11] in dread.
[12] dwelling.
[13] trade.
[14] stallion.
[15] dappled.
[16] was named.
[17] overcoat.
[18] pimpled.
[19] scabby.
[20] thin and uneven.
[21] white lead.
[22] pimples.

Can clepen "Watte"[23] as wel as can the pope.
But whoso coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;
Ay *"Questio quid juris"*[24] wolde he crye.
He was a gentil harlot[25] and a kynde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght fynde.
He wolde suffre for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to have his concubyn
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle;
And prively a finch eek coulde he pulle.[26]
And if he fond owher[27] a good felawe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
"Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he.
But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling[28] saveth—
And also war him of a *significavit*.[29]
In daunger[30] hadde he at his owne gyse[31]
The yonge girles[32] of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.[33]
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;[34]
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncival,[35] his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
Ful loude he song, "Com hider, love, to me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,[36]
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;
By ounces[37] henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
But thinne it lay, by colpons[38] oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walet.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe jet;[39]
Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle[40] hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful[41] of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male[42] he hadde a pilwe-beer,[43]
Which that, he seyde, was our lady[44] veyl:
He seyde, he hadde a gobet[45] of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.[46]
He hadde a croys of latoun,[47] ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A povre person[48] dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
And thus, with feyned flaterye and japes
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest[49] he song an offertorie;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle[50] his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so meriely and loude.

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Th'estat, th'array, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companye
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viage,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
But first I pray you, of your curteisye,

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[23] just as a modern parrot can say "Polly."
[24] The question is what part of the law (applies).
[25] rogue.
[26] fleece a gull.
[27] anywhere.
[28] absolution.
[29] a writ of excommunication.
[30] control.
[31] discretion.
[32] young people of both sexes.
[33] adviser.
[34] sign in front of an ale-house.
[35] a hospital in London.
[36] a bass accompaniment.
[37] bunches.
[38] shreds.
[39] fashion.
[40] a copy of the handkerchief of St. Veronica bearing the miraculous imprint of the face of Christ.
[41] brimful.
[42] bag.
[43] pillowcase.
[44] the blessed Virgin's.
[45] piece.
[46] caught; cf. *Matthew*, 14:22-33.
[47] an alloy similar to brass.
[48] parson.
[49] best of all.
[50] polish.

That ye n'arette it not my vileinye,[51]
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matere,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;[52]
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;[53]
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree[54]
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
  Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.[55]
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,[56]
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:[57]
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod[58] him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;[59]
And seyde thus: "Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe[60] as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithought,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
  Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.[61]
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen[62] and to pleye;
For trewely, comfort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst,[63] and doon yow som comfort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.
Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."
  Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;[64]
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,[65]
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
  "Lordinges" quod he, "now herkneth for the beste;
But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of aventures that whylom han bifalle.
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best sentence and most solas,[66]
Shal have a soper at our aller cost[67]
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement witheseye[68]
Shal paye all that we spenden by the weye.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me[69] therfore."
  This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,

---

[51] That you do not attribute it to my lack of good manners.
[52] behavior.
[53] broadly.
[54] of social rank.
[55] it pleased us.
[56] bright.
[57] Cheapside, a busy street in London.
[58] physical strength.
[59] paid our bills.
[60] at once in this inn.
[61] give you your reward.
[62] You plan to tell stories.
[63] before.
[64] It did not take us long to agree.
[65] to debate it.
[66] most instructive and pleasing.
[67] at the cost of us all.
[68] dispute.
[69] make arrangements.

And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and reportour
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his jugement.
And ther-up-on the wyn was fet[70] anon;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge.
A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,[71]
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,[72]
Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.[73]
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde: "Lordinges, herkneth, if you leste.
Ye woot your forward,[74] and I it yow recorde.[75]
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne;[76]
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight," quod he, "my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh neer," quod he, "my lady prioresse;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,
Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man."

Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And, shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight:
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this goode man saugh that it was so,
As he that wys was and obedient
To kepe forward by his free assent,
He seyde, "Sin I shal biginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye."
And with that word we ryden forth our weye;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.

The Nun's Priest's Tale

Chaucer is at his most amiable in this deliciously witty tale, taken from the beast-fable of *Reynard the Fox*. It is cast in the mock-heroic style, and the characterizations are inimitably Chaucerian.

Heere biginneth the Nunnes Preestes Tale

A povre widwe somdel stape[1] in age,
Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
Bisyde a grove, stonding in a dale.
This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
For litel was hir catel[2] and hir rente;[3]
By housbondrye,[4] of such as God hir sente,
She fond[5] hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte[6] Malle.
Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
Hir dyete was accordant to[7] hir cote.
Repleccioun[8] ne made hir nevere syk;
Attempree[9] dyete was al hir phisyk,
And exercyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
The goute lette hir no-thing[10] for to daunce,
N' apoplexye shente[11] nat hir heed;
No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed:
Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak.
Seynd[12] bacoun, and somtyme an ey[13] or tweye,
For she was as it were a maner deye.[14]
A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
In al the land of crowing nas[15] his peer.

---

[70] fetched.
[71] the cock who waked us all.
[72] faster than a walk.
[73] a brook two miles from Southwark.
[74] agreement.
[75] remind.
[76] Now draw lots before we go any further.

[1] advanced.
[2] property.
[3] income.
[4] economy.
[5] supported.
[6] was named.
[7] in keeping with.
[8] overeating.
[9] moderate.
[10] did not at all prevent her from.
[11] injure.
[12] singed.
[13] egg.
[14] dairy-woman.
[15] was not.

His vois was merier than the merye orgon
On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
Wel sikerer[16] was his crowing in his logge,
Than is a clokke, or an abbey orlogge.[17]
By nature knew he ech ascencioun
Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
For whan degrees fiftene[18] were ascended,
Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.[19]
His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
And batailed,[20] as it were a castel-wal.
His bile was blak, and as the jeet it shoon;
Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;[21]
His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
Sevene hennes, for to doon al his pleasunce,
Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,
And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewly she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;[22]
He loved hir so, that wel him was therwith.
But such a joye was it to here him singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, "my lief is faren in londe";[23]
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in the daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched[24] sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, "O herte dere!
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray[25] sleper; fy, for shame!"
And he answerde and seyde thus: "Madame,
I pray yow that ye take it nat agrief;
By God, me mette[26] I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now God," quod he, "my swevene rede[27] aright,
And kepe my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerd, wher as I saugh a beste
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelow and reed,
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for feere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning doutelees."[28]
"Avoy!" quod she, "fy on yow, hertelees![29]
Allas!" quod she, "for by that God above!
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love.
I can not love a coward, by my feith!
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree,[30] and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,[31]
Ne noon avauntour,[32] by that God above!
How dorste ye seyn, for shame, unto your love
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
"Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No thing, God wot, but vanitee in sweven is.
Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,[33]
And ofte of fume,[34] and of complecciouns,
Whan humours[35] been to habundant in a wight.
"Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
Cometh of the greet superfluitee
Of your rede *colera*, pardee,
Which causeth folk to dreden in hir dremes
Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,[36]
Of rede beestes, that they wol hem byte,
Of contek,[37] and of whelpes, grete and lyte;
Right as the humour of malencolye
Causeth ful many a man in sleep to crye,
For fere of blake beres, or boles[38] blake,
Or elles blake develes wole hem take.
Of othere humours coude I telle also,

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[16] more certain. [17] clock.
[18] the passage of an hour. [19] improved upon.
[20] with battlements. [21] toes.
[22] locked in every limb.
[23] The first line of a song beginning "My love has gone to the country."
[24] troubled. [25] true. [26] I dreamed.
[27] interpret my dream. [28] without doubt.
[29] without courage. [30] secret, discreet.
[31] weapon. [32] boaster. [33] overeating.
[34] vapors due to overeating.
[35] For the four humors, see the *Prologue*, lines 333 and 421 and notes.
[36] flames. [37] conflict. [38] bulls.

That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
Lo, Catoun,[39] which that was so wys a man,
Seyde he nat thus, "Ne do no fors[40] of dremes"?
"Now, sire," quod she, "whan we flee fro the bemes,
For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf.
Up[41] peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
I conseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
That bothe of colere and of malencolye
Ye purge yow; and for ye shal nat tarie,
Though in this toun is noon apothecarie,
I shal myself to herbes techen yow
That shul been for your hele, and for your prow;[42]
And in our yerd tho herbes shal I fynde,
The whiche han of hir propretee, by kynde,[43]
To purge yow, binethe and eek above.
Forget nat this, for Goddes owne love!
Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun.
Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote[44]
That ye shul have a fevere terciane,[45]
Or an agu, that may be your bane.[46]
A day or two ye shul have digestyves
Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves
Of lauriol, centaure and fumetere,
Or elles of ellebor that groweth there,
Of catapuce or of gaytres beryis,[47]
Of herbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in;
Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
Dredeth[48] no dreem; I can sey yow namore."
"Madame," quod he, "*graunt mercy*[49] of your lore,
But natheless, as touching daun[50] Catoun,
That hath of wisdom swich a greet renoun,
Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
By God, men may in olde bookes rede
Of many a man, more of auctoritee
Than evere Catoun was, so moot I thee![51]
That al the revers seyn of his sentence,[52]
And han wel founden by experience
That dremes been significaciouns,
As wel of joye as tribulaciouns,
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument,
The verray preve[53] sheweth it in dede.
"Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so they comen in a toun,
Wher as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,[54]
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
"And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;[55]
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;[56]
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe;[57]
Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of dong ther shaltow see,

---

[39] This passage refers to the *Distichs of Dionysius Cato*, a collection of sayings of uncertain authorship which were well known in the Middle Ages.

[40] pay no attention to

[41] on.

[42] for your health and for your benefit.

[43] nature.

[44] wager a groat.

[45] tertian fever, one that recurs every third day.

[46] death.

[47] dogwood berries. The drugs mentioned were all used as laxatives in the Middle Ages.

[48] The imperative plural and also the polite form of *dread*.

[49] many thanks.

[50] a title of respect from Latin *dominus* (master); cf. Spanish *don*.

[51] so may I prosper.

[52] opinion.

[53] true test.

[54] a lack of lodgings.

[55] started up.

[56] paid no attention.

[57] slain.

In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;'
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
"The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon,
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
This man gan fallen in suspecioun,
Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
That was arrayed in the same wyse
As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
Vengeaunce and justice of this felonye:—
'My felawe mordred is this same night,
And in this carte he lyth gapinge upright.
I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!'
What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
The peple out-sterte, and caste the cart to grounde,
And in the middel of the dong they founde
The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
"O blisful god, that art so just and trewe!
Lo, how that thou biwreyest[58] mordre alway!
Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
Mordre is so wlatsom[59] and abhominable
To god, that is so just and resonable,
That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be;
Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
And right anoon, ministres of that toun
Han hent the carter, and so sore him pyned,[60]
And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,[61]
That thay biknewe[62] hir wikkednesse anoon,
And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
"Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
And certes, in the same book I rede,
Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
(I gabbe[63] nat, so have I joye or blis,)
Two men that wolde han passed over see,
For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
But on a day, agayn[64] the even-tyde,
The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
Jolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
And casten hem ful erly for to saille;
But to that oo[65] man fil a greet mervaille.
That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day.
Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende,
Thou shalt be dreynt;[66] my tale is at an ende.'
He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
And preyde him his viage for to lette;[67]
As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.
'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and japes.[68]
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therwithal;
Men dreme of thing that never was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-sleuthen[69] wilfully thy tyde,[70]
God wot it reweth me;[71] and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly[72] the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees[73]
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
"Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike,[74] how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,

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[58] makest known. [59] disgusting. [60] tortured.
[61] tortured. [62] acknowledged. [63] speak idly.

[64] toward. [65] one. [66] drowned.
[67] put off. [68] jokes.
[69] lose through sloth.
[70] time. [71] I am sorry. [72] by chance.
[73] heedless. [74] Mercia.

His mordre in his avisioun he say.[75]
His norice him expouned every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told[76]
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever[77] than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus,[78] that writ th'avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen.
"And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In th'olde testament, of Daniel,[79]
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Joseph,[80] and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,[81]
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
"Lo Cresus,[82] which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhanged be?
Lo heer Andromacha,[83] Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,
She dremed on the same night biforn,
How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
If thilke day he wente in-to bataille;
She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
He wente for to fighte nathelees,
But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
That I shal han of this avisioun
Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
"Now let us speke of mirthe, and stinte[84] al this;
Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
For whan I see the beautee of your face,
Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
For, also siker[85] as *In principio,*
Mulier est hominis confusio;[86]
Madame, the sentence of this Latin is—
Womman is mannes joye and al his blis.
For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
I am so ful of joye and of solas
That I defye bothe sweven and dreem."
And with that word he fley doun fro the beem,
For it was day, and eek his hennes alle;
And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
For he had founde a corn,[87] lay in the yerd.
Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
He loketh as it were a grim leoun;[88]
And on his toos he rometh up and doun,
Him deyned not to sette his foot to grounde.
He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
And after wol I telle his aventure.
Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
That highte March, whan god first maked man,
Was complet, and passed were also,
Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
His seven wyves walking by his syde,
Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
That in the signe of Taurus[89] hadde y-ronne
Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more;
And knew by kynde,[90] and by noon other lore,
That it was pryme,[91] and crew with blisful stevene.[92]

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[75] saw. [76] little importance has he ascribed.

[77] rather.

[78] The writer, in the early fifth century, of the commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis.*

[79] See *Daniel,* chapter 2.

[80] See *Genesis,* chapters 37, 40, 41. [81] realms.

[82] king of Lydia (603?-546 B.C.).

[83] the wife of Hector in Homer's *Iliad.*

[84] stop. [85] sure.

[86] "In the beginning, etc." (cf. p. 122, note 32); "woman is man's confusion."

[87] grain. [88] lion.

[89] The sign of the Zodiac in which the sun passed from April 20 to May 20.

[90] nature.

[91] the first hour in the morning, some time between six and nine o'clock.

[92] voice.

"The sonne," he sayde, "is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.[93]
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas."
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;[94]
For ever the latter ende of joye is wo.
God woot that worldly joye is sone ago;[95]
And if a rethor[96] coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique[97] saufly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.[98]
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the bok of Launcelot de Lake,[99]
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned[1] yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,[2]
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast[3]
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes[4] stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern[5] of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle;
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle
That in awayt liggen[6] to mordre men.
O false mordre, lurking in thy den!
O newe Scariot,[7] newe Genilon![8]
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinoun,[9]
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd fleigh fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that God forwot[10] mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis,
Witnesse on him that any parfit clerk is,
That in scole is greet altercacioun
In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,[11]
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,[12]
Or Boece,[13] or the bishop Bradwardyn,[14]
Whether that Goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth[15] me nedely for to doon a thing,—
Nedely clepe I simple necessitee,—
Or elles if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though God forwot it, er that it was wroght;
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del,
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol nat han to do of swich matere,
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,
That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
That he had met that dreem that I of tolde.
Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
Wommannes counseils broghte us first to wo,
And made Adam fro Paradys to go,
Ther as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
But for I noot,[16] to whom it mighte displese,
If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
Passe over, for I seyde it in my game,[17]
Rede auctours where they trete of swich matere,
And what they seyn of wommen ye may here;
Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
I kan noon harme of no womman divyne!
Faire in the sond,[18] to bathe hire merily,
Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
For *Phisiologus*[19] seith sikerly,
How that they singen wel and merily.
And so bifel, that as he caste his yë
Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,[20]
But cryde anon, "Cok, cok!" and up he sterte,
As man that was affrayed in his herte.

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[93] indeed. [94] sad happening.
[95] gone. [96] rhetorician.
[97] chronicle. [98] a worthy saying.
[99] the hero of Arthurian romance and lover of Guenevere.
[1] dwelt.
[2] foreordained through divine knowledge.
[3] burst. [4] herbs. [5] mid-morning. [6] lie.
[7] Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Christ.
[8] Ganelon, who betrayed Roland. Cf. p. 58.
[9] who persuaded the Trojans to admit the wooden horse through which the city was captured.
[10] foreknew.
[11] I cannot sift it to the bran.
[12] one of the Fathers of the Church (354-430).
[13] Boethius (480?-524?), author of *Consolation of Philosophy*, which was widely read in the Middle Ages.
[14] Thomas Bradwardine, an Oxford theologian and author of *On the Cause of God*. He died in 1349.
[15] forces. [16] know not.
[17] as a joke. [18] sand.
[19] a book in Latin verse which described the nature of various animals, with allegorical interpretations.
[20] he had no desire to crow.

For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
Though he never erst hadde seyn it with his yë.
This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
Seyde, "Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
Now, certes, I were worse than a feend,
If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
I am nat come your conseil for tespye,
But trewely the cause of my cominge
Was only for to herkne how that ye singe;
For trewely, ye have as mery a stevene
As any aungel hath, that is in hevene;
Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
My lord your fader, (God his soule blesse!)
And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
Han in myn hous y-been to my gret ese;
And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
But for men speke of singing, I wol seye,
So mote I brouke[21] wel myne eyen tweye,
Save yow, I herde never man so singe
As dide your fader in the morweninge;
Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
And for to make his voys the more strong,
He wolde so peyne him that with both his yën
He moste winke,[22] so loude he wolde cryen;
And stonden on his tiptoon therwithal,
And stretche forth his nekke, long and smal.[23]
And eek he was of swich discrecioun
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have weel rad, in daun Burnel the Asse,[24]
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a prestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of your fader and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee;
Lat se, conne ye your fader countrefete."[25]
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravisshed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,[26]
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste[27] of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos
Strecching his nekke, and held his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones,
And daun Russell, the fox, sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat[28] hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer;
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.[29]
O destinee, that mayst nat ben eschewed!
Alas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte[30] nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?[31]
O Gaufred,[32] dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore!
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence, and thy lore,
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye?—
For on a Friday, soothly, slayn was he.
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry, ne lamentacioun,
Was nevere of ladies maad whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him,—as saith us *Eneydos*,—[33]
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighte,[34]
Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales[35] wyf,
Whan that hir housbonde hadde lost his lyf,

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[21] use. [22] close his eyes. [23] narrow.

[24] a satirical poem of the late twelfth century by Nigel Wireker. In this poem the injured cock fails to crow and wake his injurer until too late for him to receive his benefice, or position, in the Church.

[25] imitate.

[26] flatterer.

[27] the Apocryphal book of *Ecclesiasticus*.

[28] throat. [29] pursued.

[30] recked.

[31] Friday was Venus's day. Cf. French *vendredi*, Latin *veneris dies*.

[32] Geoffrey de Vinsauf, who, about 1200, wrote a poem containing a diatribe against Friday, the day on which King Richard died.

[33] Virgil's *Aeneid*. [34] shrieked.

[35] the king of Carthage when it was sacked, 146 B.C.

And that the Romayns hadde brend Cartage,—
She was so ful of torment and of rage,
That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
And brende hir-selven with a stedefast herte.
O woeful hennes, right so cryden ye,
As, whan that Nero[36] brende the citee
Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
Now wol I torne to my tale agayn.
This sely[37] widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
And out at dores sterten they anoon,
And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
And bar upon his bak the cok away;
And cryden, "Out! harrow! and weyl-away!
Ha! ha! the fox!" and after him they ran,
And eek with staves many another man;
Ran Colle, our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland
And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges,
So were they fered for berking of the dogges,
And shouting of the men and wommen eke;
They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
They yelleden, as feendes doon in helle;
The dokes[38] cryden, as men wolde hem quelle;[39]
The gees, for fere, flown over the trees;
Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
So hidous was the noyse, a *benedicite!*
Certes, he Iakke Straw,[40] and his meynee,[41]
Ne maden never shoutes half so shrille,
Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
Of bras they broghten bemes,[42] and of box,[43]
Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
And therwithal thay shryked and they houped;
It semed as that heven sholde falle.
Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
And seyde, "sire, if that I were as ye,
Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me[44]),
Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
Maugree[45] your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
I wol him ete in feith, and that anon."—
The fox answerde, "in feith, it shal be don,"—
And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,[46]
And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.
And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
"Allas!" quod he, "O Chauntecleer, allas!
I have to yow," quod he, "y-doon trespas,
In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
Com doun, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so."
"Nay than," quod he, "I shrewe[47] us bothe two,
And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!"[48]
"Nay," quod the fox, "but god yeve him meschaunce,
That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
That jangleth whan he sholde holde his pees."
Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,[49]
And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
But ye that holden this tale a folye,
As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
Taketh the moralitee, good men,
For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
As seith my lord, so make us alle good men;
And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.

Here is ended the Nonnes Preestes Tale.

The Pardoner's Tale

The portrait of the Pàrdoner, seller of indulgences, is ruthless in its satire. (For a similar portrait see the tale from the *Decameron, above.*) He is, as Professor Kittredge has remarked, the one lost soul among the pilgrims.

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[36] Emperor of Rome. The fire took place in 64 A.D.
[37] simple, poor. [38] ducks. [39] kill.
[40] In 1381 Jack Straw led an uprising of peasants against Flemish weavers in England.
[41] crowd. [42] trumpets. [43] boxwood.
[44] as surely as God may help me.

[45] in spite of. [46] quickly. [47] curse.
[48] prosper. [49] careless.

It is by the same irony that Chaucer has him tell a dramatic moral tale which only the most callous of such men could tell, inasmuch as it is a commentary on his own corruption. When he has concluded, he has the impudence to try to sell his wares to the company.

Her folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.[1]

"Lordings," quod he, "in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,[2]
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can[3] al by rote that I telle.
My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—
'Radix malorum est Cupiditas.'
First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles[4] shewe I, alle and sommė.
Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with[5] my predicacioun,
And for to stire men tò devocioun.
Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes[6] and of bones;
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.
Than have I in latoun[7] a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Jewes shepe.
'Good men,' seye I, 'tak of my wordes kepe;[8]
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm[9] hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle.
If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,[10]
Wol every wike,[11] er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Jewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor[12] shal multiplye.
And, sirs, also it heleth jalousye;
For, though a man be falle in jalous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or three.
Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.
Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
If any wight[13] be in this chirche now,
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he
Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
Or any womman, be she yong or old,
That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,[14]
Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
To offren to my reliks in this place.
And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
And I assoille[15] him by the auctoritee,
Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me.'
By this gaude[16] have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
An hundred mark[17] sith I was Pardoner.
I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
And whan the lewed[18] peple is doun y-set,
I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
And telle an hundred false japes[19] more.
Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
And est and west upon the peple I bekke,[20]
As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,[21]
That it is joye to see my bisinesse.
Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
Is al my preching, for to make hem free
To yeve her pens, and namely[22] un-to me.
For my entente is nat but for to winne,
And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.

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[1] The root of evils is avarice. *I Timothy*, 6:10.
[2] I take pains to speak in a lofty manner.
[3] know.
[4] documents giving him authority.
[5] add flavor to.
[6] rags.
[7] a brass-like alloy.
[8] heed.
[9] snake.
[10] owneth.
[11] week.
[12] livestock.
[13] person.
[14] cuckold (husband of an unfaithful wife).
[15] absolve.
[16] trick.
[17] Two-thirds of a pound sterling. In modern value a hundred marks would be close to ten thousand dollars.
[18] ignorant.
[19] tricks, jokes.
[20] nod.
[21] briskly.
[22] especially.

I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
Though that her soules goon a-blake-beried![23]
For certes, many a predicacioun
Cometh ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
To been avaunced by ipocrisye,
And some for veyne glorie, and some for hate.
For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
In preching, so that he shal nat asterte[24]
To been defamed falsly, if that he
Hath trespased to my brethren or to me.
For, though I telle noght his propre[25] name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances;
Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.
But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was—
'Radix malorum est cupiditas.'
Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
Which that I use, and that is avaryce.
But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne
Yet can I maken other folk to twinne[26]
From avaryce, and sore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente.
I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.
Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
For lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde.
What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
And winne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol live in povert wilfully?
Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol non of the apostles counterfete;[27]
I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
Al[28] sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun.
But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking.
For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
How holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne."

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
Of yonge folk, that haunteden[29] folye,
As ryot, hasard[30] stewes,[31] and tavernes,
Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
They daunce and pleye at dees[32] bothe day and night,
And ete also and drinken over hir might,
Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifyse
With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
By superfluitee abhominable;
Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly[33] for to here hem swere;
Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;[34]
Hem thoughte Jewes rente him noght y-nough;
And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
And right anon than comen tombesteres[35]
Fetys[36] and smale, and yonge fruytesteres,[37]
Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,[38]
Whiche been the verray develes officeres
To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed un-to glotonye;
The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,[39]
Lay by his doughtres two, unwitingly;
So dronke he was, he niste[40] what he wroughte.
Herodes,[41] (who-so wel the stories soghte),

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[23] blackberrying, i.e., wandering about.
[24] escape.
[25] own.
[26] separate.
[27] imitate.
[28] although.

[29] practised.
[30] gambling.
[31] brothels.
[32] dice.
[33] shocking.
[34] tore to pieces; i.e., they swore by all parts of the Lord's body.
[35] girl tumblers.
[36] well-shaped.
[37] female fruit-sellers.
[38] peddlers of cakes.
[39] against nature. For the story of Lot's incest, see *Genesis,* 19:30-36.
[40] knew not.
[41] The story of Herod and John the Baptist is told in *Matthew,* 14:3-12 and *Mark,* 6:17-29.

Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heste
To sleen the Baptist John ful giltelees.
  Senek[42] seith eek a good word doutelees;
He seith, he can no difference finde
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,[43]
But that woodnesse,[44] y-fallen in a shrewe,[45]
Persevereth lenger than doth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun,
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn![46]
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
Corrupt was all this world for glotonye!
  Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;[47]
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defended[48] on the tree,
Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how many maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South,
In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke[49]
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke!
Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
"Mete un-to womb,[50] and wombe eek un-to mete,
Shal god destroyen bothe," as Paulus seith.[51]
Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his privee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
  The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
"Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I,
I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god."[52]
O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,
Fulfild of donge and of corrupcioun!
At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
How greet labour and cost is thee to finde![53]
Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde,
And turnen substance in-to accident,[54]
To fulfille al thy likerous talent![55]
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary,[56] for they caste noght a-wey
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
To make him yet a newer appetyt.
But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.
  A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse
Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay "Sampsoun, Sampsoun";
And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn.
Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
Thy tongue is lost, and al thyn honest cure;[57]
For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,[58]
That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.[59]
This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
In othere wynes, growing faste by,[60]
Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,[61]
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,

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[42] Seneca, Roman philosopher and tragedian (3 B.C.-65 A.D.).

[43] drunk. [44] madness. [45] scoundrel.

[46] A reference to the Christian doctrine of redemption, whereby mankind, having fallen from divine favor through the sin of Adam, is bought back, or redeemed, through the death of Christ.

[47] doubt. [48] forbidden. [49] labor hard.

[50] belly. [51] *I Corinthians*, 6:13.

[52] *Philippians*, 3:18-19. [53] maintain, provide for.

[54] According to Medieval philosophy, "substance" was the essential nature of a thing, whereas "accident" was the mere outward appearance.

[55] gluttonous appetite. [56] marrow. [57] self-respect.

[58] a town near Cadiz, in Spain.

[59] Cheapside, in London.

[60] the strong Spanish wines mixed with the lighter French wines.

[61] Drunkenness was supposed to come from the liquorous fumes rising to the brain.

He is in Spayne, right at the toune of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;[62]
And thanne wol he seye, "Sampsoun, Sampsoun."
But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in th'olde testament,
Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere.[63]
Loke, Attila,[64] the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn sholde live in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth[65] yow right wel
What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—
Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
Of wyn-yeving to hem that han justyse.[66]
Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.
And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye.[67]
Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,[68]
And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughtre, and wast also
Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreve[69] and contrarie of honour
For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinioun,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, "ther wol I nat lese my name;
N' I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee."
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he.
Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,[70]
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day awey.
Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The heighe god forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew;[71] but in special
Of swering seith the holy Jeremye.[72]
"Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome,[73] and eek in rightwisnesse;"
But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honourable,
How that the seconde[74] heste of him is this—
"Tak nat my name in ydel or amis."
Lo, rather[75] he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second heste of god is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,[76]
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous.
"By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,[77]
Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;[78]
By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go"—
This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones[79] two,
Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.

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[62] La Rochelle and Bordeaux, in France.
[63] learn.
[64] Attila, leader of the Huns, died of dissipation in 453.
[65] consider.
[66] *Proverbs*, 31:1-5.
[67] forbid gambling.
[68] lies.
[69] reproach.
[70] This story, as well as the one immediately preceding it, is taken from John of Salisbury's *Polycraticus*.
[71] *Matthew*, 5:34.
[72] *Jeremiah*, 4:2.
[73] judgment.
[74] the second commandment, numbered the third in the King James version.
[75] earlier.
[76] plainly.
[77] relics in the abbey of Hailes, Gloucestershire.
[78] five and three.
[79] cursed dice.

Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.

Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
Longe erst er pryme[80] rong of any belle,
Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,[81]
"Go bet,"[82] quod he, "and axe redily,
What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
And look that thou reporte his name wel."
"Sir," quod this boy, "it nedeth never-a-del.
It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
For-dronke,[83] as he sat on his bench upright;
Ther cam a privee theef, men clepeth Deeth,
That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
Me thinketh that it were necessarie
For to be war of swich an adversarie:
Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more."
"By seinte Marie," seyde this taverner,
"The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
Henne[84] over a myle, with-in a greet village,
Both man and womman, child and hyne,[85] and page.
I trowe his habitacioun be there;
To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
Er that he dide a man a dishonour."
"Ye, goddes armes," quod this ryotour,
"Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
I make avow to goddes digne bones!
Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;[86]
Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
By goddes dignitee, er it be night."
Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,
And forth they goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rente[87]—
"Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente."
Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,[88]
And seyde thus, "now, lordes, god yow see!"[89]
The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, "what? carl, with sory grace,[90]
Why artow al forwrapped[91] save thy face?
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?"
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, "for I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is goddes wille.
"Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a restelees caityf,[92]
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, 'leve[93] moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,[94]
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout[95] to wrappe me!'
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face.
"But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespasse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
'Agayns[96] an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;' wherfor I yeve yow reed,[97]
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde.
I moot go thider as I have to go."
"Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,"

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[80] the first hour of the day, usually 9 A.M.
[81] servant. [82] quickly. [83] dead drunk.
[84] hence. [85] servant. [86] in accord.

[87] tore to pieces. [88] greeted. [89] protect.
[90] what? churl, a curse on you. [91] wrapped up.
[92] captive. [93] dear. [94] containing his money.
[95] a hair cloth, i.e., shroud. [96] in the presence of.
[97] advice.

Seyde this other hasardour anon;
"Thou partest nat so lightly, by seint John!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou are his aspye,[98]
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abye,
By god, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!"
  "Now, sirs," quod he, "if that yow be so leef
To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing[99] hyde.
See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde.
God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
And yow amende!"—thus seyde this olde man.
And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
Wel ny an eighte busshels, as hem thoughte.
No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
That doun they sette hem by this precious hord.
The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
  "Brethren," quod he, "tak kepe what I seye;
My wit is greet, though that I bourde[1] and pleye.
This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
In mirthe and jolitee our lyf to liven,
And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende[2]
To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youres—
For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
Than were we in heigh felicitee.
But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
And for our owene tresor doon us honge.[3]
This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
As wysly and as slyly[4] as it mighte.
Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
Be drawe, and lat see wher the cut wol falle;
And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
Shal renne to the toune, and that ful swythe,[5]
And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
And two of us shul kepen subtilly
This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best."
That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,[6]
And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
And al-so sone as that he was gon,
That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
"Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother,
Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
That shal departed[7] been among us three.
But natheles, if I can shape it so
That it departed were among us two,
Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn[8] to thee?"
  That other answerde, "I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?"
  "Shal it be conseil?"[9] seyde the firste shrewe,[10]
"And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute."
  "I graunte," quod that other, "out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye."[11]
  "Now," quod the firste, "thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same;
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille."
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
  This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and doun
The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
"O lord!" quod he, "if so were that I mighte
Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!"
And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,[12]
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;

---

[98] spy.
[99] by no means.
[1] jest.
[2] supposed, expected.
[3] have us hanged.
[4] secretly.
[5] quickly.
[6] fist.
[7] divided.
[8] turn.
[9] a secret.
[10] rascal.
[11] betray.
[12] buy.

For-why[13] the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
That he had leve[14] him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle,[15]
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,[16]
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.
The pothecarie answerde, "and thou shalt have
A thing that, al-so god my soule save,
In al this world there nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance[17] of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
Ye, sterve[18] he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
This poyson is so strong and violent."
This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box, and sith[19] he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,
And borwed of him large botels three;
And in the two his poyson poured he;
The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
For al the night he shoop him for to swinke[20]
In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
"Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
And afterward we wol his body berie."
And with that word it happed him, par cas,[21]
To take the botel ther the poyson was,
And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
For which anon they storven[22] bothe two.
But, certes, I suppose that Avicen[23]
Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,
Mo wonder[24] signes[25] of empoisoning
Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending.
Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
And eek the false empoysoner also.

O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,
That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
Thou art so fals and so unkinde,[26] allas!
Now, goode men, god foryeve yow your trespas,
And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce.
Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,[27]
So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,[28]
Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
I yow assoile,[29] by myn heigh power,
Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.
And Jesu Crist, that is our soules leche,[30]
So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;
For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.
But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
I have relikes and pardon in my male,[31]
As faire as any man in Engelond,
Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,
And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe.
It is an honour to everich that is heer,
That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
T'assoille[32] yow, in contree as ye ryde,
For aventures which that may bityde.
Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle

---

[13] because. [14] permission. [15] kill.
[16] yard. [17] amount. [18] die. [19] afterward.
[20] he intended to labor. [21] perchance. [22] died.
[23] Avicenna, Arabic physician of the twelfth century, author of a medical treatise called *The Book of the Canon of Medicine* divided into chapters called "fens." He also uses the word "canon" to mean a rule of procedure.

[24] wondrous. [25] symptoms. [26] unnatural.
[27] cure. [28] coins. [29] absolve. [30] physician.
[31] bag. [32] to absolve.

That I am in your felaweship y-falle,
That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe.
I rede[33] that our hoste heer shal biginne,
For he is most envoluped in sinne.
Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.
"Nay, nay," quod he, "than have I Cristes curs!
Lat be," quod he, "it shall nat be, so thee'ch![34]
Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech,[35]
And swere it were a relik of a seint."
This pardoner answerde nat a word;
So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.
"Now," quod our host, "I wol no lenger pleye
With thee, ne with noon other angry man."
But right anon the worthy Knight bigan,
Whan that he saugh that all the peple lough,
"Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
Sir Pardoner, be glad and mery of chere;
And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
I prey yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye."
Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye.

Here is ended the Pardoner's Tale

BOCCACCIO

From *Il Filostrato*

To medieval readers the reliable history of what had happened at Troy was to be found not in Homer, but in two pieces of Latin prose: the *De Excidio Troiae Historia* of Dares Phrygius and the *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* of Dictys Cretensis, the first (the more popular) being in Latin of the sixth century A.D. and the latter in Latin of the fourth century A.D. Troilus, Cressida, and Diomedes are to be found in Dares' book (her name there is *Briseida*), but they are not connected by any story. Centuries later (c. 1160) Benoit de Sainte Maure wrote a long poem, the *Roman de Troie*, based upon Dares and Dictys, in which the love story of Briseida and Troilus first appears, though disjointed. From it Guido delle Colonne in 1287 abridged his Latin prose *Historia Troiana.*

The first literary artist to employ the love story with effect was Boccaccio in his *Il Filostrato.* As sources he used Benoit and Guido, as well as parts of his own uncompleted *Filocolo.* Written by 1339, this tale of "The Man Stricken by Love" (*Il Filostrato*) became in Boccaccio's hands no longer a mere episode among the great stories of Troy, but a finished poem. Changing the heroine's name to Criseida, he made her a widow, freer than a girl to act the part assigned her. Revitalizing the hints afforded by his dull predecessors, he injected human values—desire, sorrow, and humor—into the love-theme. It became a lyrical poem worthy of the young poet.

But it remained for Chaucer, some fifty years later, to make of the story great art. With *Il Filostrato* as his chief source, Chaucer wrote what many believe to be his most perfect piece of work, *Troilus and Criseyde.* Unhampered, sometimes translating literally, sometimes expanding, sometimes adding new incidents and details, he used Boccaccio (whom he disguised under the name of *Lollius*) with the greatest possible freedom. Parts of Benoit and Guido rejected by Boccaccio he used, as well as passages in the *Filocolo.*

There are few lessons more instructive in the way genius works than are to be had from a close comparison of *Il Filostrato* and Chaucer's poem. As Professor Lowes puts it, "Chaucer's mind starts running ahead of Boccaccio the moment he sets pen to parchment. In stanza after stanza he will follow the text of the *Filostrato* through four or five lines, then cut loose and give rein to his own impulse for the ending. Or a stanza of Boccaccio sets him off, and for a stretch of seven of his own he goes his independent gait." *Troilus and Criseyde* thus becomes a third longer than *Il Filostrato*, and follows the latter in about one-third of its total number of lines.

Where Boccaccio is tranquil, Chaucer is spirited and dramatic. He has transformed the youthful Pandarus, cousin to Criseida, into the lustily mature uncle of Criseyde, a man cynical yet faithful in friendship, the earliest of our great humorous characters. In Pandarus critics have seen Chaucer himself, shrewd courtier and man of the world. Boccaccio's weakest character is his hero; Chaucer's Troilus is a gentle, charming man, a flower of the courtly tradition, some of the hints for whose character Chaucer borrowed from *The Romance of the Rose.* But the greatest metamorphosis is in the heroine. Boccaccio's Criseida is simply a loose woman; Chaucer's Criseyde is a quick, dignified, complex woman, who yields reluctantly and in whom the sensuality of her prototype has been refined. Here is perhaps the first great portrait of a real woman in English literature.

The praise lavished on *Troilus and Criseyde* is fully justified. Professor Lowes calls it "the first great poem in English"; Professor Kittredge calls it "the first novel, in the modern sense, that ever was written, and one of the best"; William M. Rossetti called it the "most beautiful long narrative poem" in English. Certainly its composition was an event in English poetry.

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[33] advise. [34] so may I prosper. [35] breeched.

The excerpt given below from *Il Filostrato* (for an account of Boccaccio, cf. the Introduction to *The Decameron, above*), beginning with Pandarus' visit to Criseida's home to beg her love for Troilus, will give an idea, when compared with the analogous passages in Chaucer's longer work (Book II of *Troilus*, which we give complete), of the English poet's indebtedness and greater artistry.

In R. K. Gordon's *The Story of Troilus* (1934) will be found welcome translations of Benoit and Boccaccio, as well as Chaucer's complete poem. The following excerpt from *Il Filostrato* was translated for our text. R. K. Root's edition (1926) of Chaucer's poem is the best.

Anxious to be of help to the young man whom he greatly loved, Pandarus left him to wander whither he wished, and made his way to Criseida's home. She, noting his coming, stood to greet him even as Pandarus did her. Holding her hand, he conducted her into her apartment. After laughter and tender words, gay jests, and most kind speeches, such as at times relatives are wont to indulge in, he was silent a little like a man who will try to achieve his end by new arguments, and began to gaze earnestly and attentively at her lovely face. Criseida observing this, she said with a sad smile: "Did you never behold me before cousin, that you should stare so at me now?"

To her Pandarus made answer: "Well you know I have beheld you and intend still to do so. But you are more beautiful than ever, I think, and have more to thank God for than any other beauteous lady."

Criseida said: "What mean you? Why more beautiful now than before?"

Pandarus swiftly and merrily answered: "Because *your* face is the most fortunate woman ever owned in this world, unless I err. I hear how it delights a man so immeasurably good as to be undone."

In embarrassment Criseida blushed at what Pandarus said, and looked like a morning rose. Then she spake these words to Pandarus: "Mock me not, since I would rejoice at your good fortune; the man I have pleased must be an idle one, since the like of this has never before happened to me in my life."

Said Pandarus then: "Let us leave off jesting. Tell me whether you have never seen him."

She replied: "No man more than any other, or may I die! True it is that I have seen someone pass, always gazing at my door. But I know not if he seeks me or thinks of other matters."

Pandarus asked then: "Who is this man?"

And Criseida said: "Indeed I know him not, and I can tell nothing of him."

Pandarus, observing that she spake of another, not of Troilus, said swiftly to her: "The man you have wounded is known to all."

"Who then is it who so delights to see me?" asked Criseida.

To her Pandarus then spake: "Since He who fixed limits to the world made the first man, I think He has not ever bequeathed a soul to another more perfect than this one's,—he who loves you so dearly that words cannot tell it. . . . Fortunate is your beauty if such a man hold it higher than any other. . . . Your fair face of fairest beauty has brought this about for you. Be therefore wise in employing it. Leave weeping to me, who was born in an ill hour, and have known favor from not God, the world, or fate."

"Are you but jesting, or do you speak sooth?" said Criseida. "Or have you lost your reason? Who is there would desire me unless he first wedded me? But tell me of this man: is he a stranger or a citizen that is so taken with me? Tell me, I beg, if so you may do, and do not reasonless cry out: 'Ah is me!' "

Pandarus said: "He is, in truth, a citizen, not one of the least, and my good friend. From his breast, perhaps by Fate's will, I have won what I have made known to you. He lives unhappy in his sorrow, for so does your fairness inflame him. That you may know who loves you: Troilus it is who so desires you."

Then did Criseida stand still to look at Pandarus. Her color was like that of the morning sky when it pales; hardly could she keep back the tears ready to fall from her eyes. Then as her forsaken courage returned, murmuring somewhat to herself, with a sigh she spake to Pandarus: "I thought, Pandarus, that if I ever had stooped to such folly as loving Troilus, you would have chided and beaten me. You are a man who ought to protect my honor. O God, come to my aid! What will other men contrive when you seek to make me follow love's road? . . . If anyone should have my love, indeed I should give it him, if I believed it would pleasure him. But as you well know, such desires as he now knows are common, and they last but four days or six, and then quickly pass. . . . It is for me to remain virtuous. Ah, Pandarus, in God's name, let not my response seem heavy to you. Seek comfort for him in other pleasures and pastimes."

Feeling himself injured, Pandarus rose at the lady's speech, and made as if to leave. Then he stopped, turned to her again, and said: "I have praised to you, Criseida, a man I would commend to my own sister or daughter or wife (if I had such), or may God never grant me joy! For I know Troilus to be of greater merit than your love. Yesterday I saw him in such state because of this love, that I felt deep pity for him. . . . Ah, for love of me, have pity on him! I believe there is not in the world a man more secret or faithful than he. He is loyal more than any. He desires and sees only you. Though you are dressed in widow's weeds, you are young, and it is still permitted you to love . . ."

She paused a while. Then, with a deep sigh, for she was already touched with love, spake on: "Ah! I behold where your sharp pity leads me. I will do as you wish, since thus I most please you. He is deserving. Let it suffice that I will see him. But to avoid shame, and mayhap worse, I bid him be discreet, and to do nothing that may reproach me or him."

Troilus and Criseyde

Book I tells how the seer Calchas, assured by oracle of Troy's destruction, left behind his daughter Criseyde, and stole away to the camps of the besieging Greeks. She was a widow, "allone of any freend," and "so aungellyk in hir natyf beautee That lyk a thing immortal seemed she." Forgiven her father's treachery, she kept quietly to her home. Troilus, a brave Trojan knight, meanwhile, went about boasting that his heart was free, and mocked as so many fools his fellow Trojans who were in love.

One day in a crowd he spied Criseyde. He was struck with love and cried: "Wher hastow woned (dwelt), that art so fair and goodly to devyse?" His heart began to "sprede and ryse." He began to suffer the greatest anguish because of his love, and took to the most reckless of behaviors in battle in hopes that Criseyde might hear of him.

His friend Pandarus once came upon him moaning in his room. Anxious for Troilus' well-being, he begged to know the cause of so much grief. Unwillingly, Troilus admitted he was in love. But when Pandarus offered his help, Troilus rejected his offer with: "Thou coudest never in love thyselven wisse; How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?" But Pandarus, insisting, wrung from him the name of Criseyde; whereat he "was glad." He rejoiced that Troilus loved one so worthy, bade him be happy and take hope, and promised him to smooth his path to Criseyde, his own niece. Recovering his spirits, Troilus promised to be of good cheer while he should abide the instruction "of him that gooth aboute his cure."

BOOK TWO

INCIPIT PROHEMIUM SECUNDI LIBRI.[1]

I

Owt of thise blake wawes for to sayle,
O wynde, O wynde, the weder gynneth clere;
For in this see the boot hath swych travaylle,[2]
Of my konnyng[3] that unneth[4] I it steere.
This see clepe[5] I the tempestous matere
Of desespoir[6] that Troilus was inne;
But now of hope the kalendes[7] bygynne.

2

O lady myn, that called art Cleo,[8]
Thow be my speed fro this forth, and my Muse,
To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
Me nedeth here noon othere art to use.
Forwhi[9] to every lovere I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endite,
But out of Latyn in my tonge it write.

3

Wherefore I nyl[10] have neither thank ne blame
Of al this werk, but prey yow mekely,
Disblameth me, if any word be lame;
For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I.
Ek though I speeke of love unfelyngly,
No wonder is, for it no thyng of newe is;[11]
A blynd man kan nat juggen wel in hewis.[12]

4

Ye knowe ek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
Withinne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho[13]

---

[1] The proem of Book II begins.

[2] so much labor.
[3] skill.
[4] with difficulty.
[5] call.
[6] despair.
[7] Literally, the first day of the month.
[8] Clio, the muse of history.
[9] therefore.
[10] will not.
[11] is in no wise new.
[12] colors.
[13] then.

That hadden pris,[14] now wonder nyce[15] and straunge
Us thinketh hem, and yit thei spake hem so,
And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
Ek for to wynnen love in sondry ages,
In sondry londes, sondry ben[16] usages.

5

And forthi,[17] if it happe in any wyse,
That here be any lovers in this place
That herkneth, as the story wol devise,[18]
How Troilus com to his lady grace,
And thenketh, "so nolde,[19] I nat love purchace,"
Or wondreth on his speche, or his doynge,
I noot,[20] but it is me[21] no wonderynge.

6

For every wight which that to Rome went,
Halt[22] nat o[23] path, nor alwey o manere;
Ek in som lond were al the game shent,[24]
If that men ferde[25] in love as men don here,
As thus, in opyn doyng, or in chere,
In visityng, in forme, or seyde hire sawes[26];
Forthi men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.

7

Ek scarsly ben ther in this place thre,
That have in love seid lik, and don in al;
For to thi purpos this may liken the,[27]
And the right nought, yit al is seid, or shal;
Ek som men grave[28] in tree, some in ston wal,
As it bitit[29]; but syn I have bigonne,
Myn auctour shal I folwen, if I konne.

EXPLICIT PROHEMIUM SECUNDI LIBRI.
INCIPIT LIBER SECUNDUS.[30]

8

In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
That fresshe floures, blewe, white, and rede
Ben quike[31] agayn, that wynter dede[32] made,
And ful of bawme[33] is fletyng[34] every mede;
Whan Phebus doth his bryghte bemes sprede
Right in the white Bole,[35] it so bitidde,
As I shal synge, on Mayes day the thrydde,

9

That Pandarus,[36] for al his wise speche,
Felte ek his parte of loves shotes keene,
That koude he nevere so wel of lovyng preche,
It made his hewe a day ful ofte greene;
So shope[37] it, that hym fil that day a teene,[38]
In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
And made, or it was day, ful many a wente.[39]

10

The swalowe, Proigne,[40] with a sorwful lay,
Whan morwen com, gan make hire waymentynge,[41]
Whi she forshapen[42] was, and evere lay
Pandare a-bedde, half in a slomberynge,
Til she so neigh hym made hire cheterynge,
How Tereux[43] gan forth hire suster take,
That with the noyse of hire he gan awake;

11

And gan to calle, and dresse[44] hym up to ryse,
Remembryng hym his erand was to donne[45]
From Troilus, and ek his grete emprise,[46]
And caste and knew in good plite was the moone

---

[14] good reputation. [15] queer. [16] are.
[17] therefore.
[18] make clear. [19] would not.
[20] know not. [21] to me.
[22] held. [23] one.
[24] the whole game would be lost. [25] behaved.
[26] speeches.
[27] this may please thee and not at all another.
[28] carve. [29] turns out.
[30] The proem of Book II ends. Book II begins.
[31] alive. [32] dead.
[33] balm. [34] floating.
[35] Taurus, a sign of the Zodiac.
[36] Friend of Troilus and uncle of Criseyde.
[37] happened. [38] sorrow. [39] turn.
[40] Progne, sister of Philomela and wife of Tereus, was turned into a swallow.
[41] lament. [42] misshaped.
[43] Tereus, husband of Progne, tried to seduce her sister, Philomela. When the latter tried to make outcry, her tongue was torn out to prevent the deed from becoming known. She was subsequently turned into a nightingale.
[44] got ready. [45] to do. [46] enterprise.

To doon viage,[47] and took his wey ful soone
Unto his neces paleys ther biside;
Now Janus,[48] god of entre, thow hym gyde!

12

Whan he was come unto his neces place,
"Wher is my lady?" to hire folk quod[49] he;
And they hym tolde, and he forth in gan pace,[50]
And fond two othere ladys sete, and she,
Withinne a paved parlour, and they thre
Herden a mayden reden hem the geste[51]
Of the sege of Thebes, whil hem leste.[52]

13

Quod Pandarus, "madame, god yow see,[53]
With al youre book, and al the compaignie."
"Ey, uncle, now welcome iwys,[54]" quod she;
And up she roos, and by the hond in hye[55]
She took hym faste, and seyde, "this nyght thrie,[56]
To goode mot[57] it turne, of you I mette";[58]
And with that word she doun on bench hym sette.

14

"Ye, nece, ye shal faren wel the bet,[59]
If god wol, al this yer," quod Pandarus;
"But I am sory that I have yow let[60]
To herken of youre book ye preysen[61] thus.
For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us;
Is it of love? O, som good ye me leere!"[62]
"Uncle," quod she, "youre maistresse is nat here."

15

With that thei gonnen laughe,[63] and tho she seyde:
This romaunce is of Thebes that we rede;
And we han herd how that king Layus deyde,
Thorugh Edippus his sone,[64] and al that dede;
And here we stynten[65] at thise lettres rede,
How the bisshop, as the book kan telle,
Amphiorax,[66] fil thorugh the ground to helle."

16

Quod Pandarus: "al this knowe I my selve,
And al thassege[67] of Thebes, and the care;
For herof ben ther maked bookes twelve;
But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;[68]
Do wey youre wympel,[69] and shewe youre face bare;
Do wey youre book, rys up and lat us daunce,
And lat us don to May som observaunce."

17

"I, god forbede!" quod she, "be ye mad?
Is that a widewes lif, so god yow save?
By god, ye maken me ryght sore adrad,[70]
Ye ben so wylde; it semeth as ye rave.
It satte me wel bet[71] ay in a cave
To bidde,[72] and rede on holy seyntes lyves;
Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves."

18

"As evere thryve I," quod this Pandarus,
"Yit koude I telle a thyng to doon yow pleye."[73]
"Now uncle deere," quod she, "telle it us,
For goddes love; is than thassege aweye?
I am of Grekes fered[74] so that I deye."
"Nay, nay," quod he, "as evere mote I thryve,
It is a thing wel bet than swyche fyve."[75]

19

"Ye, holy god!" quod she, "what thyng is that?
What! bet than swiche fyve? I, nay, ywys.[76]

---

[47] The moon was in favorable position to undertake a journey.

[48] Janus, the god of beginnings, from which we get our word January.

[49] said.

[50] walk.

[51] story.

[52] it pleased them.

[53] "God you see" is merely a greeting like "Good morning."

[54] indeed.

[55] haste.

[56] three times.

[57] may.

[58] dreamed.

[59] much the better.

[60] interrupted.

[61] prize.

[62] teach.

[63] laughed.

[64] Oedipus, as had been prophesied at his birth, killed his father, Laius, and married his mother, Jocasta.

[65] stop.

[66] Amphiaraus fell living into hell and after he had passed the infernal rivers was slain by Pluto's trident.

[67] the siege.

[68] get on.

[69] linen headdress.

[70] afraid.

[71] It would better suit me.

[72] pray.

[73] to cause you pleasure.

[74] afraid.

[75] five times as good as such a thing.

[76] indeed.

For al this world, ne kan I reden[77] what
It sholde ben; som jape[78] I trowe is this;
And but youre selven telle us what it is,
My wit is for tarede[79] it al to leene;
As, helpe me god, I not[80] what ye meene."

20

"And I youre borugh,[81] ne nevere shal," quod he,
"This thyng be tolde to yow, so mote[82] I thryve."
"And whi so, uncle myn, whi so?" quod she.
"By God," quod he, "that wol I telle as blyve;[83]
For prouder womman is ther noon on lyve,
And[84] ye it wiste, in al the town of Troye;
I jape nought, so evere have I joye!"

21

Tho gan she wondren moore than biforn
A thousand fold, and down hire eyen caste;
For nevere, sith the tyme that she was born,
To knowe thyng desired she so faste;
And with a sik,[85] she seyde hym at the laste:
"Now, uncle myn, I nyl yow nat displese,
Nor axen moore that may do yow disese."[86]

22

So after this, with many wordes glade,
And frendly tales, and with merie cheere,
Of this and that they pleide, and gonnen wade[87]
In many an unkouth, gladde, and depe matere,
As frendes doon whan thei ben met yfere;[88]
Tyl she gan axen hym how Ector ferde,
That was the townes wal, and Grekes yerde.[89]

23

"Ful wel, I thonke it god," quod Pandarus,
"Save in his arme he hath a litel wownde,
And ek his fresshe brother, Troilus,
The wise, worthi Ector the secounde,
In whom that alle vertu list habounde,[90]
As alle trouthe, and alle gentilesse,
Wisdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse."

24

"In good feith, em,"[91] quod she, "that liketh[92] me
Thei faren wel, god save hem bothe two!
For treweliche I holde it grete deynte,[93]
A kynges sone in armes wel to do,
And ben of good condiciouns therto;
For grete power and moral vertu here
Is selde yseyn in o persone yfere."[94]

25

"In good feith, that is soth," quod Pandarus;
"But by my trouthe, the kyng hath sones tweye,—
That is to meene Ector and Troilus,—
That certeynly, though that I sholde deye,
Thei ben as voide of vices, dar I seye,
As any men that lyve under the sonne;
Hire myght is wyde iknowe,[95] and what they konne.[96]

26

"Of Ector nedeth no thing for to telle;
In al this world ther nys a bettre knyght
Than he, that is of worthynesse welle;
And he wel moore vertu hath than myght;
This knoweth many a wys and worthi wight.
The same pris[97] of Troilus I seye,
God helpe me so! I knowe nat swiche tweye."

27

"By god," quod she, "of Ector that is sooth;
Of Troilus the same thyng trowe I;
For, dredeles,[98] men tellen that he doth
In armes day by day so worthily,
And bereth hym here at home so gentilly
To every wight, that alle pris hath he
Of hem that me were levest preysed be."[99]

---

[77] guess. [78] joke. [79] to guess. [80] know not.
[81] pledge. [82] may. [83] quickly. [84] if.
[85] sigh. [86] discomfort. [87] walk, enter.
[88] together.
[89] That was the protection of the town and the punishment of the Greeks.
[90] abound. [91] uncle.
[92] pleases. [93] very fitting.
[94] Is seldom seen in one person together.
[95] known. [96] are able to do. [97] reputation.
[98] without doubt.
[99] By them that I would most gladly be praised by.

28

"Ye seye right sooth, ywys," quod Pandarus;
"For yesterday whoso hadde with hym ben
Myghte han wondred upon Troilus;
For nevere yit so thikke a swarm of ben[1]
Ne fleigh,[2] as Grekes fro hym gonne flen;
And thorugh the feld, in everi wightes ere,
Ther nas no cry but 'Troilus is there!'

29

"Now her, now ther, he hunted hem so faste,
Ther nas but Grekes blood; and Troilus,
Now hym he hurte, and hym al down he caste;
Ay wher he wente, it was arayed thus:
He was hire deth, and sheld and lif for us;
That, as that day, ther dorste non withstonde,
Whil that he held his blody swerd in honde.

30

"Therto[3] he is the frendlieste man
Of gret estat that evere I saugh my lyve;
And wher hym list, best felawshipe kan
To swich as hym thynketh able for to thryve."
And with that word tho Pandarus as blyve,[4]
He took his leve, and seyde, "I wol gon henne.[5]"
"Nay, blame have I, myn uncle," quod she thenne.

31

"What aileth yow to be thus wery soone?
And namelich[6] of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down; by god, I have to doone
With yow to speke of wisdom or[7] ye go."
And everi wight that was aboute hem tho,[8]
That herde that, gan fer awey to stonde,
Whil they two hadde al that hem liste on honde.

32

Whan that hire tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat, and of hire governaunce,[9]
Quod Pandarus: "now is it tyme I wende;
But yit, I seye, ariseth, and lat us daunce,
And cast youre widwes habit to mischaunce.[10]
What list yow thus youre self to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid[11] so glad an aventure?"

33

"A, wel bithought! for love of god," quod she,
"Shal I nat witen[12] what ye mene of this?"
"No, this thing axeth leyser,"[13] tho quod he;
"And ek me wolde muche greve, iwys,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amys;
Yit were it bet my tonge for to stille,
Than seye a soth that were ayeyns youre wille.

34

"For, nece, by the goddesse Mynerve,
And Jupiter, that maketh the thonder rynge,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye ben the womman in this world lyvynge,
Withouten paramours,[14] to my witynge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve;
And that ye weten wel youre self, I leve."

35

"Iwis,[15] myn uncle," quod she, "graunt mercy!
Youre frendshipe have I founden evere yit.
I am to no man holden, trewely,
So muche as yow, and have so litel quyt;[16]
And with the grace of god, emforth[17] my wit,
As in my gilt, I shal yow nevere offende;
And if I have or[18] this, I wol amende.

36

"But, for the love of god, I yow biseche,
As ye ben he that I moost love and triste,[19]
Lat be to me youre fremde[20] manere speche,
And sey to me, youre nece, what yow liste."
And with that word, hire uncle anoon hire kiste.
And seyde: "gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good, that I shal sey yow here."

37

With that she gan hire look down for to caste;
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lite,

---

[1] bees.
[2] flew.
[3] moreover.
[4] quickly.
[5] hence.
[6] especially.
[7] before.
[8] then.
[9] behavior.
[10] Throw your widow's garments to the mischief.
[11] happened.
[12] know.
[13] This thing needs leisure.
[14] love affairs.
[15] certainly.
[16] repaid it.
[17] in proportion to.
[18] before.
[19] trust.
[20] strange.

And seyde: "nece, alwey, lo, to the laste;
How so it be that som men hem delite
With subtyl art hire tales for to endite,
Yit for al that, in hire entencioun,
Hire tale is al for som conclusioun.

38

"And sithen thende[21] is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,[22]
What[23] sholde I peynte or drawen it on lengthe,
To yow that ben my frend so feythfully?"
And with that word, he gan right inwardly
Byholden hire, and loken on hire face,
And seyde: "on swiche a mirour goode grace!"

39

Than thought he thus: "if I my tale endite
Aught harde, or make a proces any whyle,
She shal no savour han therin but lite,
And trowe I wolde hire in my wil bigyle;
For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle,[24]
Wher as thei kan nat pleynly understonde,
Forthi hire wit to serven wol I fonde";[25]

40

And loked on hire in a bisy wyse.
And she was war that he byheld hire so,
And seyde: "lord! so faste ye mavise![26]
Sey[27] ye me nevere or[28] now? what sey ye? no?"
"Yis, yis," quod he, "and bet wol or I go;
But, be my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
Be fortunat,[29] for now men shal it se.

41

"For to every wight som goodly aventure
Som tyme is shape,[30] if he kan it receyven;
And if that he wol take of it no cure,[31]
Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,[32]
Lo, neyther cas ne fortune hym deceyven,
But, ryght his owne slouthe and wrecchednesse;
And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.

42

"Good aventure, O bele[33] nece, have ye
Ful lightly founden, and ye konne it take;
And for the love of god, and ek of me,
Cache it anon, lest aventure slake.[34]
What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
Yif me youre hond; for in this world is noon,
If that yow list, a wight so wel bygon.[35]

43

"And sith I speke of good entencioun,
As I to yow have told wel here byforn,
And love as wel youre honour and renoun
As creature in al this world yborn,
By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
And[36] ye be wrooth therfore, or wene[37] I lye,
Ne shal I nevere sen yow eft[38] with eye.

44

"Beth naught agast, ne quaketh naught; wherto?
Ne chaungeth naught for feere so youre hewe;
For, hardely,[39] the werste of this is do[40];
And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
Yit trist alwey, ye shal me fynde trewe;
And were it thyng that me thoughte unsittynge[41]
To yow, wolde I no swiche tales brynge."

45

"Now, my good em, for goddes love I preye,"
Quod she, "come of, and telle me what it is;
For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
And ek me longeth it to wite, ywys;
For, whether it be wel or be amys,
Sey on; lat me nat in this feere dwelle."
"So wol I doon; now herkeneth, I shal telle.

46

"Now, nece myn, the kynges deere sone,
The goode, wise, worthi, fresshe, and free,
Which alwey for to don wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth the,
That, but ye helpe, it wol his bane[42] be.

---

[21] the end. [22] useful. [23] why.
[24] For feeble wits think everything is a trick.
[25] try. [26] look at me. [27] saw. [28] before.
[29] I wondered now whether you are fortunate.
[30] prepared. [31] pay no attention. [32] let go.

[33] fair. [34] let up.
[35] so lucky. [36] if.
[37] think. [38] again. [39] surely. [40] done.
[41] unfitting. [42] death.

Lo, here is al. What sholde I moore seye?
Do what yow list to make hym lyve or deye.

47

"But if ye late hym deye, I wol sterve,[43]—
Have here my trouthe, nece, I nyl nat lyen,—
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve."
With that the teris[44] bruste out of his eyen,
And seide: "if that ye don[45] us bothe dyen,
Thus gilteles, than have ye fisshed fayre;[46]
What mende ye, though that we bothe apaire?[47]

48

"Allas! he which that is my lord so deere,
That trewe man, that noble, gentil knyght,
That naught desireth but youre frendly cheere,
I se hym deyen, ther he goth upryght,
And hasteth hym with al his fulle myght
For to be slayn, if his fortune assente;
Allas! that god yow swich a beaute sente!

49

"If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deth yow liste nat to recche,[48]
That is so trewe and worthi as we se,
No moore than of a japer,[49] or a wrecche,—
If ye be swich, youre beaute may nat strecche[50]
To make amendes of so cruel a dede;
Avysement[51] is good, byfore the nede.

50

"Wo worth[52] the faire gemme vertules!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no boote![53]
Wo worth that beaute that is routheles!
Wo worth that wight that tret[54] ech undir foote![54]
And ye, that ben of beaute crop and roote,
If therwithal in yow ther be no routhe,
Than is it harm ye lyven, by my trouthe!

51

"And also thenk wel that this is no gaude;[55]
For me were levere[56] thow and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde ben his baude,
As heigh as men myghte on us alle se;
I am thyn em,[57] the shame were to me
As wel as the, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet,[58] that he thyn honour shente.[59]

52

"Now understond, for I yow nought requere
To bynde yow to hym thorugh no byheste,[60]
But only that ye make hym bettre cheere,[61]
Than ye han doon or this, and moore feste,
So that his lif be saved at the leste;
This al and som, and pleynly, oure entente;
God help me so! I nevere other mente.

53

"Lo, this requeste is nat but skile, ywys,
Ne doute of reson,[62] parde, is ther noon.
I sette[63] the worste, that ye dreden this:
Men wolde wondren sen hym come and goon;
There ayeins answere I thus, anoon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kynde,[64]
Wol deme it love of frendshipe in his mynde.

54

"What! who wol demen, though he se a man
To temple go, that he thymages[65] eteth?
Thenk ek, how wel and wisly that he kan
Governe hym self, that he no thyng foryeteth,
That where he cometh, he pris and thank hym
geteth;
And ek, therto, he shal come here so selde,
What fors[66] were it though al the town byhelde?

55

"Swych love of frendes regneth al this town,
And wry[67] yow in that mantel evere mo;

---

[43] die.
[44] tears.
[45] cause.
[46] You have had good fishing.
[47] How will it help you though both of us have misfortune?
[48] care.
[49] joker.
[50] go so far.
[51] good counsel.
[52] be.
[53] remedy.
[54] treads.
[55] deceit.
[56] I had rather.
[57] uncle.
[58] help.
[59] damage.
[60] promise.
[61] countenance.
[62] reasonable fear.
[63] suppose.
[64] by nature.
[65] the images.
[66] difference.
[67] wrap.

And, god so wys,[68] be my savacioun,
As I have seyd, youre beste is to do soo;
But goode nece, alwey to stynte his wo,
So lat youre daunger sucred[69] ben a lite,
That of his deth ye be nat for to wite."[70]

56

Criseyde, which that herde hym in this wise,
Thoughte: "I shal felen what he mene, ywis."
"Now, em," quod she, "what wolde ye devise?
What is youre rede[71] I sholde don of this?"
"That is wel seyd," quod he, "certein, best is
That ye hym love ayeyn for his lovynge;
As love for love is skilful guerdonynge.[72]

57

"Thenk ek how elde[73] wasteth every houre,
In eche of yow, a partie of beaute;
And therefore, or that age the devoure,
Go love; for olde,[74] ther wol no wight of the;
Lat this proverbe a loore[75] unto yow be:
'To late ywar,[76] quod beaute, whan it paste';
And elde daunteth daunger[77] at the laste.

58

"The kynges fool is wont to crien loude,
Whan that hym thinketh a womman berth hire hye,[78]
'So longe mote ye lyve, and alle proude,
Til crowes feet be growe under youre eye,
And sende yow than a myrour in to prye,
In which that ye may se youre face a morwe,[79]
I bidde wisshe yow no more sorwe.' "

59

With this he stynte, and caste adown the hede;
And she began to breste a wepe[80] anoon,
And seyde: "allas! for wo why nere[81] I deede?
For of this world the feyth is al agoon.
Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
Whan he that for my beste frende I wende,[82]
Ret[83] me to love, and sholde it me defende?[84]

60

"Allas! I wolde han trusted, douteles,
That if that I thorugh my disaventure
Hadde loved outher[85] hym or Achilles,
Ector, or any mannes creature,
Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
On me, but alwey had me in repreve.
This false worlde, allas! who may it leve?

61

"What! is this al the joye and al the feste?
Is this youre reed? is this my blisful cas?
Is this the verray mede of youre byheste?[86]
Is al this peynted[87] proces seyd, allas!
Right for this fyn?[88] O lady myn, Pallas,
Thow in this dredful cas for me purveye;
For so astoned am I that I deye."

62

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke.[89]
"A! may it be no bet?"[90] quod Pandarus;
"By god, I shal no more come here this wyke,[91]
And god to-forn,[92] that am mystrusted thus.
I se wel that ye sette lite[93] of us,
Or of oure deth, allas! I woful wrecche!
Might he yit lyve, of me were nought to recche.[94]

63

"O cruel god! O dispitouse Marte![95]
O Furies thre of helle! on yow I crye!
So lat me nevere out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilenye!
But sith[96] I se my lord mot nedes[97] dye,
And I with hym, here I me shryve, and seye
That wikkedly ye don[98] us bothe deye.

---

[68] surely.
[69] Let your reserve be sweetened a little.
[70] blame.
[71] advice.
[72] reward.
[73] age.
[74] when you are old.
[75] teaching.
[76] aware.
[77] Old age avenges disdain.
[78] is overbearing.
[79] in the morning.
[80] to burst out weeping.
[81] were not.
[82] thought.
[83] advised.
[84] forbid.
[85] either.
[86] the real result of your promise.
[87] feigned.
[88] end.
[89] sigh.
[90] better.
[91] week.
[92] before God.
[93] value us little.
[94] If he might live, I would not care about myself.
[95] Mars.
[96] since.
[97] must needs.
[98] cause.

64

"But sith it liketh yow that I be dede,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I nevere eten brede,
Til I myn owen herte blood may see;
For certeyn, I wol deye as soone as he."
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,[99]
Til she agayn hym by the lappe[1] kaughte.

65

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf[2] for feere,
So as she was the ferfulleste[3] wight
That myghte be, and herde ek with hire ere,
And saugh the sorwful ernest[4] of the knyght,
And in his preier ek saugh noon unryght,[5]
And for the harm that myghte ek fallen moore,
She gan to rewe[6] and drede hire wonder soore;

66

And thoughte thus: "unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in such manere[7] cas,
As men ben cruel in hemself, and wikke;
And if this man sle[8] here hymself, allas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of it deme, I kan nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleighly for to pleie."[9]

67

And with a sorwful sik[10] she seyde thrie:[11]
"A, lord! what me is tid[12] a sory chaunce!
For myn estat lith in a jupartie,[13]
And ek myn emes lif is in balaunce;
But natheles, with goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And ek his lif"; and stynte for to wepe.[14]

68

"Of harmes two the lesse is for to chese;[15]
Yit have I levere maken hym good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese."[16]
"Ye seyn, ye no thyng elles me requere?"
"No, wis," quod he, "myn owen nece dere."
"Now wel," quod she, "and I wol do my peyne;
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne.[17]

69

"But that I nyl nat holden hym in honde:[18]
Ne love a man ne kan I naught, ne may,
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf,[19] plese hym fro day to day.
Therto nolde I nat ones have seyd nay,
But that I drede,[20] as in my fantasye.
But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladie.[21]

70

"But here I make a protestacioun:
That in this proces if ye depper[22] go,
That, certeynly, for no salvacioun
Of yow, though that ye sterven bothe two,
Though al the world on o day be my fo,
Ne shal I nevere of hym han other routhe."
"I graunte wel," quod Pandare, "by my trowthe."

71

"But may I truste wel to yow," quod he,
"That of this thyng that ye han hight[23] me here,
Ye wole it holden trewely unto me?"
"Ye, douteles," quod she, "myn uncle deere."
"Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,"
Quod he, "to pleyne, or ofter yow to preche?"
"Why, no, parde;[24] what nedeth moore speche?"

72

Tho fillen[25] they in other tales glade,
Tyl at the laste: "O good em," quod she tho,
"For his love which that us bothe made,[26]
Tel me how first ye wisten[27] of his wo;
Woot noon of it but ye?" He seyde: "no."
"Kan he wel speke of love," quod she, "I preye?
Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye."[28]

---

[99] reached. [1] fold of his coat. [2] died.
[3] most timid. [4] earnestness.
[5] in his prayer also saw nothing wrong. [6] regret.
[7] kind of. [8] slay.
[9] It is necessary for me to act very cautiously.
[10] sigh. [11] thrice.
[12] happened. [13] jeopardy.
[14] ceased weeping. [15] choose.
[16] lose. [17] I shall force my heart against my desire.
[18] deceive him. [19] except for my honor.
[20] feared.
[21] But when the cause ceases, the sickness always ceases.
[22] deeper. [23] promised. [24] indeed.
[25] fell. [26] i.e., for the love of God. [27] knew.
[28] conduct myself.

73

Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
And seyde: "by my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
This other day, nat gon ful longe while,[29]
Within the paleis gardyn, by a welle,
Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
Right for to speken of an ordinaunce,
How we the Grekes myghten disavaunce.[30]

74

"Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
And casten with oure dartes to and fro,
Tyl at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,
And on the gres adoun he leyde him tho;
And I afer gan romen to and fro,
Til that I herde, as that I welk[31] allone,
How he bigan ful wofully to grone.

75

"Tho gan I stalke[32] hym softely byhynde,
And sikirly, the sothe for to seyne,
As I kan clepe[33] ayein now to my mynde,
Right thus to Love he gan hym for to pleyne;[34]
He seyde: 'lord have routhe[35] upon my peyne,
Al have I ben rebell in myn entente,
Now *mea culpa*,[36] lord, I me repente.

76

" 'O god, that at thi disposicioun
Ledest the fyn,[37] by juste purveiaunce,[38]
Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
Accepte in gree,[39] and sende me swich penaunce
As liketh[40] the; but from disesperaunce,[41]
That may my goost[42] departe awey fro the,
Thow be my sheld, for this benignite.

77

" 'For certes, lord, so soore hath she me wounded,
That stood in blak, with lokyng of hire eyen,
That to myn hertes botme it is ysounded,
Thorugh which I woot that I moot nedes deyen;
This is the worste, I dar me nat bywreyen;[43]
And wel the hotter ben the gledes[44] rede,
That men hem wrien[45] with asshen pale and dede.'

78

"With that he smot his hed adown anon,
And gan to motre,[46] I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille awey to goon,
And leet[47] therof as no thing wist hadde I,
And com ayein anon, and stood hym by,
And seyde: 'awake! ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that love doth yow longe,[48]

79

" 'That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey evere or this so dul a man?'
'Ye frend,' quod he, 'do ye youre hedes ake[49]
For love, and lat me lyven as I kan.'
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yit made he tho as fressh a contenaunce,
As though he sholde have led the newe daunce.

80

"This passed forth til now, this other day,
It fel that I com romynge al allone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Upon his bed; but man so soore grone
Ne herde I nevere, and what that was his mone
Ne wiste I nought; for, as I was comynge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleynynge.

81

"Of which I took somwhat suspecioun,
And ner I com, and fond he wepte soore;
And god so wys be my savacioun,[50]
As nevere of thyng hadde I no routhe moore;
For neither with engyn,[51] ne with no loore,
Unnethes myghte I fro the deth hym kepe;
That yit fele I myn herte for hym wepe.

---

[29] not long ago.
[30] discommode.
[31] walked.
[32] creep up secretly.
[33] call.
[34] complain.
[35] pity.
[36] These words are a part of the Catholic formula of confession.
[37] directest the end.
[38] foreknowledge.
[39] favorably.
[40] pleaseth.
[41] despair.
[42] spirit.
[43] betray.
[44] coals.
[45] cover.
[46] mutter.
[47] pretended.
[48] belong.
[49] make your head ache.
[50] so surely as God may be my salvation.
[51] wit, cleverness.

82

"And, god woot, nevere sith that I was born,
Was I so besy no man for to preche,
Ne nevere was to wight so depe isworn,
Or[52] he me tolde who myghte ben his leche.[53]
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to sowne,[54]
Ne bid me naught, but ye wol se me swowne.

83

"But for to save his lif, and elles nought,
And to noon harm of yow, thus am I dryven;
And for the love of god that us hath wrought,[55]
Swich cheer hym dooth,[56] that he and I may lyven.
Now have I plat[57] to yow myn herte shryven;[58]
And sith ye woot that myn entent is clene,
Tak hede therof, for I non yvel meene.

84

"And right good thrifte,[59] I prey to god, have ye,
That han swich oon ykaught withoute net;
And be ye wis, as ye be fair to see,
Wel in the rynge than is the ruby set.
Ther were nevere two so wel ymet,
Whan ye ben his al hool,[60] as he is youre;
Ther myghty god yit graunte us see that houre."

85

"Nay, therof spak I nought, a ha!" quod she;
"As helpe me god, ye shenden[61] every deel."
"A! mercy, dere nece," anon quod he,
"What so I spak, I mente nat but wel,
By Mars, the god that helmed is of steel;
Now beth nat wroth, my blood, my nece dere."
"Now wel," quod she, "foryeven[62] be it here."

86

With this he took his leve, and home he wente;
And, lord! so he was glad and wel bygon![63]
Criseyde aros, no lenger she ne stente,[64]
But streght into hire closet went anon,
And sette hire down as stylle as any ston,
And every word gan up and down to wynde,[65]
That he had seyd, as it com hire to mynde.

87

And was somdel[66] astoned[67] in hire thought,
Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought
Of peril, why she ought afered be.
For man may love, of possibilite,
A womman so his herte may to-breste,[68]
And she not love ayein, but if hire leste.[69]

88

But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,
Ascry[70] aros at scarmuch[71] al withoute,
And men criden in the strete: "se, Troilus
Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!"
With that gan al hire meyne[72] for to shoute:
"A! go we se, caste up the yates[73] wyde;
For thorugh this strete he moot to paleys ride;

89

"For other wey is fro the yate noon
Or Bardanus, ther opyn is the cheyne."
With that com he and al his folk anoon
An esy pas[74] rydyng, in routes tweyne,[75]
Right as his happy[76] day was, sooth to seyne;
For which men seyn, may nat distourbed be
That shal bityden[77] of necessitee.

90

This Troilus sat on his baye steede,
Al armed, save his hede, ful richely;
And wownded was his hors, and gan to blede,
On which he rood a pas ful softely;
But swich a knyghtly sighte, trewely,
As was on hym, was nat, withouten faille,
To loke on Mars, that god is of bataille;

---

[52] before.
[53] physician.
[54] repeat.
[55] created.
[56] behave to him in such a way.
[57] plainly.
[58] confessed.
[59] success.
[60] entirely.
[61] spoil.
[62] forgiven.
[63] satisfied.
[64] paused.
[65] turn.
[66] somewhat.
[67] astonished.
[68] burst asunder.
[69] she desires.
[70] clamor.
[71] skirmish.
[72] household.
[73] gates.
[74] gait.
[75] two.
[76] lucky.
[77] happen.

91

So lik a man of armes, and a knyght,
He was to seen, fulfild[78] of heigh prowesse;
For bothe he hadde a body and a myght
To don that thing, as wel as hardynesse;
And ek to seen hym in his gere[79] hym dresse,
So fressh, so yong, so worthy semed he,
It was an heven upon hym for to see.

92

His helm to-hewen[80] was in twenty places,
That by a tyssew[81] heng, his bak byhynde;
His sheld to-dasshed[82] was with swerdes and maces,
In which men myghte many an arwe fynde,
That thirled[83] hadde horn and nerf and rynde;
And ay the peple cryde: "here cometh oure joye,
And, next his brother, holder up of Troye!"

93

For which he wex[84] a litel reed for shame,[85]
Whan he the peple upon hym herde cryen,
That to byholde it was a noble game,
How sobreliche he caste adown his eyen.
Criseyde gan al his chere aspien,[86]
And leet it so softe in hire herte synke,
That to hire self she seyde: "who yaf[87] me drynke?"

94

For of hire owen thought she wex al reed,
Remembryng hire right thus: "lo, this is he
Which that myn uncle swerith he moot be deed,
But[88] I on hym have mercy and pitee";
And with that thought, for pure ashamed,[89] she
Gan in hire hed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whil he and al the peple forby paste.

95

And gan to caste[90] and rollen up and down
Withinne hire thought his excellent prowesse,
And his estat, and also his renown,
His wit, his shap, and ek his gentilesse;
But moost hire favour was, for[91] his distresse
Was al for hire, and thought it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon,[92] if that he mente trouthe.

96

Now myghte som envious jangle[93] thus:
"This was a sodeyn love; how myghte it be
That she so lightly loved Troilus
Right for the firste syghte, ye parde?"
Now whoso seith so, mot he nevere ythe;[94]
For every thyng, a gynnyng hath it nede
Or al be wrought, withouten any drede.[95]

97

For I sey nat that she so sodeynly
Yaf hym hire love, but that she gan enclyne
To like hym first, and I have told you whi;
And after that, his manhod and his pyne[96]
Made love withinne hire for to myne;[97]
For which, by proces and by good servyse,
He gat hire love, and in no sodeyn wyse.

98

And also blisful Venus, wel arrayed,
Sat in hire seventhe hous of hevene[98] tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,[99]
To helpen sely[1] Troilus of his wood
And, soth to seyn, she nas not al a foo[2]
To Troilus in his nativitee;
God woot that wel the sonner[3] spedde he.

99

Now lat us stynte of Troilus a throwe,[4]
That rideth forth, and lat us torne faste
Unto Criseyde, that heng hire hed ful lowe,
Ther as she sat allone, and gan to caste[5]

---

[78] filled full.
[79] accouterment.
[80] hewn to pieces.
[81] tissue, thread.
[82] dashed to pieces.
[83] pierced.
[84] grew.
[85] embarrassment.
[86] to observe all his countenance.
[87] gave.
[88] unless.
[89] modesty.
[90] consider.
[91] because.
[92] such a one.
[93] find fault.
[94] prosper.
[95] doubt.
[96] suffering.
[97] penetrate.
[98] That part of the heavens favorable to love.
[99] favorable.
[1] poor.
[2] entirely a foe.
[3] much the better.
[4] moment.
[5] consider.

Where on she wolde apoynte hire at the laste,
If it so were hire em[6] ne wolde cesse,
For Troilus upon hire for to presse.

100

And, lord! so she gan in hire thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow tolde,
And what to don best were, and what eschuwe,[7]
That plited[8] she ful ofte in many folde.
Now was hire herte warm, now was it colde;
And what she thoughte, somewhat shal I write,
As to myn auctour listeth[9] for tendite.[10]

101

She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone
She knew by syghte, and ek his gentilesse,
And thus she seyde: "al[11] were it nat to doone,
To graunte hym love, yit, for his worthynesse,
It were honour with pleye,[12] and with gladnesse,
In honestee with swich a lord to deele,
For myn estat[13] and also for his heele.

102

"Ek wel woot I, my kynges sone is he;
And sith he hath to se me swich delit,
If I wolde outreliche[14] his sighte flee,
Paraunter[15] he myghte have me in despit,
Thorugh which I myghte stande in worse plit;
Now were I wis, me hate to purchace,
Withouten nede, ther I may stonde in grace?

103

"In every thyng, I woot, ther lith[16] mesure;[17]
For though a man forbede dronkenesse,
He naught forbet that every creature
Be drynkeles for alwey, as I gesse.
Ek sith I woot for me is his destresse,
I ne aughte nat for that thing hym despise,
Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.

104

"And ek I knowe, of longe tyme agon,
His thewes[18] goode, and that he is nat nyce.[19]
Navauntour,[20] seith men, certein he is noon;
To wis is he to doon so gret a vice;
Ne als I nyl hym nevere so cherice,
That he may make avaunt,[21] by juste cause,
He shal me nevere bynde in swich a clause.

105

"Now sette[22] a cas: the hardest is, ywys,
Men myghten demen[23] that he loveth me;
What dishonour were it unto me, this?
May ich hym lette[24] of that? why nay, parde!
I knowe also, and alday heere and se,
Men loven wommen al biside hire leve,[25]
And whan hem list[26] no more, lat hem leve.

106

"I thenk ek how he able is for to have
Of al this noble towne the thriftieste,
To ben his love, so she hire honour save;
For out and out he is the worthieste,
Save only Ector, which that is the beste;
And yit his lif al lith now in my cure.
But swich is love, and ek myn aventure.

107

"Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
For wel wot I my self, so god me spede,
Al wolde I that no man wiste of this thought,
I am oon the faireste, out of drede,[27]
And goodlieste, whoso taketh hede,
And so men seyn, in al the town of Troie.
What wonder is, though he of me have joye?

108

"I am myn owene womman, wel at ese,
I thank it god, as after myn estat,
Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty leese,[28]

---

[6] uncle.
[7] refrain from.
[8] twisted.
[9] pleases.
[10] to write.
[11] although.
[12] pleasure.
[13] social position.
[14] entirely.
[15] perhaps.
[16] lyeth.
[17] moderation.

[18] habits.
[19] foolish.
[20] boaster.
[21] boast.
[22] suppose.
[23] think.
[24] prevent.
[25] without their consent.
[26] they desire.
[27] doubtless.
[28] untied in a pleasant pasture.

Withouten jalousie or swich debat;
Shal noon housbonde seyn to me 'chek mat.'[29]
For either they ben ful of jalousie,
Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.[30]

109

"What shal I doon? to what fyn[31] lyve I thus?
Shal I nat love, in cas if that me leste?[32]
What, pardieux! I am nat religious.[33]
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knyght, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right it may do[34] me no shame."

110

But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloude is put with wynd to flighte,
Which oversprat[35] the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorugh hire soule pace,
That overspradde hire brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for feere almost she gan to falle.

111

That thought was this "allas! syn I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in jupartie
My sikernesse,[36] and thrallen[37] libertee?
Allas! how dorste I thenken that folie?
May I nat wel in other folk aspie[38]
Hire dredful[39] joye, hire constreynte, and hire peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath[40] wey to pleyne.[41]

112

"For love is yit the moste stormy lyf,
Right of hym self, that evere was bigonne;
For evere som mystrust, or nice[42] strif,
Ther is in love; som cloude is over that sonne.
Therto we wrecched wommen nothing konne,[43]
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Oure wreche[44] is this, oure owen wo to drynke.

113

"Also thise wikked tonges ben so preste[45]
To speke us harm; ek men ben so untrewe,
That right anon, as cessed is hire leste,[46]
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe;
But harm ydoon is doon, whoso it rewe;[47]
For though thise men for love hem first to-rende,[48]
Ful sharp bygynnynge breketh ofte at ende.

114

"How ofte tyme hath it yknowen be,
The tresoun that to wommen hath ben do!
To what fyn is swich love, I kan nat see,
Or wher bycometh it, whan it is ago.
Ther is no wight that woot,[49] I trowe[50] so,
Wher it bycometh; lo, no wight on it sporneth;[51]
That erst[52] was no thing, into nought it torneth.

115

"How bisy, if I love, ek moste I be
To plesen hem that jangle[53] of love, and dremen,
And coye[54] hem, that they seye noon harm of me.
For though ther be no cause, yit hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hire frendes quemen;[55]
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or sown of belles whil that thei ben ronge?"

116

And after that, hire thought bygan to clere,
And seide: "he which that nothing undertaketh,
No thyng acheveth, be hym looth or deere."[56]
And with an other thought hire herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after drede awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus bitwixen tweye,
She rist hire up, and wente hire for to pleye.

---

[29] "Checkmate" denotes complete defeat of one's enemy in chess.
[30] novelty.
[31] end.
[32] it pleases me.
[33] I am not a nun.
[34] cause.
[35] overspreads.
[36] certainty.
[37] enslave.
[38] notice.
[39] full of dread.
[40] hath not.
[41] lament.
[42] foolish.
[43] are able.
[44] misfortune.
[45] quick.
[46] as soon as their desire has ceased.
[47] regrets.
[48] tear to pieces.
[49] knows.
[50] believe.
[51] spurns.
[52] what before.
[53] gossip.
[54] deceive.
[55] please.
[56] whether he likes it or not.

117

Adown the steyre anon right tho she wente
Into the gardyn, with hire neces thre,
And up and down they made many a wente,[57]
Flexippe, and she, Tarbe, and Antigone,
To pleyen, that it joye was to see;
And other of hire wommen, a grete route,
Hire folwede in the gardyn al abowte.

118

This yerd was large, and rayled alle thaleyes,[58]
And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
And benched newe, and sonded[59] alle the weyes,
In which she walketh arm in arm bitwene;
Til at the laste Antigone the shene[60]
Gan on a Troian songe to singen cleere,
That it an hevene was hire vois to here.

CANTUS ANTIGONE[61]

119

She seyde: "O love, to whom I have and shal
Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
As I best kan, to yow, lord, yeve ich al,[62]
For evere mo, myn hertes lust to rente.[63]
For nevere yit thi grace no wight sente
So blisful cause as me, my lif to lede
In alle joie and seurte,[64] out of drede.[65]

120

"Ye, blisful god, han me so wel byset
In love, iwys,[66] that al that bereth lif
Ymagynen ne koude how to be bet;[67]
For, lord, withouten jalousie or strif,
I love oon which that is most ententif[68]
To serven wel, unweri or unfeyned,
That evere was, and leest with harm desteyned.[69]

121

"As he that is the welle of worthynesse,
Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodlyhede,
Of wit Appollo,[70] stoon of sikernesse,
Of vertu roote, of lust fynder and hede,[71]
Thorugh which is alle sorwe fro me dede,
Iwis, I love hym best, so doth he me;
Now good thrifte have he, wherso that he be!

122

"Whom sholde I thanken but yow, god of love,
Of al this blisse in which to bathe I gynne?[72]
And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!
This is the righte lif that I am inne,
To flemen[73] alle manere vice and synne;
This dooth[74] me so to vertue for tentende,
That, day by day, I in my wil amende.[75]

123

"And whoso seith that for to love is vice,
Or thraldom,[76] though he feele in it destresse,
He outher[77] is envyous, or right nyce,[78]
Or is unmyghty,[79] for his shrewednesse,[80]
To loven; for swich manere folk, I gesse,
Defamen love, as nothing of it knowe;
Thei speken, but thei benten nevere his[81] bowe.

124

"What[82] is the sonne wers, of kynde[83] right,
Though that a man, for feblesse of his eyen,
May nat endure on it to see for bright?[84]
Or love the wers, though wrecches on[85] it crien?
No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.[86]
And, forthi, who that hath an hed of verre,[87]
Fro caste of stones war hym in the werre![88]

125

"But I with al myn herte, and al my myght,
As I have seyd, wol love unto my laste
My deere herte, and al myn owen knyght,

---

[57] turn. [58] the alleys. [59] sanded.
[60] beautiful. [61] Antigone's song. [62] give I all.
[63] render, give. [64] surety. [65] without doubt.
[66] certainly. [67] better. [68] eager. [69] stained.

[70] Apollo, thought of as the god of intelligent action.
[71] the discoverer and master of pleasure.
[72] begin. [73] escape. [74] causes. [75] improve.
[76] slavery. [77] either. [78] foolish. [79] unable.
[80] because of his ill temper. [81] I.e., Cupid's.
[82] why. [83] nature. [84] because of brightness.
[85] against. [86] endure. [87] glass. [88] war.

In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal evere laste.
Al dredde[89] I first to love hym to bigynne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne."

126

And of hir song right with that word she stente,[90]
And therwithal, "now nece," quod Criseyde,
"Who made this songe now with so good entente?"
Antigone answerde anoon, and seyde:
"Madame, iwys, the goodlieste mayde
Of gret estat in al the town of Troye;
And let[91] hire lif in most honour and joye."

127

"Forsothe, so it semeth by hire songe,"
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan therwith to sike,[92]
And seyde: "lord, is ther swych blisse amonge
Thise loveres, as they konne faire endite?"[93]
"Ye, wis," quod fresshe Antigone, the white,
"For al the folk that han or ben on lyve
Ne konne wel the blisse of love discryve.

128

"But wene[94] ye that every wrecche woot[95]
The parfit blisse of love? why nay, iwys;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot no thyng of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes[96] if it is
Aught faire in hevene; why? for they kan telle;
And axen fendes[97] is it foul in helle."

129

Criseyde unto that purpos naught answerde,
But seyde: "ywys, it wol be nyght as faste."
But every word which that she of hire herde,
She gan to prenten[98] in hire herte faste,
And ay gan love hire lasse for tagaste[99]
That it dide erst, and synken in hire herte,
That she wax[1] somwhat able to converte.

130

The dayes honour, and the hevenes eye,
The nyghtes foo,—al this clepe[2] I the sonne,—
Gan westren[3] faste, and downward for to wrye,[4]
As he that hadde his dayes cours yronne;
And white thynges wexen dymme and donne[5]
For lakke of lyght, and sterres for tapere,[6]
That she and al hire folk in went yfeere.[7]

131

So whan it liked hire to go to reste,
And voided[8] weren tho that voiden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepen wel hire leste.
Hire wommen sone unto hire bed hire broughte,
Whan al was hust, tho lay she stille, and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wise;
Reherce it nedeth nought,[9] for ye ben wise.

132

A nyghtyngale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude song ayein[10] the moone shene,
Paraunter,[11] in his briddes wise, a lay
Of love, that made hire herte fressh and gay.
That herkened she so longe in good entente,
Til at the laste the dede slepe hire hente.[12]

133

And, as she slep, anon right tho hire mette,[13]
How that an egle, fethered whit as bon,
Under hire brest his longe clawes sette,
And out hire herte rente, and that anon,
And dide[14] his herte into hire brest to gon;
Of which she nought agroos,[15] ne no thyng smerte;
And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.

---

[89] feared.
[90] ceased.
[91] leads.
[92] sigh.
[93] compose poetry.
[94] think.
[95] knew.
[96] inquire of saints.
[97] devils.
[98] print.
[99] less to frighten.
[1] grew.

[2] call.
[3] sank to the west.
[4] turn.
[5] dark.
[6] to appear.
[7] together.
[8] gone out.
[9] there is no need
[10] opposite.
[11] by chance.
[12] seized.
[13] she dreamed.
[14] caused.
[15] feared.

134

Now lat hire slepe, and we oure tales holde
Of Troilus, that is to paleis riden,
Fro the scarmuch of the which I tolde,
And in his chambre sit,[16] and hath abiden[17]
Til two or thre of his messages yeden[18]
For Pandarus, and soughten hym so faste,
Til they hym founde, and broughte hym at the laste.

135

This Pandarus come lepyng in at ones,
And seyde thus: "who hath ben wel ibete[19]
To day with swerdes, and with slynge stones,
But Troilus that hath caught hym an hete?"[20]
And gan to jape,[21] and seyde: "lord, ye swete!
But ris, and lat us soupe and go to reste";
And he answerde: "do we as the leste."[22]

136

With al the haste goodly that they myghte,
They spedde hem fro the soper, and to bedde;
And every wight out at the dore hym dyghte,
And where hym liste upon his wey hym spedde;
But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
For wo, til that he herde som tydynge,
He seyde: "frend, shal I now wepe or synge?"

137

Quod Pandarus: "ly stylle, and lat me slepe;
And don[23] thyn hood; thy nedes spedde be;[24]
And chese if thow wolt synge, or daunce, or lepe;
At shorte wordes, thow shalt truste in me.
Sire, my nece wol do wel by the,
And love the best, by god, and by my trouthe,
But[25] lakke of pursuyt make it in thi slouthe.

138

"For thus ferforth[26] have I thi werk bigonne,
Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
Hire love of frendshipe have I to the wonne;
And therto hath she leyd hire feyth to borwe.[27]
Algate a foot is hameled of thi sorwe."[28]
What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
As ye han herd byfore, al he hym tolde.

139

But right as floures, thorugh the cold of nyght
Iclosed, stoupen on hire stalkes lowe,
Redressen hem[29] ayein[30] the sonne bright,
And spreden on hire kynde cours by rowe,
Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
This Troilus, and seyde: "O Venus deere,
Thi myght, thi grace, yheried[31] be it here!"

140

And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
And seyde: "lord, al thyn be that I have;
For I am hool, al brosten[32] ben my bondes;
A thousand Troyes whoso that me yave,
Ech after other, god so wys me save,
Ne myghte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for joie, it wel to-sterte.[33]

141

"But, lord, how shal I doon, how shal I lyven?
Whan shal I next my deere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme awey be dryven,
Til that thow be ayein at hire fro me?
Thow maist answere: 'abid, abid'; but he
That hangeth by the nekke, soth to seyne,
In grete disese abideth for the peyne."

142

"Al esily, now, for the love of Marte!"[34]
Quod Pandarus, "for every thing hath tyme.
So longe abid til that the nyght departe;
For also siker as thow list[35] here by me,
And god to-forn, I wol be ther at pryme;[36]
And, forthi, werk som what as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge[37] leye.

---

[16] sits. [17] waited. [18] went. [19] beaten.
[20] become hot. [21] joke. [22] pleases you.
[23] put on. [24] are taken care of. [25] unless.
[26] promptly.

[27] pledge.
[28] At any rate one foot of your sorrow has been maimed.
[29] revive. [30] in the light of. [31] blessed.
[32] burst. [33] break in two. [34] Mars.
[35] as surely as thou lyest.
[36] mid-morning. [37] duty.

143

"For, pardee, god woot, I have evere yit
Ben redy the to serve, and to this nyght
Have I nat feyned, but emforth[38] my wit
Don al thi lust, and shal with al my myght.
Do now as I shal seyn, and fare aright;
And if thow nylt, wite al thi self thi care,[39]
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.[40]

144

"I woot wel that thow wiser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thow,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,[41]
Right of myn owen hond, write hire right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hire tellen how
I ferde amys,[42] and hire biseche of routhe;[43]
Now help thi self, and leve it nought for slouthe.[44]

145

"And I my self shal therwith to hire gon;
And whan thow woost[45] that I am with hire there,
Worth[46] upon a courser right anon,
Ye, hardily, right in thi beste gere,
And rid forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thow shalt fynde us, if I may, sittynge
At som wyndowe, into the strete lokynge.

146

"And if the list, than maistow[47] us salue,
And upon me make thow thi contenaunce;
But, by thi lif, be war and faste eschue[48]
To tarien ought,—god shilde us fro meschaunce!
Rid forth thi wey, and hold thi governaunce;
And we shal speke of the somwhat, I trowe,
Whan thow art gon, to don thyn eris glowe.[49]

147

"Towchyng thi lettre, thow art wys ynough,
I woot thow nylt it dygneliche endite;[50]
As make it with thise argumentes tough,[51]
Ne scryvenliche, or craftily thow it write;
Biblotte[52] it with thi teris ek a lite,
And if thow write a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it nought to ofte.

148

"For though the beste harpour upon lyve
Wolde on the beste sowned[53] joly harpe
That evere was, with alle his fyngres fyve,
Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul[54] harpe,
Were his nayles poynted nevere so sharpe,
It sholde maken every wight to dulle,
To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.[55]

149

"Ne jompre[56] ek no discordaunt thyng yfeere,[57]
As thus, to usen termes of phisik
In loves termes; hold of thi matere
The forme alwey, and do[58] that it be lik;
For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk[59]
With asses feet, and hedde it as an ape,
It cordeth[60] naught; so nere it but a jape."[61]

150

This counseil liked[62] wel to Troilus;
But, as a dredful[63] lovere, he seyde this:
"Allas, my deere brother Pandarus,
I am ashamed for to write, ywys,
Lest of myn innocence I seyde amys,
Or that she nolde it for despit[64] receyve;
Than were I ded, ther myght it no thyn
weyve."[65]

151

To that Pandare answerde: "if the lest,
Do that I seye, and lat me therwith gon;
For by that lord that formede est and west,
I hope of it to brynge answere anon
Right of hire hond, and if that thow nylt noon
Lat be, and sory mote he ben his lyve,
Ayeins thi lust that helpeth the to thryve."

---

[38] in proportion to. [39] take all the blame on thyself.
[40] On me is no blame for your evil fate.
[41] entirely. [42] was in great trouble. [43] pity.
[44] laziness. [45] knowest. [46] get.
[47] mayest thou. [48] avoid.
[49] to make thy ears burn.
[50] I know thou wilt not write it formally.

[51] Nor make it difficult with arguments. [52] blot.
[53] toned. [54] tune. [55] surfeited. [56] jumble
[57] together. [58] cause. [59] pike (a fish).
[60] fits. [61] joke. [62] was pleasing. [63] timid
[64] disdain. [65] prevent.

152

Quod Troilus: "depardieux,[66] ich assente;
Sith that the list, I wol arise and write;
And blisful god prey ich with good entente,
The viage, and the lettre I shal endite,
So spede it; and thow, Minerva[67] the white,
Yif thow me wit my lettre to devyse";
And sette hym down, and wrote right in this wyse:

153

First he gan hire his righte lady calle,
His hertes lif, his lust,[68] his sorwes leche,[69]
His blisse, and ek thise other termes alle,
That in swich cas thise loveres alle seche;[70]
And in ful humble wise, as in his speche,
He gan hym recomaunde unto hire grace;
To telle al how, it axeth[71] muchel space.

154

And after this, ful lowly he hire preyde
To be nat wroth, thogh he of his folye
So hardy was to hire to write, and seyde,
That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
And pitously gan mercy for to crye;
And after that he seyde, and leigh[72] ful loude,
Hym self was litel worth, and lesse he koude;[73]

155

And that she sholde han his konnyng excused,
That litel was, and ek he dredde[74] hire so,
And his unworthynesse he ay acused;
And after that than gan he telle his wo;
But that was endeles, withouten ho;[75]
And seyde, he wolde in trouth alwey hym holde;
And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.

156

And with his salte teris gan he bathe
The ruby in his signet, and it sette
Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe;[76]
Therwith a thousand tymes, or he lette,[77]
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde: "lettre, a blisful destine
The shapen is, my lady shal the see."

157

This Pandare tok the lettre, and that by tyme[78]
A morwe,[79] and to his neces paleis sterte;
And faste he swor, that it was passed prime,
And gan to jape, and seyde: "ywys, myn herte,
So fresshe it is, although it sore smerte,
I may nat slepe nevere a Mayes morwe;
I have a joly wo, a lusty sorwe."

158

Criseyde, whan that she hire uncle herde,
With dredful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his comynge, thus answerde:
"Now by youre fey,[80] myn uncle," quod she, "dere,
What maner[81] wyndes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us youre joly wo and youre penaunce;
How ferforth[82] be ye put in loves daunce?"

159

"By god," quod he, "I hoppe alwey byhynde."
And she to-laugh, it thought hire herte brest.
Quod Pandarus: "lok alwey that ye fynde
Game in myn hood,[83] but herkneth, if yow lest;
Ther is right now come into town a gest,
A Greek espie, and telleth newe thinges,
For which I come to telle yow tydynges.

160

"Into the gardyn go we, and ye shal here,
Al pryvely, of this a longe sermoun."
With that they wenten arm in arm yfeere[84]
Into the gardyn, from the chaumbre down;
And whan that he so fer was that the sown[85]
Of that he spak no man heren myghte,
He seyde hire thus, and out the lettre plighte:[86]

---

[66] in the name of God.
[67] the goddess of wisdom.
[68] pleasure.
[69] physician.
[70] seek.
[71] would require.
[72] lied.
[73] was able.
[74] feared.
[75] stop.
[76] promptly.
[77] ceased.
[78] early.
[79] in the morning.
[80] faith.
[81] kind of.
[82] far ahead.
[83] Be sure always that you will find me a source of humor.
[84] together.
[85] sound.
[86] drew.

161

"Lo, he that is al holly youres free
Hym recomaundeth lowly to youre grace,
And sente yow this lettre here by me;
Avyseth[87] yow on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answere yow purchace,[88]
Or, helpe me god, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may nat longe lyvèn for his peyne."

162

Ful dredfully tho gan she stonden stylle,
And took it naught, but al hire humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde: "scrit[89] ne bille,
For love of god, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne brynge me noon; and also, uncle deere,
To myn estat have more rewarde, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?

163

"And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth[90] nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by god, and by youre trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of hym routhe,
In harmyng of my self, or in repreve?[91]
Ber it ayein, for hym that ye on leve!"[92]

164

This Pandarus gan on hire for to stare,
And seyde: "now is this the moste wonder
That evere I say! lat be this nyce fare.[93]
To dethe mot I smyten be with thonder,
If, for the cite which that stondeth yonder,
Wolde I a lettre to yow brynge or take
To harm of yow; what list yow thus to make?

165

"But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
That he that most desireth yow to serve,
Of hym ye recche leest wher he bycome,[94]
Or whether that he lyve or elles sterve.
But for al that that evere I may deserve,
Refuse it nat," quod he, and hente hire faste,
And in hire bosom down the lettre he thraste,

166

And seyde hire: "cast it now awey anon,
That folk may seen and gauren[95] on us tweye."
Quod she: "I kan abyde til they be gon,"
And gan to smyle, and seyde hym: "em,[96] I preye,
Swich answere as yow list youre self purveye;
For, trewely, I nyl no lettre write."
"No? than wol I," quod he, "so ye endite."[97]

167

Therwith she lough,[98] and seyde: "go we dyne."
And he gan at hym self to jape faste,
And seyde: "nece, I have so grete a pyne[99]
For love, that everich other day I faste,"
And gan his beste japes forth to caste,
And made hire so to laughe at his folye,
That she for laughter wende[1] for to dye.

168

And whan that she was comen into halle,
"Now, em," quod she, "we wol go dyne anon,"
And gan som of hire wommen to hire calle;
And streight into hire chaumbre gan she gon.
But of hire besynesse this was on:[2]
Amonges othere thynges, out of drede,[3]
Ful pryvely this lettre for to rede.

169

Avysed[4] word by word in every lyne,
And fond no lakke, she thoughte he koude good;[5]
And up it putte, and wente hire in to dyne.
But Pandarus, that in a studye stood,
Or he was war, she took hym by the hood,
And seyde: "ye were caught or that ye wiste."
"I vouche sauf,"[6] quod he, "do what yow liste."

---

[87] consider. [88] contrive.
[89] script.
[90] hold back. [91] reproof.
[92] in the name of Him on whom you believe.
[93] foolish action.
[94] you care least what becomes of him.

[95] gaze. [96] uncle. [97] write it down.
[98] laughed. [99] torment.
[1] thought. [2] one.
[3] without doubt. [4] considered. [5] was very able.
[6] grant it.

170

Tho wesshen[7] they, and sette hem down and ete;
And after noon ful sleighly[8] Pandarus
Gan drawe hym to the wyndowe next the strete,
And seyde: "nece, who hath arayed thus
The yonder hous, that stant aforyeyn[9] us?"
"Which hous?" quod she, and gan for to byholde,
And knew it wel, and whos it was hym tolde.

171

And fillen forth in speche of thynges smale,
And seten in the windowe bothe tweye,
Whan Pandarus saugh tyme unto his tale,
And saugh wel that hire folk were al aweye,
"Now, nece myn, tel on," quod he, "I seye,
How liketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
Kan he theron? for, by my trouthe, I noot."[10]

172

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex[11] she,
And gan to homme,[12] and seyde: "so I trowe."[13]
"Aquite[14] hym wel, for goddes love," quod he;
"My self to medes[15] wol the lettre sowe."[16]
And held his hondes up, and fel on knowe;[17]
"Now, goode nece, be it nevere so lite,
Yif me the labour it to sowe and plite."[18]

173

"Ye, for I kan so writen," quod she tho,
"And ek I noot what I sholde to hym seye."
"Nay, nece," quod Pandare, "sey nat so;
Yit at the leeste thonketh hym, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth hym nat to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece deere,
Refuseth nat at this tyme my preyere."

174

"Depardieux," quod she, "god leve al be wel![19]
God help me so, this is the firste lettre
That evere I wroot, ye, al or any del."[20]
And into a closet, for to avise hire bettre,
She wente allone, and gan hire herte unfettre
Out of the desdaynes prison but a lite,
And sette hire down, and gan a lettre write.

175

Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Theffect, as fer as I kan understonde.
She thanked hym of al that he wel mente
Towardes hire, but holden hym in honde[21]
She nolde nought, ne make hire selven bonde
In love, but as his suster, hym to plese,
She wolde ay fayn,[22] to doon his herte an ese.

176

She shette it, and to Pandare in gan goon,
Ther as he sat and loked into the strete,
And down she sette hire by hym on a stoon
Of jaspre, upon a quysshyn[23] gold ybete,
And seyde: "as wisly help me god the grete,
I nevere dide a thing with more peyne
Than writen this, to which ye me constreyne";

177

And took it hym. He thonked hire, and seyde:
"God woot, of thyng ful ofte looth bygonne
Comth ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to hym of hard[24] now ben ywonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne.
For whi, men seith, 'impressiouns lighte
Ful lightly ben ay redy to the flighte.'

178

"But ye han pleyed the tirant neigh to longe,
And hard was it youre herte for to grave;
Now stynt, that ye no lenger on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger[25] save;
But hasteth yow to doon hym joye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe ydoon[26] hardnesse
Causeth despit ful often, for destresse."

---

[7] washed. [8] craftily. [9] stands across from.
[10] know not. [11] then grew. [12] hum. [13] believe.
[14] repay. [15] as a reward.
[16] sew. [17] knee.
[18] fold.
[19] God grant that all may be well.

[20] part. [21] deceive him.
[22] gladly.
[23] a cushion embroidered with gold thread.
[24] with difficulty.
[25] appearance of disdain.
[26] performed.

179

And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com rydyng with his tenthe somme yfere,[27]
Al softely,[28] and thiderward gan bende
Ther as they sete, as was his wey to wende
To paleis-ward; and Pandarus hym aspide,
And seyde: "nece, isee who comth here ride.

180

"O fle nat in,—he seith[29] us, I suppose,—
Lest he may thynken that ye hym eschuwe."[30]
"Nay, nay," quod she, and wex as rede as rose.
With that he gan hire humblely saluwe,
With dredful[31] chere, and oft his hewes muwe;[32]
And up his look debonairly he caste,
And bekked[33] on Pandare, and forth he paste.

181

God woot if he sat on his hors aright,
Or goodly was biseyn, that ilke[34] day!
God woot wher[35] he was lik a manly knyght!
What sholde I drecche,[36] or telle of his aray?
Criseyde, which that alle thise thynges say,[37]
To telle in short, hire liked al in fere,[38]
His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,

182

His goodly manere, and his gentilesse,
So wel that nevere sith that she was born
Ne hadde she swych routhe of his destresse;
And how so she hath hard ben here byforn,
To god hope I, she hath now kaught a thorn;
She shal nat pulle it out this nexte wyke.
God sende mo swich thornes on to pike![39]

183

Pandare, which that stood hire faste by,
Felte iren hoot, and he bygan to smyte,
And seyde: "nece, I pray yow hertely,
Tel me that I shal axen yow a lite:
A womman that were of his deth to wite,[40]
Withouten his gilt, but for hire lakke of routhe,
Were it wel doon?" Quod she: "nay, by my trouthe."

184

"God help me so," quod he, "ye sey me soth.
Ye felen wel youre self that I nat lye.
Lo, yond he rit!"[41] "Ye," quod she, "so he doth."
"Wel," quod Pandare, "as I have told yow thrie,[42]
Lat be youre nyce[43] shame and youre folie,
And spek with hym in esyng of his herte;
Lat nycete nat do yow bothe smerte."[44]

185

But theron was to heven[45] and to doone:
Considered alle thing, it may nat be;
And whi for speche?[46] and it were ek to soone
To graunten hym so grete a libertee.
For pleynly hire entente, as seyde she,
Was for to love hym unwist, if she myghte,
And guerdon[47] hym with no thing but with sighte.

186

But Pandarus thought: "it shal nat be so,
Yif that I may; this nyce opynyoun
Shal nat be holden fully yeres two."
What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
He moste assente on that conclusioun,
As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
And al was wel, he roos and toke his leve.

187

And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
And right for joye he felte his herte daunce;
And Troilus he fond allone abedde,
That lay as don thise lovers in a traunce,
Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.[48]

---

[27] company of ten together.
[28] quietly.
[29] seeth.
[30] avoid.
[31] timid.
[32] change.
[33] bowed.
[34] same.
[35] whether.
[36] why should I tarry?
[37] saw.
[38] altogether.
[39] pick.
[40] guilty.
[41] rides.
[42] thrice.
[43] foolish.
[44] cause you both to suffer.
[45] labor; i.e., the whole thing was to be labored and done over.
[46] And why should I speak with him?
[47] [illegible]
[48] despair.

But Pandarus, right at his in comynge,
He song, as who seyth, "somwhat I brynge,"

188

And seyde: "who is in his bed so soone
Iburied thus?" "It am I, frende," quod he.
"Who, Troilus? nay, help me so the moone,"
Quod Pandarus, "thow shalt arise and see
A charme that was right now sent to the,
The which kan helen the of thyn accesse,[49]
So that thow do forthwith thi bisynesse."

189

"Ye, thorugh the myght of god!" quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan hym the lettre take,
And seyde: "parde, god hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake."
But ofte gan the herte glade[50] and quake
Of Troilus, whil that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave hym hope or drede.

190

But finaly he took al for the beste
That she hym wroot; for somwhat he byheld[51]
On which, hym thoughte, he myghte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.
Thus to the more worthi part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus byheste,[52]
His grete wo foryede[53] he at the leste.

191

But as we may alday oure selven see,
Thorugh more wode or col, the more fir;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encresseth ek desir;
Or as an ook comth of a litel spir,
So thorugh this lettre, which that she hym sente,
Encressen gan desir, of which he brente.[54]

192

Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and nyght
This Troilus gan to desiren moore
Than he dede erst, thorugh hope, and dede his myght
To pressen on, as by Pandarus loore,[55]
And writen to hire of his sorwes soore,
Fro day to day; he leet it nat refreyde,[56]
That by Pandare he somwhat wroot or seyde;

193

And dide also his other observaunces,
That til a lovere longeth[57] in this cas;
And after that his dees[58] torned on chaunces,
So was he outher glad, or seyde "allas!"
And held after his gistes[59] ay his pas;[60]
And after swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outher gladde.

194

But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay to hym to pleyne,
And hym bisoughte of reed and som socours;[61]
And Pandarus, that sey[62] his woode[63] peyne,
Wex wel neigh ded for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste[64]
Som of his wo to slen,[65] and that as faste;

195

And seyde: "lord, and frend, and brother dere,
God woot that thi disese doth me wo.
But wiltow stynten al this woful cheere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,
And god to-forn, yit shal I shape it so,
That thow shalt come into a certeyn place,
There as thow mayst thi self preye hire of grace.

196

"And certeynly I noot if thow it woost,[66]
But tho[67] that ben expert in love it seye,
It is oon of the thynges forthereth most
A man, to have a leyser[68] for to preye,
And siker[69] place his wo for to bywreye;

---

[49] sickness. [50] rejoice. [51] beheld.
[52] promise. [53] gave up. [54] burned.

[55] teaching. [56] grow cold. [57] belongs.
[58] dice. [59] affairs. [60] course.
[61] advice and help. [62] saw. [63] mad.
[64] planned. [65] slay.
[66] I do not know if you know it. [67] those.
[68] opportunity. [69] certain.

For in good herte it mot[70] som routhe impresse,
To here and see the giltlees in distresse.

197

"Paraunter thynkestow; though it be so,
That kynde wolde hire don for to[71] bygynne
To han a manere[72] routhe upon my woo,
Seyth daunger;[73] 'nay, thow shalt me nevere wynne';
So reulith[74] hire hir hertes gost[75] withinne,
That, though she bende, yit she stant on roote;[76]
What in effect is this unto my boote?[77]

198

"Thenk here ayeins: whan that the sturdy ook,
On which men hakketh ofte for the nones,
Receyved hath the happy fallyng strook,
The grete sweigh doth[78] it come al at ones,
As don thise rokkes or thise milnestones;
For swifter cours comth thyng that is of wighte,[79]
Whan it descendeth, than don thynges lighte.

199

"But reed that boweth down for every blast,
Ful lightly, cesse wynd,[80] it wol aryse;
But so nyl nat an ook, whan it is cast;
It nedeth me nat the longe to forbise.[81]
Men shal rejoyssen of a grete empryse[82]
Acheved wel, and stant withouten doute,
Al[83] han men ben the lenger ther aboute.

200

"But, Troilus, now telle me, if the lest,
A thing which that I shal now axen the:
Which is thi brother that thow lovest best,
As in thi verray hertes privetee?"
"Iwis,[84] my brother Deiphebus," quod he.
"Now," quod Pandare, "or[85] houres twyes twelve,
He shal the ese,[86] unwist of it hym selve.

201

"Now lat malone,[87] and werken as I may,"
Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho,
Which hadde his lord and grete frend ben ay;[88]
Save Troilus, no man he loved so.
To telle in short, withouten wordes mo,
Quod Pandarus: "I prey yow that ye be
Frend to a cause which that toucheth me."

202

"Yis, parde," quod Deiphebus, "wel thow woost,
In al that evere I may, and god to-fore,
Al nere[89] it but for man I love moost,
My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
It is; for sith the day that I was bore,
I nas, ne nevere mo to ben I thynke,
Ayeins a thing, that myghte the forthynke."[90]

203

Pandare gan hym thanke, and to hym seyde:
"Lo, sire, I have a lady in this town,
That is my nece, and called is Criseyde,
Which som men wolden don oppressioun,
And wrongfully han hire possessioun;
Wherfore I of youre lordship yow biseche
To ben oure frend, withouten more speche."

204

Deiphebus hym answerde: "O, is nat this,
That thow spekest of to me thus straungely,
Criseyda, my frend?" He seyde: "yis."
"Than nedeth," quod Deiphebus, "hardely,[91]
No more of this; for trusteth wel that I
Wol be hire champioun with spore and yerde;[92]
I roughte[93] nat though alle hire foos it herde.

205

"But telle me how,—thow woost of this matere,—
It myghte best avaylen;[94] now lat se."
Quod Pandarus: "if ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now do this honour to me,

---

[70] must. [71] That nature would cause her to.
[72] kind of. [73] disdain.
[74] rules. [75] spirit.
[76] stands rooted. [77] help. [78] makes.
[79] weight. [80] when the wind ceases.
[81] furnish with examples. [82] enterprise.
[83] although. [84] indeed. [85] before.
[86] He shall bring comfort to thee.

[87] me alone. [88] always.
[89] although it were not.
[90] seem good to thee. [91] indeed.
[92] spur and staff. [93] would care.
[94] help.

To preyen hire to-morwe, lo, that she
Come unto yow, hire pleyntes to devyse,[95]
Hire adversaries wolde of it agrise.[96]

206

"And yif I more dorste preye as now,
And chargen yow to han so grete travaille,[97]
To han som of youre bretheren here with yow,
That myghten in hire cause bet[98] availle;
Than, wot I wel, she myghte nevere faille
For to ben holpen, what at youre instaunce,
What with hire othere frendes governaunce."

207

Deiphebus, which that comen was of kynde[99]
To alle honour and bounte[1] to consente,
Answerde: "it shal be don; and I kan fynde
Yit grettere help to this in myn entente.
What wiltow seyn, if I for Eleyne[2] sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste;
For she may leden Paris as hire leste.

208

"Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother,
If nedeth naught to preye hym frend to be;
For I have herd hym, o tyme and ek oother,
Speke of Cryseyde swich honour, that he
May seyn no bet,[3] swich hap[4] to hym hath she.
It nedeth naught, his helpes for to crave;
He shal be swich, right as we wol hym have.

209

"Speke thow thi self also to Troilus
On my byhalve, and prey hym with us dyne."
"Sire, al this shal be don," quod Pandarus;
And took his leve, and nevere gan to fyne,[5]
But to his neces hous, as streyght as lyne,
He come, and fond hire fro the mete arise,[6]
And sette hym down, and spak right in this wise.

210

He seide: "O verray god, so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn, se ye nat how I swete?
I not[7] whether ye the more thank me konne.
Be ye nat war how false Poliphete
Is now aboute eftsones[8] for to plete,[9]
And brynge on yow advocacies[10] newe?"
"I? no," quod she, and chaunged al hire hewe.

211

"What is he more aboute, me to drecche[11]
And don me wrong? What shal I doon, allas?
Yit of hym selve nothing wolde I recche,[12]
Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
That ben his frendes in swich manere cas.
But, for the love of god, myn uncle deere,
No fors of that,[13] lat hym han al yfeere;[14]

212

"Withouten that, I have ynough for us."
"Nay," quod Pandare, "it shal nothing be so;
For I have ben right now at Deiphebus,
At Ector, and myn oother lordes moo,
And shortly maked eche of hem his foo;
That, by my thrift, he shal it nevere wynne
For aught he kan, whan that so he bygynne."

213

And as thei casten[15] what was best to doone,
Deiphebus, of his owen curteisie,
Com hire to preye, in his propre[16] persone,
To holde hym on the morwe compaignie
At dyner, which she nolde nat denye,
But goodly gan to his preyere obeye.
He thonked hire, and wente upon his weye.

214

Whan this was don, this Pandare up anon,
To telle in short, and forth he gan to wende
To Troilus, as stille as any ston,
And al this thyng he tolde hym, worde and ende,
And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende,[17]
And seyde hym: "now is tyme, if that thow konne,
To bere the wel to-morwe, and al is wonne.

---

[95] to present her complaints.
[96] feel terror.
[97] labor.
[98] better.
[99] by nature.
[1] goodness.
[2] Helen.
[3] better.
[4] luck.
[5] end.
[6] risen from table.
[7] know not.
[8] again.
[9] plot.
[10] law suits.
[11] torment.
[12] care.
[13] It makes no difference.
[14] together.
[15] planned.
[16] own.
[17] deceive.

215

"Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
Lat[18] nat for nyce shame, or drede, or slouthe.
Som tyme a man mot telle[19] his owen peyne;
Bileve it, and she shal han on the routhe;
Thow shalt be saved by thi feyth in trouthe.
But wel woot I, that thow art now in drede;
And what it is, I leye,[20] I kan arede.

216

"Thow thynkest now: 'how sholde I don al this?
For by my cheres[21] mosten folk aspie
That for hire love is that I fare amys;
Yit hadde I levere[22] unwist[23] for sorwe dye.'
Now thynk nat so, for thow dost grete folie.
For I right now have founded o[24] manere
Of sleyghte,[25] for to coveren al thi cheere.

217

"Thow shalt gon over nyght, and that bylyve,[26]
Unto Deiphebus hous, as the to pleye,[27]
Thi maladie awey the bet to dryve,—
For whi[28] thow semest sik, soth for to seye.
Soone after that, down in thi bed the leye,
And say, thow mayst no lenger up endure,
And lye right there, and byd[29] thyn aventure.

218

"Sey that thi fevere is wont the for to take
The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe;
And lat se now how wel thow kanst it make,
For, parde, sik is he that is in sorwe.
Go now, farwel! and Venus here to borwe,[30]
I hope, and thow this purpos holde ferme,
Thi grace she shal fully ther conferme."

219

Quod Troilus: "iwis, thow nedeles
Conseilest me, that siklich I me feyne;
For I am sik in ernest, douteles,
So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne."
Quod Pandarus: "thou shalt the bettre pleyne,
And hast the lasse[31] nede to countrefete,[32]
For hym men demen hoot that men seen swete.[33]

220

"Lo, hold the at the triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer unto thi bowe dryve."
Therwith he took his leve al softely,
And Troilus to paleis wente blyve;[34]
So glad ne was he nevere in al his lyve,
And to Pandarus reed[35] gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at nyght he wente.

221

What nedeth yow to tellen al the cheere
That Deiphebus unto his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his siklich manere,
How men gan hym with clothes for to lade,[36]
What he was leyd, and how men wolde hym glade?[37]
But al for nought; he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare or this devyse.

222

But certeyn is, or Troilus hym leyde,
Deiphebus had hym preied over nyght,
To ben a frend and helpyng to Criseyde.
God woot, that he it graunted anon right,
To ben hire fulle frend with al his myght;
But swich a nede was to preye hym thenne,
As for to bidde a wood[38] man for to renne.[39]

223

The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meltid,[40] that the faire queene Eleyne
Shoop[41] hire to ben, an houre after the prime,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, homly, soth to seyne,
She com to dyner in hire pleyne entente.
But god and Pandare wist al what this mente.

[18] cease. [19] recount.
[20] I wager. [21] countenance.
[22] rather. [23] unknown.
[24] one. [25] deceit. [26] immediately.
[27] to enjoy yourself. [28] because.
[29] await. [30] as a pledge.

[31] less. [32] feign.
[33] For people think a man hot when they see him sweat.
[34] soon. [35] advice. [36] load. [37] cheer.
[38] mad. [39] run. [40] mealtime. [41] planned.

224

Com ek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hire suster Tarbe also,
But fle we now prolixitee best is,
For love of god, and lat us faste go
Right to theffect, withouten tales mo,
Whi al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat us of hire saluynges pace.[42]

225

Grete honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that myghte like;
But evere mo "allas!" was his refreyn,
"My goode brother, Troilus, the syke
Lith yit"; and therwithal he gan to sike;[43]
And after that he peyned hym to glade
Hem as he myghte, and cheere good he made.

226

Compleyned ek Eleyne of his siknesse
So feythfully, that pite was to here;
And every wight gan wexen[44] for accesse[45]
A leche[46] anon, and seyde: "in this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow leere";[47]
But ther sat oon, al liste hire nat[48] to teche,
That thoughte: "best koude I yit ben his leche."

227

After compleynte, hym gonnen they to preyse,
As folk don yit, whan som wight hath bygonne
To preise a man, and up with pris hym reise
A thousand fold yit hyer than the sonne:
"He is, he kan that fewe lordes konne";
And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
He naught forgat hire preisynge to conferme.

228

Herde alwey this Criseyde wel inough,
And every word gan for to notifie;[49]
For which with sobre cheere hire herte lough;[50]
For who is that nolde hire glorifie,
To mowen[51] swich a knyght don lyve or dye?
But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
For, for o fyn[52] is al that evere I telle.

229

The tyme com, fro dyner for to ryse,
And, as hem oughte, arisen everichon,
And gonne a while of this and that devise;[53]
But Pandarus brak al this speche anon,
And seyde to Deiphebus: "wol ye gon,
If it youre wille be, as I yow preyde,
To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?"

230

Eleyne, which that by the hond hire helde,
Took first the tale, and seyde: "go we blyve";
And goodly on Criseyde she bihelde,
And seyde: "Jovis lat hym nevere thryve,
That doth yow harm, and brynge hym soone of lyve;[54]
And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
If that I may, and alle folk be trewe."

231

"Tel thow thi neces cas," quod Deiphebus
To Pandarus, "for thow kanst best it telle."
"My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus;
What sholde I lenger," quod he, "do[55] yow dwelle?"
He rong hem out a proces[56] lik a belle
Upon hire foo, that highte[57] Poliphete,
So heynous, that men myghte on it spete.[58]

232

Answerde of this eche worse of hem than other,
And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien:[59]
"Anhonged be swich oon, were he my brother;
And so he shal, for it ne may nat varien."
What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
Pleynlich, al at ones, they hire highten[60]
To ben hire frend in al that evere they myghten.

---

[42] hurry over the salutations.
[43] sigh.
[44] became.
[45] fever.
[46] doctor.
[47] teach.
[48] although she did not desire.
[49] notice.
[50] laughed.
[51] be able.
[52] one end.
[53] discuss.
[54] take him soon from life.
[55] make.
[56] speech.
[57] was named.
[58] spit.
[59] abuse.
[60] promise.

233

Spak thanne Eleyne, and seyde: "Pandarus,
Woot ought my lord my brother this matere,
I meene Ector? or woot it Troilus?"
He seyde: "ye; but wole ye now me here?
Me thynketh this, sith that Troilus is here,
It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
She tolde hire self hym al this, or she wente.

234

"For he wol have the more hir grief at herte,
By cause, lo, that she a lady is;
And, by youre leve, I wol but in right sterte,
And do yow wyte,[61] and that anon, iwys,
If that he slepe, or wol ought here of this."
And in he lepe, and seyde hym in his ere:
"God have thi soule, ibrought have I thi beere!"[62]

235

To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, withouten rekenynge,
Out wente anon to Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem; "so ther be no taryinge,
Ne moore prees,[63] he wol wel that ye brynge
Criseyda, my lady, that is here;
And as he may enduren, he wol here.

236

"But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lite,
And fewe folk may lightly[64] make it warm;
Now loketh ye,—for I wol have no wite,[65]
To brynge in prees that myghte don hym harm,
Or hym disesen,[65a] for my bettre arm—
Wher it be bet she bide til eft sonys;[66]
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.

237

"I sey, for me, best is, as I kan knowe,
That no wight in ne wende, but ye tweye,
But it were I; for I kan, in a throwe,[67]
Reherce hire cas, unlik that she kan seye;
And after this, she may hym ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hire leve;
This may nat muchel of his ese hym reve.[68]

238

"And ek for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that hym thar[69] nat for yow;
Ek oother thing, that toucheth nought to here,
He wol yow telle, I woot it wel, right now,
That secret is, and for the townes prow."[69a]
And they, that nothyng knewe of his entente,
Withouten more, to Troilus in they wente.

239

Eleyne, in al hire goodly softe wyse,
Gan hym salue, and wommanly to pleye,
And seyde: "iwys, ye moste algate arise;
Now, faire brother, be al hool, I preye."
And gan hire arm right over his shulder leye,
And hym with al hire wit to reconforte;
As she best koude, she gan hym disporte.

240

So after this quod she: "we yow biseke,
My deere brother, Deiphebus, and I,
For love of god, and so doth Pandare eke,
To ben good lord and frende, right hertely,
Unto Criseyde, which that certeynly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare,
That kan hire cas wel bet than I declare."

241

This Pandarus gan newe his tonge affile,
And al hire cas reherce, and that anon.
Whan it was seyd, soone after in a while,
Quod Troilus: "as sone as I may gon,
I wol right fayn with al my myght ben oon,
Have god my trouthe, hire cause to sustene."
"Good thrift have ye," quod Eleyne, the queene.

242

Quod Pandarus: "and[70] it youre wille be,
That she may take hire leve or that she go?"
"O, elles god forbede," tho quod he,
"If that she vouche sauf for to do so."
And with that word quod Troilus: "ye two,

---

[61] cause you to know.
[62] pillow.
[63] crowd.
[64] easily.
[65] blame.
[65a] distress.
[66] later.
[67] moment.
[68] deprive.
[69] is necessary.
[69a] profit.
[70] if.

Deiphebus, and my suster, lief and deere,
To yow have I to speke of o matere,

243

"To ben avysed by youre reed[71] the bettre";
And fond, as hap was, at his beddes hed,
The copie of a tretys and a lettre,
That Ector hadde hym sent to axen reed,
If swych a man was worthi to ben ded,
Woot I nat who; but in a grisly[72] wise
He preyede hem anon on it avyse.

244

Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
In ernest gret; so dede Eleyne the queene;
And, romyng outward, faste it gonne byholde,
Downward a steire, and in an herber[73] greene,
This ilke thing they redden hem bitwene;
And largely, the mountaunce[74] of an houre,
Thei gonne on it to reden and to poure.

245

Now lat hem rede, and torne we anon
To Pandarus, that gan ful faste prye
That al was wel, and out he gan to gon
Into the grete chaumbre, and that in hye,
And seyde: "god save al this compaignye!
Com, nece myn, my lady, queene Eleyne,
Abideth yow, and ek my lordes tweyne.

246

"Rys, take with yow youre nece, Antigone,
Or whom yow list; or no fors;[75] hardyly
The lasse prees the bet; com forth with me,
And loke that ye thonken humblely
Hem alle thre, and, whan ye may goodly
Youre tyme se, taketh of hem youre leeve,
Lest we to longe his restes hym byreeve."

247

Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
Quod tho Criseyde: "go we, uncle deere";
And arm in arm inward with hym she wente,
Avysed wel hire wordes and hire cheere;
And Pandarus in ernestful manere,
Seyde: "alle folk, for goddes love, I preye,
Stynteth[76] right here, and softely yow pleye.

248

"Aviseth yow what folk ben here withinne,
And in what plit oon is, god hym amende!"
And inward[77] thus: "ful softely bygynne;
Nece, I conjure, and heighly yow defende,
On his half, that soule us alle sende,
And in the vertue of corounes tweyne,
Sle nat this man, that hath for yow this peyne.

249

"Fly on the devel! thynk which on[78] he is,
And in what plit he lith; com of anon;
Thynk al swich taried tid,[79] but lost it nys;
That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.
Secoundely, ther yit devyneth[80] noon
Upon yow two; com of now, if ye konne;
Whil folk is blent,[81] lo, al the tyme is wonne.

250

"In titeryng, and pursuyte, and delayes,
The folk devyne at waggyng of a stree;[82]
That, though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
Than dar ye naught, and whi? for she, and she,
Spak swich a word, thus loked he, and he;
Las tyme ilost, I dar nought with yow dele;
Com of, therfore, and bryngeth hym to hele."

251

But now to yow, ye loveres that ben here,
Was Troilus nat in a kankedort?[83]
That lay, and myghte whisprynge of hem here,
And thoughte: "O lord, right now renneth my sort[84]
Fully to deye, or han anon comfort";
And was the firste tyme he shulde hire preye
Of love; O myghty god, what shal he seye?

EXPLICIT LIBER SECUNDUS.[85]

(1385?)

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[71] advice. [72] very serious. [73] arbor.
[74] amount, space. [75] it matters not.

[76] stop. [77] aside to her. [78] one.
[79] time. [80] suspects. [81] blind.
[82] People read meanings from the wagging of a straw.
[83] critical position. [84] fate. [85] Book II ends.

The Compleint of Chaucer to His Empty Purse

To you, my purse, and to non other wight
Compleyne I, for ye be my lady dere!
I am so sory, now that ye be light;
For certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd up-on my bere;[1]
For whiche un-to your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot[2] I dye!

Now voucheth sauf this day, or hit be night,
That I of you the blisful soun may here,
Or see your colour lyk the sonne bright,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyf, ye be myn hertes stere,[3]
Quene of comfort and of good companye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Now purs, that be to me my lyves light,
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Out of this toune help me through your might,
Sin that ye wole nat been my tresorere;
For I am shave as nye[4] as any frere.
But yit I pray un-to your curtesye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye!

Lenvoy de Chaucer

O conquerour of Brutes Albioun![5]
Which that by lyne and free eleccioun
Ben verray king, this song to you I sende;
And ye, that mowen al our harm amende,
Have minde up-on my supplicacioun!

William Langland (?)

The fact that some sixty fifteenth-century manuscripts of the poem survive indicates the great popularity of *Piers the Plowman.* It is virtually an anonymous work, though tradition has ascribed it to one William Langland, whoever he was. If the autobiographical hints provided by the author's writing in the first person are to be taken seriously, he would seem to have been born in 1332 and to have written the poem c. 1362. In 1395 it was still being revised, though whether by the original author or by other writers scholars are not agreed. There are thus three different texts: the "A" text, the shortest (written c. 1362); the "B" text, adding ten cantos and improving by revisions the original (dating c. 1377); and the "C" text, altering and transposing the verses of the "B" text (c. 1394). Majority opinion inclines to consider all versions the work of one man; but Professor Manly has argued that the three texts represent the work of five successive men.

For the dream-vision setting of his allegory, as well as for his scathing attacks on the corruption of the clergy, the author has precedent in *The Romance of the Rose* (cf. *above*). The work is divided into four subject-sections: The Vision of Piers,—the world of affairs; the Life of Do Well,—the world of morality; the Life of Do Better,—the world of the Clergy; and the Life of Do Best,—the Unity of the Church.

Although a contemporary of Chaucer, the author of *Piers the Plowman* belongs to another tradition. He writes in the racy speech of the country, in a blunt style that seems unconcerned with attracting such a courtly audience as was Chaucer's. Where Chaucer is urbane, this man is filled with indignation and is undisguisedly a reformer. Even in his form, he turns his back upon all the elegant French models, preferring to use the unrhymed Old English alliterative line. He seems as careful to avoid sweetness in his verse as Chaucer is to capture it. The humanism which made Chaucer a modern, leaves him untouched; as a poet he is thoroughly of the Middle Ages.

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[1] bier.
[2] must.
[3] steersman.
[4] close.
[5] The reference is to Henry IV, who became king September 30, 1399. A few days later Chaucer's pension was doubled. For the mythical conquest of Britain by Brut, see *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* line 1 and note.

He wrote as much for the man in the street as for the nobility. Anger, pity, excoriation, and exaltation cross his pages, in the search for the Good Life that leads him to depict vividly scenes of destitution, idleness, debauchery, and strife. He was fully conscious of those social injustices which led to the Peasant Revolt under Wat Tyler in 1381, when for a moment the foundations of London society seemed to rock. Everywhere he saw greed and idleness destroying the basis of life; in a society that called itself Christian he found little that Christ could approve. Indeed Christ is depicted in his poem as a humble tiller of the soil; for all who seek salvation, the poet counsels work—as Carlyle was to do centuries later.

However primitive he is as an artist, this poet seems startlingly modern in his sensitiveness to social oppression. He is forecaster of those seventeenth-century Puritans who fought for democracy. In fact, he actually proposes a parliamentary government to control the king for the public welfare.

The authoritative edition is W. W. Skeat's (1886). An excellent translation was made by H. W. Wells (1935). The translation of the Prologue we print by kind permission of Houghton Mifflin Co., from Neilson and Webster's *Chief British Poets of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (1916).

The Vision of William Concerning Piers the Plowman

Version A

Prologue

(Translated by W. A. Neilson and K. G. T. Webster)

In a summer season, when soft was the sun,
I clad me in rough clothing, a shepherd as I were;
In habit of a hermit, unholy of works,
Went I wide in this world, wonders to hear.
But on a May morning on Malvern Hills
To me befell a marvel, a fairy thing methought.
I was weary of wandering and went me to rest
Under a broad bank by a burn side;
And as I lay and leaned and looked on the waters,
I slumbered in a sleep, it sounded so pleasant.
Then did I dream a marvelous dream,
That I was in a wilderness, wist I not where;
And as I beheld into the east, on high to the sun,
I saw a tower on a hill-top, splendidly fashioned;
A deep dale beneath, a dungeon therein,
With a deep ditch and dark, and dreadful to see.
A fair field full of folk found I there between,
Of all manner of men, the mean and the rich,
Working and wandering, as the world requireth.
Some put them to the plow, and played full seldom,
In plowing and sowing produced they full hardly
What many of these wasters in gluttony destroy.
And some gave themselves to pride, appareled them accordingly,
In fashion of clothing strangely disguised.
To prayer and to penance put themselves many,
For love of our Lord lived they full hard,
In hope to have the bliss of heaven's kingdom,
As anchorites and hermits that hold themselves in cells,
Covet not in the country to gad all about,
With luxurious living their body to please.
And some chose trade, to prosper the better,
As it seems to our sight that such men should;
And some mirth to make, as minstrels can,
And get gold with their glee, guiltless, I trow.
But jesters and buffoons, Judas's children,
Found for themselves fantasies and of themselves fools made,
Yet have their wits at command, to work if they will.
What Paul preached of them I dare not prove here;
Qui loquitur turpiloquium,[1] he is Lucifer's servant.
Askers and beggars fast about flitted,
Till their bags and their bellies brimful were crammed;
Feigned for their food, fought at the ale-house;
In gluttony, God wot, go they to bed
And rise up with ribaldry, these bullying beggar-knaves;

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[1] Whoso speaketh shameful speech.

Sleep and sloth follow them ever.
Pilgrims and palmers pledge themselves together
To seek the shrine of St. James and saints at Rome;
Went forth in their way with many wise tales,
And had leave to lie all their life after.
Hermits in a band with hooked staves
Went to Walsingham, and their wenches after.
Great lubbers and long, that loath were to work,
Clothed themselves in capes to be known for brethren,
And some dressed as hermits their ease to have.
I found there friars, all the four orders,
Preaching to the people for profit of their bellies,
Interpreting the gospel as they well please,
For covetousness of capes construe it ill;
For many of these masters may clothe themselves at will,
For money and their merchandise meet oft together.
Since Charity hath turned trader, and shriven chiefly lords,
Many wonders have befallen in these few years.
Unless Holy Church now be better held together
The most mischief on earth will mount up fast.
There preached a pardoner, as he a priest were,
And brought up a bull with bishop's seals,
And said he himself would absolve them all
From breach of fasting and broken vows.
The laymen liked him well, believed his speech,
And came up kneeling and kissed his bull;
He banged them with his brevet, and bleared their eyes,
And purchased with his parchment rings and brooches.
Thus ye give your gold gluttony to help,
And grant it to rascals that run after lechery.
Were the bishop holy and worth both his ears,
They should not be so brazen to deceive so the people.
Yet it is not against the bishop that the knave preacheth;
But the parish priest and pardoner share the silver
That the poor parishioners should have but for them.
Parsons and parish priests complain to their bishops
That their parish hath been poor since the pestilence-time,
And ask leave and licence at London to dwell
To sing there for simony, for silver is sweet.
There hang about a hundred in hoods of silk,
Sergeants, it seems, to serve at the bar;
Plead at the law for pence and for pounds,
Not for love of our Lord unloose their lips once.
Thou mightest better measure the mist on Malvern hills
Than get a mum of their mouth till money be shown.
I saw there bishops bold and bachelors of divinity
Become clerks of account, the king to serve;
Archdeacons and deacons, that dignity have
To preach to the people and poor men to feed,
Have leapt to London, by leave of their bishops,
To be clerks of the King's Bench, to the country's hurt.
Barons and burgesses, and husbandmen also,
I saw in that assembly, as ye shall hear hereafter.
Bakers, butchers, and brewers many,
Woollen weavers, and weavers of linen,
Tailors, tanners, and fullers also,
Masons, miners, and many other crafts,
Ditchers and delvers, that do their work ill.
And drive forth the long day with "Dieu vous sauve, dame Emma."
Cooks and their boys cry "Hot pies, hot!
Good geese and pigs, go dine, go dine!"
Taverners to them told the same tale
With good wine of Gascony and wine of Alsace,
Of Rhine and of Rochelle, the roast to digest.
All this I saw sleeping, and seven times more.

Sir Thomas Malory

(-?-1471)

Some years after the invention of printing from movable types, William Caxton (1422?-1491?) set up his printing press in England and became the first English printer when he issued in London *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers* in 1477. Eight years later he published the first great piece of English literary prose, *Morte Darthur.* Discounting our modernization of the spelling, the student will find the following pages from Malory differing little from modern English in vocabulary, and he may well ask how the language could have changed so much in the sixty-nine years following Chaucer's death,—for *Morte Darthur* was finished in 1469. The fact is that English ceased changing with its former rapidity from the time of Caxton partly because of the printing of books. Manuscripts were expensive and naturally limited in number by the labor involved in making them; and while the first printed books were not cheap, they cost very much less. Thus literature immediately became more widely disseminated. Printing assured uniformity in all copies of an edition, and the language began slowly to be standardized. Of course, other forces were to aid in the process of stabilizing the language; but printing was one of the most important, and the earliest.

If the Sir Thomas Malory who wrote *Morte Darthur* was, as he seems to have been, the knight of that name who served in France under the Earl of Warwick, he led a luckless life, the embroilments of which caused him to spend his last twenty years in prison. Beyond a few details, we know nothing of him but his great book.

When we consider that the original Arthur, if he lived at all, must have been a semi-barbaric Celtic chief, it is astonishing to behold the flower of Christian knighthood he has become when Malory has done with him. But the perspective with which we view the past we owe to the comparatively modern science of history. The medieval imagination inevitably conceived remoter times in terms of its own civilization. Turn to the medieval paintings of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, and you will find them always garbed as medieval knight and lady, set against medieval buildings. Even in the Renaissance, Antony and Cleopatra on the stage were more like Elizabethan gentleman and lady than ancient Romans. And so, as the legends about Arthur accumulated, each writer made his figure more glowing in such terms as a medieval audience would best understand. Since Arthurian legendry grew in the period that saw the development of chivalry to the height of elaborateness, from Geoffrey through Wace, Layamon, the romances, and Malory (cf. Introduction to *Middle English Literature, above*), it is as the most chivalrous of knights that Arthur finally emerges.

Malory is a compiler of most of the writings about Arthur in French and English. Tracing the career of its hero and the knights attending him, from Arthur's birth to his death, Malory's book becomes for future writers an invaluable source. It was well known, among other poets, to Tennyson, Morris, and Swinburne. It is also the first piece of English poetic prose, for Malory's limpid style has cadences delicious to the ear. Its delicate grace seems perfect for its author's almost nostalgic evocation of a golden age. For even as he was writing, the institution of chivalry had already passed its prime. Medieval England, torn by civil wars, was dying, and a new century would find a new England.

We print the chapters recounting Arthur's last fight and death. When Book XXI opens, Launcelot has fled to his own castle after the discovery of his guilty love for the Queen, and Sir Mordred has collected the disaffected knights and set himself up as king.

The standard edition is H. O. Sommer's (1889-1891) in three volumes, an exact reprint of Caxton. E. Vinaver's *Malory* (1929) is an excellent commentary.

Le Morte Darthur

Book XXI

CHAPTER I

How Sir Mordred presumed and took on him to be King of England, and would have married the Queen, his uncle's wife

As Sir Mordred was ruler of all England, he did do make letters as though that they came from beyond the sea, and the letters specified that King Arthur was slain in battle with Sir Launcelot. Wherefore Sir Mordred made a parliament, and called the lords together, and there he made them to choose him king; and so he was crowned at Canterbury, and held a feast there fifteen days; and afterward he drew him unto Winchester, and there he took the Queen Guenever, and said plainly that he would wed her which was his uncle's wife and his father's wife. And so he made ready for the feast, and a day prefixed that they should be wedded; wherefore Queen Guenever was passing heavy. But she durst not discover her heart, but spake fair, and agreed to Sir Mordred's will. Then she desired of Sir Mordred for to go to London, to buy all manner of things that longed unto the wedding. And because of her fair speech Sir Mordred trusted her well enough, and gave her leave to go. And so when she came to London she took the Tower of London, and suddenly in all haste possible she stuffed it with all manner of victual, and well garnished it with men, and so kept it. Then when Sir Mordred wist and understood how he was beguiled, he was passing wroth out of measure. And a short tale for to make, he went and laid a mighty siege about the Tower of London, and made many great assaults thereat, and threw many great engines unto them, and shot great guns. But all might not prevail Sir Mordred, for Queen Guenever would never for fair speech nor for foul, would never trust to come in his hands again. Then came the Bishop of Canterbury, the which was a noble clerk and an holy man, and thus he said to Sir Mordred: "Sir, what will ye do? will ye first displease God and sithen shame yourself, and all knighthood? Is not King Arthur your uncle, no farther but your mother's brother, and on her himself King Arthur begat you upon his own sister,[1] therefore how may you wed your father's wife?" "Sir," said the noble clerk, "leave this opinion or I shall curse you with book and bell and candle." "Do thou thy worst," said Sir Mordred, "wit thou well I shall defy thee." "Sir," said the Bishop, "and wit you well I shall not fear me to do that me ought to do. Also where ye noise where my lord Arthur is slain, and that is not so, and therefore ye will make a foul work in this land." "Peace, thou false priest," said Sir Mordred, "for an thou chafe me any more I shall make strike off thy head." So the Bishop departed and did the cursing in the most orgulist[2] wise that might be done. And then Sir Mordred sought the Bishop of Canterbury, for to have slain him. Then the Bishop fled, and took part of his goods with him, and went nigh unto Glastonbury; and there he was as priest hermit in a chapel, and lived in poverty and in holy prayers, for well he understood that mischievous war was at hand. Then Sir Mordred sought on Queen Guenever by letters and sonds,[3] and by fair means and foul means, for to have her to come out of the Tower of London; but all this availed not, for she answered him shortly, openly and privily, that she had liefer slay herself than to be married with him. Then came word to Sir Mordred that King Arthur had araised the siege for Sir Launcelot, and he was coming homeward with a great host, to be avenged upon Sir Mordred; wherefore Sir Mordred made write writs to all the barony of this land, and much people drew to him. For then was the common voice among them that with Arthur was none other life but war and strife, and with Sir Mordred was great joy and bliss. Thus was Sir Arthur depraved, and evil said of. And many there were that King Arthur had made up of nought, and given them lands, might not then say him a good word. Lo ye all Englishmen, see ye not what a mischief here was! for he that was the most king and knight of the world, and most loved the fellowship of noble knights, and by him they were all upholden, now might not these Englishmen hold them content with him. Lo thus was the old custom and usage of this land; and also men say that we of this land have not yet lost nor forgotten that custom and usage. Alas, this is a great default of us Englishmen, for there may no thing please us no term. And so fared the people at that time, they were better pleased with Sir Mordred than they were with King Arthur; and much people drew unto Sir Mordred, and said they would abide with him for better and for worse. And so Sir Mordred drew with a great host to Dover, for there he heard say that Sir Arthur would arrive, and so he thought to beat his own father from his lands; and the most part of all England held with Sir Mordred, the people were so new-fangle.

CHAPTER II

How after that King Arthur had tidings, he returned and came to Dover, where Sir Mordred met him to let his landing; and of the death of Sir Gawaine

And so as Sir Mordred was at Dover with his host, there came King Arthur with a great navy of ships, and galleys, and carracks. And there was Sir Mordred ready awaiting upon his landing, to let[4] his own father to land upon the land that he was king over. Then there was launching of great boats and small, and full of noble men of arms; and there was much slaughter of gentle knights, and many a full bold baron was laid full low, on both parties. But King Arthur was so courageous that there might no manner of knights let him to land, and his knights fiercely followed him; and so they landed maugre[5] Sir Mordred and all his power, and put Sir Mordred aback, that he fled and all his people. So when this battle was done, King Arthur let bury his people that were dead. And then was noble Sir Gawaine found in a great boat, lying more than half dead. When Sir Arthur wist that Sir Gawaine was laid so low, he went unto him; and there the king made sorrow out of measure, and took Sir Gawaine in his arms, and thrice he there swooned. And then when he awaked, he said: "Alas, Sir Gawaine, my sister's son, here now thou liest, the man in the world that I loved most; and now is my joy gone, for now, my nephew Sir Gawaine, I will discover me unto your person: in Sir Launcelot and you I most had my joy, and mine affiance, and now have I lost my joy of you both; wherefore all mine earthly joy is gone from me." "Mine uncle King Arthur," said Sir Gawaine, "wit you well my death-day is come, and all is through mine own hastiness and wilfulness; for I am smitten upon the old wound the which Sir Launcelot gave me, on the which I feel well I must die; and had Sir Launcelot been with you as he was, this unhappy war had never begun; and of all this am I causer, for Sir Launcelot and his blood, through their prowess, held all your cankered enemies in subjection and daunger. And now," said Sir Gawaine, "we shall miss Sir Launcelot. But alas, I would not accord with him, and therefore," said Sir Gawaine, "I pray you, fair uncle, that I may have paper, pen, and ink, that I may write to Sir Launcelot a cedle[6] with mine own hands." And then when paper and ink was brought, then Gawaine was set up weakly by King Arthur, for he was shriven a little to-fore; and then he wrote thus, as the French book maketh mention: "Unto Sir Launcelot, flower of all noble knights that ever I heard of or saw by my days, I, Sir Gawaine, King Lot's son of Orkney, sister's son unto the noble King Arthur, send thee greeting, and let thee have knowledge that the tenth day of May I was smitten upon the old wound that thou gavest me afore the city of Benwick, and through the same wound that thou gavest me I am come to my death-day. And I will that all the world wit, that I, Sir Gawaine, knight of the Table Round, sought my death, and not through thy deserving, but it was mine own seeking; wherefore I beseech thee, Sir Launcelot, to return again unto this realm, and see my tomb, and pray some prayer, more or less, for my soul. And this same day that I wrote this cedle, I was hurt to the death in the same wound, the which I had of thy hand, Sir Launcelot; for of a more nobler man might I not be slain. Also, Sir Launcelot, for all the love that ever was betwixt us, make no tarrying, but come over the sea in all haste, that thou mayest with thy noble knights rescue that noble king that made thee knight, that is my lord Arthur; for he is full straitly bestead with a false traitor, that is my half-brother, Sir Mordred; and he hath let crown him king, and would have wedded my lady Queen Guenever, and so had he done had she not put herself in the Tower of London. And so the tenth day of May last past, my lord Arthur and we all landed upon them at Dover; and there we put that false traitor, Sir Mordred, to flight, and there it misfortuned me to be stricken upon thy stroke. And at the date of this letter was written, but two hours and a half afore my death, written with mine own hand, and so subscribed with part of my heart's blood. And I require thee, most famous knight of the world, that thou wilt see my tomb." And then Sir Gawaine wept, and King Arthur wept; and then they swooned both. And when they awaked both, the king made Sir Gawaine to receive his Saviour. And then Sir Gawaine prayed the king for to send for Sir Launcelot, and to cherish him above all other knights. And so at the hour of noon Sir Gawaine yielded up the spirit; and then the king let inter him in a chapel within Dover Castle; and there yet all men may see the skull of him, and the same wound is seen that Sir Launcelot gave him in battle. Then was it told the king that Sir Mordred was quartered in a new field upon Barham Down. And upon the morn the king rode thither to him, and there was a great battle betwixt them, and many people were slain on both sides, but at the last Sir Arthur's party stood best, and Sir Mordred and his party fled unto Canterbury.

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[1] Mordred was the illegitimate son of Arthur, and his mother was Arthur's half-sister, though Arthur was ignorant of this fact at the time.

[2] haughtiest.

[3] messengers.

[4] prevent.

CHAPTER III

How after, Sir Gawaine's ghost appeared to King Arthur, and warned him that he should not fight that day

And then the king let search all the towns for his knights that were slain, and interred them; and salved them with soft salves that so sore were wounded. Then many people drew unto King Arthur. And then they said that Sir Mordred warred upon King Arthur with wrong. And then King Arthur drew him with his host down by the seaside westward toward Salisbury; and there was a day assigned betwixt King Arthur and Sir Mordred, that they should meet upon a down beside Salisbury, and not far from the seaside; and this day was assigned on a Monday after Trinity Sunday, whereof King Arthur was passing glad, that he might be avenged upon Sir Mordred. Then Sir Mordred araised much people about London, for they of Kent, Southsex, and Surrey, Estsex, and of Southfolk, and of Northfolk, held the most part with Sir Mordred; and many a full noble knight drew unto Sir Mordred and to the king: but they that loved Sir Launcelot drew unto Sir Mordred. So upon Trinity Sunday at night, King Arthur dreamed a wonderful dream, and that was this: that him seemed he sat upon a chaflet[7] in a chair, and the chair was fast to a wheel, and thereupon sat King Arthur in the richest cloth of gold that might be made; and the king thought there was under him, far from him, an hideous deep black water, and therein were all manner of serpents, and worms, and wild beasts, foul and horrible; and suddenly the king thought the wheel turned up-so-down, and he fell among the serpents, and every beast took him by a limb; and then the king cried as he lay in his bed and slept: "Help." And then knights, squires, and yeomen awaked the king; and then he was so amazed that he wist not where he was; and then he fell a-slumbering again, not sleeping nor thoroughly waking. So the king seemed verily that there came Sir Gawaine unto him with a number of fair ladies with him. And when King Arthur saw him, then he said: "Welcome, my sister's son; I weened thou hadst been dead, and now I see thee alive, much am I beholding unto almighty Jesu. O fair nephew and my sister's son, what be these ladies that hither be come with you?" "Sir," said Sir Gawaine, "all these be ladies for whom I have foughten when I was man living, and all these are those that I did battle for in righteous quarrel; and God hath given them that grace at their great prayer, because I did battle for them, that they should bring me hither unto you: thus much hath God given me leave, for to warn you of your death; for an ye fight as to-morn with Sir Mordred, as ye both have assigned, doubt ye not ye must be slain, and the most part of your people on both parties. And for the great grace and goodness that Almighty Jesu hath unto you, and for pity of you, and many more other good men there shall be slain, God hath sent me to you of his special grace, to give you warning that in no wise ye do battle as to-morn, but that ye take a treaty for a month day; and proffer you largely, so as to-morn to be put in a delay. For within a month shall come Sir Launcelot with all his noble knights, and rescue you worshipfully, and slay Sir Mordred, and all that ever will hold with him." Then Sir Gawaine and all the ladies vanished.

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[5] in spite of.

[6] note.

And anon the king called upon his knights, squires, and yeomen, and charged them wightly[8] to fetch his noble lords and wise bishops unto him. And when they were come, the king told them his avision, what Sir Gawaine had told him, and warned him that if he fought on the morn he should be slain. Then the king commanded Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, with two bishops with them, and charged them in any wise, an they might, "Take a treaty for a month day with Sir Mordred, and spare not, proffer him lands and goods as much as ye think best." So then they departed, and came to Sir Mordred, where he had a grim host of an hundred thousand men. And there they entreated Sir Mordred long time; and at the last Sir Mordred was agreed for to have Cornwall and Kent, by Arthur's days: after, all England, after the days of King Arthur.

CHAPTER IV

How by misadventure of an adder the battle began, where Mordred was slain, and Arthur hurt to the death

Then were they condescended[9] that King Arthur and Sir Mordred should meet betwixt both their hosts, and everych of them should bring fourteen persons; and they came with this word unto Arthur. Then said he: "I am glad that this is done:" and so he went into the field. And when Arthur should depart, he warned all his host that an they see any sword drawn: "Look ye come on fiercely, and slay that traitor, Sir Mordred, for I in no wise trust him." In like wise Sir Mordred warned his host that: "An ye see any sword drawn, look that ye come on fiercely, and so slay all that ever before you standeth; for in no wise I will not trust for this treaty, for I know well my father will be avenged on me." And so they met as their appointment was, and so they were agreed and accorded thoroughly; and wine was fetched, and they drank. Right soon came an adder out of a little heath bush, and it stung a knight on the foot. And when the knight felt him stung, he looked down and saw the adder, and then he drew his sword to slay the adder, and thought of none other harm. And when the host on both parties saw that sword drawn, then they blew beams, trumpets, and horns, and shouted grimly. And so both hosts dressed them together. And King Arthur took his horse, and said: "Alas, this unhappy day!" and so rode to his party. And Sir Mordred in like wise. And never was there seen a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land; for there was but rushing and riding, foining[10] and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke. But ever King Arthur rode throughout the battle of Sir Mordred many times, and did full nobly as a noble king should, and at all times he fainted never; and Sir Mordred that day put him in devoir, and in great peril. And thus they fought all the long day, and never stinted till the noble knights were laid to the cold earth; and ever they fought still till it was near night, and by that time was there an hundred thousand laid dead upon the down. Then was Arthur wood[11] wroth out of measure, when he saw his people so slain from him.

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[7] platform.

[8] swiftly.

[9] agreed.

Then the king looked about him, and then was he ware, of all his host and of all his good knights, were left no more alive but two knights; that one was Sir Lucan the Butler, and his brother Sir Bedivere, and they were full sore wounded. "Jesu mercy," said the king, "where are all my noble knights become? Alas that ever I should see this doleful day, for now," said Arthur, "I am come to mine end. But would to God that I wist[12] where were that traitor Sir Mordred, that hath caused all this mischief." Then was King Arthur ware where Sir Mordred leaned upon his sword among a great heap of dead men. "Now give me my spear," said Arthur unto Sir Lucan, "for yonder I have espied the traitor that all this woe hath wrought." "Sir, let him be," said Sir Lucan, "for he is unhappy;[13] and if ye pass this unhappy day, ye shall be right well revenged upon him. Good lord, remember ye of your night's dream, and what the spirit of Sir Gawaine told you this night, yet God of his great goodness hath preserved you hitherto. Therefore, for God's sake, my lord, leave off by this, for, blessed be God, ye have won the field, for here we be three alive, and with Sir Mordred is none alive; and if ye leave off now, this wicked day of destiny is past." "Tide me death, betide me life," saith the king, "now I see him yonder alone he shall never escape mine hands, for at a better avail shall I never have him." "God speed you well," said Sir Bedivere.

Then the king gat his spear in both his hands, and ran toward Sir Mordred, crying: "Traitor, now is thy death-day come." And when Sir Mordred heard Sir Arthur, he ran until him with his sword drawn in his hand. And there King Arthur smote Sir Mordred under the shield, with a foin of his spear, throughout the body, more than a fathom. And when Sir Mordred felt that he had his death wound, he thrust himself with the might that he had up to the bur of King Arthur's spear. And right so he smote his father Arthur, with his sword holden in both his hands, on the side of the head, that the sword pierced the helmet and the brainpan, and therewithal Sir Mordred fell stark dead to the earth; and the noble Arthur fell in a swoon to the earth, and there he swooned ofttimes. And Sir Lucan the Butler and Sir Bedivere ofttimes heaved him up. And so weakly they led him betwixt them both, to a little chapel not far from the seaside. And when the king was there he thought him well eased. Then heard they people cry in the field. "Now go thou, Sir Lucan," said the king, "and do me to wit[14] what betokens that noise in the field." So Sir Lucan departed, for he was grievously wounded in many places. And so as he yede,[15] he saw and hearkened by the moonlight, how that pillers[16] and robbers were come into the field, to pill and to rob many a full noble knight of brooches, and beads, of many a good ring, and of many a rich jewel; and who that were not dead all out, there they slew them for their harness and their riches. When Sir Lucan understood this work, he came to the king as soon as he might, and told him all what he had heard and seen. "Therefore by my rede," said Sir Lucan, "it is best that we bring you to some town." "I would it were so," said the king.

CHAPTER V

How King Arthur commanded to cast his sword Excalibur into the water, and how he was delivered to ladies in a barge

"But I may not stand, mine head works so. Ah

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[10] thrusting. [11] mad. [12] knew. [13] a bad omen.

[14] let me know. [15] went. [16] pillagers.

Sir Launcelot," said King Arthur, "this day have I sore missed thee: alas, that ever I was against thee, for now have I my death, whereof Sir Gawaine me warned in my dream." Then Sir Lucan took up the king the one part, and Sir Bedivere the other part, and in the lifting the king swooned; and Sir Lucan fell in a swoon with the lift, that the part of his guts fell out of his body, and therewith the noble knight's heart brast. And when the king awoke, he beheld Sir Lucan, how he lay foaming at the mouth, and part of his guts lay at his feet. "Alas," said the king, "this is to me a full heavy sight, to see this noble duke so die for my sake, for he would have holpen me, that had more need of help than I. Alas, he would not complain him, his heart was so set to help me: now Jesu have mercy upon his soul!" Then Sir Bedivere wept for the death of his brother. "Leave this mourning and weeping," said the king, "for all this will not avail me, for wit thou well an[17] I might live myself, the death of Sir Lucan would grieve me evermore; but my time hieth fast," said the king. "Therefore," said Arthur unto Sir Bedivere, "take thou Excalibur, my good sword, and go with it to yonder water side, and when thou comest there I charge thee throw my sword in that water, and come again and tell me what thou there seest." "My lord," said Bedivere, "your commandment shall be done, and lightly bring you word again." So Sir Bedivere departed, and by the way he beheld that noble sword, that the pommel and the haft was all of precious stones; and then he said to himself: "If I throw this rich sword in the water, thereof shall never come good, but harm and loss." And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree. And so, as soon as he might, he came again unto the king, and said he had been at the water, and had thrown the sword in the water. "What saw thou there?" said the king. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but waves and winds." "That is untruly said of thee," said the king, "therefore go thou lightly again, and do my commandment; as thou art to me lief and dear, spare not, but throw it in." Then Sir Bedivere returned again, and took the sword in his hand; and then him thought sin and shame to throw away that noble sword, and so eft[18] he hid the sword, and returned again, and told to the king that he had been at the water, and done his commandment. "What saw thou there?" said the king. "Sir," he said, "I saw nothing but the waters wap[19] and waves wan." "Ah, traitor untrue," said King Arthur, "now hast thou betrayed me twice. Who would have weened that, thou that hast been to me so lief and dear? and thou art named a noble knight, and would betray me for the richness of the sword. But now go again lightly, for thy long tarrying putteth me in great jeopardy of my life, for I have taken cold. And but if thou do now as I bid thee, if ever I may see thee, I shall slay thee with mine own hands; for thou wouldst for my rich sword see me dead." Then Sir Bedivere departed, and went to the sword, and lightly took it up, and went to the water side; and there he bound the girdle about the hilt, and then he threw the sword as far into the water, as he might; and there came an arm and an hand above the water and met it, and caught it, and so shook it thrice and brandished, and then vanished away the hand with the sword in the water. So Sir Bedivere came again to the king, and told him what he saw. "Alas," said the king, "help me hence, for I dread me I have tarried over long." Then Sir Bedivere took the king upon his back, and so went with him to that water side. And when they were at the water side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. "Now put me into the barge," said the king. And so he did softly; and there received him three queens with great mourning; and so they set them down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head. And then that queen said: "Ah, dear brother, why have ye tarried so long from me? alas, this wound on your head hath caught overmuch cold." And so then they rowed from the land, and Sir Bedivere beheld all those ladies go from him. Then Sir Bedivere cried: "Ah my lord Arthur, what shall become of me, now ye go from me and leave me here alone among mine enemies?" "Comfort thyself," said the king, "and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in, for I will into the vale of Avilion to heal me of my grievous wound: and if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul." But ever the queens and ladies wept and shrieked, that it was pity to hear. And as soon as Sir Bedivere had lost the sight of the barge, he wept and wailed, and so took the forest; and so he went all that night, and in the morning he was ware betwixt two holts hoar,[20] of a chapel and an hermitage.

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[17] if.

[18] again.

[19] ripple.

[20] gray woods.

CHAPTER VI

How Sir Bedivere found him on the morrow dead in an hermitage, and how he abode there with the hermit.

Then was Sir Bedivere glad, and thither he went; and when he came into the chapel, he saw where lay an hermit grovelling on all four, there fast by a tomb was new graven. When the hermit saw Sir Bedivere he knew him well, for he was but little to-fore Bishop of Canterbury, that Sir Mordred flemed.[21] "Sir," said Bedivere, "what man is there interred that ye pray so fast for?" "Fair son," said the hermit, "I wot not verily, but by deeming.[22] But this night, at midnight, here came a number of ladies, and brought hither a dead corpse, and prayed me to bury him; and here they offered an hundred tapers, and they gave me an hundred besants." "Alas," said Sir Bedivere, "that was my lord King Arthur, that here lieth buried in this chapel." Then Sir Bedivere swooned; and when he awoke he prayed the hermit he might abide with him still there, to live with fasting and prayers. "For from hence will I never go," said Sir Bedivere, "by my will, but all the days of my life here to pray for my lord Arthur." "Ye are welcome to me," said the hermit, "for I know ye better than ye ween that I do. Ye are the bold Bedivere, and the full noble duke, Sir Lucan the Butler, was your brother." Then Sir Bedivere told the hermit all as ye have heard to-fore. So there bode Sir Bedivere with the hermit that was to-fore Bishop of Canterbury, and there Sir Bedivere put upon him poor clothes, and served the hermit full lowly in fasting and in prayers. Thus of Arthur I find never more written in books that be authorised, nor more of the very certainty of his death heard I never read, but thus was he led away in a ship wherein were three queens; that one was King Arthur's sister, Queen Morgan le Fay; the other was the Queen of Northgalis; the third was the Queen of the Waste Lands. Also there was Nimue, the chief lady of the lake, that had wedded Pelleas the good knight; and this lady had done much for King Arthur, for she would never suffer Sir Pelleas to be in no place where he should be in danger of his life; and so he lived to the uttermost of his days with her in great rest. More of the death of King Arthur could I never find, but that ladies brought him to his burials; and such one was buried there, that the hermit bare witness that sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, but yet the hermit knew not in certain that he was verily the body of King Arthur: for this tale Sir Bedivere, knight of the Table Round, made it to be written.

CHAPTER VII

Of the opinion of some men of the death of King Arthur.

Yet some men say in many parts of England that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of our Lord Jesu into another place; and men say that he shall come again, and he shall win the holy cross. I will not say it shall be so, but rather I will say: here in this world he changed his life. But many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus.*[23]

Everyman

The golden age of Athens saw drama raised to one of its highest points of development in the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and in the comedies of Aristophanes. In Rome, Terence and Plautus followed the model of a lesser Greek comic dramatist, Menander; and Seneca, succeeding only in being pompous, tried to continue the dignified art of Euripides. But all the Greek and Roman plays were lost to the public in the Dark Ages succeeding the collapse of Roman civilization. It is true that in monasteries the plays of Terence were treasured as models of style; but they were given no public representation. As though the drama of antiquity had never existed, a new native drama was born in the early Middle Ages. Not till the Renaissance was classical drama to exert an influence on playwrights.

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[21] terrified.

[22] I do not truly know but have an only opinion.

[23] Here lies Arthur, formerly King, and King to be.

The origins of medieval drama can be traced to elaborations of the Mass at Easter. Since there was one Church, the history of these beginnings is common to most European drama. At first bits of musical dialogue accompanied by some symbolic action, were interpolated in the services with the object of catching the interest of those unskilled in Latin. Next came the dramatization of the Easter and Christmas stories into Latin playlets, the great popularity of which resulted in the rise of the vernacular in place of Latin. With the monks and priests as actors, these primitive plays began to exploit many of the Biblical stories for subject matter. As drama developed, the use of various parts of the Church to suggest the setting, and the great crowds coming to see the plays, made the churchyard more convenient.

This change of locality, which separated the dramatic presentations from the service, sped the secularization of the plays, and passed the drama from the hands of the clergy to those of laymen. It was the guilds who now took up the responsibility of giving the performances. Cycles of plays dramatizing the stories of the Bible were developed by the guilds, each guild presenting one play. Thus the York cycle, containing forty-eight plays, divided them as follows: the shipwrights gave *The Building of the Ark*, the fishers and mariners gave *Noah and the Flood*, the chandlers gave *The Shepherds*, the barbers gave *The Baptism of Christ*, the bakers gave *The Last Supper*, etc.

The actors were amateurs who presented their play on a wagon in a square of the town. When the particular play was over, the wagon, making room for the next play, was drawn to another square for other spectators. These plays on the Bible and the lives of the saints are known as *mystery* (derived probably from a word meaning *trade*) or *miracle* plays. The names were used interchangeably in England. After a time, certain elements of comedy found their way into plays that had once been strictly religious. For instance, in the Wakefield *Second Shepherds' Play*, dealing with the birth of Christ, a fresh racy sub-plot of the stealing of a sheep and its concealment in a cradle has delightful touches of homely realism; the shepherds, so far from being Palestinian, are credible English countryfolk. Again in the Chester *Deluge*, we find Noah's wife unwilling to enter the Ark unless she can take along her "gossips"; she tells Noah that if her friends can't come, he can "rowe forth" where he pleases and get himself a new wife; Noah has to force her into the Ark and is rewarded with a slap; here again the realism of a domestic quarrel breaks in upon the sacredness of the subject. And it is perhaps these very irrelevancies that are historically the most important parts of the miracle plays, for they bequeathed to English drama two important characteristics: a concern with the values of human experience, and a taste for mixing the comic with the serious.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw the full development of the miracles. It was towards the end of this period that a new type of play appeared, the *morality*. Allegorical in manner, these were longer than the miracles, often divided into acts and scenes, and were usually performed by professionals. The persons of the morality plays were abstract qualities, so dear to the medieval mind. The typical plot was the attempt of evil forces to overcome Humanum Genus or Mankind, and his rescue by Wisdom or Conscience. In these plays, too, humor intrudes often upon the scene, and the allegorical abstractions tend to become recognizable contemporary failings and qualities. Moreover, in technique the moralities show a marked advance over the miracles. In short, drama was moving towards its adulthood.

Of all the moralities, the most famous is *Everyman*, written near the end of the fifteenth century. A corresponding Dutch play *Elckerlijk* may be its source or may have been taken from it; which is the case, we do not know. As a drama it is both superior to most of the moralities and typical of many of them. Poetically *Everyman* ranks high among early dramas, and must be considered one of the masterpieces of fifteenth century literature.

In a work like ours, no more than such a sketch of medieval drama as we have attempted, can be expected. The scholarship on the period, however, is rich. Among the best works are: K. Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church,* two volumes (1933); E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage,* two volumes (1903); E. H. Moore, *English Miracle Plays and Moralities* (1907); W. R. Mackenzie, *The English Moralities* (1914); and A. W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes* (1923). An excellent anthology of early drama is J. Q. Adams, *Chief Pre-Shakespearean Dramatists* (1924). A valuable short history of English drama is A. Nicoll, *British Drama* (1925).

CHARACTERS

Everyman
God: Adonai
Death
Messenger
Fellowship
Cousin
Kindred
Goods
Good-Deeds
Strength
Discretion
Five-Wits
Beauty
Knowledge
Confession
Angel
Doctor

Here beginneth a treatise how the High Father of Heaven sendeth death to summon every creature to come and give account of their lives in this world and is in manner of a moral play.

Messenger. I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play—
The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wondrous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith,—Man, in the beginning,
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay!
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall you see how *Fellowship* and *Jollity,*
Both *Strength, Pleasure,* and *Beauty,*
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For ye shall hear, how our Heaven King
Calleth *Everyman* to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.
God. I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly[1] sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod;
My law that I showed, when I for them died,
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head:
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me.
They use the seven deadly sins damnable;
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable;
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company;
Everyman liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appaireth fast,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of Everyman's person;
For and I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts;
For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they all do clean forget.
I hoped well that Everyman
In my glory should make his mansion,
And thereto I had them all elect;
But now I see, like traitors deject,
They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I them have lent;
I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
And few there be that asketh it heartily;
They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
That needs on them I must do justice,
On Everyman living without fear.
Where art thou, *Death,* thou mighty messenger?
Death. Almighty God, I am here at your will,
Your commandment to fulfil.
God. Go thou to *Everyman,*
And show him in my name
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;
And that he bring with him a sure reckoning

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[1] spiritual.

Without delay or any tarrying.
Death. Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
And cruelly outsearch both great and small;
Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly:
He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,
Except that alms be his good friend,
In hell for to dwell, world without end.
Lo, yonder I see *Everyman* walking;
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure,
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord Heaven King.
Everyman, stand still; whither art thou going
Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker forgot?
Everyman. Why askst thou?
Wouldest thou wete?[2]
Death. Yea, sir, I will show you;
In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.
Everyman. What, sent to me?
Death. Yea, certainly.
Though thou have forgot him here,
He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,
As, or we depart, thou shalt know.
Everyman. What desireth God of me?
Death. That shall I show thee;
A reckoning he will needs have
Without any longer respite.
Everyman. To give a reckoning no longer leisure I crave;
This blind matter troubleth my wit.
Death. On thee thou must take a long journey:
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring;
For turn again thou cannot by no way,
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning:
For before God thou shalt answer, and show
Thy many bad deeds and good but a few;
How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
Before the chief lord of paradise.
Have ado that we were in that way,
For, wete thou well, thou shalt make none attournay.
Everyman. Full unready I am such reckoning to give.
I know thee not: what messenger art thou?
Death. I am *Death,* that no man dreadeth.
For every man I rest and no man spareth;
For it is God's commandment
That all to me should be obedient.
Everyman. O *Death,* thou comest when I had thee least in mind;
In thy power it lieth me to save,
Yet of my good will I give thee, if ye will be kind,
Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,
And defer this matter till another day.
Death. *Everyman,* it may not be by no way;
I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
Nor by pope, emperor, king, duke, nor princes.
For and I would receive gifts great,
All the world I might get;
But my custom is clean contrary.
I give thee no respite: come hence, and not tarry.
Everyman. Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
I may say *Death* giveth no warning:
To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
For all unready is my book of reckoning.
But twelve year and I might have abiding,
My counting book I would make so clear,
That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
Wherefore, *Death,* I pray thee, for God's mercy,
Spare me till I be provided of remedy.
Death. Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray:
But haste thee lightly that you were gone the journey,
And prove thy friends if thou can.
For, wete thou well, the tide abideth no man,
And in the world each living creature
For *Adam's* sin must die of nature.
Everyman. *Death,* if I should this pilgrimage take,
And my reckoning surely make,
Show me, for saint *charity,*
Should I not come again shortly?
Death. No, *Everyman;* and thou be once there,
Thou mayst never more come here,
Trust me verily.
Everyman. O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
Have mercy on me in this most need;
Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?
Death. Yea, if any be so hardy,
That would go with thee and bear thee company.
Hie thee that you were gone to God's magnificence,
Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
What, weenest[3] thou thy life is given thee,
And thy worldly goods also?
Everyman. I had wend so, verily.
Death. Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;

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[2] know.

[3] thinkest. The past participle is *wend.*

For as soon as thou art go,
Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefro
Even as thou hast done.
Everyman, thou art mad; thou hast thy wits five,
And here on earth will not amend thy life,
For suddenly I do come.
EVERYMAN. O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,
That I might scape this endless sorrow!
Now, gentle *Death,* spare me till to-morrow,
That I may amend me
With good advisement.
DEATH. Nay, thereto I will not consent,
Nor no man will I respite,
But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
Without any advisement.
And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
See thou make thee ready shortly,
For thou mayst say this is the day
That no man living may scape away.
EVERYMAN. Alas, I may well weep with sighs deep;
Now have I no manner of company
To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
And also my writing is full unready.
How shall I do now for to excuse me?
I would to God I had never be gete![4]
To my soul a full great profit it had be;
For now I fear pains huge and great.
The time passeth; Lord, help that all wrought;
For though I mourn it availeth nought.
The day passeth, and is almost a-go;
I wot not well what for to do.
To whom were I best my complaint to make?
What, and[5] I to *Fellowship* thereof spake,
And showed him of this sudden chance?
For in him is all mine affiance;
We have in the world so many a day
Be on good friends in sport and play.
I see him yonder, certainly;
I trust that he will bear me company;
Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
Well met, good *Fellowship,* and good morrow!
FELLOWSHIP SPEAKETH. *Everyman,* good morrow by this day.
Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
If any thing be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
That I may help to remedy.
EVERYMAN. Yea, good *Fellowship,* yea,
I am in great jeopardy.
FELLOWSHIP. My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee, unto my life's end,
In the way of good company.
EVERYMAN. That was well spoken, and lovingly.
FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress;
If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee,—
Though that I know before that I should die.
EVERYMAN. Verily, *Fellowship,* gramercy.[6]
FELLOWSHIP. Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw.
Show me your grief, and say no more.
EVERYMAN. If I my heart should to you break,
And then you to turn your mind from me,
And would not me comfort, when you hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.
FELLOWSHIP. Sir, I say as I will do in deed.
EVERYMAN. Then be you a good friend at need:
I have found you true here before.
FELLOWSHIP. And so ye shall evermore;
For, in faith, and thou go to Hell,
I will not forsake thee by the way!
EVERYMAN. Ye speak like a good friend; I believe you well;
I shall deserve it, and I may.
FELLOWSHIP. I speak of no deserving, by this day.
For he that will say and nothing do
Is not worthy with good company to go;
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most loving and kind.
EVERYMAN. I shall show you how it is;
Commanded I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous,
And give a strait count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.
FELLOWSHIP. That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
But, and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain:
Also it make me afeard, certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear a strong man.
EVERYMAN. Why, ye said, If I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, quick nor dead,
Though it were to hell truly.
FELLOWSHIP. So I said, certainly,
But such pleasures be set aside, thee sooth to say:

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[4] been born.
[5] if.
[6] thanks.

And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?
EVERYMAN. Nay, never again till the day of doom.
FELLOWSHIP. In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?
EVERYMAN. Indeed, *Death* was with me here.
FELLOWSHIP. Now, by God that all hath bought,
If *Death* were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath journey—
Not for the father that begat me!
EVERYMAN. Ye promised other wise, pardie.
FELLOWSHIP. I wot well I say so truly;
And yet if thou wilt eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women, the lusty company,
I would not forsake you, while the day is clear,
Trust me verily!
EVERYMAN. Yea, thereto ye would be ready;
To go to mirth, solace, and play,
Your mind will sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.
FELLOWSHIP. Now, in good faith, I will not that way.
But and thou wilt murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good will!
EVERYMAN. O that is a simple advice indeed!
Gentle *fellow*, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need,
And now, gentle *Fellowship*, remember me.
FELLOWSHIP. Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.
EVERYMAN. Yet I pray thee, take the labor, and do so much for me
To bring me forward, for saint charity.
And comfort me till I come without the town.
FELLOWSHIP. Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
I will not a foot with thee go;
But and you had tarried I would not have left thee so.
And as now, God speed thee in thy journey,
For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.
EVERYMAN. Whither away, *Fellowship?* will you forsake me?
FELLOWSHIP. Yea, by my fay, to God I betake thee.
EVERYMAN. Farewell, good *Fellowship*; for this my heart is sore;
Adieu for ever, I shall see thee no more.
FELLOWSHIP. In faith, *Everyman*, farewell now at the end;
For you I will remember that parting is mourning.
EVERYMAN. Alack! shall we thus depart indeed?
Our Lady, help, without any more comfort,
Lo, *Fellowship* forsaketh me in my most need:
For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make;
And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
Which in adversity be full unkind.
Now whither for succor shall I flee,
Since that *Fellowship* hath forsaken me?
To my kinsmen I will truly,
Praying them to help me in my necessity;
I believe that they will do so,
For kind will creep where it may not go.[7]
I will go say, for yonder I see them go.
Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?
KINDRED. Here be we now at your commandment.
Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
In any wise, and not spare.
COUSIN. Yea, *Everyman,* and to us declare
If ye be disposed to go any whither,
For wete you well, we will live and die together.
KINDRED. In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
For over his kin a man may be bold.
EVERYMAN. Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind.
Now shall I show you the grief of my mind:
I was commanded by a messenger,
That is an high king's chief officer;
He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
And I know well I shall never come again;
Also I must give a reckoning straight,
For I have a great enemy, that hath me in wait,
Which intendeth me for to hinder.
KINDRED. What account is that which ye must render?
That would I know.
EVERYMAN. Of all my works I must show
How I have lived and my days spent;
Also of ill deeds, that I have used
In my time, since life was me lent;
And of all virtues that I have refused.
Therefore I pray you go thither with me,
To help to make mine account, for saint *charity.*
COUSIN. What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
Nay, *Everyman,* I had liefer fast bread and water
All this five year and more.
EVERYMAN. Alas, that ever I was bore!

[7] For nature will creep where it is unable to walk.

For now shall I never be merry
If that you forsake me.
Kindred. Ah, sir; what, ye be a merry man!
Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,
As for me, ye shall go alone.
Everyman. My *Cousin*, will you not with me go?
Cousin. No, by our Lady; I have the cramp in my toe.
Trust not to me, for, so God me speed,
I will deceive you in your most need.
Kindred. It availeth not us to tice.[8]
Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she may agree.
Everyman. Now show me the very effect of your mind.
Will you go with me, or abide behind?
Kindred. Abide behind? yea, that I will and I may!
Therefore farewell until another day.
Everyman. How should I be merry or glad?
For fair promises to me make,
But when I have most need, they me forsake.
I am deceived; that maketh me sad.
Cousin. Cousin *Everyman*, farewell now,
For verily I will not go with you;
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now, God keep thee, for now I go.
Everyman. Ah, *Jesus,* is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words maketh fools feign;
They promise and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so *Fellowship* promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide.
Yet in my mind a thing there is;—
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my good now help me might,
He would make my heart full light.
I will speak to him in this distress.—
Where art thou, my *Goods* and riches?
Goods. Who calleth me? *Everyman?* what haste thou hast.
I lie here in corners, trussed and piled so high,
And in chests I am locked so fast,
Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,
I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.
What would ye have, lightly me say.
Everyman. Come hither, *Goods,* in all the haste thou may,
For of counsel I must desire thee.
Goods. Sir, and ye in the world have trouble or adversity,
That can I help you to remedy shortly.
Everyman. It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
I am sent for another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest *Jupiter* of all;
And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee.
Therefore I pray thee go with me,
For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify;
For it is said ever among,
That money maketh all right that is wrong.
Goods. Nay, *Everyman,* I sing another song,
I follow no man in such voyages;
For and I went with thee
Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me;
For because on me thou did set thy mind,
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
That thine account thou cannot make truly;
And that hast thou for the love of me.
Everyman. That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer.
Up, let us go thither together.
Goods. Nay, not so, I am too brittle, I may not endure;
I will follow no man one foot, be ye sure.
Everyman. Alas, I have thee loved, and had great pleasure
All my life-days on good and treasure.
Goods. That is to thy damnation without lesing,
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting.
But if thou had me loved moderately during,
As, to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolor be,
Nor in this great sorrow and care.
Everyman. Lo, now was I deceived or I was ware,
And all I may wyte[9] my spending of time.
Goods. What, weenest thou that I am thine?
Everyman. I had wend so.

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[8] entice.

[9] blame.

Goods. Nay, *Everyman,* I say no;
As for a while I was lent thee,
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill;
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world, not verily.
Everyman. I had wend otherwise.
Goods. Therefore to thy soul *Good* is a thief;
For when thou art dead, this is my guise
Another to deceive in the same wise
As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reprief.
Everyman. O false *Good,* cursed thou be!
Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me,
And caught me in thy snare.
Goods. Marry, thou brought thyself in care,
Whereof I am glad,
I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.
Everyman. Ah, *Good,* thou hast had long my hearty love;
I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.
But wilt thou not go with me in deed?
I pray thee truth to say.
Goods. No, so God me speed,
Therefore farewell, and have good day.
Everyman. O to whom shall I make my moan
For to go with me in that heavy journey?
First *Fellowship* said he would with me gone;
His words were very pleasant and gay,
But afterwards he left me alone.
Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
And also they gave me words fair,
They lacked no fair speaking,
But all forsake me in the ending.
Then went I to my *Goods* that I loved best,
In hope to have comfort, but there had I least;
For my *Goods* sharply did me tell
That he bringeth many into hell.
Then of myself I was ashamed,
And so I am worthy to be blamed;
Thus may I well myself hate.
Of whom shall I now counsel take?
I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my *Good-Deeds,*
But alas, she is so weak,
That she can neither go nor speak;
Yet will I venture on her now.—
My *Good-Deeds,* where be you?
Good-Deeds. Here I lie cold in the ground;
Thy sins hath me sore bound,
That I cannot stir.
Everyman. O, *Good-Deeds,* I stand in fear;
I must you pray of counsel,
For help now should come right well.
Good-Deeds. *Everyman,* I have understanding
That ye be summoned account to make
Before *Messias,* of Jerusalem King;
And you do by me[10] that journey with you will I take.
Everyman. Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;
I pray you, that ye will go with me.
Good-Deeds. I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.
Everyman. Why, is there anything on you fall?
Good-Deeds. Yea, sir, I may thank you of all;
If ye had perfectly cheered me,
Your book of account now full ready had be.
Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;
Oh, see how they lie under the feet,
To your soul's heaviness.
Everyman. Our Lord *Jesus,* help me!
For one letter here I cannot see.
Good-Deeds. There is a blind reckoning in time of distress!
Everyman. *Good-Deeds,* I pray you, help me in this need,
Or else I am for ever damned indeed;
Therefore help me to make reckoning
Before the redeemer of all things,
That king is, and was, and ever shall.
Good-Deeds. *Everyman,* I am sorry of your fall,
And fain would I help you, and I were able.
Everyman. *Good-Deeds,* your counsel I pray you give me.
Good-Deeds. That shall I do verily;
Though that on my feet I may not go.
I have a sister, that shall with you also,
Called *Knowledge,* which shall with you abide,
To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.
Knowledge. *Everyman,* I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.
Everyman. In good condition I am now in every thing,
And am wholly content with this good thing;
Thanked be God my Creator.
Good-Deeds. And when he hath brought thee there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your reckoning and your *Good-Deeds* together
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.
Everyman. My *Good-Deeds,* gramercy;

[10] If you take my counsel.

I am well content, certainly,
With your words sweet.
KNOWLEDGE. Now go we together lovingly,
To *Confession*, that cleansing river.
EVERYMAN. For joy I weep; I would we were there;
But, I pray you, give me cognition
Where dwelleth that holy man, *Confession.*
KNOWLEDGE. In the house of salvation:
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.
Lo, this is *Confession*; kneel down and ask mercy,
For he is in good conceit with God Almighty.
EVERYMAN. O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen;
I come with *Knowledge* for my redemption,
Repent with hearty and full contrition;
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now, I pray you, *Shrift,* mother of salvation,
Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation.
CONFESSION. I know your sorrow well, *Everyman;*
Because with *Knowledge* ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, wise voider of adversity;
Therewith shall your body chastised be,
With abstinence and perseverance in God's service:
Here shall you receive that scourge of me
Which is penance strong, that ye must endure,
To remember thy Savior was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently;
So must thou, or thou escape that painful pilgrimage;
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time *Good-Deeds* will be with thee.
But in any wise, be sure of mercy,
For your time draweth fast, and ye will saved be;
Ask God mercy, and He will grant truly,
When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.
EVERYMAN. Thanked be God for his gracious work!
For now I will my penance begin;
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.
KNOWLEDGE. *Everyman,* look your penance that ye fulfil,
What pain that ever it to you be,
And *Knowledge* shall give you counsel at will,
How your accounts ye shall make clearly.
EVERYMAN. O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,
Which descended down in a virgin pure
Because he would *Everyman* redeem,
Which *Adam* forfeited by his disobedience;
O blessed Godhead, elect and high-divine,
Forgive my grievous offence;
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.
O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer
Of all the world, hope and conductor,
Mirror of joy, and founder of mercy.
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be;
Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life
Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
Yet let my name be written in *Moses'* table;
O *Mary*, pray to the Maker of all thing,
Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my enemy,
For *Death* assaileth me strongly;
And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
Of your Son's glory to be partaker,
By the means of his passion I it crave,
I beseech you, help my soul to save.—
Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance;
My flesh therewith shall give a quittance:
I will now begin, if God give me grace.
KNOWLEDGE. *Everyman,* God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Savior,
Thus may you make your reckoning sure.
EVERYMAN. In the name of the Holy Trinity,
My body sore punished shall be:
Take this body for the sin of the flesh;
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh,
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring;
Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing.
Now of penance I will wade the water clear
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.
GOOD-DEEDS. I thank God, now I can walk and go;
And am delivered of my sickness and woe.
Therefore with *Everyman* I will go, and not spare;
His good works I will help him to declare.
KNOWLEDGE. Now, *Everyman,* be merry and glad;
Your *Good-Deeds* cometh now; ye may not be sad;
Now is your *Good-Deeds* whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

EVERYMAN. My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.
GOOD-DEEDS. *Everyman,* pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every sound.[11]
EVERYMAN. Welcome, my *Good-Deeds;* now I hear thy voice,
I weep for very sweetness of love.
KNOWLEDGE. Be no more sad, but ever rejoice,
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on this garment to thy behove,
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When you to your journey's end come shall.
EVERYMAN. Gentle *Knowledge,* what do you it call?
KNOWLEDGE. It is a garment of sorrow:
From pain it will you borrow;
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.
GOOD-DEEDS. *Everyman,* will you wear it for your heal?
EVERYMAN. Now blessed be *Jesu, Mary's* Son!
For now have I on true contrition.
And let us go now without tarrying;
Good-Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?
GOOD-DEEDS. Yea, indeed I have it here.
EVERYMAN. Then I trust we need not fear;
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.
KNOWLEDGE. Nay, *Everyman,* that will we not, certain.
GOOD-DEEDS. Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.
EVERYMAN. Who should they be?
GOOD-DEEDS. *Discretion* and *Strength* they hight,[12]
And thy *Beauty* may not abide behind.
KNOWLEDGE. Also ye must call to mind
Your *Five-Wits* as for your counselors.
GOOD-DEEDS. You must have them ready at all hours.
EVERYMAN. How shall I get them hither?
KNOWLEDGE. You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.
EVERYMAN. My friends, come hither and be present
Discretion, Strength, my *Five-Wits,* and *Beauty.*
BEAUTY. Here at your will we be all ready.
What will ye that we should do?
GOOD-DEEDS. That ye would with *Everyman* go,
And help him in his pilgrimage,
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?
STRENGTH. We will bring him all thither,
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.
DISCRETION. So will we go with him all together.
EVERYMAN. Almighty God, loved thou be,
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and *Five-Wits;* lack I nought;
And my *Good-Deeds,* with *Knowledge* clear,
All be in my company at my will here;
I desire no more to my business.
STRENGTH. And I, *Strength,* will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.
FIVE-WITS. And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.
BEAUTY. No more will I unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.
DISCRETION. *Everyman,* advise you first of all;
Go with a good advisement and deliberation;
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well.
EVERYMAN. My friends, hearken what I will tell:
I pray God reward you in his heavenly sphere.
Now hearken, all that be here,
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present.
In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain
In the way of charity, with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In quiet to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell
To go quite out of his peril
Ever after and this day.
KNOWLEDGE. *Everyman,* hearken what I say;
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together;
Then shortly see ye turn again hither;
We will all abide you here.
FIVE-WITS. Yea, *Everyman,* hie you that ye ready were,
There is no emperor, king, duke, nor baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world being;
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign,

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[11] Season.
[12] are called.

He beareth the keys and thereof hath the cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure;
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pine;[13]
Here in this transitory life, for thee and me
The blessed sacraments seven there be,
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,
Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;
These seven be good to have in remembrance,
Gracious sacraments of high divinity.
EVERYMAN. Fain would I receive that holy body
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.
FIVE-WITS. *Everyman,* that is the best that ye can do:
God will you to salvation bring,
For priesthood exceedeth all other thing;
To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;
God hath to them more power given,
Than to any angel that is in heaven;
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in flesh and blood to make,
And handleth his maker between his hands;
The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands,
Both in earth and in heaven;
Thou ministers all the sacraments seven;
Though we kissed thy feet thou were worthy;
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly:
No remedy we find under God
But all only priesthood..
Everyman, God gave priests that dignity,
And setteth them in his stead among us to be;
Thus be they above angels in degree.
KNOWLEDGE. If priests be good it is so surely;
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart
There he gave, out of his blessed heart,
The same sacrament in great torment:
He sold them not to us, that Lord Omnipotent.
Therefore Saint Peter the apostle doth say
That Jesu's curse hath all they
Which God their Savior do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell.
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad;
Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard;
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life, as lusts of lechery:
These be with sin made blind.
FIVE-WITS. I trust to God no such may we find;
Therefore let us priesthood honor,
And follow their doctrine for our souls' succor;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be
By whom we all be kept in surety.
Peace, for yonder I see *Everyman* come,
Which hath made true satisfaction.
GOOD-DEEDS. Methinketh it is he indeed.
EVERYMAN. Now Jesu be our alder speed.[14]
I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all they that counseled me to take it!
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod your hand,
And shortly follow me:
I go before, there I would be; God be our guide.
STRENGTH. *Everyman,* we will not from you go,
Till ye have gone this voyage long.
DISCRETION. I, *Discretion,* will bide by you also.
KNOWLEDGE. And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
I will never part you fro:
Everyman, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.[15]
EVERYMAN. Alas, I am so faint I may not stand,
My limbs under me do fold;
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold.
For into this cave must I creep
And turn to the earth and there to sleep.
BEAUTY. What, into this grave? alas!
EVERYMAN. Yea, there shall you consume more and less.
BEAUTY. And what should I smother here?
EVERYMAN. Yea, by my faith, and never more appear.
In this world live no more we shall,
But in heaven before the highest Lord of all.
BEAUTY. I cross out all this; adieu by Saint *John*;
I take my tap in my lap and am gone.[16]
EVERYMAN. What, *Beauty,* whither will ye?
BEAUTY. Peace, I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou would give me all the gold in thy chest.
EVERYMAN. Alas, whereto may I trust?
Beauty goeth fast away hie;
She promised with me to live and die.
STRENGTH. *Everyman,* I will thee also forsake and deny;

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[13] suffering.

[14] Help of us all.

[15] Great Jewish warrior of the second century B.C.

[16] A proverbial expression used to describe a hasty departure.

Thy game liketh me not at all.
EVERYMAN. Why, then ye will forsake me all.
Sweet *Strength*, tarry a little space.
STRENGTH. Nay, sir, by the rood of grace
I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart brast.
EVERYMAN. Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.
STRENGTH. Yea, I have you far enough conveyed;
Ye be old enough, I understand,
Your pilgrimage to take on hand;
I repent me that I hither came.
EVERYMAN. *Strength,* you to displease I am to blame;
Will you break promise that is debt?
STRENGTH. In faith, I care not;
Thou art but a fool to complain,
You spend your speech and waste your brain;
Go thrust thee into the ground.
EVERYMAN. I had wend surer I should you have found.
He that trusteth in his *Strength*
She him deceiveth at the length.
Both *Strength* and *Beauty* forsaketh me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.
DISCRETION. *Everyman,* I will after *Strength* be gone,
As for me I will leave you alone.
EVERYMAN. Why, *Discretion,* will ye forsake me?
DISCRETION. Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,
For when *Strength* goeth before
I follow after evermore.
EVERYMAN. Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,
Look in my grave once piteously.
DISCRETION. Nay, so nigh will I not come.
Farewell, every one!
EVERYMAN. O all thing faileth, save God alone;
Beauty, Strength, and *Discretion;*
For when *Death* bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.
FIVE-WITS. *Everyman,* my leave now of thee I take;
I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.
EVERYMAN. Alas! then may I wail and weep,
For I took you for my best friend.
FIVE-WITS. I will no longer thee keep;
Now farewell, and there an end.
EVERYMAN. O Jesu, help, all hath forsaken me!
GOOD-DEEDS. Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.
EVERYMAN. Gramercy, *Good-Deeds;* now may I true friends see;
They have forsaken me every one;
I love them better than my *Good-Deeds* alone.
Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?
KNOWLEDGE. Yea, *Everyman,* when ye to death do go:
But not yet for no manner of danger.
EVERYMAN. Gramercy, *Knowledge,* with all my heart.
KNOWLEDGE. Nay, yet I will not from hence depart,
Till I see where ye shall be come.
EVERYMAN. Methinketh, alas, that I must be gone,
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I loved best do forsake me,
Except my *Good-Deeds* that bideth truly.
GOOD-DEEDS. All earthly things is but vanity:
Beauty, Strength, and *Discretion,* do man forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake,
All fleeth save *Good-Deeds*, and that am I.
EVERYMAN. Have mercy on me, God most mighty;
And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, holy *Mary.*
GOOD-DEEDS. Fear not, I will speak for thee.
EVERYMAN. Here I cry God mercy.
GOOD-DEEDS. Short our end, and minish our pain;
Let us go and never come again.
EVERYMAN. Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom.
In manus tuas—of might's most
For ever—*commendo spiritum meum.*[17]
KNOWLEDGE. Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure;
The *Good-Deeds* shall make all sure.
Now hath he made ending;
Methinketh that I hear angels sing
And make great joy and melody,
Where *Everyman's* soul received shall be.

---

[17] Into thy hands I commend my spirit.

Angel. Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu:
Hereabove thou shalt go
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now the soul is taken the body fro;
Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto the which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.
Doctor. This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember *Beauty, Five-Wits, Strength,* and *Discretion,*
They all at the last do *Everyman* forsake,
Save his *Good-Deeds,* there doth he take.
But beware, and they be small
Before God, he hath no help at all.
None excuse may be there for *Everyman*:
Alas, how shall he do then?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity do him forsake.
If his reckoning be not clear when he do come,
God will say—*ite maledicti in ignem æternum.*[18]
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither
That we may live body and soul together.
Thereto help the Trinity,
Amen, say ye, for saint *charity.*

The Ballads

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight describes holiday games, *The Romance of the Rose* tells of round-dances in gardens, and there were dances at wakes in the churchyard—all of which must have called forth inventive talents among the unlettered to help along the dancing with words and music. While lords of the land had been listening to their court poets and while scholars had been poring over manuscripts, humble folk were developing their own kind of narrative poetry: the *ballads* (i.e. "dance-songs"). Though by the time they found their way into print the ballads were fairly shorn of their dance-origins, the repetitions and refrains of many of them remind one that the form was once associated with dancing and music. The simple but eloquent melodies of a number of our ballads have remained to us. Where civilization was slowest to make inroads, the ballads lasted longest; hence most of them in our language come from the region of the Scottish border.

Scholars have argued the manner in which they could have been composed. Some hold that the ballad must have had an individual, if now anonymous, author; others maintain that the ballad was composed communally or co-operatively, in the way Negro spirituals are made in the South. At any rate, whichever theory is correct, the ballads as we have them are the poetry of a people. For they were composed usually around a subject of current or local interest, and passed orally from generation to generation. In so passing they were changed and amplified, with the result that for some three hundred and five extant ballads there is a total of more than a thousand versions.

Naturally it is impossible to date them. Some of them must descend from very old originals, though few of them can be shown to antedate the fifteenth century—for which reason they are considered in this place as representative of late medieval popular literature. The problem can be exhibited in the instance of *Thomas Rymer.* This ballad was built around a man whose fame became legendary, and who is known to have lived in the thirteenth century. But the earliest version of the poem can be traced only to the eighteenth century, although in style the ballad indicates considerable age. It was not, indeed, until the eighteenth century that any consistent attempt was made to collect the ballads. Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) aroused interest in them, and thereafter a number of students began a diligent search for them. From the Scottish peasants Sir Walter Scott gathered the substance of a work in three volumes, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3). It should be remembered, therefore, that the versions we possess of the ballads are more or less modern. In *Our Goodman,* for instance, the "powdered wig" is proof enough that the ballad in its present form cannot have been medieval.

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[18] Depart, ye accursed, into the eternal fire.

The longevity of the ballads attests their vitality and popularity. A number of them survive in children's games today, even in the United States, and in the songs of rural folk. *Our Goodman,* for example, will be already familiar to many readers in a rowdier version. These poems are rich in variety: some have their basis in history (e.g. *Sir Patrick Spens*), some are stories of domestic tragedy (e.g. *Edward, Babylon*), some deal with the supernatural (e.g. *Thomas Rymer, The Wife of Usher's Well*), some are love stories, and others are humorous (e.g. *Get Up and Bar the Door, Our Goodman*). In addition, there is an important cycle of ballads around the persons of Robin Hood and his men, which taken together seem like raw material for an epic on the famous outlaw. What can be said about all the ballads is that they are anonymous, narrative, simple in design, told dramatically, impersonally, and with great economy. In tendency they seem to prefer tragedy of a rather grim and stark order. Their particular literary flavor is a curious blending of the crude and the subtle.

In the nineteenth century a number of distinguished poets (Scott, Coleridge, Keats, and Rossetti among them) wrote under the conscious influence of the old ballads. (Cf. *Vol. II.*) Their freshness and apparent artlessness fell with relief on ears that were jaded by the formal perfection of Pope and his imitators.

The definitive collection of the ballads is F. J. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (1882-98), from which a convenient abridgment was made by Sargent and Kittredge (1904). Important studies are F. B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (1907), and G. H. Gerould, *The Ballad of Tradition* (1932).

Edward

This powerful ballad was a favorite of the German Romantic composers when, in Schubert's time, English literature was so highly prized. A number of them set these words to music, and Brahms built a piano-composition around it. But the old simple English music is eloquent enough of the tragedy unfolded by the striking lines. Note how the repetition, typical of ballads, in this case helps to build up the emotional excitement of the mother, and how the evasive answers of the son intimate his soul-sickness after the deed he has done.

"Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
Edward, Edward?
Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid,
And why sae sad gang[1] yee O?"
"O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my hauke sae guid,
And I had nae mair bot[2] hee O."
"Your haukis bluid was nevir sae reid,[3]
Edward, Edward,
Your haukis bluid was never sae reid,
My deir son I tell thee O."
"O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my reid-roan steid,
That erst was sae fair and frie O."

"Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair,
Edward, Edward,
Your steid was auld, and ye hae gat mair;
Sum other dule ye drie[4] O."
"O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Mither, mither,
O I hae killed my fadir deir,
Alas, and wae is mee O!"

"And whatten penance wul ye drie for that,
Edward, Edward?
And whatten penance wul ye drie, for that?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
Mither, mither,
Ile set my feit in yonder boat,
And Ile fare ovir the sea O."

---

[1] go.
[2] had no more but he.
[3] red.
[4] sorrow you suffer.

"And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye doe wi your towirs and your ha,
That were sae fair to see O?"
"Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
Mither, mither,
Ile let thame stand tul they doun fa,
For here nevir mair maun I bee[5] O."

"And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your bairns and your wife,
Whan ye gang ovir the sea O?"
"The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
Mither, mither,
The warldis room, late them beg thrae life,
For thame nevir mair wul I see O."

"And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir,
Edward, Edward?
And what wul ye leive to your ain mither deir?
My deir son, now tell me O."
"The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Mither, mither,
The curse of hell frae me sall ye beir,
Sic counseils ye gave to me O."

Thomas Rymer

This is the finest of the ballads telling of adventures between fairyfolk and mortals. Medieval French popular poetry contains several such stories. It is interesting to compare Keats's *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* with this early ballad to see the poet's significant elaboration of the theme.

True Thomas lay oer yond grassy bank,
And he beheld a ladie gay,
A ladie that was brisk and bold,
Come riding oer the fernie brae.[1]

Her skirt was of the grass-green silk,
Her mantel of the velvet fine,
At ilka tett[2] of her horse's mane
Hung fifty silver bells and nine.

True Thomas he took off his hat
And bowed him low down till his knee:
'All hail, thou mighty Queen of Heaven!
For your peer on earth I never did see.'

'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That name does not belong to me;
I am but the queen of fair Elfland,
And I'm come here for to visit thee.

. . . . . .

'But ye maun[3] go wi me now, Thomas,
True Thomas, ye maun go wi me,
For ye maun serve me seven years,
Thro weel or wae as may chance to be.'

She turned about her milk-white steed,
And took True Thomas up behind,
And aye wheneer her bridle rang,
The steed flew swifter than the wind.

For forty days and forty nights
He wade thro red blude to the knee,
And he saw neither sun nor moon,
But heard the roaring of the sea.

O they rade on and further on,
Until they came to a garden green:
'Light down, light down, ye ladie free,
Some of that fruit let me pull to thee.'

'O no, O no, True Thomas,' she says,
'That fruit maun not be touched by thee,
For a' the plagues that are in hell
Light on the fruit of this countrie.

'But I have a loaf here in my lap,
Likewise a bottle of claret wine,
And here ere we go farther on,
We'll rest a while, and ye may dine.'

When he had eaten and drunk his fill,
'Lay down your head upon my knee,'
The lady sayd, 'ere we climb yon hill,
And I will show you fairlies[4] three.

'O see ye not yon narrow road,
So thick beset wi thorns and briers?
That is the path of righteousness,
Tho after it but few enquires.

---

[5] for here nevermore may I be.

[1] fern-covered hillside.

[2] every lock.

[3] must.

[4] wonders.

'And see not ye that braid braid road,
  That lies across yon lillie leven?[5]
That is the path of wickedness,
  Tho some call it the road to heaven.

'And see ye not that bonny road,
  Which winds about the fernie brae?
That is the road to fair Elfland,
  Where you and I this night maun gae.

'But Thomas, ye maun hold your tongue,
  Whatever ye may hear or see,
For gin ae word you should chance to speak,
  You will neer get back to your ain countrie.'

He has gotten a coat of the even cloth,
  And a pair of shoe's of velvet green,
And till seven years were past and gone
  True Thomas on earth was never seen.

The Dœmon Lover

"O where have you been, my long, long love,
  This long seven years and mair?"[1]
"O I'm come to seek my former vows
  Ye granted me before."

"O hold your tongue of your former vows,
  For they will breed sad strife;
O hold your tongue of your former vows,
  For I am become a wife."

He turned him right and round about,
  And the tear blinded his ee:[2]
"I wad never hae trodden on Irish ground,
  If it had not been for thee.

"I might hae had a king's daughter,
  Far, far beyond the sea;
I might have had a king's daughter,
  Had it not been for love o thee."

"If ye might have had a king's daughter,
  Yersel ye had to blame;
Ye might have taken the king's daughter,
  For ye kend[3] that I was nane.

"If I was to leave my husband dear,
  And my two babes also,
O what have you to take me to,
  If with you I should go?"

"I hae seven ships upon the sea—
  The eighth brought me to land—
With four-and-twenty bold mariners,
  And music on every hand."

She has taken up her two little babes,
  Kissd them baith cheek and chin:
"O fair ye weel, my ain two babes,
  For I'll never see you again."

She set her foot upon the ship,
  No mariners could she behold;
But the sails were o the taffetie,
  And the masts o the beaten gold.

She had not saild a league, a league,
  A league but barely three,
When dismal grew his countenance,
  And drumlie[4] grew his ee.

They had not saild a league, a league,
  A league but barely three,
Until she espied his cloven foot,
  And she wept right bitterlie.

"O hold your tongue of your weeping," says he,
  "Of your weeping now let me be;
I will shew you how the lilies grow
  On the banks of Italy."

"O what hills are yon, yon pleasant hills,
  That the sun shines sweetly on?"
"O yon are the hills of heaven," he said,
  "Where you will never win."

"O whaten a mountain is yon," she said,
  "All so dreary wi frost and snow?"
"O yon is the mountain of hell," he cried,
  "Where you and I will go."

He strack the tap-mast wi his hand,
  The fore-mast wi his knee,
And he brake that gallant ship in twain,
  And sank her in the sea.

---

[5] lovely glade.
[1] more.
[2] eye.
[3] knew.
[4] gloomy.

Get Up and Bar the Door

The ballads could be merry in an inimitable fun-loving folk spirit, and bring the incident close to home-experience. The gaiety of this one and of *Our Goodman* is infectious.

It fell about the Martinmas time,[1]
And a gay time it was then,
When our good wife got puddings to make,
And she's boild them in the pan.

The wind sae cauld blew south and north,
And blew into the door;
Quoth our goodman to our good wife,
"Gae out and bar the door."

"My hand is in my hussyfskap,[2]
Goodman, as ye may see;
An it shoud nae be barrd this hundred year,
It's no be barrd for me."

They made a paction[3] tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
That the first word whaeer[4] shoud speak,
Shoud rise and bar the door.

Then by there came two gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night,
And they could neither see house nor hall,
Nor coal nor candle-light.

"Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is it a poor?"
But neer a word wad ane o them speak,
For barring of the door.

And first they ate the white puddings,
And then they ate the black;
Tho muckle thought the goodwife to hersel,
Yet neer a word she spake.

Then said the one unto the other,
"Here, man, tak ye my knife;
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the goodwife."

"But there's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?"[5]
"What ails thee at the pudding-broo,[6]
That boils into the pan?"

O up then started our goodman,
And angry man was he:
"Will ye kiss my wife before my een,
And scad[7] me wi pudding-bree?"

Then up and started our goodwife,
Gied three skips on the floor:
"Goodman, you've spoken the foremost word,
Get up and bar the door."

The Twa Corbies

As I was walking all alane,
I heard twa corbies[1] making a mane;[2]
The tane[3] unto t' other say,
"Where sall we gang and dine to-day?"

"In behint yon auld fail[4] dyke,
I wot there lies a new slain knight;
And naebody kens[5] that he lies there,
But his hawk, his hound, and lady fair.

"His hound is to the hunting gane,
His hawk to fetch the wild-fowl hame,
His lady's ta'en another mate,
So we may mak our dinner sweet.

"Ye'll sit on his white hause-bane,[6]
And I'll pike out his bonny blue een;
Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
We'll theek[7] our nest when it grows bare.

"Mony a one for him makes mane,
But nane sall ken where he is gane;
Oer his white banes, when they are bare,
The wind sall blaw for evermair."

---

[1] November 11.
[2] kneading-trough.
[3] agreement.
[4] whoever.
[5] for water to shave him with.
[6] pudding-broth.
[7] scald.

[1] crows.
[2] moan.
[3] one.
[4] turf wall.
[5] knows.
[6] neck-bone.
[7] thatch.

The Wife of Usher's Well

There lived a wife[1] at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them oer the sea.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely ane,
Whan word came to the carline wife
That her three sons were gane.

They hadna been a week from her,
A week but barely three,
Whan word came to the carline wife
That her sons she'd never see.

"I wish the wind may never cease,
Nor fashes[2] in the flood,
Till my three sons come hame to me,
In earthly flesh and blood."

It fell about the Martinmass,
When nights are lang and mirk,[3]
The carline wife's three sons came hame,
And their hats were o the birk.[4]

It neither grew in syke[5] nor ditch,
Nor yet in ony sheugh;[6]
But at the gates o Paradise,
That birk grew fair eneugh.

. . . . .

"Blow up the fire, my maidens,
Bring water from the well;
For a' my house shall feast this night,
Since my three sons are well."

And she has made to them a bed,
She's made it large and wide,
And she's taen her mantle her about,
Sat down at the bed-side.

. . . . .

Up then crew the red, red cock,
And up and crew the gray;
The eldest to the youngest said,
"'Tis time we were away."

The cock he hadna crawd but once,
And clappd his wings at a',
When the youngest to the eldest said,
"Brother, we must awa.

"The cock doth craw, the day doth daw,
The channerin[7] worm doth chide;
Gin we be mist out o our place,
A sair pain we maun bide.

"Fare ye weel, my mother dear!
Fareweel to barn and byre!
And fare ye weel, the bonny lass
That kindles my mother's fire!"

Sir Patrick Spens

This is one of the deftest of all ballads. Note the skill which etches a picture by a single significant detail, and the impatience with superfluity of words (as in the third stanza). This ballad powerfully impressed Coleridge (cf. his *Dejection: An Ode*).

The king sits in Dumferling toune,
Drinking the blude-reid wine:
"O whar will I get guid sailor,
To sail this schip of mine?"

Up and spak an eldern knicht,
Sat at the kings richt kne:
"Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor,
That sails upon the se."

The king has written a braid[1] letter,
And signd it wi his hand,
And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
Was walking on the sand.

The first line that Sir Patrick red,
A loud lauch[2] lauched he;
The next line that Sir Patrick red,
The teir blinded his ee.

---

[1] woman. [2] troubles. [3] dark. [4] birch.
[5] trench. [6] furrow.
[7] devouring.

[1] broad. [2] laugh.

"O wha is this has don this deid,
  This ill deid don to me,
To send me out this time o' the yeir,
  To sail upon the se!

"Mak hast, mak haste, my mirry men all,
  Our guid schip sails the morne."
"O say na sae, my master deir,
  For I feir a deadlie storme.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moone,
  Wi the auld moone in hir arme,
And I feir, I feir, my deir master,
  That we will cum to harme."

O our Scots nobles wer richt laith[3]
  To weet their cork-heild schoone;[4]
Bot lang owre a' the play wer playd,
  Thair hats they swam aboone.

O lang, lang may their ladies sit,
  Wi thair fans into their hand,
Or eir they se Sir Patrick Spens
  Cum sailing to the land.

O lang, lang may the ladies stand,
  Wi thair gold kems in their hair,
Waiting for thair ain deir lords,
  For they'll se thame na mair.

Haf owre, haf owre to Aberdour,
  It's fiftie fadom deip,
And thair lies guid Sir Patrick Spens,
  Wi the Scots lords at his feit.

Babylon; or, The Bonnie Banks o' Fordie

There were three ladies lived in a bower,
  Eh vow bonnie,
And they went out to pull a flower,
  On the bonnie banks o Fordie.

They hadna pu'ed a flower but ane,
When up started to them a banisht man.

He's taen the first sister by her hand,
And he's turned her round and made her stand.

"It's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?"

"It's I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I'll rather die by your wee pen-knife."

He's killed this may,[1] and he's laid her by,
For to bear the red rose company

He's taken the second ane by the hand,
And he's turned her round and made her stand.

"It's whether will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?"

"I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
But I'll rather die by your wee pen-knife."

He's killed this may, and he's laid her by,
For to bear the red rose company.

He's taken the youngest ane by the hand,
And he's turned her round and made her stand.

Says, "Will ye be a rank robber's wife,
Or will ye die by my wee pen-knife?"

"I'll not be a rank robber's wife,
Nor will I die by your wee pen-knife.

"For I hae a brother in this wood,
And gin ye kill me, it's he'll kill thee."

"What's thy brother's name? come tell to me."
"My brother's name is Baby Lon."

"O sister, sister, what have I done!
O have I done this ill to thee!

"O since I've done this evil deed,
Good sall never be seen o me."

He's taken out his wee pen-knife,
And he's twyned[2] himsel o his ain sweet life.

---

[3] loath.

[4] cork-heeled shoes.

[1] maid.

[2] separated.

Robin Hood Rescuing the Widow's Three Sons

Of all personalities celebrated in the ballads, the most prominent is Robin Hood. The ballads, indeed, made of him the popular English hero of the middle ages—friend of the poor and enemy of the privileged. There are many ballads celebrating his exploits, and he seems to have been ready for epic treatment, though no epic poet was forthcoming to bring all his deeds into a heroic poem. A late medieval poet, it is true, made a long ballad, *A Gest of Robyn Hode*—an attempt to collect many of the ballad-stories—but that work is not done in epic style. The following ballad shows Robin Hood at his characteristically chivalric best, coming, in the nick of time, where he is most needed.

There are twelve months in all the year
As I hear many men say,
But the merriest month in all the year
Is the merry month of May.

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met a silly old woman,
Was weeping on the way.

"What news? what news, thou silly old woman?
What news hast thou for me?"
Said she, "There's three squires in Nottingham-town
To-day is condemned to die."

"O have they parishes burnt?" he said,
"Or have they ministers slain?
Or have they robbed any virgin,
Or with other men's wives have lain?"

"They have no parishes burnt, good sir,
Nor yet have ministers slain,
Nor have they robbed any virgin,
Nor with other men's wives have lain."

"O what have they done?" said bold Robin Hood,
"I pray thee tell to me":
"It's for slaying of the king's fallow deer,
Bearing their long bows with thee."

'Dost thou not mind, old woman," he said,
"Since thou made me sup and dine?
By the truth of my body," quoth bold Robin Hood,
"You could not tell it in better time."

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a day,
And there he met with a silly[1] old palmer,
Was walking along the highway.

"What news? what news, thou silly old man?
What news, I do thee pray?"
Said he, "Three squires in Nottingham town
Are condemned to die this day."

"Come change thy apparel with me, old man,
Come change thy apparel for mine;
Here is forty shillings in good silver,
Go drink it in beer or wine."

"O thine apparel is good," he said,
"And mine is ragged and torn;
Wherever you go, wherever you ride,
Laugh neer an old man to scorn."

"Come change thy apparel with me, old churl,
Come change thy apparel with mine;
Here are twenty pieces of good broad gold,
Go feast thy brethren with wine."

Then he put on the old man's hat,
It stood full high on the crown:
"The first bold bargain that I come at,
It shall make thee come down."

Then he put on the old man's cloak,
Was patchd black, blew, and red;
He thought no shame all the day long
To wear the bags of bread.

Then he put on the old man's breeks,[2]
Was patchd from ballup[3] to side;
"By the truth of my body," bold Robin can say,
"This man lov'd little pride."

Then he put on the old man's hose,
Were patched from knee to wrist;
"By the truth of my body," said bold Robin Hood,
"I'd laugh if I had any list."[4]

Then he put on the old man's shoes,
Were patched both beneath and aboon;

[1] weak. [2] breeches. [3] front flap. [4] desire.

Then Robin Hood swore a solemn oath,
"It's good habit that makes a man."

Now Robin Hood is to Nottingham gone,
With a link a down and a down,
And there he met with the proud sheriff,
Was walking along the town.

"O save, O save, O sheriff," he said,
"O save, and you may see!
And what will you give to a silly old man
To-day will your hangman be?"

"Some suits, some suits," the sheriff he said,
"Some suits I'll give to thee;
Some suits, some suits, and pence thirteen
To-day's a hangman's fee."

Then Robin he turns him round about,
And jumps from stock to stone;
"By the truth of my body," the sheriff he said,
"That's well jumpt, thou nimble old man."

"I was neer a hangman in all my life,
Nor yet intends to trade;
But curst be he," said bold Robin,
"That first a hangman was made.

"I've a bag for meal, and a bag for malt,
And a bag for barley and corn;
A bag for bread, and a bag for beef,
And a bag for my little small horn.

"I have a horn in my pocket,
I got it from Robin Hood,
And still when I set it to my mouth,
For thee it blows little good."

"O wind thy horn, thou proud fellow,
Of thee I have no doubt;[5]
I wish that thou give such a blast
Till both thy eyes fall out."

The first loud blast that he did blow,
He blew both loud and shrill;
A hundred and fifty of Robin Hood's men
Came riding over the hill.

The next loud blast that he did give,
He blew both loud and amain,
And quickly sixty of Robin Hood's men
Came shining over the plain

"O who are you," the sheriff he said,
"Come tripping over the lee?"
"They're my attendants," brave Robin did say,
"They'll pay a visit to thee."

They took the gallows from the slack,[6]
They set it in the glen,
They hangd the proud sheriff on that,
Releasd their own three men.

Our Goodman

Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he,
And then he saw a saddle-horse
Where nae horse should be.

"What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?
How came this horse here,
Without the leave o me?"

Recitative. "A horse?" quo she.
"Ay, a horse," quo he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,
Ill mat[1] ye see!
'Tis naething, but a broad[2] sow,
My minnie[3] sent to me."

"A broad sow?" quo he.
"Ay, a sow," quo shee.

"Far hae I ridden,
And farer hae I gane,
But a sadle on a sow's back
I never saw nane."

Hame came our goodman,
And hame came he;
He spy'd a pair of jack-boots,[4]
Where nae boots should be.

"What's this now, goodwife?
What's this I see?

---

[5] fear.

[6] low ground.

[1] may. [2] brood. [3] mother.

[4] long boots, reaching above the knee, usually worn by soldiers.

How came these boots here,
  Without the leave o me?"

"Boots?" quo she.
"Ay, boots," quo he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,
  And ill mat ye see!
It's but a pair of water-stoups,[5]
  My minnie sent to me."

"Water-stoups?" quo he.
"Ay, water-stoups," quo she.

"Far hae I ridden,
  And farer hae I gane,
But siller spurs on water-stoups
  I saw never nane."

Hame came our goodman,
  And hame came he,
And he saw a sword,
  Whare a sword should na be.

"What's this now, goodwife?
  What's this I see?
How came this sword here,
  Without the leave o me?"

"A sword?" quo she.
"Ay, a sword," quo he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,
  Ill mat ye see!
It's but a porridge-spurtle,[6]
  My minnie sent to me."

"A spurtle?" quo he.
"Ay, a spurtle," quo she.

"Far hae I ridden,
  And farer hae I gane,
But siller-handed spurtles
  I saw never nane."

Hame came our goodman,
  And hame came he;
There he spy'd a powderd wig,
  Where nae wig should be.

"What's this now, goodwife?
  What's this I see?
How came this wig here,
  Without the leave o me?"

"A wig?" quo she.
"Ay, a wig," quo he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,
  And ill mat ye see!
'Tis naething but a clocken-hen,[7]
  My minnie sent to me."

"Clocken hen?" quo he.
"Ay, clocken hen," quo she.

"Far hae I ridden,
  And farer hae I gane,
But powder on a clocken-hen
  I saw never nane."

Hame came our goodman,
  And hame came he,
And there he saw a muckle[8] coat,
  Where nae coat should be.

"What's this now, goodwife?
  What's this I see?
How came this coat here,
  Without the leave o me?"

"A coat?" quo she.
"Ay, a coat," quo he.

"Shame fa your cuckold face,
  Ill mat ye see!
It's but a pair of blankets,
  My minnie sent to me."

"Blankets?" quo he.
"Ay, blankets," quo she.

"Far hae I ridden,
  And farer hae I gane,
But buttons upon blankets
  I saw never nane."

Ben[9] went our goodman,
  And ben went he,
And there he spy'd a sturdy man,
  Where nae man should be.

---

[5] water pitchers.

[6] porridge stirrer.

[7] clucking hen, i.e. a sitting hen.

[8] great.

[9] into the inner room.

"What's this now, goodwife?
  What's this I see?
How came this man here,
  Without the leave o me?"

"A man?" quo she.
"Ay, a man," quo he.

"Poor blind body,
  And blinder mat ye be!
It's a new milking-maid,
  My mither sent to me."

"A maid?" quo he.
"Ay, a maid," quo she.

"Far hae I ridden,
  And farer hae I gane,
But lang-bearded maidens
  I saw never nane."

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE ELIZABETHANS

Renaissance and Reformation

THE salient characteristic of medieval thought is, perhaps, its reliance upon authority. The very structure of feudal society exhibits the principle of authority, for the bulk of the population had its allotted sphere of economic and social subordination to the lord; in exchange for his protection his underlings had to render him economic and military services. The lord in his turn bore a similar relationship to his overlord, and the overlords to the feudal monarchs. One Church was recognized by men and women in Western Europe; and for the ministering to the souls of its millions of members, the Church itself took on the character of a feudal institution. Indeed, many a powerful feudal lord was a bishop in the Church. In the propagation of its religion the Church evolved into a great international state. That religion taught that this life had significance only as preparation for the next.

Thus the world was for the medieval mind an ordered and enclosed place, which had provided a welcome refuge from the chaos following the breakdown of the Roman Empire. Even geographically the earth's surface was confined between the Atlantic on the west, the icy seas on the north, and the Mohammedan world on the south and east. Ptolemy's astronomy closed the universe by making the earth the fixed center of the revolving spheres. In a world so tightly organized there was little place for personal expression. A vital personality like Chaucer's is the exception in medieval literature. The cultural and artistic activity of the Middle Ages was great, but it is almost entirely anonymous.

In time, however, the communal and international characteristics of medieval society began to decay. The first symptoms were the growth, in the later Middle Ages, of the towns. The feudal order was by its nature agrarian. In the towns, a new class of society, the *bourgeoisie*, made its appearance. With the growth of trades and commerce, the power of money began to threaten the power of land. Feudal restrictions were inimical to the enterprise of the new industries, and the towns fought for and, in many cases, won their independence from landlords. Their struggles for economic freedom made the medieval towns, says E. B. Osborn, the "political laboratories in which numerous experiments in the use of reasoned liberty and the methods of democratic government anticipated the later experience of rational communities." As medieval manufacturing developed, each town tended to spread its control over the surrounding countryside, and the municipalities came into conflict with one another.

With the Crusades, the West came into closer contact with the Near East. Tales of amazing riches waiting to be amassed by European traders were brought back by thirteenth- and fourteenth-century travelers to India, China, and Japan. Commerce expanded and urban prosperity increased. The earliest to benefit by the new trade were the Italian seaport towns; their inland neighbors profited, too, by the increased demand for manufactures; Florence, for instance, soon became "the banker of Italy." The consequence of the extension of the merchants' prestige and influence and of their struggle against the oppressive burdens of the feudal order, was an attack on prerogative and authority. The desire for personal gain and individual expression undermined the very basis of the old order. The new princes, like the Medici, were heads of large business houses. The very notion of unrestricted competition implied the freedom of the individual to expand his powers, and a new philosophy, the philosophy of the Renaissance, began to supersede the medieval view of life.

The Church no less than feudalism faced the attacks of the new order. Frowning upon profits, the Church had held the spiritual principle, rather than the economic, to be fundamental for society. Usury and the taking of interest were strictly forbidden as un-Christian. Such a philosophy was an impediment to a class that was interested in economic expansion and accumulation. Rather than be checked in its career, the bourgeoisie gave up considerations of the next world and insisted on the full exploitation of this earthly life. Once opposed, the universal authority of the Church began to weaken. New heresies arose, and great damage to its authority followed from the schism which set up rival popes at Rome and Avignon. The worldliness of new urban thinking seeped into the Church, some of whose members, at the height of the Italian Renaissance, were corrupt men seeking personal advantage and power. In short, the rumblings of the Protestant Revolt were to be heard.

It was in the Italian cities that the first cultural fruits of the new individualism appeared. In the fourteenth century, Italian scholars began that great intellectual movement for the liberation of the individual which we know as *humanism*. Turning to the civilizations of Greece and Rome as having fostered *human* wisdom, rather than the *divine* wisdom of the Middle Ages, they began to study the classics with fresh eyes. In them they found the justification of living this life to the full. The study of the "humanities" became synonymous with enlarging the horizons for the individual. When read again, the scientific studies of the ancients revived an interest in examining the characteristics of the physical world, no longer despised as it had been by medieval thinkers. The spherical shape of the earth was rediscovered; the earth was found to be but a planet of the sun, and not the centre of the universe. Explorers were emboldened to sail into the unknown Atlantic, in pursuit of further economic power. Under the patronage of the merchant princes, a wonderful rebirth took place in literature, scholarship, painting, and sculpture. Men began to cultivate possibilities of enriching the span between birth and death. Urban life provided more leisure, and the thoughts of men turned towards the rediscovery of man's nature. Painters and sculptors, too, began to find again physical beauty in men, women, and Nature, where for long there had been thought to be only sin. Academies were formed all over Italy to train youth in physical development and grace as well as in intellectual pursuits pertaining to the affairs of this world.

Until recently historians used to think of this cultural movement, known to us as the Renaissance, as having suddenly burst upon the world around 1350. But we know that the seeds of this culture had been planted as long before that as the twelfth century, and that the very centuries (i.e. the twelfth to the fourteenth) during which urban advance gave the world the crowning achievements of medieval architecture and fine arts, were coeval with a transition to modern times and the developing interest in civilization. The very word *Renaissance* has been attacked, on the grounds that learning, even when "divine," had never ceased to flourish in the Middle Ages, and that it is incorrect to think of a "new birth" after them. But if we are careful to define this rebirth as a change from a preoccupation with the next world to a preoccupation with this, and a change from the prestige of authority to that of individualism, the word *Renaissance* may continue to serve, provided we remember to place its beginnings as far back as the Crusades.

This double side of the Middle Ages can be seen in its greatest Italian expression in literature, the work of Dante (cf. *above*), which has been called "the medieval synthesis" since all medieval learning seems to meet in his writings. But in those same writings can be found qualities which are strictly Renaissance in character. Dante's intense patriotism, communicated to Petrarch, shows the movement towards nationalism; the great dream of his life was a unified Italy. Moreover, objective as *The Divine Comedy* is, how powerfully is it impressed with the personality of its author! Here again we see a break with the impersonality of medieval literature. Even in his early work, *The New Life,* Dante reveals his personal joys and sorrows with the deepest sincerity, and becomes the first poet of the modern world to make immortal poetry out of subjective experiences. It was Dante, too, who first brought prominently into a national culture the ancient world; in *The Divine Comedy* ancient and modern times are treated everywhere as parallel: the illustrations are Christian and pagan throughout the poem. In him can also be read the deepening effects of natural beauty on the human spirit; in a few strokes he can give us the feeling of morning, the tempest-tossed forests, and light upon the sea.

With Petrarch (1304-1374) the study of Latin classics for their human content widened. It was he, the first humanist, who inaugurated the search for lost manuscripts of the classics, and gave impetus to the rebuilding of culture after the patterns of the lost pagan culture. He was one of the earliest of men to appreciate the magnificence of Homer, a copy of whom in the Greek he religiously kept, although he could not read the language, and knew him only in a Latin translation. It was with his beloved Virgil that Petrarch tried to vie in his own Latin epic; and Cicero was his favorite author. His *Letters to Classical Authors* (cf. *below*) exhibit his passion for humanistic research. This new lease on life of classical writers inspired Petrarch with a thirst for fame. In his *Letter to Posterity,* Petrarch admits to that desire for the immortality of his writings which was to become a favorite theme of the Elizabethan sonneteers. That fame he has found chiefly in his sonnets, whose form he perfected into a wonderful medium for expressing subjective feelings. He, too, had a sense of the beauties of nature, and he has given us many descriptions of them—as in his fine pictures of the Gulf of Spezzia (in his *Africa*).

Most of these enthusiasms he shared with his friend Boccaccio, his co-fosterer of humanism, whose Latin compilations on biography, mythology, and geography became famous all over Europe. In Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum* there is a spirited defence of the pagan poets and their modern imitators, against the attacks of the schoolmen. The rich heritage of Greek and Roman mythology he incorporated into his poetry, notably into the *Teseide.* Another feature of the Renaissance, consequent upon its lively interest in human beings, the development of biography, can be traced to Boccaccio, whose life of Dante is the first important modern work in that field.

We have here touched only upon early leaders of Renaissance thought, but it should be remembered that they had hundreds of followers and associates, enriching the new learning. It is said that in Florence even the muleteers sang the verses of Dante. Some of the best manuscripts which have come down to us from that period belonged to mere artisans. Nor should we forget the importance to literature of the creations of painters and sculptors who were plentifully supplying the world with dazzling beauty of color and form, taught by the ancients, and by them taught to see beauty in contemporary life and nature.

The contagion spread gradually to France and Spain, and, towards the end of the fifteenth century, to England. Chaucer had been a herald of the new life, but his times were unprepared to digest what he had to contribute. It was not till England could recover from the disaster of civil war that the influence of humanism could really be felt.

Henry VII, first of the Tudors, who came to the throne in 1485, was not much concerned with the new movement. But his handsome son, Henry, who was to succeed him to the throne, was a good scholar and a lover of music; to the greatest humanist of his times, Erasmus, Prince Henry wrote a letter in his own hand. When he became Henry VIII, he immediately began to spend the large fortune his miserly father had collected, and he spent it on building one of the most brilliant courts in Europe to indulge his taste for pleasure and extravagance. Making the court the center of cultural life, he encouraged learning. The ability to write verses became a fashionable accomplishment of the well-bred courtier, and men like Sir Francis Bryan, Lord Vaux, and Lord Rochford set the style, while two greater poets, Wyatt and Surrey, experimented in new forms and eagerly sought inspiration from Italy, France, and the classics. English had changed so much since 1400 that it was necessary to do all over Chaucer's noble work in refining the language and its versification.

At Oxford John Colet had fostered an enthusiasm for Greek studies. Before the close of the fifteenth century, Erasmus could say of his visit to England, "I have met with so much kindness and so much learning, not backward and trivial, but deep, accurate, ancient, Latin and Greek, that but for the curiosity of seeing it, I do not now so much care for Italy. When I hear Colet I seem to be listening to Plato himself. . . . What has nature created more gentle, more sweet, more happy than the genius of Thomas More?"

When Henry VIII was on the throne Erasmus returned to England, where he made his first great reputation, and where his rich humanism and his efforts on behalf of a religion on rational principles did much to influence English thought. One of his good friends, Thomas More, produced "the manifesto of early English humanism," *Utopia* (1516), a picture of a society governed on rational principles, an embodiment of More's dreams of the new learning.

The Tudors, as they built up a patriarchal system in which all important officers of state were appointed by the throne, from the beginning allied themselves with men of the merchant class. Under royal encouragement, England became a great wool-producing country and a leader in the manufacture and export of cloth. Thus began, incidentally, the gradual depopulation of the countryside, and the first appearance in the towns of a wage-earning class. Great wealth was pouring into England as trade expanded. Henry VIII offered golden opportunities to men of talent, many of whom he raised from the ranks to great heights—and often higher still to the scaffold, when they had outlived their usefulness to him.

One of his favorites, Wolsey, founded new colleges at Oxford while Bishop Fisher was fostering the new learning at Cambridge. More, whom Henry treated as a close friend, maintained a household, often visited by Erasmus, that was almost a school for Latin, Greek, logic, and philosophy. Courtly and secular drama made advances under the patronage of More and his friends, some of the best plays of the period being printed by John Rastell, More's brother-in-law. Rastell himself wrote a play, a secular modification of the medieval moralities, *The Four Elements,* replete with More's enthusiasm for education and with many allusions to the new learning. Rastell's son-in-law, John Heywood, is thought to be the author of a number of amusing adaptations of French farces in which the drama further freed itself from medieval abstractions.

Learning, poetry, and the drama were experiencing a new awakening under Henry VIII, when, in the latter part of his reign, the chief English sponsors of humanism were destroyed by a revolution of social, economic, and religious scope. In 1516 Erasmus' critical edition of the New Testament, containing bitter attacks on the Roman clergy, had been published. The next year Martin Luther had begun his crucial revolt against ecclesiastical abuses. With the exception of its effect upon Tyndale, the Lutheran Reformation had had in England only the effect of causing Henry to write a treatise against the German monk, for which Henry had been granted the title (ironically retained by later English monarchs) of Defender of the Faith.

But forces were at work that were to culminate in Henry's break with Rome. The wealthy men of commerce in their economic aggression were indignant at the treasures and vast extent of lands owned by the Church, lands on which they felt they could profitably breed their sheep. In 1529 Simon Fish, a lawyer, published a scurrilous but clever pamphlet, *A Supplication for the Beggars,* in which he attacked the whole body of the clergy as wasteful, lazy, unprofitable men who collected fabulous sums of money and possessed "the goodliest lordships, manors, lands and territories" and who were given "the tenth part of all corn, meadow, pasture, grass, wool, colts, calves, lambs, pigs, geese and chickens." Henry delighted in Fish's exaggerated calculation, the first piece of literature from the Protestant merchant class. The medieval veneration for the studious monk, Fish made seem ridiculous, and the picture of the business layman enterprisingly accumulating wealth he postulated as a substitute ideal. The year of this pamphlet the Reformation Parliament was summoned to begin the revolution. Anti-clerical, obedient to the King's will, it proceeded to curtail the privileges of the clergy.

This predatory hostility towards the clergy made it easier for Henry to attack the Church for personal motives. He wished to have his marriage to the Emperor Charles V's aunt Catherine annulled, because of his desire for a male heir and his love for Anne Boleyn. When the Pope, influenced by the Emperor, ordered Henry to Rome for a trial, Henry refused, banished Catherine, and in defiance married Anne (1533). His chief supporter was Thomas Cromwell, a clever, unscrupulous statesman who boasted of his admiration for Machiavelli's *The Prince* (cf. *below*) and who organized the plundering of the Church. Henry was acknowledged Head of the Church of England by act of Parliament; between 1536 and 1542 all the religious institutions were seized, and their lands and possessions confiscated. The Crown, pocketing the modern equivalent of fifteen million pounds, immediately sold the estates to families newly rich through commerce, and thus set up a new plutocracy. Sir Thomas More and his friend Bishop Fisher refused to take the oath renouncing papal supremacy, and were beheaded on technical grounds of treason. Thus the greatest hope of early English humanism, More, perished as a martyr for the old religion. And, although they had not withstood Henry's break with the Pope, Wyatt was imprisoned and Surrey was executed only to satisfy Henry's cruel whim. Henry who had been a patron of humanism in his younger days, became its greatest hinderer in his later reign.

But neither Henry's marital difficulties nor his spoliation of religious houses could have established English Protestantism. In the days of Chaucer the writings of Wyclif and the Lollard movement were precursors of the Protestant revolt against the Church. Under Henry VIII Protestantism had been growing with the guidance of a group of Cambridge scholars who had been powerfully impressed by Erasmus' work on the New Testament. These men were the creators of the literature of English Protestantism: Tyndale, whose translation of the New Testament is also a piece of Protestant propaganda (cf. *The Bible, below*); Coverdale, who continued Tyndale's work of translating the Bible; Cranmer, the author of the beautiful English Prayer Book, the simple dignity of which has been part of the education of most Englishmen; and Latimer, whose sermons in the homely language of the people attacked abuses and superstition.

This revolutionary period continued through the short reign of Edward VI. In 1536 Calvin had issued his great work formulating the Protestant theology, the basis for the English Puritan movement of the seventeenth century. The English Reformation, unchecked, now came into closer contact with later and more positive Protestantism on the continent. His father's work of plundering, extending to the property of the medieval guilds, was carried on under Edward.

After the tragic interlude of Lady Jane Grey, Mary, a sister of Edward, and daughter of that Catherine whom Henry had divorced, succeeded to the throne. Attempting vainly to re-establish Catholicism, she married Philip II of Spain, and persecuted the Protestants as her father had the Catholics. Three hundred men, including Protestant leaders like Cranmer and Latimer, were burned at the stake; but their deaths only popularized Protestantism in England. Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (1563), a sensational account of the sufferings of Mary's victims, was one of the most popular of books for nearly two centuries. Mary was unable to restore the Church's property, now in the hands of wealthy squires. On her death, Mary's courtiers rushed to the support of Anne Boleyn's daughter, Elizabeth, who came to the throne in 1558, and in whose reign England achieved one of the richest flourishings of its national culture.

H. D. Traill, *Social England,* Vols. III and IV, are highly informative for this period. Two masterful works on the Italian Renaissance are J. C. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1929), and J. A. Symonds, *The Renaissance in Italy,* four volumes, though they both date the beginnings of the Renaissance too late.

The Elizabethans

When Elizabeth became Queen in 1558, England was again a nation far behind the Latin countries because of the bitter factionalism of Protestants and Catholics. Yet before her long reign ended in 1603, England had become a leading power in Europe. Some of her country's triumph is attributable to Elizabeth's own genius and character, for her rule was a personal one as her father's had been. Although she settled in the affirmative the question as to whether England was to be a Protestant country, she was a child of the Renaissance rather than of the Reformation. Her tutors were distinguished humanists. One of them, Roger Ascham, pupil of Sir John Cheke, who studied under Erasmus, was a writer of note (cf. *below*). She mastered Greek and Roman literature, and delighted in exhibiting to ambassadors her fluency in Latin, French, and Italian. She was herself the author of some verses not bad for a queen (cf. *below*), an excellent letter-writer, and master of an elegant oratorical style. More interested in politics and the arts than in religion, she steered a middle course between the old faith and extreme Protestantism. She had to resign all hope for reconciliation with Rome when Pius V excommunicated her (1570) and officially "gave" the throne to Mary, Queen of Scots; but although there were many plots against her by the Catholic party, Elizabeth exhibited extraordinary tolerance as compared to the monarchs of France and Spain. So long as they made no noise about it, men could believe in what they pleased, provided they gave her the loyalty she demanded.

For some twenty years Elizabeth kept several princely suitors for her hand guessing while she strengthened her country internally and abroad. It was her ingenuity which postponed the inevitable conflict with Spain until, in 1588, England was ready, and able to emerge victor over the Armada. Making her court a literary center, she soon found herself the object of a cult of chivalric worship. Innumerable panegyrics upon the Virgin Queen, her beauty, her accomplishments, and her goodness were written by poets and prose-writers from Lyly through Spenser, Ralegh, and Shakespeare. They may bore with their exaggeration and repetitiousness, but, allowing for flattery, they indicate a real enthusiasm for her among her people. In her fondness for lavish show, pageant, and music, she gave new force to the humanistic revival; the luxuriance of Renaissance culture found a ready home at her court. In her day English music rose to the front rank of European composition; had Puritanism, which grew rapidly under the Stuarts, not ruined it, English music after its Elizabethan beginnings might have had no peer in later days. She succeeded, in short, in incarnating the spirit of her age in all its contradictions: like it she was in turn artistic, lavish, childlike, calculating, intelligent, reckless, vain, affectionate, and cruel.

Under her, England began to take advantage of the new central position it had procured as a result of the discovery of America. On the medieval map Britain had been an outpost of civilization; when the Atlantic opened up continents, England suddenly found itself occupying a critical position between the New World and the continent. The great rival was Spain, with her vast holdings in the Americas. English pirates were soon joining the French Protestants and Dutch Protestants who were eager to dispute Spain's share, and piracy became a favored and quasi-religious profession that poured wealth and luxuries into England. In 1577, Francis Drake set sail, passed through the strait of Magellan, sacked Spanish towns on the Pacific, sailed up the coast of California, across the Pacific to the Philippines and East Indies, and returned by the Cape of Good Hope with fabulous treasure. His arrival home in 1580 indicated to Elizabeth that she was ready for an encounter with Spain. After the victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, Ralegh and Essex took the aggressive and plundered Cadiz in 1595, bringing back, among other things, a great Spanish library to form the basis of the invaluable Bodleian collection at Oxford. These victories, and the successful voyages of the merchants to the East, were an endless source of national pride to Englishmen, whose vision was dazzled by England's expanding power and the wonders of the world.

The Elizabethan writers have been likened to their corsair contemporaries, voyaging boldly into foreign waters of literature and bringing back every sort of treasure for England's glory. The language itself was increased to nearly twice its size not only by importations from abroad and from the classics but also by coinings to express new ideas. In pushing back the limits of the medieval world, translators enriched English culture with the accumulated wealth of antique and Renaissance civilization. (Cf. *Guevara, Tasso,* and *Elizabethan Translations, below.*) Chroniclers like Holinshed added to popular patriotic excitement by collecting the stores, factual and legendary, of English history. Courtier poets like Sidney (cf. *below*) were continuing where Wyatt and Surrey had left off in their experimentation with forms. Then there came from Cambridge, a center of Protestant humanistic learning, the first great poet of the age, Spenser (cf. *below*), whose vast learning was plucked from every humanistic source, and whose genius enabled him to employ with authority the wonderfully enriched language and to develop a musical perfection unexcelled in any other tongue. But it was through the patronage of the general London public in the field of the drama that Elizabethan literature reached its greatest heights.

The background of this accomplishment was twofold. At the Universities, humanist teaching fostered the enthusiastic study, acting, and imitation of the comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca. These Latin plays were the school at which English drama learned the secret of a well-knit play, of a polish far removed from the chaotic shapelessness of medieval drama. Characterization, unity, and progression of a plot through five acts were thus taught the first academic dramatists, Nicholas Udall of Eton, author of *Ralph Roister Doister*, and Mr. S. of Cambridge, author of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*—playwrights whose content is English but the construction of whose plays is that of the Latin comedies. Sharing with the universities and schools this interest in classical drama, the law students at the Inns of Court often gave theatrical performances; and it was under their auspices that the first English tragedy on the Senecan model was presented, *Ferrex and Porrex, or Gorboduc* (1562) by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton. *Gorboduc,* which initiated a series of stilted dull English "Senecan" tragedies written and acted by the young lawyers, has a twofold importance: it put to dramatic use the blank verse which Surrey had introduced into lyric poetry; and as the first English play recognizable as a tragedy, it ushered in a great English literary tradition. The first comedies, *Ralph Roister Doister* (1553-4?) and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* (1550-3?), are more interesting; the former, although it is somewhat crude and often is very imitative of Terence, has a certain freshness of dialogue; *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* a merry story of a village hunt for a lost needle, is even freer of Terence in its rustic setting, natural dialogue, and realistic touches. The Queen and her court began to delight in having such plays acted before them; and the choir-boys of the royal chapel were also organized as an acting-group to perform the elegant courtly plays which Lyly expressly wrote for them.

In the meantime popular drama had been following a more or less independent line of development. The performances of the guilds (cf. Introduction to *Everyman, above*) proving insufficient to meet the demand for plays, acting companies had been formed. The actors, becoming part of the king's or some powerful lord's household, gave public exhibitions of their art as well as private ones for their patrons. The village square in which medieval audiences had stood to watch the medieval pageants may have suggested the similar availability of the town inn-yards where the actors improvised wooden stages on which to enact their plays. These popular dramas, moralities and interludes and hybrid forms, were racy but confused and ephemeral in quality.

At last in 1576 James Burbage, manager of the Earl of Leicester's company, erected *The Theatre,* the first playhouse in England, just outside the limits of the City of London. It was a crude affair, not much more than a kind of enclosed inn-yard, with a stage that protruded into a space exposed to the elements, with much of the audience standing about in no great comfort. But this primitive building remained the model for nearly all the many theatres which soon opened—The Curtain, The Rose, The Swan, The Fortune, and The Globe (of which Shakespeare became part owner). Immediately the theatres became the favorite resort of men of all ranks, the poor and the wealthy, the tradesman and the courtier—the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick-maker.

Among the first dramatists to write for the popular playhouses was a group of "university wits," graduates of Oxford and Cambridge—Robert Greene (cf. *below*), Thomas Lodge, John Lyly (cf. *below*), Thomas Nashe, George Peele (cf. *below*), Christopher Marlowe (cf. *below*), and a man who does not seem to have attended a university, Thomas Kyd—all reckless, fiery young men who joined the actors in order to make a living by supplying London with its best-loved entertainment. Nearly all of them led a Bohemian life among disreputable companions, for the player's rank was low in society, and were the object of attack by the Puritans for their loose living. But they were fellows of imagination and performed an incalculable service to English drama. Through them converged the two diverse streams of influence in the drama: their task was to make plays for a popular audience, but they had been disciplined in the works of the Latin dramatists. Luckily these men were gifted with poetic passion and preferred to follow the popular taste for energy and excitement; their knowledge of the classics was a corrective for the extravagance of the popular tradition, and gave form to their own overflowing fancy. In their hands popular and humanistic traditions met to create the basic types of drama which needed only the genius of Shakespeare to lift London drama to the level of great art. Of these men Marlowe was the most original and most gifted. His four tragedies, *Tamburlaine, Faustus, The Jew of Malta,* and *Edward II,* were the earliest plays to be written around a central personality. And it was Marlowe who demonstrated the potentialities of blank verse for poetic drama. His untimely death cut short the most promising career before Shakespeare's.

And then followed Shakespeare (cf. *below*), accepting the best of what had gone before him, transforming all that had been crude or inept into magnificence and profundity. In him incomparable poetic gifts were so joined to a deep knowledge of men and women that most of his plays continue to enchant mankind in every clime and age. All that the best in the Renaissance was trying to achieve, through diversified and conflicting tendencies, seems to have met in him in a varied but unified harmony.

> *What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!*

So speaks Hamlet, voicing the brightest visions the Renaissance knew of Man's potentialities.

> *Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,*
> *Creeps in this petty pace from day to day*
> *To the last syllable of recorded time;*
> *And all our yesterdays have lighted fools*
> *The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!*
> *Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player*
> *That struts and frets his hour upon the stage*
> *And then is heard no more. It is a tale*
> *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,*
> *Signifying nothing,*

says Macbeth, expressing the despair of the disillusioned. Between these two poles, the hopes and defeats of humanity were caught by Shakespeare. To have thus understood the wars that can rack men's souls, he himself must have possessed the mellowed philosophy of Prospero, which encompasses all that lies within these two points of view. We seem to hear Shakespeare in Prospero's:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep

—words which touch the deepest springs of humanity within us.

By Shakespeare's side, and coming after him, was a score of other popular dramatists only less wonderful than he. It is fair to say that even without Shakespeare, the work of Webster (cf. *below*), Beaumont, Fletcher (cf. *below*), Dekker (cf. *below*), Heywood, Massinger, Jonson (cf. *below*), Chapman (cf. *below*), Middleton, and Ford, would make Elizabethan drama, with the possible exception of Greek classic tragedy, the richest body of dramatic literature the world has known. As one turns to the dark beauty of Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, the moving poetry of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, the wholesome good-humor of Dekker's *Shoemakers' Holiday*, the compassionateness of Heywood's *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, the sharp bite of Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, the satire and realism of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, the poignancy of Ford's *'Tis A Pity She's A Whore*—to mention some of the best of these plays—one may wonder how a stage that was nothing more than an unattractive wooden platform, could have inspired such masterpieces.

To put the case concretely, let us take a scene from a play familiar to everyone, the last act of *The Merchant of Venice.* As the scene opens, Jessica and Lorenzo are walking under the trees on Portia's estate. With no footlights, no scenery, no lighting effects to create the illusion, the audience standing around the wooden platform in Shakespeare's theatre was actually in the full light of the late afternoon (possibly modified by the thick of a London fog!) in an area open to the sky. On the platform itself were supposed to be moonlight, the shade of trees, a gentle wind, and the scent of flowers—all of which a modern theatre could easily present, even employing behind the scenes, if desired, an atomizer for the perfume! On the Elizabethan stage, if moonlight, shadows, and a light wind were needed, they had to be there *in the lines.* Take up the play and see how Shakespeare has met the problem: Lorenzo and Jessica are indulging in that romantic and teasing talk which lovers dote upon, but all the time the setting is being painted:

Lor. *The moon shines bright. In such a night as this,*
When the sweet winds did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise . . .
Jes. *In such a night,*
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself . . .

Notice how the whole atmosphere is suddenly charged with the silence of a moonlit night. And then, when Portia comes in, she says:

That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Even a London fog might be pierced by the radiance of such lines! The limitations, in short, of that crude stage were a challenge to a poet to exercise his genius to the full. There were many great writers able to meet that challenge. The activity of the dramatists continued at a feverish rate, the results for many years varying in excellence but rarely in vigor, until at last enthusiasm for the theatre waned. Under Charles I the Puritans, bitter opponents of drama, had grown so powerful as to be able to force the closing of the theatres in 1642. By that time Elizabeth had been dead nearly forty years; but because the stream of inspiration was so steady, we often call the plays of the whole period from the building of the first theatre to the closing of the last (1576-1642), the "Elizabethan" drama.

It is in the plays that we find another important literary product of the age—its songs. It would appear that men even of the most mediocre talents could turn out lovely songs with ease. "The English lyric," says Bruce Pattison, "attained its highest excellence during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and it is no accident that the same period is also the purplest patch in English musical history." The audience loved these songs, and some of the most beautiful of them are to be found interpolated in the dramas of the period. In the Elizabethan lyrics the heritage of the fresh medieval lyric and the influence of elegant classical and Renaissance models can be perceived. Non-dramatic poets too, like Sidney and Spenser, wrote exquisite songs, and Campion (cf. *below*) made the composition of them his career.

Finally, in addition to the drama and the song, a third important form of poetic expression, the sonnet, must be mentioned. A number of fine poets wrote sequences containing sonnets of a very high order: Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella,* Spenser's *Amoretti,* Daniel's *Delia,* Drayton's *Idea,* and, of course, Shakespeare's collection, are the outstanding. The audience for these was not the popular one of the theatre, but the cultivated entourage of the court. The Elizabethan sonnets, are, in consequence, more remarkable for polish, sweetness, ingenuity, and refined passion than for power. The conceits and conventions of the Petrarchan school are the source of much grace and artifice in Elizabethan sonnets; yet there are much authentic feeling and delightful music in the sequences of these five sonneteers.

Prose, however, was slower in development. Some of the leading thinkers of the English Renaissance, like More and Bacon, preferred Latin for their most ambitious works. Translators, however—particularly North and Florio—were making important experiments in English prose style. But false ideas of elegance, so apparent in Lyly's *Euphues* (cf. *below*), deflected English from forming a satisfactory prose tradition. Prose-writers like Ascham in his *Schoolmaster* (cf. *below*), Ralegh in his *History of the World* (cf. *below*), and Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593), achieved distinction as individual stylists, but no considerable body of great prose can be pointed to, in an age that was much more inclined towards poetry. It is nevertheless worthy of remark that prose passages in the popular dramas, particularly those of Jonson, in their attempt to catch the rhythms and vocabulary of everyday speech, show English prose becoming less stiff and more flexible.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, there appeared the earliest of Bacon's *Essays* (cf. *below*), almost modern in their simple directness. Both the cool objective thought and the clear style of these minor pieces by the popularizer of the inductive method of reasoning, belong much more to the ideals of the seventeenth than of the sixteenth century. No work, however, can take precedence for influence on the future of English prose over the Bible of 1611 (cf. *below*), which, as the culmination of many Renaissance translations, must be called the triumph of Elizabethan prose.

The literature of scholarship on this period is peculiarly rich. A fascinating panorama of the life of the times is *Shakespeare's England* (S. Lee, general editor) two volumes (1916); of interest, too, is H. T. Stephenson, *Shakespeare's London* (1905). The fullest account of the drama is E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage,* four volumes (1923); briefer, but excellent, are F. E. Schelling, *Elizabethan Drama,* two volumes, and W. Creizenach, *English Drama in the Age of Elizabeth* (trans. 1916). There are a number of representative anthologies of Elizabethan drama. Good literary histories are E. C. Dunn, *The Literature of Shakespeare's England* (1936), and V. de S. Pinto, *The English Renaissance* (1938). A discriminating collection, well annotated, is J. W. Hebel and H. H. Hudson, *Poetry of the English Renaissance, 1509-1660* (1929).

PETRARCH (1304-1374)

Born at Arezzo the son of a Florentine who, like Dante, had been exiled by the rival party, Petrarch was taken as a boy to Avignon in France, then a cosmopolitan centre of medieval culture. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Montpellier to study law, but its technicalities disgusted him. There is told of him a story, which the reader of the letter below will not find hard to credit: his father once angrily threw the young law student's books of poetry into the fire, but was induced to spare a Virgil and a half-burnt Cicero at his son's tearful supplications. The death of Petrarch's father in 1326 freed him from a profession he disliked, but left him penniless. His only inheritance, however, was precious to him—a manuscript of Cicero. His circumstances forced him to take orders, and he lived for some years under the patronage of a powerful ecclesiastic, Giacomo Colonna.

When he was not quite twenty-three, he first saw in a church at Avignon that Laura who, with Dante's Beatrice, is the most celebrated loved one in poetry. Her actual identity has never been ascertained; but it is clear that, in the tradition of courtly love, she was married, and that he maintained with her a friendship which was never intimate. His Italian poems have celebrated for all time his unrequited passion.

Giving up his long residence at Avignon in 1333, he visited Paris, Ghent, Liége, and Cologne, making everywhere the acquaintance of learned men, and transcribing manuscripts of those classical writers whom he worshipped. After returning to Avignon, he set out for Rome whose classic ruins mightily impressed him. In 1337 he retired to Vaucluse in France to lead the life of a solitary student amid unspoiled natural surroundings—an act remarkable for a medieval scholar. Reading, studying, taking long walks, he composed sonnets and songs to Laura in Italian, engaged in an elaborate correspondence in Latin with his friends, wrote a number of important prose works, and began work on an ambitious Latin epic, *Africa.* As the manuscripts of these began to circulate, Petrarch began to win the renown for which he thirsted. Finally, in April 1341, he went to Rome, there to be crowned with the poet's laurel at the Capitol by the Roman senate, and amid public applause he delivered an oration on a passage in Virgil. That occasion has often been pointed to as the place where the ancient and the modern worlds united to provide "a new stadium for the human spirit"—which we call the Renaissance.

The coronation, indeed, opened a new life for Petrarch. Thereafter his reputation as poet and rhetorician was European, and he was sought after by princes everywhere; he became a friend to popes, the Emperor, and the King of France. But to Petrarch the most important of his experiences was his discovery at Verona of the manuscript of what had been thought a lost work—Cicero's *Familiar Letters.* His love of Ciceronian Latin had filled his head with dreams of the majesty of classical Rome. When Rienzi, in 1347, succeeded by revolution in reviving a short-lived republic at Rome, Petrarch hailed him as a deliverer who would restore ancient Roman glory, and began to think of medieval Romans as the "Populus Romanus." In the same year, Petrarch built himself a house at Parma, intending to pursue the life of an honorable man of letters and a patriot of ideals—and his writings on topics of the day were widely read by scholars.

But the next year Laura and many of his friends died of the plague; and their loss to a man of his profound sensibility was great. For a time he thought of abandoning the world, and even planned a new kind of monastery of the new learning.

It was in 1350 that he formed the most important of his friendships, with Boccaccio, who already venerated him, and through whom he was offered the rectorship of the new university at Florence. That great honor, however, he declined in favor of the leisure he desired for study and writing. After much triumphant moving from court to court, he settled in 1362 at Padua. His last years were spent in tireless literary activity, aided and encouraged by the friendship of Boccaccio. One of his last works was a Latin version (from which Chaucer made the *Clerk's Tale*) of the last tale in *The Decameron*, the story of Griselda. On July 18, 1374, he was found dead among his books in the library of his house.

Nobody would be more surprised than Petrarch to find that his fame as a writer rests upon his Italian sonnets, which have been hailed both as one of the chief glories of Italian literature and as a model for poets of all countries (cf. *Vol. I. p. 239*). To him they had small literary importance, and he came to look upon them as youthful indiscretions. It was as a scholar and a humanist he wished to be known; of his writings it was his ambitious Latin works that he expected to bring him immortality. Unhappily his beloved Latin epic, *Africa*, as a critic has wittily put it, "will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten, and not till then." There are, in total, some sixteen volumes of his Latin works including many letters, a life of Caesar, Lives of Famous Men, Meditations, Essays, Eclogues, metrical epistles, and his long epic.

But the importance of his studies to the modern world cannot be overestimated. Although conforming outwardly to the medieval view of life as a probation for the hereafter, Petrarch was the first great advocate of the claims of this life, "the first modern man of letters, the real founder of modern Italian literature,"—the father of Humanism. Born and bred in a medieval culture, he nevertheless succeeded in opening doors that had been shut for centuries to the human spirit, and hence aided the opening of other such doors whose existence had never been suspected. His invigorating contact with antiquity, brought back to human beings the desire for self-knowledge and progress. The knowledge of Latin had, of course, never perished in Europe, but Petrarch was the first man to understand that Greek culture was the foundation on which Roman culture had been built. In his maturity, he labored to learn Greek, but never quite mastered it; he had to be content to worship Homer in his friend Boccaccio's Latin version. He turned, therefore, to the Latin not, like the scholastics, to find in it predictions of Christianity, but to rediscover the values of antiquity. The writers of ancient Greece and Rome were for him living men to whom he could even write personal letters, like the one below. Convinced that many treasures had been lost, he began a search for manuscripts, collected a library of them, and annotated them as he read. He is the first great collector of books (and coins) and the first preserver of manuscripts.

He earns the title of the father of humanism because his measure of good and evil was the human spirit; whatever aided in expanding or enriching it was for Petrarch a great good, whatever cramped or impoverished it was an evil. The function of the poet, the orator, the rhetorician, and the scholar is, he saw, to provide this good for humanity. Hence he cut himself free to rise above the narrow disputations of the medieval schoolmen.

Cicero was his greatest love in literature, and next to him Virgil. He felt like a personal friend to these men, and turned to them for inspiration and consolation. Perhaps nothing could better illustrate what humanism meant to Petrarch than this letter to Cicero which we reprint from M. E. Cosenza's translation of the *Letters to Classical Authors* (1914) with the kind permission of the translator and the Chicago University Press.

E. H. R. Tatham, *Francesco Petrarca* (1926), is an important study of the humanist, as is M. F. Jerrold, *Francesco Petrarca, Poet and Humanist* (1909). A brilliant estimate of Petrarch's relation to the Renaissance will be found in Volumes II and IV of J. A. Symonds' *The Renaissance in Italy.*

From *Letters to Classical Authors*

TO M. T. CICERO[1]

(*Translated by Mario E. Cosenza*)

I fear that my last letter has offended thee; for thou art wont to designate as just the adage of thy friend[2] in his Andria, "Homage begets friends; truth, enemies." If my fear prove true, then accept what may in some degree soothe thy injured feelings. Let not the truth be a source of ill humor in every and all instances, I beg of thee. Men, I know, are wont to be angered at justifiable censure, and to rejoice in merited praise. Thou, indeed, O Cicero (speaking with thy leave), didst live as a man, didst speak as an orator, didst write as a philosopher. It was thy life that I found fault with, not thy intellectual powers, nor yet thy command of language. Indeed, I admire the former, and am amazed at the latter. And, moreover, in thy life I feel the lack of nothing except the element of constancy, and a desire for peace that was to have been expected of a philosopher. I look in vain for a deep-rooted antipathy to civil dissension, to strifes utterly of no avail, considering that liberty had been crushed and that the Republic had already been mourned as dead.

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[1] Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), Roman orator, philosopher, and statesman.

[2] Cf. Terence, *Andria*, line 69.

Mark how different is my attitude toward thee from thine toward Epicurus on so many occasions, but especially in the *De finibus*. Whenever thou wert so inclined, thou didst praise his life and ridicule his intellect. In thee I ridicule nothing. I take compassion, however, on the life thou didst lead; while, as I have already stated, I rejoice in thy mental abilities and in thy powers of expression. O thou great father of Roman eloquence! Not only I, but all who take delight in the elegance of the Latin tongue render thee great thanks. Thou art the fountain-head from which we draw the vivifying waters for our meadows. We frankly confess that we have been guided by thee, assisted by thy judgments, enlightened by thy radiance; and, finally, that it was under thy auspices, so to speak, that I have gained this ability as a writer (such as it is), and that I have attained my purpose.

For the realms of poetry, however, there was at hand a second guide. The nature of the case demanded that there should be two leaders—one whom I might follow in the unencumbered ways of prose, and the other in the more restricted paths of poetry. It was necessary that there should be two men whom I should admire, respectively, for their eloquence and their song. This had needs be so. For—and I beg the kind indulgence of both of you for speaking thus boldly—neither of you could serve both purposes; he could not rival thee in thy chosen field, whereas thou couldst not adapt thyself to his measured flow. I would not, indeed, have ventured to be the first to pass such criticism, even though I clearly perceived it to be true. It has already been passed before me—or, peradventure, it may have been quoted from another writer—by that great Annaeus Seneca[3] of Cordova, who, as he himself complains, was prevented from becoming acquainted with thee, not by any lapse of years, but by the fury of civil warfare. He might have seen thee, but did not; withal, he was a constant admirer and worshiper both of thy works and of those of that other. Seneca, therefore, marks out the boundaries of your respective spheres, and enjoins upon each to yield to his coworker in the other field.

But I am keeping thee in suspense too long. Dost thou ask who that other guide is? Thou wilt know the man at once, if thou art merely reminded of his name. It is Publius Vergilius Maro,[4] a citizen of Mantua, of whom thou didst prophesy such great things. For we have read that when thou, then advanced in years, hadst admired some youthful effort of his, thou didst inquire its author's name, and that, having seen the young man, thou didst express thy great delight. And then, drawing on thy unexhausted fount of eloquence, thou didst pronounce upon him a judgment which, though mingled with self-praise, was nevertheless both honorable and splendid for him; "Rome's other hope and stay." This sentence, which he thus heard fall from thy lips, pleased the youth to such a degree, and was so jealously treasured in his mind, that twenty years later, when thou hadst long since ended this earthly career, he inserted it word for word into his divine poem. And if it had been thy lot to see this work, thou wouldst have rejoiced that from the first blossom thou hast made such accurate prediction of future success. Thou wouldst, moreover, have congratulated the Latin Muses, either for leaving but a doubtful superiority to the arrogant Greek Muses, or else for winning over them a decisive victory. There are defenders for both these opinions, I grant thee. And yet, if I have come to know thee from thy works—and I feel that I know thee as intimately as if I had always lived with thee—I should say that thou wouldst have been a stern defender of the latter view, and that, just as thou hadst already granted to Latium the palm in oratory, thou wouldst have done likewise in the case of poetry. I do not doubt, moreover, that thou wouldst have pronounced the Aeneid superior to the Iliad—an assertion which Propertius did not fear to make from the very beginning of Vergil's labors. For when he had meditated upon the opening lines of the inspired poem, he freely gave utterance to the feelings and hopes aroused by it in these verses:

> Yield then, ye bards of Greece, ye Romans yield,
> A mightier yet than Homer takes the field.

Thus much concerning my second guide for Latin eloquence, thus much concerning Rome's other hope and stay. I come back to thee now. Thou hast already heard from me my opinions on thy life and on thy genius. Art thou desirous now of learning what lot befell thy works, of knowing in what esteem they are held either by the world in general, or else by the more learned classes? There are extant, indeed, splendid volumes—volumes which I can scarcely enumerate, much less peruse with care. The fame of thy deeds and thy works is very great, and has spread far and wide. Thy name, too, has a familiar ring to all. Very few and rare, however, are those who study thee, and for various reasons: either because of the natural perversity of the times toward such studies, or because the minds of men have become dull and sluggish, or, as I think most likely, because greed has bent their minds in an entirely different direction. Wherefore, some of thy works have (unless I am mistaken) perished in this generation, and I know not whether they will ever be recovered. Oh, how great is my grief thereat; how great is the ignominy of this age; how great the loss to posterity! It was not, I suppose, sufficiently degrading to neglect our own powers, and to bequeath to future generations no fruit of our intellects; but, worse than all else, we had to destroy the fruit also of thy labor with our cruel, our unpardonable disregard. This lamentable loss has overtaken not merely thy works, but also those of many other illustrious authors. But at present I would speak of thy writings only; and the names of those whose loss is the more regrettable are the following: *De republica, De re familiari, De re militari, De laude philosophiae, De consolatione,* and the *De gloria.* Concerning the last, however, I entertain a more or less doubtful hope of its recovery, and consequently my despair is not unqualified. Unfortunately, however, even of those books that have come down to us, there are lacking large portions. It is as if we had overcome, after a great struggle, the oblivion threatened by the sloth and inactivity of ages; but, as the price of victory, we had to mourn over our leaders, not only those to be numbered among the dead, but also the maimed and the lost. We miss this loss in many of thy works, but more especially in the *De oratore*, the *Academica*, and the *De legibus*—all of which have reached us in such a fragmentary and mutilated condition that it would have been better, perhaps, had they perished altogether.

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[3] Celebrated Roman Stoic philosopher, born at Cordova, Spain, 4 B.C., died near Rome 65 A.D.

[4] The greatest Roman epic poet, 70-19 B.C.

There remains still another topic. Art thou desirous of learning the present condition of Rome and the Roman state? of knowing the actual appearance of thy fatherland, the state of harmony among its citizens, to whom the shaping of its policies has fallen, and by whose wisdom and by whose hands the reins of government are held? Art thou wondering whether or not the Danube and the Ganges, and the Ebro, and the Nile, and the Don are still the boundaries of our empire? and whether that man has arisen among us

> The limits of whose victories
> Are ocean, of his fame the skies,

and who

> O'er Ind and Garamant extreme
> Shall stretch his reign,

as thy Mantuan friend once sang? I feel sure that thou art most eager to hear such and similar tidings, owing to thy loyalty and the love thou didst bear the fatherland, a love remaining constant even unto death. But it is better to pass over such subjects in silence. Believe me Cicero, if thou wert to learn of the fallen state of our country, thou wouldst weep bitter tears, be it a region of Heaven that thou inhabitest, or of Hades. Forever farewell.

From the land of the living, on the left bank of the Rhone, in Transpadane Gaul, in the same year, on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of January (at Avignon, December 19, 1345).

Sir Thomas More

(1478-1535)

The son of a prominent London lawyer, More studied at Oxford under teachers enthusiastically promoting the new learning. Making his mark as a lawyer, he was appointed successor to Wolsey as Chancellor to Henry VIII, with whom for a while he was a great favorite. More became a close friend of Erasmus, the great humanist, and himself earned the reputation of being a leading English humanist. He was a deeply religious man, too, and however he urged tolerance in his *Utopia*, was remorseless in his persecution of heretics. When Henry set about making himself the head of the English Church, More refused to take the oath rejecting the Pope's authority. For his courage, he was charged with high treason, convicted on perjured evidence, and beheaded. Four hundred years later (1935) he was canonized by Pius XI.

His great work, *Utopia,* influenced by Plato's *Republic* and the writings of Erasmus and St. Augustine, is written, as might be expected from a humanist, in a Latin elegant, witty, and scholarly. The English translation by the Elizabethan Ralph Robinson misses most of these qualities, but captures at least the flavor of the times. *Utopia* (i.e. "Nowhere," in Greek) describes an ideal state which provides enough for everybody and where life is lived rationally and war is outlawed; there is no private property, and work is required of everyone; the state maintains educational institutions free to everybody, and individual desires are subordinated to the common good. There are some telling contrasts between the well-being of this socialist society and the extremes of poverty and luxury in Tudor England. More's noble preoccupation with the claims of humanity is one of the first fruits of the Renaissance in England, and of that humanism which Petrarch and Boccaccio sponsored.

The introduction to C. Collins's edition of *Utopia* (1904) is important. *The English Works of Sir Thomas More* were edited by various scholars (1927-1931). Karl Kautsky, the political theorist, wrote the much discussed *Thomas More and His Utopia* (trans. 1927). R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (1935), is an exhaustive account.

From *Utopia*

(Translated from the Latin by Ralph Robinson in 1556)

OF THEIR LIVING AND MUTUAL CONVERSATION TOGETHER

But now will I declare how the citizens use themselves one towards another: what familiar occupying and entertainment there is among the people, and what fashion they use in the distribution of every thing. First the city consisteth of families, the families most commonly be made of kindreds. For the women, when they be married at a lawful age, they go into their husbands houses. But the male children with all the whole male offspring continue still in their own family and be governed of the eldest and ancientest father, unless he dote for age: for then the next to him in age is placed in his room. But to the intent the prescript number of the citizens should neither decrease, nor above measure increase, it is ordained that no family which in every city be six thousand in the whole, besides them of the country, shall at once have fewer children of the age of fourteen years or thereabouts than ten or more than sixteen, for of children under this age no number can be prescribed or appointed. This measure or number is easily observed and kept, by putting them that in fuller families be above the number into families of smaller increase. But if chance be that if the whole city store increase above the just number, therewith they fill up the lack of other cities. But if so be that the multitude through the whole island pass and exceed the due number, then they choose out of every city certain citizens, and build up a town under their own laws in the next land where the inhabitants have much waste and unoccupied ground, receiving also of the same country people to them, if they will join and dwell with them.

They thus joining and dwelling together do easily agree in one fashion of living, and that to the great wealth of both the peoples. For they so bring the matter about by their laws, that the ground which before was neither good nor profitable for the one nor for the other, is now sufficient and fruitful enough for them both. But if the inhabitants of that land will not dwell with them to be ordered by their laws, then they drive them out of those bounds which they have limited, and appointed out for themselves. And if they resist and rebel, then they make war against them. For they count this the most just cause of war, when any people holdeth a piece of ground void and vacant to no good nor profitable use, keeping other from the use and possession of it, which notwithstanding by the law of nature ought thereof to be nourished and relieved. If any chance do so much diminish the number of any of their cities, that it cannot be filled up again, without the diminishing of the just number of the other cities (which they say chanced but twice since the beginning of the land through a great pestilent plague) then they fulfil and make up the number with citizens fetched out of their own foreign towns, for they had rather suffer their foreign towns to decay and perish, than any city of their own island to be diminished.

But now again to the conversation of the citizens among themselves. The eldest (as I said) ruleth the family. The wives be ministers to their husbands, the children to their parents, and to be short the younger to their elders. Every city is divided into four equal parts or quarters. In the midst of every quarter there is a market place of all manner of things. Thither the works of every family be brought into certain houses. And every kind of thing is laid up several in barns or storehouses. From hence the father of every family, or every householder fetcheth whatsoever he and his have need of, and carrieth it away with him without money, without exchange, without gage, pawn, or pledge. For why should any thing be denied unto him? Seeing there is abundance of all things, and that it is not to be feared, lest any man will ask more than he needeth. For why should it be thought that that man would ask more than enough, which is sure never to lack? Certainly in all kinds of living creatures either fear of lack doth cause covetousness and ravin, or in many only pride, which counteth it a glorious thing to pass and excel other in the superfluous and vain ostentation of things. The which kind of vice among the Utopians can have no place.

Next to the market places that I spake of, stand meat markets; whither be brought not only all sorts of herbs, and the fruit of trees, with bread, but also fish, and all manner of four-footed beasts, and wild fowl that be man's meat. But first the filthiness and odour thereof is clean washed away in the running river without the city in places appointed meet for the same purpose. From thence the beasts be brought in killed, and clean washed by the hands of their bondmen. For they permit not their free citizens to accustom themselves to the killing of beasts, through the use of whereof they think clemency, the gentlest affection of our nature, by little and little to decay and perish. Neither they suffer any thing that is filthy, loathsome, or uncleanly, to be brought into the city, lest the air by the stench thereof infected and corrupt, should cause pestilent diseases. Moreover every street hath certain great large halls set in equal distance one from another, every one known by a several name. In these halls dwell the syphogrants.[1] And to every one of the same halls be appointed thirty families, on either side fifteen. The stewards of every hall at a certain hour come into the meat markets, where they receive meat according to the number of their halls.

But first and chiefly of all, respect is had to the sick, that be cured in the hospitals. For in the circuit of the city, a little without the walls, they have four hospitals, so big, so wide, so ample, and so large, that they may seem four little towns, which were devised of that bigness partly to the intent the sick, be they never so many in number, should not lie too throng or strait,[2] and therefore uneasily and incommodiously: and partly that they which were taken and holden with contagious diseases, such as be wont by infection to creep from one to another, might be laid apart far from the company of the residue. These hospitals be so well appointed, and with all things necessary to health so furnished, and moreover so diligent attendance through the continual presence of cunning physicians is given, that though no man be sent thither against his will, yet notwithstanding there is no sick person in all the city, that had not rather lie there, than at home in his own house.

When the steward of the sick hath received such meats as the physicians have prescribed, then the best is equally divided among the halls, according to the company of every one, saving that there is had a respect to the prince, the bishop, the tranibores,[3] and to ambassadors and all strangers, if there be any, which be very few and seldom. But they also when they be there, have certain several houses appointed and prepared for them. To these halls at the set hours of dinner and supper cometh all the whole syphogranty or ward, warned by the noise of a brazen trumpet: except such as be sick in the hospitals, or else in their own houses. Howbeit no man is prohibited or forbid, after the halls be served, to fetch home meat out of the market to his own house, for they know that no man will do it without a cause reasonable. For though no man be prohibited to dine at home, yet no man doth it willingly: because it is counted a point of small honesty. And also it were a folly to take the pain to dress a bad dinner at home, when they may be welcome to good and fine fare so nigh hand at the hall. In this hall all vile service, all slavery, and drudgery, with all laborsome toil, and base business is done by bondmen.

But the women of every family by course have the office and charge of cookery for seething and dressing the meat, and ordering all things thereto belonging. They sit at three tables or more, according to the number of their company. The men sit upon the bench next the wall, and the women against them on the other side of the table, that if any sudden evil should chance to them, as many times happeneth to women with child, they may rise without trouble or disturbance of anybody, and go thence into the nursery. The nurses sit several alone with their young sucklings in a certain parlor appointed and deputed to the same purpose, never without fire and clean water, nor yet without cradles, that when they will they may lay down the young infants, and at their pleasure take them out of their swathing clothes, and hold them to the fire, and refresh them with play. Every mother is nurse to her own child, unless either death, or sickness be the lot. When that chanceth, the wives of the syphogrants quickly provide a nurse. And that is not hard to be done. For they that can do it, proffer themselves to no service so kindly as to that. Because that there this kind of pity is much praised: and the child that is nourished, ever after taketh his nurse for his own natural mother.

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[1] rulers over thirty families.

[2] thickly or close together.

[3] officers commanding ten syphogrants.

Also among the nurses sit all the children that be under the age of five years. All the other children of both kinds, as well boys as girls, that be under the age of marriage, do either service at the tables, or else if they be too young thereto, yet they stand by with marvellous silence. That which is given to them from the table they eat, and other several dinner-time they have none.

The syphogrant and his wife sit in the midst of the high tables, forasmuch as that is counted the honorablest place, and because from thence all the whole company is in their sight. For that table standeth overthwart the over end of the hall. To them be joined two of the ancientest and eldest For at every table they sit four at a mess. But if there be a church standing in that syphogrant or ward, then the priest and his wife sitteth with the syphogranty, as chief in the company. On both sides of them sit young men, and next unto them again old men. And thus throughout all the house equal of age be set together, and yet be mixed and matched with unequal ages. This, they say, was ordained, to the intent that the sage gravity and reverence of the elders should keep the younger from wanton license of words and behavior. Forasmuch as nothing can be so secretly spoken or done at the table, but either they must sit in the one side or on the other must needs perceive it. The dishes be not set down in order from the first place, but all the old men (whose places be marked with some special token to be known) be first served of their meat, and then the residue equally. The old men divide their dainties as they think best to the younger on each side of them.

Thus the elders be not defrauded of their due honor, and nevertheless equal commodity cometh to every one. They begin every dinner and supper of reading something that pertaineth to good manners and virtue. But it is short because no man shall be grieved therewith. Hereof the elders take occasion of honest communication, but neither sad nor unpleasant. Howbeit they do not spend all the whole dinner-time themselves with long and tedious talks: but they gladly hear also the young men: yea, and purposely provoke them to talk, to the intent that they may have a proof of every man's wit, and towardness, or disposition to virtue, which commonly in the liberty of feasting doth show and utter itself. Their dinners be very short: but their suppers be somewhat longer, because that after dinner followeth labor, after supper sleep and natural rest, they think to be of more strength and efficacy to wholesome and healthful digestion. No supper is passed without music. Nor their banquets lack no conceits nor junkets. They burn sweet gums and spices or perfumes, and pleasant smells, and sprinkle about sweet ointments and waters, yea, they leave nothing undone that maketh for the cheering of the company. For they be much inclined to this opinion: to think no kind of pleasure forbidden, whereof cometh no harm. Thus therefor and after this sort they live together in the city, but in the country they that dwell alone far from any neighbours, do dine and sup at home in their own houses. For no family there lacketh any kind of victuals, as from whom cometh all that the citizens eat and live by.

Roger Ascham

(1515-1568)

The new humanism claimed Ascham, the first lecturer on Plato's dialogues at Cambridge, as one of its most important disciples. He was a tutor to the future Queen Elizabeth who continued him in the post of Latin Secretary, which he had occupied for her brother and sister, Edward VI and Mary. His love of learning, however, far from making him cosmopolitan only intensified his patriotic pride in being an Englishman. And unlike most of his fellow humanists, he, therefore, preferred to write his prose in English. While he loved the learning that had come out of Renaissance Italy, he feared the corrupting influence of Renaissance morals; he accepted its culture and rejected its looseness of conduct. Nothing infuriated him more than the "Italianate Englishman" who was becoming all too common in his day, and he severely castigated those who could not be exposed to the new learning and art without losing their consciousness of being true Englishmen.

His *Toxophilus* (1545), a treatise on the art of archery and the educational advantages of its practice, took the form of a Platonic dialogue. *The Scholemaster* (1570) is the first modern English tract on Education. In it his humanism is to be read on every page, not only in his love of the classics, but, for instance, in his urging the encouragement of a love of learning as a better method of discipline than the use of the rod. His prose is direct and forceful, when compared with the awkward or ornate attempts of his contemporaries, and mirrors well his own strong-minded personality.

The standard edition of Ascham is that of Giles, four volumes (1865) with an important biographical memoir. An interesting study is H. Patterson, *The Humanism of Roger Ascham* (*The Pedagogical Seminary*, 1915, pp. 546-551).

From *The Schoolmaster*

(From *Book I*)

Therefore, if wise men will needs send their sons into Italy, let them do it wisely, under the keep and guard of him, who, by his wisdom and honesty, by his example and authority, may be able to keep them safe and sound, in the fear of God, in Christ's true religion, in good order and honesty of living: except they will have them run headlong into overmany jeopardies, as Ulysses had done many times, if Pallas had not always governed him: if he had not used, to stop his ears with wax: to bind himself to the mast of his ship: to feed daily, upon that sweet herb Moly with the black root and white flower, given unto him by Mercury, to avoid all enchantments of Circe. Whereby, the divine poet Homer meant covertly (as wise and godly men do judge) that love of honesty, and hatred of ill, which David more plainly doth call the fear of God: the only remedy against all enchantments of sin.

I know diverse noble personages, and many worthy gentlemen of England, whom all the siren songs of Italy, could never untwine from the mast of God's word: nor no enchantment of vanity, overturn them, from the fear of God, and love of honesty.

But I know as many, or more, and some, sometime my dear friends, for whose sake I hate going into that country the more, who, parting out of England fervent in the love of Christ's doctrine, and well furnished with the fear of God, returned out of Italy worse transformed, than ever were any in Circe's court. I know diverse, that went out of England, men of innocent life, men of excellent learning, who returned out of Italy, not only with worse manners, but also with less learning: neither so willing to live orderly, nor yet so able to speak learnedly, as they were at home, before they went abroad And why? Plato, that wise writer, and worthy traveller himself, telleth the cause why. He went into Sicily, a country, no nigher Italy by site of place, than Italy that is now, is like Sicily that was then, in all corrupt manners and licentiousness of life. Plato found in Sicily, every city full of vanity, full of factions, even as Italy is now. . . .

Plato also, that divine philosopher, hath many godly medicines against the poison of vain pleasure, in many places, but specially in his Epistles to Dionysius the tyrant of Sicily: yet against those, that will needs become beasts, with serving of Circe, the prophet David, crieth most loud, *Nolite fieri* *sicut equus et mulus:*[1] and by and by giveth the right medicine, the true herb Moly, *In camo et freno maxillas eorum constringe,*[2] that is to say, let God's grace be the bit, let God's fear be the bridle, to stay them from running headlong into vice, and to turn them into the right way again. David in the second Psalm after, giveth the same medicine, but in these plainer words, *Diverte a malo et fac bonum.*[3] But I am afraid that over-many of our travelers into Italy do not eschew the way to Circe's Court,[4] but go and ride, and run, and fly thither; they make great haste to come to her; they make great suit to serve her; yea, I could point out some with my finger that never had gone out of England but only to serve Circe in Italy. Vanity and vice and any licence to ill living in England was counted stale and rude unto them. And so, being mules and horses before they went, returned very swine and asses home again; yet everywhere very foxes with subtle and busy heads; and where they may, very wolves with cruel malicious hearts. A marvelous monster, which, for filthiness of living, for dulness to learning himself, for wiliness in dealing with others, for malice in hurting without cause, should carry at once, in one body, the belly of a swine, the head of an ass, the brain of a fox, the womb of a wolf. If you think we judge amiss and write too sore against you, hear what the Italian saith of the Englishman, what the master reporteth of the scholar; who uttereth plainly what is taught by him, and what is learned by you, saying, *'Inglese Italianato è un diabolo incarnato,'*[5] that is to say, you remain men in shape and fashion, but become devils in life and condition. This is not the opinion of one for some private spite, but the judgment of all in a common proverb, which riseth of that learning and those manners which you gather in Italy: a good schoolhouse of wholesome doctrine, and worthy masters of commendable scholars, where the master had rather defame himself for his teaching, than not shame his scholar for his learning. A good nature of the master, and fair conditions of the scholars. And now choose you, you Italian Englishmen, whether you will be angry with us for calling you monsters, or with the Italians for calling you devils, or else with your own selves that take so much pains and go so far to make yourselves both. If some yet do not well understand what is an Englishman Italianated, I will plainly tell him. He that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for religion, papistry or worse; for learning, less, commonly, than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living. These be the enchantments of Circe, brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England; much by example of ill life, but more by precepts of fond books of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London, commended by honest titles, the sooner to corrupt honest manners; dedicated overboldly to virtuous and honorable personages, the easier to beguile simple and innocent wits. It is pity that those which have authority and charge to allow and disallow books to be printed, be no more circumspect herein than they are. Ten sermons at Paul's Cross do not so much good for moving men to true doctrine, as one of those books do harm with enticing men to ill living. Yea, I say farther, those books tend not so much to corrupt honest living, as they do to subvert true religion. More papists be made by your merry books of Italy than by your earnest books of Louvain. And because our great physicians do wink at the matter, and make no count of this sore, I, though not admitted one of their fellowship, yet having been many years a prentice to God's true religion, and trust to continue a poor journeyman therein all days of my life, for the duty I owe and love I bear both to true doctrine and honest living, though I have no authority to amend the sore myself, yet I will declare my good-will to discover the sore to others.

St. Paul saith that sects and ill opinions be the works of the flesh and fruits of sin. This is spoken no more truly for the doctrine than sensible for the reason. And why? For ill doings breed ill thinkings. And of corrupted manners spring perverted judgments. And how? There be in man two special things: man's will, man's mind. Where will inclineth to goodness, the mind is bent to truth. Where will is carried from goodness to vanity, the mind is soon drawn from truth to false opinion. And so the readiest way to entangle the mind with false doctrine is first to entice the will to wanton living. Therefore, when the busy and open papists abroad could not by their contentious books turn men in England fast enough from truth and right judgment in doctrine, then the subtle and secret papists at home procured bawdy books to be translated out of the Italian tongue, whereby over-many young wills and wits, allured to wantonness, do now boldly contemn all severe books that sound to honesty and godliness. In our forefathers' time, when papistry, as a standing pool, covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain books [of] chivalry, as they said, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle monks or wanton canons: as one, for example, *Morte Arthur,* the whole pleasure of which book standeth in two special points—in open manslaughter and bold bawdry. In which book those be counted the noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel, and commit foulest adulteries by subtlest shifts: as Sir Lancelot with the wife of King Arthur, his master; Sir Tristram with the wife of King Mark, his uncle; Sir Lamerock with the wife of King Lot, that was his own aunt. This is good stuff for wise men to laugh at, or honest men to take pleasure at! Yet I know when God's Bible was banished the court, and *Morte Arthur* received into the prince's chamber. What toys the daily reading of such a book may work in the will of a young gentleman or a young maid that liveth wealthily and idly, wise men can judge and honest men do pity. And yet ten *Morte Arthurs* do not the tenth part so much harm as one of these books made in Italy and translated in England. They open not fond and common ways to vice, but such subtle, cunning, new, and diverse shifts to carry young wills to vanity and young wits to mischief, to teach old bawds new schoolpoints, as the simple head of an Englishman is not able to invent, nor never was heard of in England before; yea, when papistry overflowed all. Suffer these books to be read, and they shall soon displace all books of godly learning. For they, carrying the will to vanity and marring good manners, shall easily corrupt the mind with ill opinions and false judgment in doctrine: first, to think nothing of God himself—one special point that is to be learned in Italy and Italian books. And that which is most to be lamented, and therefore more needful to be looked to, there be more of these ungracious books set out in print within these few months than have been seen in England many score years before. And because our Englishmen made Italians cannot hurt but certain persons and in certain places, therefore these Italian books are made English to bring mischief enough openly and boldly to all states, great and mean, young and old, everywhere.

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[1] Do not act like the horse and the mule.

[2] Restrain their jaws with bit and bridle.

[3] Eschew evil and do good.

[4] Circe was the enchantress in the Odyssey who turned into animals all who came into her power.

[5] The Italianized Englishman is a devil incarnate.

And thus you see how will enticed to wantonness doth easily allure the mind to false opinions; and how corrupt manners in living, breed false judgment in doctrine; how sin and fleshliness bring forth sects and heresies. And, therefore, suffer not vain books to breed vanity in men's wills, if you would have God's truth take root in men's minds.

That Italian that first invented the Italian proverb against our Englishmen Italianated, meant no more their vanity in living than their lewd opinion in religion. For in calling them devils, he carrieth them clean from God; and yet he carrieth them no farther than they willingly go themselves—that is, where they may freely say their minds—to the open contempt of God and all godliness, both in living and doctrine.

And how? I will express how, not by a fable of Homer, nor by the philosophy of Plato, but by a plain truth of God's Word, sensibly uttered by David thus: 'These men, *abominabiles facti in studiis suis,* think verily and sing gladly the verse before, *Dixit insipiens in corde suo, non est Deus*[6]—that is to say, they giving themselves up to vanity, shaking off the motions of grace, driving from them the fear of God, and running headlong into all sin, first lustily contemn God, then scornfully mock his Word, and also spitefully hate and hurt all well-willers thereof. Then they have in more reverence the *Triumphs* of Petrarch than the *Genesis* of Moses. They make more account of Tully's[7] *Offices* than St. Paul's *Epistles*; of a tale in Boccaccio than a story of the Bible. Then they count as fables the holy mysteries of christian religion. They make Christ and his Gospel only serve civil policy. Then neither religion cometh amiss to them. In time they be promoters of both openly: in place, again, mockers of both privily, as I wrote once in a rude rime:—

Now new, now old, now both, now neither,
To serve the world's course, they care not with
 whether.

For where they dare, in company where they like, they boldly laugh to scorn both protestant and papist. They care for no Scripture; they make no count of general councils; they contemn the consent of the church; they pass for no doctors; they mock the Pope; they rail on Luther; they allow neither side; they like none, but only themselves. The mark they shoot at, the end they look for, the heaven they desire, is only their own present pleasure and private profit; whereby they plainly declare of whose school of what religion they be—that is, epicures in living and ἄθεοι[8] in doctrine. This last word is no more unknown now to plain Englishmen than the person was unknown some time in England, until some Englishman took pains to fetch that devilish opinion out of Italy. These men, thus Italianated abroad, cannot abide our godly Italian church at home; they be not of that parish; they be not of that fellowship; they like not that preacher; they hear not his sermons, except sometimes for company they come thither to hear the Italian tongue naturally spoken, not to hear God's doctrine truly preached.

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[6] The reference is to *Psalms,* 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."

[7] The *De Officiis* of Marcus Tullius Cicero.

And yet these men in matters of divinity openly pretend a great knowledge, and have privately to themselves a very compendious understanding of all, which, nevertheless, they will utter when and where they list. And that is this: all the mysteries of Moses, the whole law and ceremonies, the Psalms and prophets, Christ and his Gospel, God and the devil, heaven and hell, faith, conscience, sin, death, and all they shortly wrap up, they quickly expound with this one half verse of Horace:

Credat Judæus Apella.[9]

Yet though in Italy they may freely be of no religion, as they are in England in very deed too, nevertheless, returning home into England, they must countenance the profession of the one or the other, however inwardly they laugh to scorn both. And though for their private matters they can follow, fawn, and flatter noble personages contrary to them in all respects, yet commonly they ally themselves with the worst papists, to whom they be wedded, and do well agree together in three proper opinions: in open contempt of God's Word; in a secret security of sin; and in a bloody desire to have all taken away by sword and burning that be not of their faction. They that do read with indifferent judgment Pygius and Machiavelli,[10] two indifferent patriarchs of these two religions, do know full well what I say true.

Ye see what manners and doctrine our Englishmen fetch out of Italy. For, finding no other there, they can bring no other hither. And, therefore, many godly and excellent learned Englishmen, not many years ago, did make a better choice, when open cruelty drove them out of this country, to place themselves there where Christ's doctrine, the fear of God, punishment of sin, and discipline of honesty were had in special regard.

I was once in Italy myself; but I thank God my abode there was but nine days. And yet I saw in that little time, in one city, more liberty to sin than ever I heard tell of in our noble city of London in nine years. I saw it was there as free to sin not only without all punishment, but also without any man's marking, as it is free in the city of London to choose without all blame whether a man lust to wear shoe or pantocle. And good cause why; for, being unlike in truth of religion, they must needs be unlike in honesty of living. For blessed be Christ, in our city of London commonly the commandments of God be more diligently taught, and the service of God more reverently used, and that daily in many private men's houses, than they be in Italy once a week in their common churches; where making ceremonies to delight the eye, and vain sounds to please the ear, do quite thrust out of the churches all service of God in spirit and truth. Yea, the Lord Mayor of London, being but a civil officer, is commonly, for his time, more diligent in punishing sin, the bent enemy against God and good order, than all the bloody inquisitors in Italy be in seven years. For their care and charge is not to punish sin, not to amend manners, not to purge doctrine, but only to watch and oversee that Christ's true religion set no sure footing where the Pope hath any jurisdiction. I learned, when I was in Venice, that there it is counted good policy, when there be four or five brethren of one family, one only to marry, and all the rest to welter with as little shame in open lechery as swine do here in the common mire. Yea, there be as fair houses of religion, as great provision, as diligent officers to keep up this misorder, as Bridewell is and all the masters there to keep down misorder. And, therefore, if the Pope himself do not only grant pardons to further these wicked purposes abroad in Italy, but also (although this present Pope in the beginning made some show of misliking thereof) assign both need and merit to the maintenance of stews and brothel-houses at home in Rome, then let wise men think Italy a safe place for wholesome doctrine and godly manners, and a fit school for young gentlemen of England to be brought up in! (1570)

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[8] atheists.

[9] "Let the Jew Apella believe it," said of anything one doesn't believe.

[10] See p. 313.

DON ANTHONY OF GUEVARA (c. 1490-1544)

The writings of the Spanish priest, Don Antonio de Guevara, had a European popularity all out of proportion to their merit. His earliest work, *Reloj de principes* (1529), a piece of Renaissance pedantry, was intended to exhibit the ideal prince through the person of Marcus Aurelius. From the French translation of the book, Lord Berners (1467-1533) made an English version which, carrying over the stiff affectation that had been retained from the Spanish, introduced into the new humanistic prose the elements later developed by Lyly (cf. *Euphues, below*). Guevara's "learned" allusions and his complex artificiality were retained in a second translation, published in 1557 by Sir Thomas North under the title of *The Diall of Princes.*

North's translation was greatly admired, though to us *The Diall of Princes* seems nothing more than a long dull collection of didactic essays. Its success with Elizabethan readers may be attributed to the fact that it is full of the commonplaces of a humanism that was still fresh for Englishmen. It praises the simple life, inveighs against war, and speaks with authority of such matters as dress, horsemanship, table manners, and cooking. A number of these matters Lyly was also inspired to deal with. But it was particularly the attempt of Guevara and North to achieve a musical prose, that impressed Lyly, and that was important in his invention of the Euphuistic style which he made fashionable.

From THE DIALL OF PRINCES

(*Translated by Sir Thomas North*)

Book Four: Chapter VIII

What Company the Courtier Should Keep and How He Should Apparel Himself

The wise courtier, both in court and out of court, and in all places where he cometh, must take great regard he accompany with none but with wise and virtuous men. For if he do not, he cannot win nor acquire such honor by his well doing, as he shall lose his credit by keeping ill company. And therefore he shall enforce himself always to be in the presence and company of virtuous and noble men, and shall confer with the most grave, wise, and honest gentlemen of the court. For using this way, he shall bind them to him, by reason of his daily access to them, and he shall purchase himself a good opinion of them, besides the good example he shall leave to others to tread his steps and follow his course.

For what is more true than, when a young gentleman cometh newly to the court, you shall see immediately a company of other young fools, a company of amorous squires, light and idle persons, a company of troublesome jesters, and covetous praters, besides other young fry in court, that when they know a new come courtier (namely being of great living) they will seek to attend upon him and train him to the lure of their affects and manner, bringing him to like of their qualities and conditions. Wherefor cunningly to shake off the rout of these needy, greedy retainers, he must altogether feed them with fair words and show them good countenance, and yet notwithstanding seek by all policy he can to fly their fellowship and company.

Noble men's sons, knights' sons, and gentlemen's sons, may not think their friends send them to the court to learn new vices and wicked practices, but to win them new friends and obtain the acquaintance of noble men, whose credit and estimation with the prince may honor and countenance them, and by their virtues and means, may after a time be brought into the princes' favor also, and daily to rise in credit and reputation amongst others.

Therefore such fathers as will send their children to the court, unless they do first admonish them well how they ought to behave themselves, or that they recommend them to the charge and oversight to some dear and especial friend of theirs, that will reprove them of their faults when they do amiss—I say they were better to lay irons on their feet and send them to Bedlam or such other like house where mad men be kept. For if they be bound there in irons, it is but to bring them to their wits again and to make them wise; but to send them to the court loose and at liberty without guide, it is the next way to make them fools and worse than mad men, assuring you no greater danger or injury can be done to a young man than to be sent to the court and not committed to the charge of some one that should take care of him and look straightly to him. For otherwise, it were impossible he should be there many days, but he must needs run into excess and foul disorder, by means whereof he should utterly cast himself away and heap upon his parents' heads continual curses and griefs during their lives.

And therefore their fathers (supposing after they have once placed their sons in the court, that they should no more cark nor care of them, nor reckon to instruct them to be wise and virtuous) find when they come home to them again that they are laden with vices, ill complexioned, worse apparelled, their clothes all tattered and torn, having vainly and fondly spent and played away their money, and worst of all forsaken their masters, leaving them displeased with their service.

And of these I would admonish the young courtier, because he must of necessity accompany with other young men, that in no case he acquaint himself with vicious and ill-disposed persons, but with the honest, wise and courteous, amongst whom he shall put upon him a certain grave and staid modesty, fitting himself only to their companies, being also apt and disposed to all honest and virtuous exercises, decent for a right gentleman and virtuous courtier, shunning with his best policy the light, foolish, and vain toys of others.

And yet notwithstanding these, my intent and meaning is not to seem to persuade or teach him to become a hypocrite, but only to be courteous, honest, and well beloved of other young gentlemen, winning this reputation withal, to be esteemed for the most virtuous and honestest among them, gallant and lively in his disports and pastimes, of few words, and small conversation amongst boasters and backbiters, or other wicked and naughty persons; not to be sad among those that are merry, nor dumb among those that talk wisely and of grave matters; nor to believe he should be accounted a trim courtier, to take his book in his hands to pray when others will take the ball to play, or go about some other honest recreation or pastime for exercise of the body. For so doing, they would rather take him for a fool and a hypocrite than for a virtuous and honest young man: being good reason the child should use the pleasures and pastimes of a child, young men disports and acts of youth, and old men also grave and wise recreations fit for them. For in the end, do the best we can, we cannot fly the motions of the flesh, wherein we are born into this world.

These young gentlemen courtiers must take heed that they become not troublesome, importunate, nor quarrellers, that they be not filchers, liars, vagabonds, and slanderers, nor any way given to vice. As for other things, I would not seem to take from them their pastime and pleasure but that they may use them at their own pleasure. And in all other things lawful and irreprovable, observing time and hours convenient, and therewithal to accompany themselves with their fellows and companions.

Also the young courtier that cometh newly to the court must of necessity be very well apparelled, according to his degree and calling, and his servants that follow him well appointed. For in court men regard not only the house and family he cometh of, but mark also his apparel and servants that follow him. And I mislike one thing very much, that about the court they do rather honor and reverence a man brave and sumptuous in apparel being vicious, than they do a man that is grave, wise, and virtuous. And yet nevertheless the courtier may assure himself of this, that few will esteem of him, either for that he is virtuous or nobly born, if he be not also sumptuously apparelled and well accompanied, for then only will every man account and esteem of him.

Wherefore, I durst take upon me to swear, if it were possible to take oath of our bodies, that they would swear they needed them not, much less desire so large compassed gowns, that every puff of wind might swell them as the sails of a ship, neither so long that trailing on the ground they gather dust and cast it into our eyes. Howbeit I think nowadays these fine men wear them large and wide, and women long with trains upon the ground, because, in the court and elsewhere, no man makes reckoning of him that spendeth but orderly and only upon necessaries to go cleanly withal, but him they set by that is prodigal, excessive and superfluous. And who that in his doings and apparel is moderate, and proceedeth wisely, they hold him in court for a miserable and covetous man, and contrarily he that is prodigal and lavish in expense, him they count a noble and worthy person.

Albeit the courtier come of a noble house, and that he be young of years, rich, and wealthy, yet would I like better he should use rather a certain mean and measure in his apparel (wearing that that is comely and gentlemanlike) than others of most cost and worship. For like as they would count him a fool for wearing that he could not pay for, so they likewise would think him simple, if he wear not that that become him, and that he might easily come by. His apparel should be agreeable with his years, that is to say, on the holy days some more richer and braver than on the work days, and in the winter of the hottest furs, in the summer light garments of satin and damask, and to ride with some others of lesser price and more durable. For as the wisdom ot man is known by his speaking, so is his discretion discerned by his apparel.

Let not the poor courtier study to wear or devise any new or strange fashioned garment, for if he be of that humor, he shall quickly undo himself, and give others occasion also to follow his light and vain invention. They are nowadays found out so many strange ways to dress meat, and so many fashions and patterns of apparel that now they have universities of tailors and cooks. What more greater vanity and lightness can there be than this, that they will not suffer the mothers' gowns to be made fit for their daughters, saying that they are old and out of fashion, and that they use now a new kind of apparel and attire far from the old manner. And notwithstanding these gowns be it in manner new, good, whole, clean, rich, and well made and without weme,[1] yet their daughters must needs have new gowns at their marriage. So that we may aptly say that a new folly seeks always a new gown, namely when they are light persons, without wit and discretion.

John Lyly

(1554?-1606)

Educated at Oxford, Lyly won fame in his time as a dramatist, poet, wit, and writer of romances. His plays, written chiefly for the Court, were performed usually by the children of St. Paul's choir, and contain many flattering allusions to Elizabeth; they are memorable for their lovely lyrics. But it was in his two prose romances, *Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit* (1578), and its sequel *Euphues and His England* (1580) that lay his greatest importance to his times—the first combining the parable of the Prodigal Son (from the Bible) with Boccaccio's story of two friends (from *The Decameron*, Day 10, story 8), and the second stringing three tales together on a slender thread. They have been sometimes regarded as the first English novels, though their plots are actually only an excuse for treatises on love, women, loyalty, friendship, education, and morals. The reader will find close resemblances between Ascham's ideas and Lyly's. Besides his debt to the English humanist, influences of Petrarch, Boccaccio, Tasso, and Guevara are to be found in Lyly's romances.

The particular significance of *Euphues* and *Euphues and His England* is in their style, which it became immediately the fashion to imitate, and which hangs like a pall over much Elizabethan prose. Symptoms of tendencies that flourish in *Euphues* were to be seen in Guevara (cf. *above*) and his translator North, as well as in the English writings of Sir Thomas More. Lyly did not, as is often erroneously stated, invent the Euphuistic style; his books were responsible for popularizing it. The characteristics of his highly ornate style are: complicated sentence structure compounded of antitheses and parallelisms, plays upon words, use of marked alliteration, involved conceits, and frequent illustrative comparisons drawn from popular unnatural "natural history." Lyly's style can strike us only as ridiculously pretentious. Indeed his work did not need to wait for a later time for such a verdict; for his own contemporary, Shakespeare, ridiculed it in *1 Henry IV* (IV, 4) where Falstaff undertakes to be kingly, and again in *Hamlet* in the person of Osric.

In fairness to Lyly it should be remembered that his general objective was not ignoble, however much he erred in his particular judgment. He was obviously aiming for a prose that might have the artistic dignity of poetry. If he was wrong to infer therefore that alliteration and regular rhythms could suit the purposes of prose, he nevertheless was the first experimenter in what has proved to be an important literary medium—poetic prose. He failed, but he set the ideal in which Browne, Taylor, De Quincey, Ruskin, and Pater—to name but a few—were to succeed. In his own time, many prose writers fell under his spell, not excluding the Sidney who objecting to Euphuism wrote almost as artificially in *Arcadia*, or Shakespeare himself when he was representing the language of the nobility and of ceremony.

The Complete Works of John Lyly were edited with a valuable biographical and critical introduction by R. W. Bond.

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[1] fault.

From *Euphues, The Anatomy of Wit*

A REMEDY FOR LOVE

Beware of delays. What less than the grain of mustard seed?—in time, almost what thing is greater than the stalk thereof? The slender twig groweth to a stately tree, and that which with the hand might easily have been pulled up will hardly with the ax be hewn down. The least spark, if it be not quenched, will burst into a flame; the least moth in time eateth the thickest cloth; and I have read that, in a short space, there was a town in Spain undermined with conies, in Thessaly with moles, with frogs in France, in Africa with flies. If these silly worms in tract of time overthrow so stately towns, how much more will love, which creepeth secretly into the mind (as the rust doth into the iron and is not perceived), consume the body, yea, and confound the soul. Defer not from hour to day, from day to month, from month to year, and always remain in misery.

He that to-day is not willing will to-morrow be more willful. But, alas, it is no less common than lamentable to behold the tottering estate of lovers, who think by delays to prevent dangers, with oil to quench fire, with smoke to clear the eyesight. They flatter themselves with a feinting farewell, deferring ever until to-morrow, whenas their morrow doth always increase their sorrow. Let neither their amiable countenances, neither their painted protestations, neither their deceitful promises, allure thee to delays. Think this with thyself, that the sweet songs of Calypso[1] were subtle snares to entice Ulysses; that the crab then catcheth the oyster when the sun shineth; that hyena, when she speaketh like a man, deviseth most mischief; that women when they be most pleasant pretend most treachery.

Follow Alexander,[2] which, hearing the commendation and singular comeliness of the wife of Darius,[3] so courageously withstood the assaults of her beauty. Imitate Cyrus,[4] a king endued with such continency that he loathed to look on the heavenly hue of Panthea; and, when Araspus told him that she excelled all mortal wights in amiable show, "By so much the more," said Cyrus, "I ought to abstain from her sight; for if I follow thy counsel in going to her, it may be I shall desire to continue with her, and by my light affection neglect my serious affairs." Learn of Romulus[5] to refrain from wine, be it never so delicate; of Agesilaus[6] to despise costly apparel, be it never so curious; of Diogenes[7] to detest women, be they never so comely. He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled; the sore eye infecteth the sound; the society with women breedeth security in the soul, and maketh all the senses senseless. Moreover, take this counsel as an article of thy creed, which I mean to follow as the chief argument of my faith, that idleness is the only nurse and nourisher of sensual appetite, the sole maintenance of youthful affection, the first shaft that Cupid shooteth into the hot liver of a heedless lover. I would to God I were not able to find this for a truth by mine own trial, and I would the example of others' idleness had caused me rather to avoid that fault than experience of mine own folly. How dissolute have I been in striving against good counsel, how resolute in standing in mine own conceit, how forward to wickedness, how wanton with too much cockering,[8] how wayward in hearing correction! Neither was I much unlike these abbey lubbers in my life (though far unlike them in belief) which labored till they were cold, ate till they sweat, and lay in bed till their bones ached. Hereof cometh it, gentlemen, that love creepeth into the mind by privy craft, and keepeth his hold by main courage.

The man being idle, the mind is apt to all uncleanness; the mind being void of exercise, the man is void of honesty. Doth not the rust fret[9] the hardest iron if it be not used? Doth not the moth eat the finest garment if it be not worn? Doth not moss grow on the smoothest stone if it be not stirred? Doth not impiety infect the wisest wit if it be given to idleness? Is not the standing water sooner frozen than the running stream? Is not he that sitteth more subject to sleep than he that walketh? Doth not common experience make this common unto us, that the fattest ground bringeth forth nothing but weeds if it be not well tilled, that the sharpest wit inclineth only to wickedness if it be not exercised? Is it not true which Seneca reporteth, that as too much bending breaketh the bow, so too much remission spoileth the mind? Besides this, immoderate sleep, immodest play, unsatiable swilling of wine doth so weaken the senses and bewitch the soul that, before we feel the motion of love, we are resolved into lust. Eschew idleness, my Philautus, so shalt thou easily unbend the bow and quench the brands of Cupid. Love gives place to labor; labor, and thou shalt never love. Cupid is a crafty child, following those at an inch that study pleasure, and flying those swiftly that take pains. Bend thy mind to the law, whereby thou mayest have understanding of old and ancient customs; defend thy clients; enrich thy coffers; and carry credit in thy country. If law seem loathsome unto thee, search the secrets of physic, whereby thou mayest know the hidden natures of herbs; whereby thou mayest gather profit to thy purse and pleasure to thy mind. What can be more exquisite in human affairs than for every fever, be it never so hot, for every palsy, be it never so cold, for every infection, be it never so strange, to give a remedy? The old verse standeth as yet in his old virtue: That Galen[10] giveth goods, Justinian[11] honors. If thou be so nice that thou canst no way brook the practice of physic, or so unwise that thou wilt not beat thy brains about the institutes of the law, confer all thy study, all thy time, all thy treasure to the attaining of the sacred and sincere knowledge of divinity; by this mayest thou bridle thine incontinency, rein thine affections, restrain thy lust. Here shalt thou behold, as it were in a glass, that all the glory of man is as the grass; all things under heaven are but vain; that our life is but a shadow, a warfare, a pilgrimage, a vapor, a bubble, a blast; of such shortness that David saith it is but a span long; of such sharpness that Job noteth it replenished with all miseries; of such uncertainty that we are no sooner born but we are subject to death; the one foot no sooner on the ground but the other ready to slip into the grave. Here shalt thou find ease for thy burden of sin, comfort for the conscience pined[12] with vanity, mercy for thine offences by the martyrdom of thy sweet Savior. By this thou shalt be able to instruct those that be weak, to confute those that be obstinate, to confound those that be erroneous, to confirm the faithful, to comfort the desperate, to cut off the presumptuous, to save thine own soul by thy sure faith, and edify the hearts of many by thy sound doctrine.

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[1] The nymph who kept Ulysses in captivity to be her lover.

[2] Alexander the Great, king of Macedonia and conqueror of much of the known world of the fourth century B.C.

[3] King of Persia at the time of Alexander.

[4] King of Persia (d. 528 B.C.).

[5] one of the legendary founders of Rome.

[6] King of Sparta (444?-360 B.C.).

[7] Greek cynic philosopher (412?-323 B.C.).

[8] coddling.

[9] eat into.

(1579)

From *Euphues and His England*

ON QUEEN ELIZABETH

This beautiful mold when I beheld to be indued with chastity, temperance, mildness, and all other good gifts of nature (as hereafter shall appear), when I saw her to surpass all in beauty, and yet a virgin, to excel all in piety, and yet a prince, to be inferior to none in all the lineaments of the body, and yet superior to every one in all gifts of the mind, I began thus to pray, that as she hath lived forty years a virgin in great majesty, so she may live four score years a mother with great joy, that as with her we have long time had peace and plenty, so by her we may ever have quietness and abundance, wishing this even from the bottom of a heart that wisheth well to England, though feareth ill, that either the world may end before she die, or she live to see her children's children in the world; otherwise how fickle their state is that now triumph, upon what a twist they hang that now are in honor, they that live shall see, which I to think on, sigh! But God for his mercy's sake, Christ for his merit's sake, the Holy Ghost for his name's sake, grant to that realm comfort without any ill chance, and the prince they have without any other change, that the longer she liveth, the sweeter she may smell, like the bird Ibis, that she may be triumphant in victories, like the palm tree, fruitful in her age like the vine, in all ages prosperous, to all men gracious, in all places glorious, so that there be no end to her praise until the end of all flesh.

Thus did I often talk with myself, and wish with mine whole soul.

Why should I talk of her sharp wit, excellent wisdom, exquisite learning, and all other qualities of the mind, wherein she seemeth as far to excel those that have been accounted singular, as the learned have surpassed those that have been thought simple.

In questioning, not inferior to Nicaulia, the queen of Saba,[1] that did put so many hard doubts to Solomon; equal to Nicostrata[2] in the Greek tongue, who was thought to give precepts for the better perfection; more learned in the Latin than Amalasunta;[3] passing Aspasia,[4] in philosophy, who taught Pericles; exceeding in judgment Themistoclea, who instructed Pythagoras.[5] Add to these qualities, those that none of these had; the French tongue, the Spanish, the Italian, not mean in every one, but excellent in all; readier to correct escapes in those languages than to be controlled; fitter to teach others than learn of any; more able to add new rules than to err in the old; insomuch as there is no ambassador that cometh into her court but she is willing and able both to understand his message and utter her mind; not like unto the kings of Assyria, who answered ambassadors by messengers, while they themselves either dally in sin or snort in sleep. Her godly zeal to learning, with her great skill, hath been so manifestly approved that I cannot tell whether she deserve more honor for her knowledge, or admiration for her courtesy, who in great pomp hath twice directed her progress unto the universities, with no less joy to the students than glory to her state. Here, after long and solemn disputations in law, physic, and divinity, not as one wearied with scholars's arguments, but wedded to their orations, when every one feared to offend in length, she in her own person, with no less praise to her Majesty than delight to her subjects, with a wise and learned conclusion, both gave them thanks, and put herself to pains. O noble pattern of a princely mind, not like to the kings of Persia, who in their progresses did nothing else but cut sticks to drive away the time, nor like the delicate lives of the Sybarites,[6] who would not admit any art to be exercised within their city that might make the least noise. Her wit so sharp, that if I should repeat the apt answers, the subtle questions, the fine speeches, the pithy sentences, which on the sudden she hath uttered, they would rather breed admiration than credit. But such are the gifts that the living God hath indued her withal, that look in what art or language, wit or learning, virtue or beauty any one hath particularly excelled most, she only hath generally exceeded every one in all, insomuch that there is nothing to be added that either man would wish in a woman, or God doth give to a creature.

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[10] Galen (130-200?), Greek physician and writer, the founder of the medical theory current in the Middle Ages.

[11] Justinian (483-565), Byzantine emperor, and codifier of the law.

[12] suffering.

[1] The Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon. See *I Kings*, chap. 10.

[2] A prophetess who delivered oracles in verse; cf Plutarch *Romulus*, 21.

I let pass her skill in music, her knowledge in all the other sciences, whenas I fear lest by my simplicity I should make them less than they are, in seeking to show how great they are, unless I were praising her in the gallery of Olympia,[7] where giving forth one word, I might hear seven.

But all these graces, although they be to be wondered at, yet her politic government, her prudent counsel, her zeal to religion, her clemency to those that submit, her stoutness to those that threaten, so far exceed all other virtues that they are more easy to be marveled at than imitated.

Two and twenty years hath she borne the sword with such justice, that neither offenders could complain of rigor, nor the innocent of wrong; yet so tempered with mercy as malefactors have been sometimes pardoned upon hope of grace, and the injured requited to ease their grief, insomuch that in the whole course of her glorious reign, it could never be said that either the poor were oppressed without remedy, or the guilty repressed without cause, bearing this engraven in her noble heart, that justice without mercy were extreme injury, and pity without equity, plain partiality, and that it is as great tyranny not to mitigate laws, as iniquity to break them.

Her care for the flourishing of the Gospel hath well appeared whenas neither the curses of the Pope (which are blessings to good people) nor the threatenings of kings (which are perilous to a prince) nor the persuasions of papists (which are honey to the mouth) could either fear[8] her or allure her to violate the holy league contracted with Christ, or to maculate the blood of the ancient Lamb, which is Christ. But always constant in the true faith, she hath to the exceeding joy of her subjects, to the unspeakable comfort of her soul, to the great glory of God, established that religion the maintenance whereof she rather seeketh to confirm by fortitude, than leave off for fear, knowing that there is nothing smelleth sweeter to the Lord than a sound spirit, which neither the hosts of the ungodly nor the horror of death can either remove or move.

This Gospel with invincible courage, with rare constancy, with hot zeal, she hath maintained in her own countries without change, and defended against all kingdoms that sought change insomuch that all nations round about her, threatening alteration, shaking swords, throwing fire, menacing famine, murder, destruction, desolation, she only hath stood like a lamp on the top of a hill, not fearing the blasts of the sharp winds, but trusting in his providence that rideth upon the wings of the four winds. Next followeth the love she beareth to her subjects, who no less tendereth them than the apple of her own eye, showing herself a mother to the afflicted, a physician to the sick, a sovereign and mild governess to all.

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[3] Queen of the Ostrogoths, 522-530.

[4] Mistress of Pericles, the great Athenian leader of the fifth century B.C.

[5] Greek philosopher (582?-500 B.C.).

[6] Inhabitants of the ancient city of Sybaris in southern Italy. They were noted for their luxury.

[7] This is based on Plutarch's description.

[8] frighten.

Touching her magnanimity, her majesty, her estate royal, there was neither Alexander,[9] nor Galba[10] the Emperor, nor any, that might be compared with her.

This is she that, resembling the noble queen of Navarre, useth the marigold for her flower, which at the rising of the sun openeth her leaves, and at the setting shutteth them, referring all her actions and endeavors to him that ruleth the sun. This is that Cæsar, that first bound the crocodile to the palm tree, bridling those that sought to rein her. This is that good pelican, that to feed her people spareth not to rend her own person. This is that mighty eagle, that hath thrown dust into the eyes of the hart that went about to work destruction to her subjects, into whose wings although the blind beetle would have crept, and so being carried into her nest, destroyed her young ones, yet hath she with the virtue of her feathers, consumed that fly in his own fraud. She hath exiled the swallow that sought to spoil the grasshopper, and given bitter almonds to the ravenous wolves that endeavored to devour the silly lambs, burning even with the breath of her mouth like the princely stag, the serpents that were engendered by the breath of the huge elephant, so that now all her enemies are as whist[11] as the bird Attagen, who never singeth any tune after she is taken, nor they being so overtaken.[12]

But whither do I wade, ladies, as one forgetting himself, thinking to sound the depth of her virtues with a few fathoms, when there is no bottom; for I know not how it cometh to pass that, being in this labyrinth, I may sooner lose myself than find the end. (1580)

Sir Walter Ralegh

(1552?-1618)

That completeness in living which the Renaissance taught and Elizabethan humanism cultivated, seems to us personified in Sir Walter Ralegh. Explorer, soldier, sailor, statesman, musician, chemist, poet, and historian,—he had one of the brightest careers among Elizabeth's courtiers. He was very dear to the queen, although for a time he lost her favor by winning the love of a lady-in-waiting, whom he married. In addition to three attempts to colonize Virginia, he made an expedition to Guiana. He was present at the crucial victory over the Armada, as well as during the attack on the Azores. Among his friends was the great poet Spenser, whom he visited in Ireland in 1589. His favor with Elizabeth could do little to make him pleasant in the eyes of her successor. He was soon accused of complicity against the life of James I, and in 1603 was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Tower, where he remained thirteen years. Released to make a voyage in search of a gold mine he claimed existed in the Orinoco, he was commanded not to trespass on Spanish ground. The expedition not only failed but resulted in conflict with a Spanish settlement. On Ralegh's return he was again arrested, and condemned to die. The story of his courage on Tower Hill, where he was beheaded, is famous.

His many poems were scattered in miscellanies and as commendatory verses in the books of other writers; a number of them appeared over the signature "Ignoto" in *England's Helicon* (1600), the finest of the Elizabethan miscellanies. The most famous of his lyrics are his noble sonnet on *The Faerie Queene* and his answer to Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd* (cf. *below*). His prose works include a report on the attack of the Azores (1591)—on which Tennyson based *The Revenge* (cf. *Vol. II*), his account of *The Discovery of Guiana* (1596), and his *History of the World* (pub. 1614). The last named was written in prison and goes only as far as 130 B.C. As history it is worth nothing, but it has a number of magnificent passages which stand among the finest examples of Elizabethan prose.

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[9] King of Macedonia and conqueror of much of the known world (356-323 B.C.).

[10] Emperor of Rome in 69 A.D.

[11] silent.

[12] Examples of "unnatural natural history." Many of these alleged qualities of animals are taken from medieval and classical tradition.

The following passage, which forms the conclusion to what was intended as "volume one" of the *History*, is remarkable for its somber grandeur.

The standard edition of Ralegh's poems is by A. M. C. Latham (1929). The collected edition of his works was made by the Oxford University Press in eight volumes (1829). Among the biographies to be recommended are W. Stebbing, *Sir Walter Ralegh* (1891), and H. de Selincourt, *Great Ralegh* (1908).

From *The History of the World*

For the rest, if we seek a reason of the succession and continuance of this boundless ambition in mortal men, we may add to that which hath been already said, that the kings and princes of the world have always laid before them the actions, but not the ends, of those great ones which preceded them. They are always transported with the glory of the one, but they never mind the misery of the other, till they find the experience in themselves. They neglect the advice of God, while they enjoy life, or hope it; but they follow the counsel of Death upon his first approach. It is he that puts into man all the wisdom of the world, without speaking a word, which God, with all the words of his law, promises, or threats, doth not infuse. Death, which hateth and destroyeth man is believed; God, which hath made him and loves him, is always deferred. *I have considered,* saith Solomon, *all the works that are under the sun, and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* But who believes it, till Death tells us? It was Death which, opening the conscience of Charles the Fifth,[1] made him enjoin his son Philip to restore Navarre; and king Francis the First of France, to command that justice should be done upon the murderers of the Protestants in Merindol and Cabrieres, which till then he neglected. It is therefore Death alone that can suddenly make man to know himself. He tells the proud and insolent that they are but abjects and humbles them at the instant, makes them cry, complain, and repent, yea, even to hate their forepast happiness. He takes the account of the rich and proves him a beggar, a naked beggar, which hath interest in nothing but in the gravel that fills his mouth. He holds a glass before the eyes of the most beautiful, and makes them see therein their deformity and rottenness, and they acknowledge it.

O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*[2]

(1614)

PETRARCH (1304-1374)

(Translations by Miss Wallaston)

His own estimate to the contrary, it is not his Latin eclogues, poetical epistles, or epic which have won immortality for Petrarch the poet (cf. p. 220 for an account of his career), but the Italian poems he did not rate high, the *Canzoniere*, dedicated to his beloved Laura. In these songs and sonnets are to be found a curious fusion of the medieval and the modern. Appealing to the limited audience trained in the school of courtly poetry, Petrarch's lyrical poetry does not avoid the artifices of the troubadours. His relation to his lady, a married woman, is strictly according to the rules of the chivalric game. His conceits and many of his poetic commonplaces are in the tradition. Unhappily these insincerities were retained by the Renaissance sonneteers because of the prestige of Petrarch's example. On the other hand, all Petrarch's overlaying of artificialities cannot obscure the naturalness of his feelings; the genuineness of his passion breaks through the medieval pretences. Of Laura he wrote: "What little I am, such as it is, I am through her," and the *Canzoniere* prove his deep love. His ardor is far more vivid in them than is Laura herself. As she is painted in the poems, she seems to be, as John Addington Symonds expressed it, "a beautiful woman seated in a lovely landscape, a perpetual object of delightful contemplation." This generalizing of his love, expressed with emotional persuasiveness, has enabled Petrarch's readers to identify themselves as Petrarch and Laura in the poems. But what is a quality in his own sonnets becomes a fault in his imitators, who often fall into endless enumeration of passionless conceits.

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[1] Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (1500-1558).

[2] Here lies ———.

It is as the perfecter of the sonnet that Petrarch wielded his widest influence. Nowhere else in poetry will perfect form be found wedded to greater purity of language. It was Petrarch's sonnets that inspired Wyatt, a number of whose poems are merely translations of the *Canzoniere,* to introduce into English poetry a form that has proved so fruitful to our literature. (Cf. the essay on *The Literary Medium* in the Appendix, for the Petrarchan sonnet.)

SONNET VI

Of His Foolish Passion for Laura

My tameless will doth recklessly pursue
Her, who, unshackled by love's heavy chain,
Flies swiftly from its chase, whilst I in vain
My fetter'd journey pantingly renew;
The safer track I offer to its view,
But hopeless is my power to restrain,
It rides regardless of the spur or rein;
Love makes it scorn the hand that would subdue.
The triumph won, the bridle all its own,
Without one curb I stand within its power,
And my destruction helplessly presage:
It guides me to that laurel, ever known,
To all who seek the healing of its flower,
To aggravate the wound it should assuage.

SONNET XI

He Hopes That Time Will Render Her More Merciful

Lady, if grace to me so long be lent
From love's sharp tyranny and trials keen,
Ere my last days, in life's far vale, are seen,
To know of thy bright eyes the luster spent,
The fine gold of thy hair with silver sprent,
Neglected the gay wreaths and robes of green,
Pale, too, and thin the face which made me, e'en
'Gainst injury, slow and timid to lament:
Then will I, for such boldness love would give,
Lay bare my secret heart, in martyr's fire
Years, days, and hours that yet has known to live;
And, though the time then suit not fair desire,
At least there may arrive to my long grief,
Too late of tender sighs the poor relief.

SONNET XVIII

The Praises of Laura Transcend His Poetic Power

Ashamed at times that I am silent, yet,
Lady, though your rare beauties prompt my rhyme,
When first I saw thee I recall the time
Such as again no other can be met.
But, with such burthen on my shoulders set,
My mind, its frailty feeling, cannot climb,
And shrinks alike from polish'd and sublime,
While my vain utterance frozen terrors let.
Often already have I sought to sing,
But midway in my breast the voice was stay'd,
For ah! so high what praise may ever spring?
And oft have I the tender verse essay'd,
But still in vain; pen, hand, and intellect
In the first effort conquer'd are and check'd.

THE VISIONS OF PETRARCH

These translations are included not only because they were made by a great poet, but because they indicate how devious were the channels through which Petrarch's influence was felt. The French poet Marot first adapted these pieces from Petrarch, and the young Spenser, just entering upon his studies at Cambridge, was so attracted by them as to retranslate Marot into English. It will be noted that he chose to employ the English form of the sonnet for this purpose.

(*Translated by Edmund Spenser*)

I

Being one day at my window all alone,
So manie strange things happened me to see,
As much it grieveth me to thinke thereon.
At my right hand a hynde appear'd to mee,
So faire as mote the greatest god delite;
Two eager dogs did her pursue in chace,
Of which the one was blacke, the other white:
With deadly force so in their cruell race
They pincht the haunches of that gentle beast,
That at the last, and in short time, I spide,
Under a rocke, where she, alas! oppress,
Fell to the ground, and there untimely dide.
  Cruell death vanquishing so noble beautie
  Oft makes me wayle so hard a destenie.

II

After, at sea a tall ship did appeare,
Made all of heben and white yvorie;
The sailes of golde, of silke the tackle were:
Milde was the winde, calme seem'd the sea to bee,
The skie eachwhere did show full bright and faire:
With rich treasures this gay ship fraighted was:

But sudden storme did so turmoyle the aire,
And tumbled up the sea, that she (alas!)
Strake on a rock, that under water lay,
And perished past all recoverie.
O how great ruth, and sorrowful assay,
Doth vex my spirite with perplexitie,
Thus in a moment to see lost and drown'd
So great riches as like cannot be found!

III

Then heavenly branches did I see arise
Out of the fresh and lustie lawrell tree,
Amidst the yong greene wood: of Paradise
Some noble plant I thought my selfe to see.
Such store of birds therein yshroweded were,
Chaunting in shade their sundrie melodie,
That with their sweetnes I was ravish't nere.
While on this lawrell fixed was mine eie,
The skie gan everie where to overcast,
And darkned was the welkin all about:
When sudden flash of heavens fire out brast,
And rent this royall tree quite by the roote;
Which makes me much and ever to complaine;
For no such shadow shalbe had againe.

IV

Within this wood, out of a rocke did rise
A spring of water, mildly rumbling downe,
Whereto approched not in any wise
The homely shepheard, nor the ruder clowne;
But manie Muses, and the nymphes withall,
That sweetly in accord did tune their voyce
To the soft sounding of the waters fall,
That my glad hart thereat did much rejoyce.
But while herein I tooke my chiefe delight,
I saw (alas!) the gaping earth devoure
The spring, the place, and all cleane out of sight:
Which yet aggreeves my hart even to this houre,
And wounds my soule with rufull memorie,
To see such pleasures gon so suddenly.

V

I saw a phoenix in the wood alone,
With purple wings, and crest of golden hewe;
Strange bird he was, whereby I thought anone,
That of some heavenly wight I had the vewe;
Untill he came unto the broken tree,
And to the spring, that late devoured was.
What say I more? Each thing at last we see
Doth passe away: the phoenix there, alas!
Spying the tree destroid, the water dride,
Himselfe smote with his beake, as in disdaine,
And so foorthwith in great despight he dide:
That yet my heart burnes in exceeding paine,
For ruth and pitie of so haples plight.
O, let mine eyes no more see such a sight!

VI

At last, so faire a ladie did I spie,
That thinking yet on her I burne and quake:
On hearbs and flowres she walked pensively,
Milde, but yet love she proudly did forsake:
White seem'd her robes, yet woven so they were
As snow and golde together had been wrought:
Above the wast a darke clowde shrouded her,
A stinging serpent by the heele her caught;
Wherewith she languisht as the gathered floure,
And well assur'd she mounted up to joy.
Alas! on earth so nothing doth endure,
But bitter griefe and sorrowfull annoy:
Which make this life wretched and miserable,
Tossed with stormes of fortune variable.

VII

My song, thus now in thy conclusions,
Say boldly that these same six visions
Do yelde unto thy lorde a sweete request,
Ere it be long within the earth to rest.

Sir Thomas Wyatt

(1503?-1542)

Under Henry VIII the Renaissance produced its first English flowers. The last of the medieval poets was John Skelton (d. 1529), who was succeeded by a group of courtier-poets interested in cultivating the short subjective poem. Unfortunately for us, the Tudor poets were content to circulate their poems in manuscript among their friends, so that most of their efforts are lost to us. It is to the enterprise of a printer, Richard Tottel, that we are indebted for such poetry of the period as is extant. His collection of 1557, which we know as *Tottel's Miscellany*, was published in the last year of Mary's reign, when most of his contributors were long dead. In the first edition, of 271 poems, Tottel ascribed 97 to Wyatt and 40 to Surrey.

From his boyhood Wyatt held various official positions at Henry's court. In 1527 he went on an embassy to leading Italian cities, and was affected by what he witnessed much as Chaucer had been. At that time, when Italy was still the center of Renaissance activity, the worship there of Petrarch had become almost a cult. The elegance of the famous sonnets and lyrics to Laura were taken as a model for what could be achieved in the vernacular equal in finish to the Latin classics.

Wyatt caught the enthusiasm for Petrarch, and was inspired to the writing of imitations of the great Italian in sonnets which were to give new life to English poetry. Wyatt, whatever his shortcomings as a poet, was an important pioneer. He proved to Englishmen that the short poem could be written with dignity and force. If the content of his sonnets, as in Petrarch, was still largely the heritage of the courtly school, the form he introduced was new, and was to become the leading form for lyrical poetry for over a century in England. He was not blessed with much originality, and often is merely a translator of Petrarch; when he is not translating one of the *Canzoniere*, he can usually be found repeating Petrarchan conceits without any of the latter's music and warmth. However, he frequently departs from the Petrarchan rhyme-scheme by ending his sonnet in a couplet. Petrarch's two favorite rhyme-arrangements are ***abbaabba cdcdcd*** and ***abbaabba cdecde***; Wyatt's favorite is ***abbaabba cddc ee***.

Occasionally Wyatt proves that had he had an English tradition behind him, he might have become a greater sonneteer. For example in our first sonnet, a translation of Petrarch's number *137*, the Italian poet's undistinguished line:

Celansi i duo miei dolci usati segni

(literally, "My two sweet accustomed signs are hidden") becomes transformed into the fine

The stars be hid that led me to this pain.

(It might also be here observed that some editors think the word *hour* in line 5 of the same sonnet to be an error for *oar*, which is like the Italian.)

A reprint of Tottel was made by H. E. Rollins (1928). The best critical study is by E. K. Chambers in *Sir Thomas Wyatt and Other Studies* (1933).

The Lover Compareth His State to a Ship in Perilous Storm Tossed on the Sea

My galley charged with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas, in winter nights doth pass,
'Tween rock and rock; and eke[1] my foe, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness,
And every hour, a thought in readiness,
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sighs, and trusty fearfulness.
A rain of tears, a cloud of dark disdain
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance,
Wreathed with error, and with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain;
  Drowned is reason that should be my comfort,
  And I remain, despairing of the port.

(pub. 1557)

The Lover Having Dreamed of Enjoying of His Love, Complaineth That the Dream Is Not Either Longer or Truer

Unstable dream, according to the place,
Be steadfast once, or else at least be true.
By tasted sweetness make me not to rue

---

[1] also.

The sudden loss of thy false feigned grace.
By good respect in such a dangerous case
Thou broughtst not her into these tossing seas,
But madest my spirit to live, my care t'encrease,
My body in tempest her delight t'embrace.
The body dead, the spirit had his desire;
Painless was th' one, the other in delight.
Why then, alas! did it not keep it right,
But thus return to leap into the fire,
And where it was at wish, could not remain?
Such mocks of dreams do turn to deadly pain!
(pub. 1557)

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

(1517?-1547)

Friend and disciple of Wyatt, Surrey was the son of the powerful Duke of Norfolk. A better craftsman than Wyatt, he too admired Petrarch; and his interest in the Latin poets was greater than his friend's. His translations from Virgil, Horace, and Martial have something of the elegance of the originals. Surrey gave promise of being the first important humanist poet, such as Sidney became; but his life was cut short by the enmity of Henry VIII, who had him convicted on technical grounds of treason, and beheaded.

He performed two great services to English poetry: He invented the so-called "English" sonnet, with its interlocked rhyme-scheme and concluding couplet (*ababcdcdefef gg*), and, in his translation of two books of the *Æneid,* he introduced blank verse into English poetry. Rhyme is more difficult in English than in most languages because of the scarcity of inflectional endings. The "English" sonnet has therefore been preferred to the Petrarchan by many English writers; the concluding couplet, often epigrammatic in effect, gives this sonnet-form a feeling completely different from the "Italian." Blank verse is one of the most important of all English mediums: it is a favorite instrument not only of Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth, but of many other great poets as well.

F. M. Padelford edited the complete works of Surrey (1928). An excellent estimate of Surrey's achievement will be found in W. J. Courthope, *A History of English Poetry,* Vol. II (1911).

Description of Spring

Wherein Each Thing Renews, Save Only the Lover

The soote[1] season that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle[2] to her make[3] hath told her tale:
Summer is come, for every spray now springs;
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;[4]
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings:
The fishes flete[5] with new repaired scale;
The adder all her slough away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings.[6]
Winter is worn, that was the flowers' bale:
And thus I set among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs!
(pub. 1557)

VIRGIL'S AENEID

(Translated by The Earl of Surrey)

BOOK II

They whisted[1] all, with fixèd face attent,
When Prince Æneas from the royal seat
Thus gan to speak: 'O Queen, it is thy will
I should renew a woe cannot be told;
How that the Greeks did spoil and overthrow
The Phrygian wealth and wailful realm of Troy.
Those ruthful things that I myself beheld,
And whereof no small part fell to my share;
Which to express, who could refrain from tears?
What Myrmidon? or yet what Dolopës?[2]
What stern Ulysses' wagèd soldier?
And lo! moist night now from the welkin[3] falls,

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[1] sweet.

[2] turtle-dove.
[3] mate.
[4] has shed his horns
[5] swim.
[6] mixes.

[1] were silent.
[2] tribes of Greeks, the former commanded by Achilles.
[3] sky.

And stars declining counsel us to rest:
But since so great is thy delight to hear
Of our mishaps and Troyës last decay,
Though to record the same my mind abhors
And plaint eschews, yet thus will I begin:—
The Greekës chieftains, all irked with the war,
Wherein they wasted had so many years,
And oft repulsed by fatal destiny,
A huge horse made, high raisèd like a hill,
By the divine science of Minerva,—
Of cloven fir compacted were his ribs,
For their return a feignèd sacrifice,—
The fame whereof so wandered it at point.
In the dark bulk they closed bodies of men
Chosen by lot, and did enstuff by stealth
The hollow womb with armèd soldiers.
  There stands in sight an isle hight Tenedon,
Rich, and of fame while Priam's kingdom stood,
Now but a bay and road unsure for ship.
Hither them secretly the Greeks withdrew,
Shrouding themselves under the desert shore;
And, weening we they had been fled and gone,
And with that wind had fet[4] the land of Greece,
Troy discharged her long continued dole.
The gates cast up, we issued out to play,
The Greekish camp desirous to behold,
The places void and the forsaken coasts.
Here Pyrrhus' band, there fierce Achilles pight;[5]
Here rode their ships, there did their battles join.
Astonied some the scathful gift beheld,
Behight by vow unto the chaste Minerve,
All wondering at the hugeness of the horse.
  And first of all, Timœtes gan advise
Within the walls to lead and draw the same,
And place it eke amid the palace court,
Whether of guile, or Troyës fate it would.
Capys, with some of judgment more discreet,
Willed it to drown, or underset with flame,
The suspect present of the Greeks' deceit,
Or bore and guage the hollow caves uncouth;
So diverse ran the giddy people's mind.
  Lo! foremost of a rout that followed him,
Kindled Laöcoön hasted from the tower,
Crying far off: "O wretched citizens,
What so great kind of frenzy fretteth you?
Deem ye the Greeks, our enemies, to be gone?
Or any Greekish gifts can you suppose
Devoid of guile? Is so Ulysses known?
Either the Greeks are in this timber hid,
Or this an engine is to annoy our walls,
To view our towers, and overwhelm our town.
Here lurks some craft. Good Troyans give no trust
Unto this horse, for, whatsoever it be,
I dread the Greeks, yea, when they offer gifts."

THEOCRITUS (early 3d century B.C.)

Theocritus himself is the source of our scant knowledge of his life. He was born in Sicily at Syracuse, "a man of the people." Some time he spent on the pleasant isle of Cos, and his later days in the city of Alexandria. Whether his bucolic poems were written in the country at Cos, or for city-folk in Alexandria, is not certain.

Although we think of Theocritus as the inventor of bucolic (i.e. "rustic") poetry, when he wrote there were undoubtedly already in existence some country-songs upon which he based his work. The last great Greek poet, he is the father of pastoral poetry in European literature, and his descendants are many. One advantage he retains over his imitators in other languages: whereas the particular curse of the pastoral has been its artificiality, the poetry of Theocritus is authentically of the country. The persons of his poems are real Sicilian peasants, painted with their actual coarseness and simplicity. To this day Sicilian peasants improvise antiphonal songs, just as they do in Theocritus' singing-matches. The shepherds he knew were light-hearted, sunny folk who loved to sing and dance. Indeed, it is entirely likely that while at Cos, Theocritus and his friends did do the work of shepherds and goatherds in exchange for food and lodging. The poet was an artist who was shaping folk-material for his verses, but there is no pretence in his speaking of himself as a shepherd. The countryside and its folk were realities to him and he sang of them with a freshness that has delighted the world ever since.

Moschus, a Sicilian (fl. 150 B.C.), and Bion, of Smyrna (fl. 100 B.C.), continued in the tradition he established. After them, Virgil is the next important pastoral poet; but in him artifice already replaces the genuineness of Theocritus.

A splendid verse translation of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus was made by J. H. Hallard (1924), and an able prose version was written by Andrew Lang (1880).

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[4] achieved.

[5] camp.

IDYLL I

(Translated by J. H. Hallard)

The Song of the Death of Daphnis

Thyrsis. Sweet is the music of yon whispering pine
Beside the springs; and sweetly pipest thou,
Goatherd. For thee, next after Pan,[1] the award.
If his the hornèd buck, thine were the dam;
If his the dam, to thee the kid should fall,—
And dainty flesh have kids as yet unmilked.

Goatherd. Sweeter thy singing, shepherd, is to me
Than the resounding murmur of the lynn
Which pours from yonder crag; and were the lamb
To be the Muses' guerdon, thine should be
The fatling of the fold; chose they the fatling,
Thine were the ewe.

Thyr. I prithee by the Nymphs,
I prithee, goatherd, seat thee by the knoll
That rises here among the tamarisks,
And pipe to me—I'll tend thy goats the while.

Goat. Nay, shepherd, nay; in the heat of summer noon
I dare not pipe; for at that hour doth Pan,
Weary with hunting, take his rest, and him
I fear. Savage of mood is he, and Wrath
Sits fierce and grim above his nostrils ever.
But thou art skilled the Daphnis-dirge to sing,
And well hast learned the country Muse's lore.
Come, sit we, Thyrsis, underneath this elm,
Fronting Priapus[2] and the water-nymphs,
Here where the oaks are and the shepherd's bench
If but thou sing to-day as once thou sang'st
In strife with Libyan Chromis, thine shall be
Three milkings of this goat—she suckles twins,
Yet none the less two pailfuls more can yield—
And thine shall be a drinking-cup, twy-eared,
Well waxed, new-made, still smelling of the chisel,
Around whose lip there twines an ivy-wreath
With everlastings pranked; the spray below
Winds happy in its own gold fruit. Between,
Divinely wrought, a woman stands, adorned
With robe and snood; on either hand of her
A man with fair long hair, who each with the other
Wrangles in words, nor moves her heart at all;
But now she smiles and looks on one, now throws
Her light heart to his rival. They, poor lads,
Are heavy-eyed, and vex themselves in vain.
An aged fisher, too, is carved thereon,
Who standing on a rough ledge gathers up
His ample fishing-net to make a cast,
Toiling amain. With all the force of his limbs
He seems to work, each sinew of his neck
Swelling; the greybeard has a youthlike strength.
Anigh that wave-worn sire a vineyard bows
Beneath its comely load of ruddy grapes;
A little boy sits on a dry-stone wall
To watch and ward; two foxes round him roam;
One prowls among the vine-rows pillaging
The riper clusters, while the other plots
A raid on the lad's wallet, and has vowed
To wreck his morning meal. But he the while
Weaves for himself a pretty grasshopper-net
With asphodel, fitting it on a rush,
And heeds no whit his wallet or the vines,
So happy in his plaiting. About the cup
The soft acanthus spreads; a marvel 'tis
Of dazzling art—a miracle to see.
To the mariner from Calydon I gave
A she-goat and a large white cheese for it.
Ne'er have my lips yet touched it, it remains
Unhanselled. Gladly will I give it thee,
If thou wilt sing me that delightful lay.
I mock thee not.—Come, friend, thou can'st not take
Thy ditty with thee unto Acheron,[3]
To Acheron where all things are forgot.

Thyr. *Oh, raise, dear Muses, raise a country-song.*
Thyrsis of Etna am I; oh, hark to him sweetly singing!
Where were ye, Nymphs, ah, where, when Daphnis pined away?
Not where Anapus flows, or the waters of Acis are springing;
Not on Etna's peak, but on Pindus, or Tempe's knolls that day.
O raise, dear Muses, raise a country-song.

(Him e'en jackals wailed, and for him wolves raised a moaning;
The lion came from the woods and mourned for the fair dead youth.
At his feet was a throng of kine and oxen weeping and groaning,
The heifers and heifer-calves lamented for pity and ruth.)
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

First from the hill came Hermes and said: 'What sorrow assails thee,

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[1] The goat-footed god of the woods and fields.

[2] A god, son of Dionysus and Aphrodite, promoter of fertility, and patron of shepherds and farmers.

[3] Hades.

Daphnis? Whom dost love? Prithee, dear lad, tell me true.'
All were gathered together and said: 'Oh, tell what ails thee'—
Shepherds, goatherds, hinds. Priapus came there too,—
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

And said to him: 'Why, poor Daphnis, pine like an idle dreamer?
By every woodland and spring the lass is roaming now.
Thee she desires, thou laggard-in-love, thou sorry schemer;
A neatherd once thou wast hight, but now like a goatherd art thou.
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

When the goatherd sees his flock at their wanton amorous playing,
He weeps and says to himself: "Ah, would I were one of you!"
And thou, beholding the girls when they laugh, would'st fain be a-maying
With them in the dance, fond youth, and thine eyes are wet with dew.'
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

Not a word did the herdsman speak, nor heeded he their beguiling,
But held through his bitter love to the bitter end of death.
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

And the goddess of Cyprus[4] came; in her heart she was sweetly smiling,
But anger she feigneth still and a cruel word she saith:
'Daphnis, thy vaunt was once that Love were a paltry foeman—
Hast thou not tried a fall, and been thrown by the strong god now?'
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

And he answered and said: 'Fell Cypris, accursed, dear to no man,
I shall ne'er see the dawn again? So be it!—yet hearken, thou.
E'en in the underworld shall Daphnis be Love's undoing.—
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

To Ida begone,[5] where once in the depths of an oakwood vale
To a herdsman's lust thou did'st yield, to the voice of Anchises' wooing;
Sheltering oaks are there—here, nought but galingale!
In his bloom is Adonis too, his flock to the pasture leading;
His arrow smites the hare, and in hunting he takes delight.—
To Diomede hie thee then, and say to him: "Daphnis is bleeding,
Daphnis the herdsman—lo, I challenge thee to the fight!"
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

Ye jackals and wolves, ye bears that in hill-caves have your den,
Farewell, for Daphnis the herdsman ye ne'er shall behold again;
No more shall the thicket know him, the grove shall know him no more;
Farewell, Arethusa, farewell, bright streams that from Thymbris pour.
Low lieth Daphnis now that herded his kine once here,
And led to the side of the water his heifer-calf and steer.
O Muses, raise again the country-song.

Pan, O Pan, art roaming the high Lycaean brow,
Or ranging Maenalus' hill?—To Sicily speed thee now.
The barrow of Helice leave, and the cairn upon Arcas' grave,
That marvel to blessèd gods—Come hither across the wave—
O, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.

Hither and take this pipe, wax-banded, a lovely thing,
My pan-pipe honey-sweet, that curves on the lip, O King!
For Love will hale me away unto Hades' house ere long.
O, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.

On you, O acanthus and bramble, may violets blossom now
And rife may the fair white jonquil wave on the juniper bough!
All things madly be mingled, for Daphnis lieth alow,
Hounds be baited by harts, and pears on the pine-tree grow,

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[4] Aphrodite.

[5] This stanza refers to various lovers of Aphrodite.

Owls of the hillside vie with the nightingales' warbling throng!'
O, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.

These were his words, these only, and fain had she been to restore him,
But the thread of his life had failed from the Fates, and now was an end.
To the river of Death he sped, and away the waters bore him,
A man by the Nymphs belov'd, and the Muses called him friend.
O, cease, ye Muses, cease the country-song.

Bring hither now the goat for me to milk,
And give the cup, that I may make libation
Unto the Muses. Muses, fare ye well—
Oh, fare ye well! Some other while I'll sing
A sweeter song.

Goat. O Thyrsis, may thy mouth
Be filled with honey and the honeycomb!
Sweet figs of Aegilus be thine to eat!
For never a cicala sings like thee.
Take the cup, friend, and note its fragrant smell—
Thou'lt ween that in the fountain of the Hours
It hath been dipped. Hither, Cissaetha, hither!
Go, milk her, thou. Ye other she-goats there,
Beware the he-goat's horns and cease your skipping!

IDYLL XI

(Translated by E. B. Browning)

THE CYCLOPS

And so an easier life our Cyclops drew,
The ancient Polyphemus,[1] who in youth
Loved Galatea while the manhood grew
Adown his cheeks, and darkened round his mouth.
No jot he cared for apples, olives, roses;
Love made him mad; the whole world was neglected,
The very sheep went backward to their closes
From out the fair green pastures, self-directed.
And singing Galatea, thus, he wore
The sunrise down along the weedy shore,
And pined alone, and felt the cruel wound
Beneath his heart, which Cypris' arrow bore,
With a deep pang: but, so, the cure was found;
And, sitting on a lofty rock, he cast
His eyes upon the sea, and sang at last:
"O whitest Galatea, can it be
That thou shouldst spurn me off who love thee so?
More white than curds, my girl, thou art to see,
More meek than lambs, more full of leaping glee
Than kids, and brighter than the early glow
On grapes that swell to ripen,—sour like thee!
Thou comest to me with the fragrant sleep,
And with the fragrant sleep thou goest from me;
Thou fliest . . . fliest as a frightened sheep
Flies the gray wolf!—yet love did overcome me,
So long!—I loved thee, maiden, first of all
When down the hills (my mother fast beside thee)
I saw thee stray to pluck the summer-fall
Of hyacinth-bells, and went myself to guide thee;
And since my eyes have seen thee, they can leave thee
No more, from that day's light! But thou . . . by Zeus,
Thou wilt not care for *that*, to let it grieve thee!
I know thee, fair one, why thou springest loose
From my arm round thee. Why? I tell thee, dear!
One shaggy eyebrow draws its smudging road
Straight through my ample front, from ear to ear;
One eye rolls underneath; and yawning, broad,
Flat nostrils feel the bulging lips too near.
Yet . . . ho, ho!—*I*,—whatever I appear,—
Do feed a thousand oxen! When I have done,
I milk the cows, and drink the milk that's best!
I lack no cheese, while summer keeps the sun;
And after, in the cold, it's ready prest!
And then, I know to sing, as there is none
Of all the Cyclops can, . . . a song of thee,
Sweet apple of my soul, on love's fair tree,
And of myself who love thee . . . till the west
Forgets the light, and all but I have rest.
I feed for thee, besides, eleven fair does,
And all in fawn; and four tame whelps of bears.
Come to me, sweet! thou shalt have all of those
In change for love! I will not halve the shares.
Leave the blue sea, with pure white arms extended
To the dry shore; and, in my cave's recess,
Thou shalt be gladder for the noon-light ended;
For here be laurels, spiral cypresses,
Dark ivy, and a vine whose leaves infold
Most luscious grapes; and here is water cold,
The wooded Ætna pours down through the trees
From the white snows, which gods were scarce too bold

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[1] Son of Poseidon and chief of the Cyclops or one-eyed giants. He is here in love with Galatea, a sea-nymph, not to be confused with Galatea, the statue animated by Aphrodite for Pygmalion.

To drink in turn with nectar. Who with these
Would choose the salt wave of the lukewarm seas?
Nay, look on me! If I am hairy and rough,
I have an oak's heart in me; there's a fire
In these gray ashes which burns hot enough;
And, when I burn for *thee*, I grudge the pyre
No fuel . . . not my soul, nor this one eye,—
Most precious thing I have, because thereby
I see thee, fairest! out, alas! I wish
My mother had borne me finnèd like a fish,
That I might plunge down in the ocean near thee,
And kiss thy glittering hand between the weeds,
If still thy face were turned; and I would bear thee
Each lily white, and poppy fair that bleeds
Its red heart down its leaves!—one gift, for hours
Of summer,—one for winter; since to cheer thee,
I could not bring at once all kinds of flowers.
Even now, girl, now, I fain would learn to swim,
If stranger in a ship sailed nigh, I wis,
That I may know how sweet a thing it is
To live down with you in the deep and dim!
Come up, O Galatea, from the ocean,
And, having come, forget again to go!
As I, who sing out here my heart's emotion,
Could sit forever. Come up from below!
Come, keep my flocks beside me, milk my kine;
Come, press my cheese, distrain my whey and curd!
Ah, mother! she alone . . . that mother of mine . . .
Did wrong me sore! I blame her! Not a word
Of kindly intercession did she address
Thine ear with for my sake; and ne'ertheless
She saw me wasting, wasting, day by day:
Both head and feet were aching, I will say,
All sick for grief, as I myself was sick.
O Cyclops, Cyclops! whither hast thou sent
Thy soul on fluttering wings? If thou wert bent
On turning bowls, or pulling green and thick
The sprouts to give thy lambkins, thou wouldst make thee
A wiser Cyclops than for what we take thee.
Milk dry the present! Why pursue too quick
That future which is fugitive aright?
Thy Galatea thou shalt haply find,
Or else a maiden fairer and more kind;
For many girls do call me through the night,
And, as they call, do laugh out silverly.
I, too, am something in the world, I see!"

While thus the Cyclops love and lambs did fold,
Ease came with song, he could not buy with gold.

VIRGIL (70-19 B.C.)

Virgil's lifetime covers the golden age of Roman literature. Among his contemporaries were Lucretius, Catullus, Horace, Julius Caesar, and Cicero. He was born on a farm on the banks of the river Mincio, not far from Mantua. Though born of the lower ranks, he was well educated, and he remained all his life a scholar. He was already living in Rome when he finished his pastoral poems, The *Eclogues*, in 37 B.C. There he won the friendship of established writers, like Horace, Varius, and Pollio, and the favor of the munificent Mæcenas.

A scrupulous artist, Virgil never tired of polishing his poems. Only the command of Augustus prevented the destruction of his masterpiece, the *Æneid*, for in his last illness Virgil, not satisfied that the work was in a finished state, called for his manuscripts with the intention of burning his great epic. More than any other Roman poet, Virgil had deep sympathies for the great achievements of Greek literature. Basing his own creations on Greek originals, he raised the Latin language and its poetry to one of the highest levels ever attained in any literature.

The *Eclogues*, composed between 42 and 37 B.C., indicate, by their invocation to the "Sicilian Muses," his intention of immortalizing Italian scenery as Theocritus had immortalized the Sicilian countryside. These pastorals owed much to the Greek, and were the fruits of Virgil's apprenticeship in literature. They are among the most exquisite in world literature, despite their artificiality. Their self-conscious loveliness has an air of the "literary," very alien to the freshness of Theocritus; nature is here delicate but less real. And, more important, Virgil took the opportunity to discuss current topics so that the pastoral became in his hands a kind of poetic masquerade. The shepherds in Theocritus are real; in Virgil the poet's friends are called shepherds by convention. From this flows the allegorical use of the pastoral—the chief reason of its having since been often a highly artificial type of literary expression.

Pollio, who was addressed in this *Eclogue*, was a popular Roman orator, poet, and historian, actively concerned in Roman politics. In this poem Virgil is celebrating the consulship of his friend and patron and the expected birth of a child; the poet also expresses his hope for an era of peace. We have here a striking example of how far Virgil draws the pastoral from its rustic beginnings. The associations with the shepherd's life have become mere artifice.

An excellent prose translation of the *Eclogues* was made by J. W. Mackail (1889).

ECLOGUE IV.—POLLIO

(Translated by J. W. Mackail)

Muses of Sicily, sing we a somewhat ampler strain: not all men's delight is in coppices and lowly tamarisks: if we sing of the woods, let them be woods worthy of a Consul.

Now is come the last age of the Cumaean prophecy: the great cycle of periods is born anew. Now returns the Maid, returns the reign of Saturn: now from high heaven a new generation comes down. Yet do thou at that boy's birth, in whom the iron race shall begin to cease, and the golden to arise over all the world, holy Lucina, be gracious; now thine own Apollo reigns. And in thy consulate, in thine, O Pollio, shall this glorious age enter, and the great months begin their march: under thy rule what traces of our guilt yet remain, vanishing shall free earth for ever from alarm. He shall grow in the life of gods, and shall see gods and heroes mingled, and himself be seen by them, and shall rule the world that his fathers' virtues have set at peace. But on thee, O boy, untilled shall Earth first pour childish gifts, wandering ivy-tendrils and foxglove and colocasia mingled with the laughing acanthus: untended shall the she-goats bring home their milk-swoln udders, nor shall huge lions alarm the herds: unbidden thy cradle shall break into wooing blossom. The snake too shall die, and die the treacherous poison-plant: Assyrian spice shall grow all up and down. But when once thou shalt be able now to read the glories of heroes and thy father's deeds, and to know Virtue as she is, slowly the plain shall grow golden with the soft cornspike, and the reddening grape trail from the wild briar, and hard oaks shall drip dew of honey. Nevertheless there shall linger some few traces of ancient wrong, to bid ships tempt the sea and towns be girt with walls and the earth cloven in furrows. Then shall a second Tiphys[1] be, and a second Argo[2] to sail with chosen heroes: new wars too shall arise, and again a mighty Achilles be sent to Troy. Thereafter, when now strengthening age hath wrought thee into man, the very voyager shall cease out of the sea, nor the sailing pine exchange her merchandise: all lands shall bear all things, the ground shall not suffer the mattock, nor the vine the pruning-hook; now likewise the strong ploughman shall loose his bulls from the yoke. Neither shall wool learn to counterfeit changing hues, but the ram in the meadow himself shall dye his fleece now with soft glowing sea-purple, now with yellow saffron; native scarlet shall clothe the lambs at their pasturage. Run even thus, O ages, said the harmonious Fates to their spindles, by the steadfast ordinance of doom. Draw nigh to thy high honors (even now will the time be come) O dear offspring of gods, mighty germ of Jove! Behold the world swaying her orbed mass, lands and spaces of sea and depth of sky; behold how all things rejoice in the age to come. Ah may the latter end of a long life then yet be mine, and such breath as shall suffice to tell thy deeds! Not Orpheus of Thrace nor Linus[3] shall surpass me in song, though he have his mother and he his father to aid, Orpheus Calliope, Linus beautiful Apollo. If even Pan before his Arcady contend with me, even Pan before his Arcady shall declare himself conquered. Begin, O little boy, to know and smile upon thy mother, thy mother on whom ten months have brought weary longings. Begin, O little boy: of them who have not smiled on a parent, never was one honored at a god's board or on a goddess' couch.

[1] The pilot of the Argo.

[2] The ship in which Jason and his companions sailed for the Golden Fleece.

[3] famous mythical musicians.

Edmund Spenser

(1552?-1599)

Born in London, the greatest non-dramatic poet of the age was educated at the Merchant Taylors' School and at Cambridge, where he took his M.A. in 1576. At the university he formed a close friendship with Gabriel Harvey, a critic of prestige, who probably introduced him to Sir Philip Sidney (cf. *below*) and to Queen Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester, in whose household he was given a position. At this time (1579) he wrote and published *The Shepherd's Calendar* (cf. *below*), a collection of twelve pastorals, began his masterpiece *The Faerie Queene*, and joined a literary clique that included Sidney and Dyer. In 1580 he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey, Lord Deputy of Ireland, in which country Spenser passed most of his remaining years.

Lord Grey's technique in subjugating England's first colony was a simple one. "Through the length and breadth of Ireland," says Mr. de Selincourt, "he passed like a scourge, hanging and mutilating the rebels, burning the crops, reducing the wretched inhabitants to surrender by the terror of famine and the sword." Spenser, though born into the ranks of the humble, was an official servant, and thoroughly condoned Lord Grey's methods, in support of which he wrote a *View of the Present State of Ireland.* It may seem strange that a man of the poet's delicate sensibilities should have sanctioned the "reducinge that salvage nacion to better gouerment and cyvillitie" through carnage and deprivation. But Spenser had the misfortune to be cut off from the larger public for whom his great contemporaries, Marlowe and Shakespeare, were to write in the theatre. His literary career was that of a court poet, striving to please Elizabeth's cultivated courtiers. To him writing was an escape from the disorders and miseries of Ireland, and in refuge he came to idealize the good old days of knightly courtesy. He drank deeply of Renaissance learning, but he saw humanism as the concern only of gentle-folk for whose moral edification he framed *The Faerie Queene.* Although Chaucer was his favorite poet, he had none of Chaucer's lively interest in his contemporaries or his clear apprehension of the ways of men. The realities of life about him seem to have thrust Spenser back more intensely upon his own imagination. His antiquarianism which led him to love the archaic (Jonson said that he "writ no language"), and the absence, among a wealth of poetic powers, of force in his poetry may be ascribed to these limitations of character and audience.

In Ireland he was promoted to higher positions, and was given the confiscated Kilcolman Castle (1586). There he was visited in 1589 by Sir Walter Ralegh, then his neighbor, to whom he read what he had written of *The Faerie Queene.* With Ralegh's advice he accompanied the latter to London with the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*, which he published in 1590. The poem, instantly acclaimed, won him a small pension from Elizabeth, to whom he had dedicated it. But this reward was a sad disappointment to Spenser, who had expected some advancement at court. On his return to Ireland he wrote a charming pastoral, *Colin Clout's Come Home Again,* in which he described his experiences in London and reflected on the intrigues of Elizabeth's courtiers. In 1594 he married the woman for whom he had written the love-sonnets which form the sequence, *Amoretti*; and to celebrate his marriage he wrote the noble *Epithalamion.* These two he published in 1595. The next year found him again in London with three more books of *The Faerie Queene* which he saw through the press. Late in the year he wrote the *Prothalamion*, an exquisitely wrought hymn on the marriage of two daughters of the Earl of Worcester. Still disappointed in his hopes, he returned once more to Ireland, where revolt was brewing. In 1598 Kilcolman Castle was burned by the rebels, and he fled with his family to London. Disillusioned and broken in health, he died early in 1599. His body lies near Chaucer's in the Poets' Corner at Westminster Abbey.

Spenser has often been called "the poet's poet," for no other poet has furnished inspiration to so many of our great singers. They have gone to him to catch, if they could, some part of the secret of his unequalled gift for making deep harmonied and melodious music out of words. And he has earned the title of "poet's poet" by giving impetus to great poets, from Milton through Keats and Tennyson down to our own day. Even his own contemporaries fell under his spell, and wrote the better for it. The fluidity that English poetry had lost with Chaucer he restored to an enriched language. Before he wrote, English poetry was faltering in bewilderment before a variety of Renaissance influences; he gave it sureness, and widely enlarged its splendors with the authority of a master.

E. Greenlaw, C. G. Osgood, and F. M. Padelford have prepared a definitive variorum edition of Spenser (1932-). A convenient one-volume edition is that of E. de Selincourt and J. C. Smith (1912). Especially worthy of attention, among critical studies, are: E. Legouis, *Edmund Spenser* (1923), W. L. Renwick, *Edmund Spenser, an Essay on Renaissance Poetry* (1925), and B. E. C. Davis, *Edmund Spenser, A Critical Study* (1933).

The Shepherd's Calendar

Since Latin rather than Greek literature exerted a powerful influence on the Renaissance, it was Virgil, rather than Theocritus, who furnished the model for the humanistic pastoral. In Petrarch's Latin *Eclogues* (1346-1356) the emphasis on political ideas is strong. It is likewise Petrarch who converted the pastoral to satirical uses; the "shepherd's weed" is a mere disguise for attacks on Rienzi's enemies in Rome or on the corruptions of the court at Avignon. Boccaccio wrote a number of Latin eclogues in imitation of his friend, and also incorporated pastoral poems in his Italian romance, *Ameto* (1342).

An able Latinist of the next century, Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516) made the pastoral very popular by employing it for satire against women, life at courts, and the clergy. Mantuan's poems are clever, but lack Theocritus' freshness or Virgil's grace. His contemporary, Jacopo Sannazaro, of Naples, followed Boccaccio's lead in his pastoral romance *Arcadia*, written in Italian and, like *Ameto*, alternating lyrical eclogues with narrative prose. Here everything is prettified and unreal: fountains play, birds sing, and the landscape blossoms in a land of idle dreams which offer an escape from contemporary life. This sentimental idealization of a golden age and the artificial simplicity of its manners are the qualities particularly admired by later Renaissance writers of the pastoral. To these conventions were added chivalric touches by Montemayor in his *Diana* (1542), the chief source of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (cf. *below*).

In France the pastoral flourished in the hands of Clément Marot, who was able to preserve some of the Sicilian charm although he used the pastoral allegorically. Among the best of Marot's poems is the pastoral elegy (1531) on the mother of Francis I, which influenced Spenser's *November* Eclogue; echoes of it, via Spenser, are also to be heard in Milton's *Lycidas*.

Aside from lame translations of Mantuan, the classical pastoral had no history in England before Spenser. To Chaucer alone Spenser acknowledges discipleship, but *The Shepherd's Calendar* exhibits indebtedness to his predecessors in the pastoral. In the twelve eclogues which form the work can be read almost the history of the pastoral: one is fashioned after Theocritus and has his naturalness, another catches the sweetness of Bion, another imitates the graceful conventions of Virgil, another has the political coloring of Mantuan, and still another achieves the delicate sadness of Marot.

The publication of *The Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579 was an important event for English literature. It marks the beginning of the English tradition in the pastoral—a form, loved or hated by critics and poets, that has had ever since a long and significant history. It was also the occasion for the public emergence of the greatest non-dramatic poet of the age. In this first work Spenser already shows his marvelous gift for fusing many literary traditions into something original. That the author is young is obvious; but he is a young man who is a genius, exhilarated at the wonderful possibilities in his material and craft, and filled with the excitement of a language recently enriched and still expanding. *The Shepherd's Calendar* is written with the zest of a writer revelling in experiment.

Dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, *The Shepherd's Calendar* was issued under the pseudonym of *Immerito.* It is a collection of twelve pastorals, one for each month of the year, this framework being new to the pastoral. The connecting theme of the sequence is the unrequited love of Colin Clout (i.e. Spenser) for Rosalind. The poems are on many subjects, including moral and political satire and compliments to friends and patrons. But while following pastoral conventions, Spenser injects into his pictures here and there his feeling for English meadows and woodlands. To add to the rustic tone he deliberately employs dialect and archaic English. His technical virtuosity is also exhibited in a variety of poetic forms.

The *April* eclogue, a tribute to Queen Elizabeth, is one of the most beautiful lyrical pieces of Elizabethan poetry. This eulogy when compared with the stately praise of Virgil's fourth Eclogue to Pollio (cf. *above*) seems inspired. The stanza, subtly varied, has an enchanting restlessness of movement in keeping with the rapturous mood of the poem; and the rhymes are cunningly contrived to delight the ear. Later poets knew this poem well, and echoes of it resound in many a later English masterpiece.

C. H. Herford has a fully annotated edition of *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1925), with a splendid introduction.

April

AEGLOGA QUARTA

This Aeglogue is purposely intended to the honor and prayse of our most gracious soverigne, Queene Elizabeth. The speakers herein be Hobbinoll and Thenott, two sheepheardes: the which Hobbinoll, being before mentioned greatly to have loved Colin, is here set forth more largely, complayning him of that boyes great misadventure in Love; whereby his mynd was alienate and withdrawen not onely from him, who moste loved him, but also from all former delightes and studies, as well in pleasaunt pyping, as conning ryming and singing, and other his laudable exercises. Whereby he taketh occasion, for proofe of his more excellencie and skill in poetrie, to recorde a songe, which the sayd Colin sometime made in honor of her Majestie, whom abruptely he termeth Elysa.

THENOT, HOBBINOLL.

THEN. Tell me, good Hobbinoll, what garres thee greete?[1]
What? hath some Wolfe thy tender Lambes ytorne?
Or is thy Bagpype broke, that soundes so sweete?
Or art thou of thy loved lasse forlorne?
Or bene thine eyes attempred to the yeare,
Quenching the gasping furrowes thirst with rayne?
Like April shoure so stremes the trickling teares
Adowne thy cheeke, to quenche thy thristye payne.

HOBB. Nor thys, nor that, so muche doeth make me mourne,
But for the ladde, whome long I lovd so deare,
Nowe loves a lasse that all his love doth scorne:
He, plongd in payne, his tressed locks dooth teare.

Shepheards delights he dooth them all forsweare;
Hys pleasaunt Pipe, whych made us meriment,
He wylfully hath broke, and doth forbeare
His wonted songs, wherein he all outwent.

THEN. What is he for a Ladde you so lament?
Ys love such pinching payne to them that prove?
And hath he skill to make[2] so excellent,
Yet hath so little skill to brydle love?

HOBB. Colin thou kenst, the Southerne sheepheardes boye;
Him Love hath wounded with a deadly darte:
Whilome on him was all my care and joye,
Forcing with gyfts to winne his wanton heart.

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[1] makes thee weep.

[2] compose poetry.

But now from me hys madding mynd is starte,
And woes the Widdowes daughter of the glenne;
So nowe fayre Rosalind hath bredde hys smart,
So now his frend is chaunged for a frenne.[3]

Then. But if hys ditties bene so trimly dight,[4]
I pray thee, Hobbinoll, recorde some one,
The whiles our flockes do graze about in sight,
And we close shrowded in thys shade alone.

Hobb. Contented I: then, will I singe his laye
Of fayre Elisa, Queene of shepheardes all,
Which once he made as by a spring he laye,
And tuned it unto the Waters fall.

'Ye dayntye Nymphs, that in this blessed brooke
Doe bathe your brest,
Forsake your watry bowres, and hether looke,
At my request:
And eke you Virgins, that on Parnasse[5] dwell,
Whence floweth Helicon, the learned well,
Helpe me to blaze
Her worthy praise,
Which in her sexe doth all excell.

'Of fayre Elisa be your silver song,
That blessed wight,
The flowre of Virgins: may shee florish long
In princely plight!
For shee is Syrinx daughter without spotte.
Which Pan, the shepheards God, of her begot:
So sprong her grace
Of heavenly race,
No mortall blemishe may her blotte.

'See, where she sits upon the grassie greene,
(O seemely sight!)
Yclad in Scarlot, like a mayden Queene,
And ermines white:
Upon her head a Cremosin[6] coronet,
With Damaske roses and Daffadillies set:
Bay leaves betweene,
And primroses greene,
Embellish the sweete Violet.

'Tell me, have ye seene her angelick face,
Like Phoebe fayre?
Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace,
Can you well compare?
The Redde rose medled[7] with the White yfere,[8]
In either cheeke depeincten lively chere:
Her modest eye,
Her Majestie,
Where have you seene the like but there?

'I sawe Phoebus[9] thrust out his golden hedde,
Upon her to gaze:
But, when he sawe how broade her beames did spredde,
It did him amaze.
He blusht to see another Sunne belowe,
Ne durst againe his fyrye face out showe:
Let him, if he dare,
His brightnesse compare
With hers, to have the overthrowe.

'Shewe thyselfe, Cynthia,[10] with thy silver rayes,
And be not abasht:
When shee the beames of her beauty displayes,
O, how art thou dasht!
But I will not match her with Latonaes seede,
Such follie great sorow to Niobe did breede:[11]
Now she is a stone,
And makes dayly mone,
Warning all other to take heede.

'Pan may be proud that ever he begot
Such a Bellibone;
And Syrinx rejoyse that ever was her lot
To beare such an one.
Soone as my younglings cryen for the dam
To her will I offer a milkwhite Lamb:
Shee is my goddesse plaine,
And I her shepherds swayne,
Albee forswonck and forswatt[12] I am.

'I see Calliope speede her to the place,
Where my Goddesse shines;
And after her the other Muses trace,
With their Violines.
Bene they not Bay braunches which they do beare,
All for Elisa in her hand to weare?
So sweetely they play,
And sing all the way,
That it a heaven is to heare.

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[3] stranger.
[4] neatly composed.
[5] The Muses dwelt on Mount Parnassus by the Spring of Helicon.
[6] Crimson.
[7] mingled.
[8] together.
[9] the sun.
[10] the moon.
[11] Phoebus Apollo and Diana were children of Latona, who punished Niobe for boasting of her children. Niobe was turned into a statue which wept continually.
[12] tired and sweaty.

'Lo! how finely the Graces can it foote
To the Instrument:
They dauncen deffly, and singen soote,[13]
In their meriment.
Wants not a fourth Grace, to make the daunce even?
Let that rowme to my Lady be yeven:[14]
She shal be a Grace,
To fyll the fourth place,
And reigne with the rest in heaven.

'And whither rennes this bevie of Ladies bright,
Raunged in a rowe?
They bene all Ladyes of the lake behight,
That unto her goe.
Chloris, that is the chiefest Nymph of all,
Of Olive braunches beares a Coronall:
Olives bene for peace,
When wars doe surcease:
Such for a Princesse bene principall.

'Ye shepheards daughters, that dwell on the greene,
Hye you there apace:
Let none come there but that Virgins bene,
To adorne her grace:
And, when you come whereas shee is in place,
See that your rudenesse doe not you disgrace:
Binde your fillets faste,
And gird in your waste,
For more finenesse, with a tawdrie lace.

'Bring hether the Pincke and purple Cullambine,
With Gelliflowres;
Bring Coronations, and Sops in wine,
Worne of Paramoures:
Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
And Cowslips, and Kingcups, and loved Lillies:
The pretie Pawnce,[15]
And the Chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice.[16]

'Now ryse up, Elisa, decked as thou art
In royall aray;
And now ye daintie Damsells may depart
Eche one her way.
I feare I have troubled your troupes to longe:
Let dame Elisa thanke you for her song:
And if you come hether
When Damsines I gether,
I will part them all you among.'

THEN. And was thilk[17] same song of Colins owne making?
Ah, foolish Boy! that is with love yblent:[18]
Great pittie is, he be in such taking,
For naught caren that bene so lewdly bent.

HOBB. Sicker I hold him for a greater fon,[19]
That loves the thing he cannot purchase.
But let us homeward, for night draweth on,
And twincling starres the daylight hence chase.

(1579)

ARIOSTO (1474-1533)

On the chief of Charlemagne's knights already celebrated by the French in *The Song of Roland*, Boiardo (1434-1494) wrote a long poem, *Orlando Innamorato* (i.e. Roland in Love) which, left unfinished, had considerable vogue in Italy. Many poets attempted to complete it, but Ariosto alone both finished and surpassed it in his *Orlando Furioso* (i.e. Mad Roland). Only one year before his death was Ariosto, a poet shamefully neglected by his patrons, ready to publish the final revised edition, having spent some thirty years on its composition.

Ariosto looked to the chivalric exploits of the Crusades for his materials. Out of that romantic legendry he evolved a dream world of knights and ladies, tournaments, battles, and festivals. Writing thus on a subject exotic to Italy, he was escaping from the life about him to a world of his own creation, and which he could view in perspective. His outstanding quality as a poet is a lively fancy by which he was able to give to the most extraordinary events the semblance of reality.

His general purpose was to honor the house of Este, rulers of Ferrara; so, too, Spenser was to write *The Faerie Queene* to honor Elizabeth. Hence Ariosto's central figures are Ruggiero and Bradamante, founders of the Este family, rather than Roland and his paladins; Spenser, following the hint, centered interest in his poem on Artegal and Britomart, "ancestors" of Elizabeth. Indeed, of all influences on *The Faerie Queene*, Ariosto's is the easiest to trace. In Spenser, says Professor Dodge, "every point of the story has its counterpart in the *Furioso*; the correspondence from beginning to end is complete." But the two poets were by talents vastly dissimilar. Ariosto has none of that moral purport which was cardinal with Spenser. Where Ariosto is passionate, Spenser is visionary; and where Ariosto is ironic or comic, Spenser usually prefers spiritual gravity.

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[13] sweet.

[14] given.

[15] pansies.

[16] iris.

[17] the same.

[18] blinded.

[19] fool.

Sir John Harington made a translation of *Orlando Furioso* in 1591 and John Hoole another in 1783. Both are inferior to the excellent version of W. Stewart Rose (1823). A fine study is E. Gardner, *Ariosto, the Prince of Court Poets* (1906).

ORLANDO FURIOSO

(Translated by William Stewart Rose [1823]*)*

From *Canto I*

I

Of loves and ladies, knights and arms, I sing,
  Of courtesies, and many a daring feat;
And from those ancient days my story bring,
  When Moors from Afric passed in hostile fleet,
And ravaged France, with Agramant their King,
  Flushed with his youthful rage and furious heat,
Who on King Charles the Roman emperor's head
Had vowed due vengeance for Troyano dead.

II

In the same strain of Roland will I tell
  Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,
On whom strange madness and rank fury fell,
  A man esteemed so wise in former time;
If she, who to like cruel pass has well
  Nigh brought my feeble wit which fain would climb
And hourly wastes my sense, concede me skill
And strength my daring promise to fulfil.

III

Roland, who long the lady of Catay,
  Angelica, had loved, and with his brand
Raised countless trophies to that damsel gay,
  In India, Median, and Tartarian land,
Westward with her had measured back his way;
  Where, nigh the Pyrenees, with many a band
Of Germany and France, King Charlemagne
Had camped his faithful host upon the plain.

IV

To make King Agramant, for penance, smite
  His cheek, and rash Marsilius rue the hour;
This, when all trained with lance and sword to fight,
  He led from Africa to swell his power;
That other when he pushed, in fell despite,
  Against the realm of France Spain's martial·flower.
'Twas thus Orlando came where Charles was tented
  In evil hour, and soon the deed repented.

V

For here was seized his dame of peerless charms,
  (How often human judgment wanders wide!)
Whom in long warfare he had kept from harms,
  From western climes to eastern shores her guide
In his own land, 'mid friends and kindred arms,
  Now without contest severed from his side,
Fearing the mischief kindled by her eyes,
From him the prudent Emperor reft the prize.

VI

For bold Orlando and his cousin, free
  Rinaldo, late contended for the maid,
Enamored of that beauty rare; since she
  Alike the glowing breast of either swayed.
But Charles, who little liked such rivalry,
  And drew an omen thence of feebler aid,
To abate the cause of quarrel, seized the hair,
And placed her in Bavarian Namus' care.

From *Canto IV*

I

Though an ill mind appear in simulation,
And, for the most, such quality offends;
'Tis plain that this in many a situation
Is found to further beneficial ends,
And save from blame, and danger, and vexation:
Since we converse not always with our friends,
In this, less clear than clouded, mortal life,
Beset with snares, and full of envious strife.

II

If after painful proof we scarcely find
A real friend, through various chances sought,
To whom we may communicate our mind,
Keeping no watch upon our wandering thought;

What should the young Rogero's lady kind
Do with Brunello, not sincere, but fraught
With treasons manifold, and false and tainted,
As by the good enchantress truly painted?

III

She feigns as well with that deceitful scout;
(Fitting with him the father of all lies)
Watches his thievish hands in fear and doubt;
And follows every motion with her eyes.
When lo! a mighty noise is heard without!
"O mighty mother! Queen of heaven!" she cries,
"What thing is this I hear?" and quickly springs
Towards the place from whence the larum rings,

IV

And sees the host and all his family,
Where, one to door, and one to windows slips,
With eyes upturned and gazing at the sky,
As if to witness comet or eclipse.
And there the lady views, with wondering eye,
What she had scarce believed from other's lips,
A feathered courser, sailing through the rack,
Who bore an armèd knight upon his back.

V

Broad were his pinions, and of various hue;
Seated between, a knight the saddle pressed,
Clad in steel arms, which wide their radiance threw,
His wondrous course directed to the west:
There dropt among the mountains lost to view.
And this was, as that host informed his guest,
(And true the tale) a sorcerer, who made
Now farther, now more near, his frequent raid.

VI

"He, sometimes towering, soars into the skies;
"Then seems, descending, but to skim the ground:
"And of all beauteous women makes a prize,
"Who, to their mischief, in these parts are found.
"Hence, whether in their own or others' eyes,
"Esteemed as fair, the wretched damsels round,
"(And all in fact the felon plunders) hide;
"As fearing of the sun to be descried.

VII

"A castle on the Pyrenean height
"The necromancer keeps, the work of spell,"
(The host relates) "of steel, so fair and bright,
"All nature cannot match the wondrous shell.
"There many cavaliers, to prove their might,
"Have gone, but none returned the tale to tell.
"So that I doubt, fair sir, the thief enthralls
"Or slays whoever in the encounter falls."

VIII

The watchful maid attends to every thing,
Glad at her heart, and trusting to complete
(What she shall compass by the virtuous ring)
The downfall of the enchanter and his seat.
Then to the host—"A guide I pray thee bring,
"Who better knows than me the thief's retreat.
"So burns my heart, (nor can I choose but go)
"To strive in battle with this wizard foe."

IX

"It shall not need," exclaimed the dwarfish Moor,
"For I, myself, will serve you as a guide;
"Who have the road set down, with other lore,
"So that you shall rejoice with me to ride."
He meant the ring, but further hint forbore;
Lest dearly he the avowal should abide.
And she to him—"Your guidance gives me pleasure."
Meaning by this she hoped to win his treasure.

X

What useful was to say, she said, and what
Might hurt her with the Saracen, concealed,
Well suited to her ends, the host had got
A palfrey, fitting for the road or field.
She bought the steed, and as Aurora shot
Her rosy rays, rode forth with spear and shield:
And maid and courier through a valley wind,
Brunello now before and now behind.

XI

From wood to wood, from mount to mountain hoar,
They clomb a summit, which in cloudless sky
Discovers France and Spain, and either shore.
As from a peak of Apennine the eye
May Tuscan and Sclavonian sea explore,
There, whence we journey to Camaldoli.
Then through a rugged path and painful wended,
Which thence into a lowly vale descended.

xii

A rock from that deep valley's centre springs;
Bright walls of steel about its summit go:
And this as high that airy summit flings,
As it leaves all the neighboring cliffs below.
He may not scale the height who has not wings;
And vainly would each painful toil bestow.
"Lo! where his prisoners!" Sir Brunello cries,
"Ladies and cavaliers, the enchanter sties."

xiii

Scraped smooth upon four parts, the mountain bare
Seemed fashioned with the plumb, by builder's skill;
Nor upon any side was path or stair,
Which furnished man the means to climb the hill.
The castle seemed the very nest and lair
Of animal, supplied with plume and quill.
And here the damsel knows 'tis time to slay
The wily dwarf, and take the ring away.

xiv

But deems it foul, with blood of man to stain
Unarmed and of so base a sort, her brand;
For well, without his death, she may obtain
The costly ring; and so suspends her hand.
Brunello, off his guard, with little pain,
She seized, and strongly bound with girding band:
Then to a lofty fir made fast the string;
But from his finger first withdrew the ring.

xv

Neither by tears, nor groans, nor sound of woe,
To move the steadfast maid the dwarf had power:
She down the rugged hill descending slow,
Until she reached the plain beneath the tower.
Then gave her bugle breath, the keep below,
To call the castled wizard to the stower:[1]
And when the sound was finished, threatened, cried,
And called him to the combat and defied.

xvi

Not long within his gate the enchanter stayed,
After he heard the voice and bugle ring.
Against the foe, who seemed a man, arrayed
In arms, with him the horse is on the wing.
But his appearance well consoled the maid,
Who, with small cause for fear, beheld him bring
Nor mace, nor rested lance, nor biting sword,
Wherewith the corselet might be bruised or gored.

xvii

On his left arm alone his shield he took,
Covered all o'er with silk of crimson hue;
In his right-hand he held an open book,
Whence, as the enchanter read, strange wonder grew:
For often times, to sight, the lance he shook;
And flinching eyelids could not bide the view;
With tuck or mace he seemed to smite the foe:
But sate aloof and had not struck a blow.

xviii

No empty fiction wrought by magic lore,
But natural was the steed the wizard pressed;
For him a filly to a griffin bore;
Hight[2] hippogryph. In wings and beak and crest,
Formed like his sire, as in the feet before;
But like the mare, his dam, in all the rest.
Such on Riphæan hills, though rarely found,
Are bred, beyond the frozen ocean's bound.

xix

Drawn by enchantment from his distant lair,
The wizard thought but how to tame the foal;
And, in a month, instructed him to bear
Saddle and bit, and gallop to the goal;
And execute on earth or in mid air,
All shifts of manege, course and caracole:
He with such labor wrought. This only real,
Where all the rest was hollow and ideal.

xx

Thus truth by him with fictions was combined,
Whose sleight passed red for yellow, black for white:
But all his vain enchantments could not blind
The maid, whose virtuous ring assured her sight:
Yet she her blows discharges at the wind;
And spurring here and there prolongs the fight.
So drove or wheeled her steed, and smote at nought,
And practised all she had before been taught.

xxi

When she sometime had fought upon her horse,
She from the courser on her feet descends:

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[1] conflict.

[2] called.

To compass and more freely put in force,
As by the enchantress schooled, her wily ends.
The wizard, to display his last resource,
Unweeting the defence, towards her wends.
He bares the shield, secure to blind his foe,
And by the magic light, astonished, throw.

XXII

The shield might have been shown at first, nor he
Needed to keep the cavaliers at bay;
But that he loved some master-stroke to see,
Achieved by lance or sword in single fray,
As with the captive mouse, in sportive glee,
The wily cat is sometimes seen to play;
Till waxing wroth, or weary of her prize,
She bites, and at a snap the prisoner dies.

XXIII

To cat and mouse, in battles fought before,
I liken the magician and his foes;
But the comparison holds good no more:
For, with the ring, the maid against him goes;
Firm and attentive still, and watching sore,
Lest upon her the wizard should impose:
And as she sees him bare the wondrous shield,
Closes her eyes and falls upon the field.

XXIV

Not that the shining metal could offend,
As wont those others, from its cover freed;
But so the damsel did, to make descend
The vain enchanter from his wondrous steed.
Nor was in aught defeated of her end;
For she no sooner on the grassy mead
Had laid her head, than wheeling widely round,
The flying courser pitched upon the ground.

XXV

Already cased again, the shield was hung,
By the magician, at his saddle bow.
He lights and seeks her, who like wolf among
The bushes, couched in thicket, waits the roe;
She without more delay from ambush sprung,
As he drew near, and grappled fast the foe.
That wretched man, the volume by whose aid
He all his battles fought, on earth had laid:

XXVI

And ran to bind her with a chain, which he,
Girt round about him for such purpose, wore;
Because he deemed she was no less to be
Mastered and bound than those subdued before.
Him hath the dame already flung; by me
Excused with reason, if he strove not more.
For fearful were the odds between that bold
And puissant maid, and warrior weak and old!

XXVII

Intending to behead the fallen foe,
She lifts her conquering hand; but in mid space,
When she beholds his visage, stops the blow,
As if disdaining a revenge so base.
She sees in him, her prowess has laid low,
A venerable sire, with sorrowing face;
Whose hair and wrinkles speak him, to her guess,
Of years six score and ten, or little less.

XXVIII

"Kill me, for love of God!" (afflicted sore,
The old enchanter full of wrath did cry,)
But the victorious damsel was not more
Averse to kill, than he was bent to die.
To know who was the necromancer hoar
The gentle lady had desire, and why
The tower he in that savage place designed,
Doing such outrage foul to all mankind.

XXIX

"Now I, by malice moved, alas! poor wight,"
(The weeping necromancer answer made,)
"Built the fair castle on the rocky height,
"Nor yet for rapine ply the robber's trade;
"But only to redeem a gentle knight
"From danger sore and death, by love was swayed;
"Who, as the skies foreshow, in little season,
"Is doomed to die a Christian, and by treason.

XXX

"The sun beholds not 'twixt the poles, a Child
"So excellent as him, and passing fair;
"Who from his infancy, Rogero styled,
"(Atlantes I) was tutored by my care.
"By love of fame and evil stars beguiled,
"He follows into France Troyano's heir.

"Him, in my eyes, than son esteemed more dear,
"I seek to snatch from France and peril near.

XXXI

"I only built the beauteous keep to be
"Rogero's dungeon, safely harbored there;
"Who whilom was subdued in fight by me,
"As I to-day had hoped thyself to snare,
"And dames and knights, and more of high degree,
"Have to this tower conveyed, his lot to share,
"That with such partners of his prison pent,
"He might the loss of freedom less lament.

XXXII

"Save they should seek to break their dungeon's bound,
"I grant my inmates every other pleasure.
"For whatsoever in the world is found,
"Search its four quarters, in this keep I treasure;
"(Whatever heart can wish or tongue can sound)
"Cates, brave attire, game, sport, or mirthful measure.
"My field well sown, I well had reaped my grain,
"But that thy coming makes my labor vain.

XXXIII

"Ah! then unless thy heart less beauteous be
"Than thy sweet face, mar not my pious care;
"Take my steel buckler, this I give to thee,
"And take that horse, which flies so fast in air,
"Nor meddle with my castle more; or free
"One or two captive friends, the rest forbear—
"Oh (for I crave but this) release them all,
"So that Rogero but remain my thrall.

XXXIV

"Or if disposed to take him from my sight,
"Before the youth be into France conveyed,
"Be pleased to free my miserable sprite
"From its now rotted bark, long since decayed."
"Prate as thou wilt, I shall restore the knight
"To liberty," replied the martial maid,
"Nor offer shield and courser to resign,
"Which are not in thy gift,—already mine.

XXXV

"Nor were they thine to take or to bestow,
"Would it appear that such exchange were wise;
"Thou sayest to save him from what stars foreshow,
"And cheat an evil influence of the skies
"Rogero is confined. Thou canst not know,
"Or knowing, canst not change his destinies:
"For, if unknown an ill so near to thee,
"Far less mayest thou another's fate foresee.

XXXVI

"Seek not thy death from me; for the petition
"Is made in vain; but if for death thou sigh,
"Though the whole world refused the requisition,
"A soul resolved would find the means to die.
"But ope thy gates to give thy guests dismission
"Before thine hand the knot of life untie."
So spake the scornful dame with angry mock,
Speeding her captive still towards the rock.

XXXVII

Bound by the conqueror with the chain he bore,
Atlantes walked, the damsel following nigh,
Who trusted not to the magician hoar,
Although he seemed subdued in port and eye.
Nor many paces went the pair, before
They at the mountain's foot the cleft espy,
With steps by which the rugged hill to round;
And climb, till to the castle-gate they wound:

XXXVIII

Atlantes from the threshold, graved by skill,
With characters and wondrous signs, upturned
A virtuous stone, where, underneath the sill,
Pots, with perpetual fire and secret, burned.
The enchanter breaks them; and at once the hill
To an inhospitable rock is turned.
Nor wall nor tower on any side is seen,
As if no castle there had ever been.

XXXIX

Then from the lady's toils the wizard clears
His limbs, as thrush escapes the fowler's snare;
With him as well his castle disappears,
And leaves the prisoned troop in open air;
From their gay lodgings, dames and cavaliers,
Unhoused upon that desert, bleak and bare.
And many at the freedom felt annoy,
Which dispossessed them of such life of joy.

XL

There is Gradasso, there is Sacripant,
There is Prasildo, noble cavalier,
Who with Rinaldo came from the Levant;
Iroldo, too, Prasildo's friend sincere.
And there, at last, the lovely Bradamant
Discerns Rogero, long desired and dear;
Who, when assured it was that lady, flew
With joyful cheer to greet the damsel true;

XLI

As her he prized before his eyes, his heart,
His life; from that day cherished when she stood
Uncasqued for him, and from the fight apart;
And hence an arrow drank her virgin blood.
'Twere long to tell who launched the cruel dart,
And how the lovers wandered in the wood;
Now guided by the sun, and now benighted,
Here first since that encounter reunited.

XLII

Now that the stripling sees her here, and knows
Alone she freed him from the wizard's nest,
He deems, his bosom with such joy overflows,
That he is singly fortunate and blest.
Thither, where late the damsel conquered, goes
The band, descending from the mountain's crest;
And finds the hippogryph, who bore the shield,
But in its case of crimson silk concealed.

XLIII

To take him by the rein the lady there
Approached, and he stood fast till she was nigh,
Then spread his pinions to the liquid air,
And at short distance lit, half-mountain high:
And, as she follows him with fruitless care,
Nor longer flight nor shorter will he try.
'Tis thus the raven, on some sandy beach,
Lures on the dog, and flits beyond his reach.

TASSO (1544-1595)

Educated by the Jesuits, Tasso, the son of a courtier-poet, was already famous for his precocity at the age of eight. He was raised in an atmosphere of luxury and in a society where humanistic criticism was degenerating into pedantry. Not sixteen when his first poem was published, he became the darling of literary circles. By the time he was eighteen he had written *Rinaldo*, an attempt to combine the romantic qualities of Ariosto's epic with the regularity of Virgil's *Æneid*. Shortly thereafter he printed his views on the epic in *Discourses on the Art of Poetry*.

He won the patronage of that same family that had granted it (chiefly in theory) to Ariosto. At the court of Ferrara, then the most brilliant in Italy, his fame, learning, and handsomeness made him the idol of all. In 1573 his *Aminta*, a pastoral drama of great lyrical sweetness, was published; for two centuries it was used as a libretto for operas and oratorios all over Europe. In 1574, at the age of thirty, he completed his masterpiece, *Gerusalemma Liberata* (i.e. Jerusalem Delivered).

Making the mistake of consulting many friends for their opinions of his epic, Tasso was rewarded with criticism of a most stupidly pedantic order, against which he spent much energy defending himself. He had taken the first Crusade for his subject, and Godfrey de Bouillon, leader of the Christian armies, as his hero. Again aiming to ennoble the epic as conceived by Ariosto through observing unity of plot and elevating the diction (his model being Virgil), he also tried to infuse the concepts of Catholicism into his story in the person of Godfrey. But Tasso's natural genius was for romance. As in the case of Spenser, with whom he has much in common, our interest in his poem is deflected from the allegorical intent to the passion of Ruggiero and Rinaldo, the impulsiveness of Tancred, and the chivalry of the Saracens. The action of the story turns upon Armida, the beautiful sorceress, who, sent to bring havoc upon the Christians, is converted to the true faith by love. Other women hold our attention too: Clorinda, fighting in armor with her lover and being baptized in death by his hands; and Erminia, seeking safety in the hut of a shepherd. As John Addington Symonds says: "These lovely pagan women, so touching in their sorrows, so romantic in their adventures, so tender in their emotions, rivet our attention, while we skip the battles, religious ceremonies, conclaves, and stratagems of the campaign. The truth is that Tasso's great invention as an artist was the poetry of sentiment."

His arguments with his critics began to break Tasso's health, and he put his manuscript aside. He grew irritable and suspicious, made enemies, and became a victim of delusions. He fancied himself betrayed by his servants, was convinced he had been denounced to the Inquisition, and daily expected to be poisoned. He got into quarrels, and in 1577 drew his knife on a servant, was arrested, but released and sent to the country. By now virtually insane, he became obsessed with the notion that his patron intended to have him murdered, and he fled to Sorrento. Self-exiled, he begged to be allowed to return, was welcomed again at Ferrara, again suffered from his old ailment, again ran away, again returned and, behaving outrageously, was confined in the madhouse of St. Anna. There he spent seven years, and was treated with tender care. In 1581 his *Jerusalem Delivered* was published without his consent, and went through seven editions in six months. Released from the asylum, he began to wander feverishly over Italy; everywhere he was received well, and everywhere his madness made him fretful, ungracious, and intolerable. His genius gone, he even attempted a revision of his great poem, taking out all that was best, and debasing the language.

In 1594, Pope Clement VIII invited him to Rome to receive, like Petrarch, the crown of bays on the Capitol. But fate intervened. Before the ceremony could take place, Tasso entered the monastery of St. Onofrio to die. The last twenty years of his fifty-one had been wasted. The tragedy of this great poet moved Goethe to make him the hero of a drama.

If the influence of Tasso on Spenser is not obvious at first glance, it is none the less there. The tone of his poem—that "enchanting grace and diffused harmony" of which a critic speaks—is akin to Spenser's, as is his wonderful gift for description.

The first translation of *Jerusalem Delivered* was made by Richard Carew in 1594. In 1600 Edward Fairfax made a translation, spirited and sensitive, and still considered the best by most critics. John Addington Symonds's *The Renaissance in Italy* contains an incomparable commentary on Tasso.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED

(Translated by Fairfax)

THE CRUSADERS REACH JERUSALEM

The purple morning left her crimson bed,
And don'd her robe of pure vermilion hue;
Her amber locks she crown'd with roses red,
In Eden's flowery gardens gathered new;
When through the camp a murmur shrill was spread;
Arm, arm, they cried; arm, arm, the trumpets blew;
Their merry noise prevents the joyful blast,
So hum small bees, before their swarms they cast.

Their captain rules their courage, guides their heat,
Their forwardness he stay'd with gentle rein;
And yet more easy, haply, were the feat,
To stop the current near Charybdis'[1] main,
Or calm the blust'ring winds on mountains great,
Than fierce desires of warlike hearts restrain;
He rules them yet, and ranks them in their haste,
For well he knows disord'red speed makes waste.

Feath'red their thought, their feet in wings were dight,
Swiftly they march'd yet were not tir'd thereby,
For willing minds make heaviest burdens light;
But when the gliding sun was mounted high,
Jerusalem, behold, appear'd in sight,
Jerusalem they view, they see, they spy;
Jerusalem with merry noise they greet,
With joyful shouts, and acclamations sweet.

As when a troop of jolly sailors row,
Some new found land and country to descry;
Through dang'rous seas and under stars unknow,
Thrall to the faithless waves, and trothless sky;
If once the wished shore begin to show,
They all salute it with a joyful cry,
And each to other show the land in haste,
Forgetting quite their pains and perils past.

To that delight which their first sight did breed,
That pleased so the secret of their thought,
A deep repentance did forthwith succeed,
That rev'rend fear and trembling with it brought.
Scantly they durst their feeble eyes dispread
Upon that town, where Christ was sold and bought,
Where for our sins he, faultless, suff'red pain,
There where he died, and where he liv'd again.

Soft words, low speech, deep sobs, sweet sighs, salt tears,
Rose from their breasts, with joy and pleasure mixt;
For thus fares he the Lord aright that fears,
Fear on devotion, joy on faith is fixt:
Such noise their passions make, as when one hears
The hoarse sea-waves roar hollow rocks betwixt;
Or as the wind in hoults and shady greaves
A murmur makes, among the boughs and leaves.

Their naked feet trod on the dusty way,
Following th' ensample of their zealous guide;
Their scars, their crests, their plumes, and feathers gay,
They quickly doft, and willing laid aside;
Their molten hearts their wonted pride alay,
Along their watery cheeks warm tears down slide,
And then such secret speech as this, they us'd,
While to himself, each one himself accused:

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[1] a whirlpool which endangered Odysseus's ship.

Flowers of goodness, root of lasting bliss,
Thou well of life, whose streams were purple blood
That flowed here, to cleanse the foul amiss
Of sinful man, behold this brinish flood,
That from my melting heart distilled is;
Receive in gree[2] these tears, O lord so good,
For never wretch with sin so overgone,
Had fitter time, or greater cause to moan.

This while the wary watchman looked over,
From tops of Sion's towers, the hills and dales,
And saw the dust the fields and pastures cover,
As when thick mists arise from moory vales:
At last the sun-bright shields he 'gan discover,
And glist'ring helms, for violence none that fails,
The metal shone like lightning bright in skies,
And man and horse amid the dust descries.

Then loud he cries, Oh, what a dust ariseth!
Oh, how it shines with shields and targets clear!
Up, up, to arms, for valiant heart despiseth
The threat'nd storm of death, and danger near;
Behold your foes: then further thus deviseth;
Haste, haste, for vain delay increaseth fear,
These horrid clouds of dust, that yonder fly,
Your coming foes do hide, and hide the sky.

The tender children, and the fathers old,
The aged matrons, and the virgin chaste,
That durst not shake the spear, nor target hold,
Themselves devoutly in their temples plac'd;
The rest, of members strong and courage bold,
On hardy breasts their harness don'd in haste,
Some to the walls, some to the gates them dight;
Their king meanwhile directs them all aright.

Armida, the Sorceress

The town Damascus and the lands about
Rul'd Hidraort, a wizard grave and sage,
Acquainted well with all the damned rout
Of Pluto's reign, ev'n from his tender age;
Yet of this war he could not figure out
The wished ending, or success presage;
For neither stars above, nor powers of hell,
Nor skill, nor art, nor charm, nor devil could tell.

And yet he thought, O vain conceit of man!
Which as thou wishest judgest things to come,
That the French host to sure destruction ran,
Condemned quite by heav'n's eternal doom:
He thinks no force withstand or vanquish can
Th' Egyptian strength, and therefore would that some
Both of the prey and glory of the fight,
Upon his Syrian folk should haply light.

But for he held the Frenchmen's worth in prise,
And fear'd the doubtful gain of bloody war
He, that was closely false and silly wise,
Cast how he might annoy them most from far:
And as he 'gan upon this point devise
(As counsellors in ill still nearest are),
At hand was Satan, ready ere men need,
If once they think to make them do the deed.

He counsel'd him how best to hunt his game,
What dart to cast, what net, what toil to pitch:
A niece he had, a nice and tender dame,
Peerless in wit, in nature's blessings rich,
To all deceit she could her beauty frame,
False, fair, and young, a virgin and a witch;
To her he told the sum of this emprise,
And prais'd her thus, for she was fair and wise:

My dear, who underneath these locks of gold,
And native brightness of thy lovely hue,
Hidest grave thoughts, ripe wit, and wisdom old,
More skill than I, in all mine arts untrue,
To thee my purpose great I must unfold,
This enterprise thy cunning must pursue,
Weave thou to end this web which I begin,
I will the distaff hold, come thou and spin.

Go to the Christians' host, and there assay
All subtle sleights that women use in love,
Shed brinish tears, sob, sigh, entreat, and pray,
Wring thy fair hands, cast up thine eyes above,
For mourning beauty hath much power, men say,
The stubborn hearts with pity frail to move;
Look pale for dread, and blush sometime for shame,
In seeming troth thy lies will soonest frame.

Take with the bait Lord Godfrey, if thou may'st,
Frame snares of looks, trains of alluring speech;
For if he love, the conquest then thou hast:
Thus purpos'd war thou may'st with ease impeach;
Else lead the other lords to deserts waste,
And hold them slaves far from their leader's reach.
This taught he her, and for conclusion saith,
All things are lawful for our lands and faith.

The sweet Armida took this charge on hand,
A tender piece, for beauty, sex and age,
The sun was sunken underneath the land

---

[2] grace.

When she began her wanton pilgrimage;
In silken weeds she trusteth to withstand,
And conquer knights in warlike equipage.
Of their night-ambling dame the Syrians prated,
Some good, some bad, as they her lov'd or hated.

Within few days the nymph arrived there,
Where puissant Godfrey had his tents ypight;[3]
Upon her strange attire, and visage clear,
Gazed each soldier, gazed every knight:
As when a comet doth in skies appear,
The people stand amazed at the light,
So wonder'd they, and each at other sought,
What mister wight she was, and whence ybrought.

Yet never eye to Cupid's service vow'd
Beheld a face of such a lovely pride;
A tinsel veil her amber locks did shroud,
That strove to cover what it could not hide;
The golden sun, behind a silver cloud,
So streameth out his beams on every side;
The marble goddess, set at Guido's, naked,
She seem'd, were she uncloth'd, or that awaked.

The gamesome wind among her tresses plays,
And curleth up those glowing riches short;
Her spareful eye to spread his beams denays,
But keeps his shot where Cupid keeps his fort;
The rose and lily on her cheek assays
To paint true fairness out in bravest sort;
Her lips, where blooms naught but the single rose,
Still blush, for still they kiss while still they close.

Her breasts, two hills o'erspread with purest snow,
Sweet, smooth and supple, soft and gently swelling,
Between them lies a milken dale below,
Where love, youth, gladness, whiteness make their dwelling;
Her breasts half hid, and half were laid to show;
Her envious vesture greedy sight repelling:
So was the wanton clad, as if thus much
Should please the eye, the rest unseen the touch.

As when the sunbeams dive through Tagus' wave,
To spy the storehouse of his springing gold,
Love-piercing thought so through her mantle drave,
And in her gentle bosom wander'd bold:
It view'd the wondrous beauty virgins have,
And all to fond desire with vantage told:
Alas! what hope is left to quench the fire,
That kindled is by sight, blown by desire.

Thus past she, praised, wish'd, and wond'red at,
Among the troops who were encamped lay,
She smiled for joy, but well dissembled that
Her greedy eye chose out her wished prey;
On all her gestures seeming virtue sat,
Towards th' imperial tent she ask'd the way:
With that she met a bold and lovesome knight,
Lord Godfrey's youngest brother, Eustace hight.

This was the fowl that first fell in the snare,
He saw her fair, and hop'd to find her kind;
The throne of Cupid hath an easy stair,
His bark is fit to sail with every wind,
The breach he makes no wisdom can repair.
With rev'rence meet the baron low inclin'd,
And thus his purpose to the virgin told,
For youth, use, nature, all had made him bold:

Lady, if thee beseem a stile so low,
In whose sweet looks such sacred beauties shine,
For never yet did heav'n such grace bestow
On any daughter born of Adam's line,
Thy name let us, though far unworthy, know,
Unfold thy will, and whence thou art in fine,
Lest my audacious boldness learn too late,
What honors due become thy high estate.

Sir knight, quoth she, your praises reach too high
Above her merit you commenden so,
A hapless maid I am, both born to die,
And dead to joy, that live in care and wo,
A virgin helpless, fugitive pardie,
My native soil and kingdom thus forego
To seek Duke Godfrey's aid, such store men tell
Of virtuous ruth doth in his bosom dwell.

Conduct me then that mighty Duke before,
If you be courteous, sir, as well you seem,—
Content, quoth he; since of one womb ybore,
We brothers are, your fortune good esteem
T' encounter me, whose word prevaileth more
In Godfrey's hearing than you haply deem,
Mine aid I grant, and his I promise too,
All that his sceptre, or my sword, can do.

He led her eas'ly forth when this was said,
Where Godfrey sat among his lords and peers;
She rev'rence did, then blush'd as one dismay'd
To speak, for secret wants and inward fears;
It seem'd a bashful shame her speeches stay'd.
At last the courteous Duke her gently cheers;
Silence was made, and she began her tale.
They sit to hear, thus sung the nightingale:

---

[3] pitched.

Victorious prince, whose honorable name
  Is held so great among our pagan kings,
That to those lands thou dost by conquest tame,
  That thou hast won them some content it brings;
Well known to all is thy immortal fame.
  The earth thy worth, thy foe thy praises sings,
And painims wronged come to seek thine aid,
So doth thy virtue, so thy power persuade.

The Faerie Queene

In projecting a work to stand beside the epics of Homer and Virgil, Spenser made no attempt to imitate a classical model. A great English poem should be linked to England's literary past, he soundly reasoned. And however archaic his poetic diction may at times be, his eye was fixed firmly on the contemporary import of his poem to his courtier-audience. "The general end therefore of all the book," he tells Ralegh, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."

No work is more typically Elizabethan than *The Faerie Queene.* All the richly varied ingredients of Renaissance learning meet in this vast and bewildering poem which is at once an epic, a romance, and an allegory. The scope of the poem's intent is enormous. Thus, Gloriana is Queen of the Fairies, the personification of Glory, and Queen Elizabeth, all at the same time; Arthur is Malory's hero, the personification of Magnificence, and the Earl of Leicester; the Fairyland of the action is itself, the Platonic world of Ideas, and Britain.

Of the more immediate influences visible in the poem are: Homer, Virgil, Aristotle, and Plato, of the classics; Ariosto, Tasso, and Malory, of the chivalric writers; and Dante, De Lorris (*The Romance of the Rose*), Langland, and Chaucer (*The Parliament of Fowls*), writers of allegory. Among these, Ariosto's influence is perhaps the chief. From *Orlando Furioso* Spenser borrowed characters and incidents as well as much of the chivalric spirit. Closer in his own genius to Tasso, Spenser shows most his indebtedness to the later Italian in descriptive passages and in the refined poetic tone of the whole. Many-sided as is the lore which Spenser acquired, he transmuted it into his very own. For example, the ideals of courtly love and of chastity, though mutually opposed in the Middle Ages, are fused as one in his romantic ideal of marriage, as exemplified in the union of Artegall and Britomart.

Opening his epic much as Virgil did his (*Ille ego, qui quondam,* etc.—*Lo, I the man,* etc.), Spenser preferred, like the great Roman, an archaic diction as more suitable to his subject. Besides the statement of the subject (which is in diction imitated from Ariosto: *Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori, Le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto—And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds,* etc.), Spenser employs other conventions from the classical epic, such as the appeal to the Muse, and the technique of beginning the story in the middle. The allegorical design of the poem is explained in Spenser's *Letter* to Ralegh. Beyond the references to persons of his day, Spenser, a fervent Protestant of Puritan sympathies, was representing, as Bunyan did later, the struggle of the Christian warrior through failure and mischance to the city of heaven. But if the modern reader should choose to set aside the allegory, he will find a varied story peopled with many types of character, and filled with scenes of rarest beauty. Spenser's own preface is somewhat misleading in its emphasis on the moral design; he does not bother to tell us that he is one of the world's supreme painters and musicians. The imaginative world he has created is made real by his incomparable artistry.

Only six books and two cantos of the seventh book were completed of the twelve books planned. Each book is divided into twelve cantos. The unit is the stanza which Spenser invented for *The Faerie Queene,* and is made up of eight lines in iambic pentameter and a ninth line in iambic hexameter, rhyming *ababbcbcc* (closely resembling Chaucer's *rime royal*). This stanza, admirably suited for the long poem, is a favorite of later poets, among them Thomson in *The Castle of Indolence,* Burns in *The Cotter's Saturday*

Night, Byron in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Shelley in *Adonais*, and Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes*—all of which are major works of their authors. It is not strange that the Spenserian stanza should have had this prestige. Its full majesty and even flow have been described by M. Legouis as able to lull the intellect with its "perpetually recurring measure" away "from the real world into another, a world of order and harmony where this stanza seems to be the natural rhythm." Indeed, no poem of our language has been more loved by the great poets than *The Faerie Queene*. For though the poem has defects in construction and in pace, nowhere in our poetry is to be found music more delicate and melodious than here. It is perhaps true that the appreciation of Spenser's worth requires an apprenticeship in the reading of other poets; but once the ear is trained to his musical wizardry, he is not likely to suffer one's neglect.

The standard edition of *The Faerie Queene* is edited by J. C. Smith.

A Letter of the Authors

EXPOUNDING HIS WHOLE INTENTION IN THE COURSE OF THIS WORKE: WHICH, FOR THAT IT GIVETH GREAT LIGHT TO THE READER, FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING IS HEREUNTO ANNEXED.

TO THE RIGHT NOBLE AND VALOROUS
SIR WALTER RALEIGH, Knight,
LORD WARDEIN OF THE STANNERYES, AND HER MAIESTIES LIEFETENAUNT
OF THE COUNTY OF CORNEWAYLL

Sir, knowing how doubtfully all Allegories may be construed, and this booke of mine, which I have entituled the Faery Queene, being a continued Allegory, or darke conceit, I haue thought good, as well for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof, (being so by you commanded,) to discover unto you the general intention and meaning, which in the whole course thereof I have fashioned, without expressing of any particular purposes, or by accidents, therein occasioned. The generall end therefore of all the booke is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline: Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, being coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter then for profite of the ensample, I chose the historye of King Arthure, as most fitte for the excellency of his person, being made famous by many mens former workes, and also furthest from the daunger of envy, and suspition of present time. In which I have followed all the antique Poets historicall; first Homere, who in the Persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses hath ensampled a good governour and a vertuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Aeneas: after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando: and lately Tasso dissevered them againe, and formed both parts in two persons, namely that part which they in Philosophy call Ethice, or vertues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named Politice in his Godfredo. By ensample of which excellente Poets, I labour to pourtraict in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve private morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised; the which is the purpose of these first twelve books:[1] which if I finde to be well accepted, I may be perhaps encoraged to frame the other part of pollliticke vertues in his person, after that hee came to be king.

To some, I know, this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather have good discipline delivered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they use, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall devises. But such, me seeme, should be satisfide with the use of these dayes, seeing all things accounted by their showes, and nothing esteemed of, that is not delightfull and pleasing to commune sence. For this cause is Xenophon preferred before Plato, for that the one, in the exquisite depth of his judgement, formed a Commune welth, such as it should be; but the other in the person of Cyrus, and the Persians, fashioned a governement, such as might best be: So much more profitable and gratious is doctrine by ensample, then by rule. So haue I laboured to doe in the person of Arthure: whome I conceive after his long education by Timon, to whom he was by Merlin delivered to be brought up, so soone as he was borne of the Lady Igrayne, to have seene in a dream or vision the Faery Queen, with whose excellent beauty ravished, he awaking resolved to seeke her out; and so being by Merlin armed, and by Timon throughly instructed, he went to seeke her forth in Faerye land. In that Faery Queene I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land. And yet, in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two persons, the one of a most royall Queene or Empresse, the other of a most vertuous and beautiful Lady, this latter part in some places I doe expresse in Belphœbe, fashioning her name according to your owne excellent conceipt of Cynthia, (Phœbe and Cynthia being both names of Diana.) So in the person of Prince Arthure I sette forth magnificence in particular; which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all the rest, and conteineth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deedes of Arthure applyable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke. But of the xii. other vertues, I make xii. other knights the patrones, for the more variety of the history: Of which these three bookes contayn three.

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[1] Spenser really completed a little more than six books.

The first of the knight of the Redcrosse, in whome I expresse Holynes: The seconde of Sir Guyon, in whome I sette forth Temperaunce: The third of Britomartis, a Lady Knight, in whome I picture Chastity. But, because the beginning of the whole worke seemeth abrupte, and as depending upon other antecedents, it needs that ye know the occasion of these three knights seuerall adventures. For the Methode of a Poet historical is not such, as of an Historiographer. For an Historiographer discourseth of affayres orderly as they were donne, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a Poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the thinges forepaste, and divining of thinges to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all.

The beginning therefore of my history, if it were to be told by an Historiographer should be the twelfth booke, which is the last; where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her Annuall feaste xii. dayes; uppon which xii. severall dayes, the occasions of the xii. severall adventures hapned, which, being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these xii. books severally handled and discoursed. The first was this. In the beginning of the feast, there presented him selfe a tall clownishe younge man, who falling before the Queene of Faries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feaste should happen: that being graunted, he rested him on the floore, unfitte through his rusticity for a better place. Soone after entred a faire Ladye in mourning weedes, riding on a white Asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a war-like steed, that bore the Armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfes hand. Shee, falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient King and Queene, had bene by an huge dragon many years shut up in a brasen Castle, who thence suffred them not to yssew; and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assygne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person, upstarting, desired that adventure: whereat the Queene much wondering, and the Lady much gainesaying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the Lady told him, that unlesse that armour which she broughte, would serve him (that is, the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, VI Ephes.), that he could not succeed in that enterprise: which being forthwith put upon him with dewe furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the Lady. And eftesoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that straunge courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first book, viz.,

A gentle knight was pricking on the playne, etc.

The second day there came in a palmer, bearing an infant with bloody hands, whose parents he complained to have bene slain by an enchantress called Acrasia; and therefore craved of the Faery Queene, to appoint him some knight to perform that adventure; which being assigned to Sir Guyon, he presently went forth with that same palmer: which is the beginning of the second booke and the whole subject thereof. The third day there came in a groome, who complained before the Faery Queene, that a vile enchaunter, called Busirane, had in hand a most fair lady, called Amoretta, whom he kept in most grievous torment, because she would not yield him the pleasure of her body. Whereupon Sir Scudamour, the lover of that lady, presently tooke on him that adventure. But being unable to performe it by reason of the hard enchantments, after long sorrow, in the end met with Britomartis, who succoured him, and reskewed his love.

But by occasion hereof many other adventures are intermedled, but rather as accidents then intendments: as the love of Britomart, the overthrow of Marinell, the misery of Florimell, the vertuousness of Belphœbe, the lasciviousness of Hellenora, and many the like.

Thus much, Sir, I have briefly overronne, to direct your understanding to the welhead of the history, that from thence gathering the whole intention of the conceit ye may, as in a handfull, gripe all the discourse, which otherwise may happily seeme tedious and confused. So, humbly craving the continuance of your honourable favour towards me, and the eternal establishment of your happiness, I humbly take leave.

23 January, 1589.
Yours most humbly affectionate,
ED. SPENSER.

The First Book

CONTAYNING THE LEGEND OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE, OR OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo! I, the man whose Muse whylome[1] did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,[2]
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds,[3]
And sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds;
Whose praises having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse[4] areeds[5]
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng:
Fierce warres and faithful loves shall moralize my song.

II

Helpe then, O holy virgin! chiefe of nyne,[6]
Thy weaker Novice to performe thy will;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne[7]
The antique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,[8]
Whom that most noble Briton Prince[9] so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong:
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong!

III

And thou most dreaded impe[10] of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruel dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,
That glorious fire it kindled in his hart;
Lay now thy deadly Heben[11] bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine ayde;
Come, both; and with you bring triumphant Mart,[12]
In loves and gentle jollities arraid,
After his murdrous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse[13] heavenly bright!
Mirrour of grace and Majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phœbus lampe[14] throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile[15]:
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest dread, a-while!

CANTO I

The Patrone of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate:
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

---

[1] formerly.

[2] He had written *The Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579. This passage is almost a direct translation of the lines preceding Virgil's *Æneid* in which the poet speaks of turning from quiet pastoral poetry to the more stirring epic.

[3] Trumpets and reeds symbolize respectively epic and pastoral poetry.

[4] Clio, the muse of history.

[5] designates.

[6] Clio, one of the nine muses.

[7] desk.

[8] daughter of Oberon, king of the fairies, but here referring to Queen Elizabeth.

[9] Prince Arthur.

[10] child (Cupid).

[11] ebony.

[12] Mars.

[13] Queen Elizabeth.

[14] the sun.

[15] humble pen.

I

A gentle Knight was pricking[1] on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloody fielde;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield.
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:
Full jolly[2] knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knightly giusts[3] and fierce encounters fitt.

II

And on his brest a bloodie Crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living, ever him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope which in his helpe he had
Right faithfull true he was in deede and word,
But of his cheere[4] did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.[5]

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana[6] to him gave,
(That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond)
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges he most did crave:
And ever as he rode his hart did earne[7]
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne,
Upon his foe, a Dragon[8] horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely Ladie[9] rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly Asse more white then snow,
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled[10] was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfrey slow;
Seemed in heart some hidden care she had,
And by her, in a line, a milkewhite lambe she lad.[11]

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;
And by descent from Royall lynage came
Of ancient Kinges and Queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from East to Westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foull uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe[12] did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearied with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his Lemans lap[13] so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd[14] it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr.
Faire harbour that them seems, so in they entred ar.

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,

---

[1] spurring. [2] bold, handsome [3] jousts.
[4] countenance. [5] feared. [6] Queen Elizabeth.
[7] yearn. [8] Sin.
[9] Una = Truth = the Church of England. The ass signifies humility.

[10] folded. [11] led. [12] Prudence.
[13] Jove (the heavens); Leman's (lover's). Leman's lap = the earth.
[14] seek shelter.

Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,
The sayling Pine; the Cedar proud and tall;
The vine-propp Elme; the Poplar never dry;
The builder Oake, sole king of forrests all;
The Aspine good for staves; the Cypresse funerall;

IX

The Laurell, meed[15] of mightie Conquerours
And Poets sage; the Firre that weepeth still:
The Willow, worne of forlorne Paramours;
The Eugh,[16] obedient to the benders will;
The Birch for shaftes; the Sallow[17] for the mill;
The Mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound;
The warlike Beech; the Ash for nothing ill;
The fruitfull Olive; and the Platane[18] round;
The carver Holme;[19] the Maple seeldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Until the blustring storme is overblowne;
When, weening[20] to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in waies unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt,[21] their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the dwarfe a while his needless spere he gave.

XII

"Be well aware," quoth then that ladie milde,
"Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir knight, with-hold, till further tryall made."
"Ah, ladie," sayd he, "shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade."

XIII

"Yea, but," quoth she, "the perill of this place
I better wot then you; though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisedome warnes, whilest foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forcèd to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read[22] beware." "Fly, fly!" quoth then
The fearefull dwarfe: "this is no place for living men."

XIV

But full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull knight could not for ought be staide,
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And lookèd in: his glistring armor made
A little glooming light, much like a shade,
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsome, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

XV

And as she lay upon the durtie ground,
Her huge long taile her den all overspred,
Yet was in knots and many boughtes[23] upwound,
Pointed with mortall sting. Of her there bred
A thousand yong ones, which she dayly fed,

---

[15] reward. [16] yew. [17] broad-leaved willow. [18] plane tree [19] a species of oak. [20] supposing. [21] fear.

[22] advise. [23] coils.

Sucking upon her poisnous dugs, each one
Of sundrie shapes, yet all ill favorèd:
Soone as that uncouth light upon them shone,
Into her mouth they crept, and suddain all were gone.

XVI

Their dam upstart, out of her den effraide,[24]
And rushèd forth, hurling her hideous taile
About her cursèd head, whose folds displaid
Were stretcht now forth at length without entraile.[25]
She lookt about, and seeing one in mayle
Armed to point, sought backe to turne againe;
For light she hated as the deadly bale,[26]
Ay wont[27] in desert darknes to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plaine.

XVII

Which when the valiant Elfe[28] perceiv'd, he lept
As Lyon fierce upon the flying pray,
And with his trenchand blade her boldly kept
From turning backe, and forced her to stay:
Therewith enrag'd she loudly gan to bray,
And turning fierce her speckled taile advaunst,
Threatning her angrie sting, him to dismay;
Who, nought aghast, his mightie hand enhaunst:[29]
The stroke down from her head unto her shoulder glaunst.

XVIII

Much daunted with that dint her sence was dazd;
Yet kindling rage her selfe she gathered round,
And all attonce her beastly bodie raizd
With doubled forces high above the ground:
Tho, wrapping up her wrethed sterne arownd,
Lept fierce upon his shield, and her huge traine
All suddenly about his body wound,
That hand or foot to stirr he strove in vaine.
God helpe the man so wrapt in Errours endlesse traine!

XIX

His Lady, sad to see his sore constraint,
Cride out, "Now, now, Sir knight, shew what ye bee:
Add faith unto your force, and be not faint;
Strangle her, els she sure will strangle thee."
That when he heard, in great perplexitie,
His gall did grate[30] for griefe[31] and high disdaine;
And, knitting all his force, got one hand free,
Wherewith he grypt her gorge[32] with so great paine,
That soone to loose her wicked bands did her constraine.

XX

Therewith she spewd out of her filthie maw[33]
A floud of poyson horrible and blacke,
Full of great lumps of flesh and gobbets[34] raw,
Which stunck so vildly, that it forst him slacke
His grasping hold, and from her turne him backe.
Her vomit full of bookes and papers[35] was,
With loathly frogs and toades, which eyes did lacke,
And creeping sought way in the weedy gras:
Her filthie parbreake[36] all the place defiled has.

XXI

As when old father Nilus gins to swell
With timely pride above the Aegyptian vale,
His fattie waves doe fertile slime outwell,
And overflow each plaine and lowly dale:
But, when his later spring gins to avale,[37]
Huge heapes of mudd he leaves, wherin there breed
Ten thousand kindes of creatures, partly male
And partly femall, of his fruitful seed;
Such ugly monstrous shapes elsewher may no man reed.[38]

XXII

The same so sore annoyed has the knight,
That, welnigh choked with the deadly stinke,
His forces faile, ne can no lenger fight:
Whose corage when the feend perceived to shrinke,
She poured forth out of her hellish sinke

---

[24] frightened. [25] coiling. [26] destruction.
[27] accustomed.
[28] The Red Cross Knight, who was of elfin birth.
[29] lifted up.

[30] stir. [31] anger. [32] throat. [33] stomach
[34] pieces. [35] attacks on the English church and state.
[36] vomit. [37] subside. [38] see.

Her fruitful cursed spawne of serpents small,
Deformed monsters, fowle, and blacke as inke,
Which swarming all about his legs did crall,
And him encombred sore, but could not hurt at all.

XXIII

As gentle shepheard in sweete eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke[39] in west,
High on an hill, his flocke to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best;
A cloud of cumbrous gnattes doe him molest,
All striving to infixe their feeble stinges,
That from their noyance he no where can rest;
But with his clownish hands their tender wings
He brusheth oft, and oft doth mar their murmurings.

XXIV

Thus ill bestedd, and fearefull more of shame
Then of the certeine perill he stood in,
Halfe furious unto his foe he came,
Resolvd in minde all suddenly to win,
Or soone to lose, before he once would lin;[40]
And stroke at her with more then manly force,
That from her body, full of filthie sin,
He raft[41] her hatefull heade without remorse:
A streame of cole black blood forth gushèd from her corse.

XXV

Her scattred brood, soone as their parent deare
They saw so rudely falling to the ground,
Groning full deadly, all with troublous feare,
Gathred themselves about her body round,
Weening their wonted entrance to have found
At her wide mouth: but being there withstood,
They flockèd all about her bleeding wound,
And suckèd up their dying mothers bloud,
Making her death their life, and eke her hurt their good.

XXVI

That detestable sight him much amazde,
To see th' unkindly[42] impes, of heaven accurst,
Devoure their dam; on whom while so he gazd,
Having all satisfide their bloudy thurst,
Their bellies swolne he saw with fulnesse burst,
And bowels gushing forth; well worthy end
Of such as drunke her life, the which them nurst!
Now needeth him no lenger labour spend;
His foes have slaine themselves, with whom he should contend.

XXVII

His lady, seeing all that chaunst, from farre,
Approcht in hast to greet his victorie.
And saide, "Faire knight, borne under happie starre,
Who see your vanquisht foes before you lye,
Well worthie be you of that armory,
Wherein ye have great glory wonne this day,
And proov'd your strength on a strong enimie,
Your first adventure: many such I pray,
And henceforth ever wish that like succeed it may."

XXVIII

Then mounted he upon his steede againe,
And with the lady backward sought to wend;
That path he kept which beaten was most plaine,
Ne ever would to any by way bend,
But still did follow one unto the end,
The which at last out of the wood them brought.
So forward on his way (with God to frend[43])
He passèd forth, and new adventure sought:
Long way he traveilèd, before he heard of ought.

XXIX

At length they chaunst to meet upon the way
An agèd sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feete all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belte his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
And all the way he prayèd as he went,
And often knockt his brest, as one that did repent.

XXX

He faire the knight saluted, louting[44] low,
Who faire him quited, as that courteous was;
And after askèd him, if he did know
Of straunge adventures, which abroad did pas.
"Ah! my dear sonne," quoth he, "how should, alas!

---

[39] wane. [40] stop. [41] took away. [42] unnatural.

[43] as friend. [44] bending.

Silly[45] old man, that lives in hidden cell,
Bidding[46] his beades all day for his trespas,
Tydings of warre and worldly trouble tell?
With holy father sits[47] not with such thinges to mell.[48]

XXXI

"But if of daunger, which hereby doth dwell,
And homebredd evil ye desire to heare,
Of a straunge man I can you tidings tell,
That wasteth all this countrie, farre and neare."
"Of such," (saide he,) "I chiefly doe inquere,
And shall thee well rewarde to shew the place,
In which that wicked wight[49] his dayes doth weare;
For to all knighthood it is foule disgrace,
That such a cursed creature lives so long a space."

XXXII

"Far hence" (quoth he) "in wastfull wildernesse
His dwelling is, by which no living wight
May ever passe, but thorough great distresse."
"Now," (saide the Ladie,) "draweth toward night,
And well I wote, that of your later fight
Ye all forwearied be; for what so strong,
But, wanting rest, will also want of might?
The Sunne, that measures heaven all day long,
At night doth baite[50] his steedes the Ocean waves emong.

XXXIII

"Then with the Sunne take, Sir, your timely rest,
And with new day new worke at once begin:
Untroubled night, they say, gives counsell best."
"Right well, Sir knight, ye have advised bin,"
Quoth then that aged man: "the way to win
Is wisely to advise; now day is spent:
Therefore with me ye may take up your In
For this same night." The knight was well content;
So with that godly father to his home they went.

XXXIV

A litle lowly Hermitage it was,
Downe in a dale, hard by a forests side,
Far from resort of people that did pas
In traveill to and froe: a little wyde
There was an holy chappell edifyde,[51]
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy thinges each morne and eventyde;
Thereby a christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

XXXV

Arrived there, the litle house they fill,
Ne looke for entertainement where none was;
Rest is their feast, and all thinges at their will:
The noblest mind the best contentment has.
With faire discourse the evening so they pas;
For that olde man of pleasing wordes had store,
And well could file his tongue as smooth as glas:
He told of Saintes and Popes,[52] and evermore
He strowd an *Ave-Mary* after and before.

XXXVI

The drouping night thus creepeth on them fast;
And the sad humor[53] loading their eyeliddes,
As messenger of Morpheus, on them cast
Sweet slombering deaw, the which to sleep them biddes.
Unto their lodgings then his guests he riddes:[54]
Where when all drownd in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his studie goes; and there amiddes
His magick bookes, and artes of sundrie kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes to trouble sleepy minds.

XXXVII

Then choosing out few words most horrible,
(Let none them read) thereof did verses frame;
With which, and other spelles like terrible,
He bad awake blacke Plutoes griesly Dame;[55]
And cursed heven; and spake reprochful shame
Of highest God, the Lord of life and light:
A bold bad man, that dar'd to call by name
Great Gorgon, prince of darknes and dead night;
At which Cocytus[56] quakes, and Styx[56] is put to flight.

---

[45] simple.
[46] counting his beads for his sins.
[47] is not fitting.
[48] meddle.
[49] person.
[50] refresh.
[51] built.
[52] Archimago represents Hypocrisy and is also a Roman Catholic.
[53] heavy dampness.
[54] dismisses.
[55] Proserpine.
[56] rivers in Hades.

XXXVIII

And forth he cald out of deepe darknes dredd
Legions of Sprights, the which, like litle flyes
Fluttring about his ever-damned hedd,
Awaite whereto their service he applyes,
To aide his friendes, or fray[57] his enimies.
Of those he choose out two, the falsest twoo,
And fittest for to forge true-seeming lyes:
The one of them he gave a message too,
The other by him selfe staide, other worke to doo.

XXXIX

He, making speedy way through spersed[58] ayre,
And through the world of waters wide and deepe,
To Morpheus house doth hastily repaire.
Amid the bowels of the earth full steepe,
And low, where dawning day doth never peepe,
His dwelling is; there Tethys[59] his wet bed
Doth ever wash, and Cynthia[60] still doth steepe
In silver deaw his ever-drouping hed,
Whiles sad Night over him her mantle black doth spred.

XL

Whose double gates he findeth locked fast,
The one faire fram'd of burnisht Yvory,
The other all with silver overcast;
And wakeful dogges before them farre doe lye,
Watching to banish Care their enimy,
Who oft is wont to trouble gentle Sleepe.
By them the Sprite doth passe in quietly,
And unto Morpheus comes, whom drowned deepe
In drowsie fit he findes: of nothing he takes keepe.[61]

XLI

And more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,[62]
Mixt with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
Of swarming Bees, did cast him in a swowne.
No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
Might there be heard; but carelesse Quiet lyes
Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

XLII

The Messenger approching to him spake;
But his waste wordes retournd to him in vaine:
So sound he slept, that nought mought him awake.
Then rudely he him thrust, and pusht with paine,
Whereat he gan to stretch; but he againe
Shooke him so hard, that forced him to speake.
As one then in a dreame, whose dryer[63] braine
Is tost with troubled sights and fancies weake,
He mumbled soft, but would not all his silence breake.

XLIII

The Sprite then gan more boldly him to wake,
And threatned unto him the dreaded name
Of Hecate:[64] whereat he gan to quake,
And, lifting up his lompish[65] head, with blame
Halfe angrie asked him, for what he came.
"Hether" (quoth he,) "me Archimago sent,
He that the stubborne Sprites can wisely tame,
He bids thee to him send for his intent
A fit false dreame, that can delude the sleepers sent."[66]

XLIV

The God obayde; and, calling forth straight way
A diverse[67] Dreame out of his prison darke,
Delivered it to him, and downe did lay
His heavie head, devoide of careful carke;[68]
Whose sences all were straight benumbd and starke.
He, backe returning by the Yvorie dore,[69]
Remounted up as light as chearefull Larke;
And on his litle winges the dreame he bore
In hast unto his Lord, where he him left afore.

XLV

Who all this while, with charmes and hidden artes,

---

[57] frighten. [58] dispersed. [59] the ocean.
[60] the moon. [61] care. [62] roof.

[63] A "dry brain" was not supposed to rest well.
[64] underworld goddess of magic. [65] heavy.
[66] sense. [67] misleading. [68] worry that is full of care.
[69] False dreams go out the ivory door, true dreams through the gate of horn.

Had made a Lady of that other Spright,
And fram'd of liquid ayre her tender partes,
So lively and so like in all mens sight,
That weaker sence it could have ravisht quight:
The maker selfe, for all his wondrous witt,
Was nigh beguiled with so goodly sight.
Her all in white he clad, and over it
Cast a black stole, most like to seeme for Una fit.

XLVI

Now, when that ydle dreame was to him brought,
Unto that Elfin knight he bad him fly,
Where he slept soundly void of evil thought,
And with false shewes abuse his fantasy,
In sort as[70] he him schooled privily:
And that new creature, borne without her dew,[71]
Full of the makers guyle, with usage sly
He taught to imitate that Lady trew,
Whose semblance she did carrie under feigned hew.

XLVII

Thus well instructed, to their worke they hast,
And comming where the knight in slomber lay,
The one upon his hardy head him plast,
And made him dreame of loves and lustfull play,
That nigh his manly hart did melt away,
Bathed in wanton blis and wicked joy:
Then seemed him his Lady by him lay,
And to him playnd,[72] how that false winged boy
Her chast hart had subdewd, to learne Dame Pleasures toy.

XLVIII

And she her selfe of beautie soveraigne Queene,
Faire Venus seemde unto his bed to bring
Her, whom he waking evermore did weene
To be the chastest flowre, that ay did spring
On earthly braunch, the daughter of a king,
Now a loose Leman to vile service bound:
And eke the Graces seemed all to sing,
Hymen iô Hymen,[73] dauncing all around,
Whilst freshest Flora her with Yuie girlond crownd.

XLIX

In this great passion of unwonted lust,
Or wonted feare of doing ought amis,
He started up, as seeming to mistrust
Some secret ill, or hidden foe of his:
Lo there before his face his Lady is,
Under blake stole hyding her bayted hooke,
And as halfe blushing offred him to kis,
With gentle blandishment and lovely looke,
Most like that virgin true, which for her knight him took.

L

All cleane dismayd to see so uncouth sight,
And halfe enraged at her shamelesse guise,
He thought have slaine her in his fierce despight:[74]
But hastie heat tempring with sufferance wise,
He stayde his hand; and gan himselfe advise
To prove his sense, and tempt her faigned truth.
Wringing her hands, in wemens pitteous wise,
Tho can she weepe, to stirre up gentle ruth[75]
Both for her noble blood, and for her tender youth.

LI

And sayd, "Ah Sir, my liege Lord, and my love,
Shall I accuse the hidden cruell fate,
And mightie causes wrought in heaven above,
Or the blind God that doth me thus amate,[76]
For hoped love to winne me certaine hate?
Yet thus perforce he bids me do, or die.
Die is my dew; yet rew my wretched state,
You, whom my hard avenging destinie
Hath made judge of my life or death indifferently.

LII

"Your owne deare sake forst me at first to leave
My fathers kingdom"—There she stopt with teares;
Her swollen hart her speech seemed to bereave,
And then againe begonne: "My weaker yeares,
Captiv'd to fortune and frayle worldly feares,
Fly to your fayth for succour and sure ayde:
Let me not die in languor and long tears."
"Why, Dame," (quoth he,) "what hath ye thus dismayd?
What frayes ye, that were wont to comfort me affrayd?"

---

[70] in a way that. [71] unnaturally. [72] complained.
[73] a marriage song.

[74] anger. [75] Then she wept to stir up gentle pity.
[76] dishearten.

LIII

"Love of your selfe," she saide, "and deare constraint,[77]
Lets me not sleepe, but waste the wearie night
In secret anguish and unpittied plaint,
Whiles you in careless sleepe are drowned quight."
Her doubtful words made that redoubted knight
Suspect her truth: yet since no' untruth he knew,
Her fawning love with foule disdainefull spight
He would not shend,[78] but said, "Deare dame, I rew,
That for my sake unknowne such griefe unto you grew.

LIV

"Assure your selfe, it fell not all to ground;
For all so deare as life is to my hart,
I deeme your love, and hold me to you bound;
Ne let vaine feares procure your needlesse smart,
Where cause is none, but to your rest depart."
Not all content, yet seemed she to appease
Her mournful plaintes, beguiled of her art,
And fed with words, that could not chose but please;
So slyding softly forth, she turned as to her ease.

LV

Long after lay he musing at her mood,
Much griev'd to thinke that gentle dame so light,
For whose defence he was to shed his blood.
At last dull weariness of former fight
Having yrockt a sleep his irkesome spright,
That troublous dreame gan freshly tosse his braine
With bowres, and beds, and ladies deare delight:
But when he saw his labour all was vaine,
With that misformèd spright he backe returned againe.

CANTO II

The guilefull great Enchaunter parts
the Redcrosse Knight from Truth:
Into whose stead faire Falshood steps,
and workes him woefull ruth.

CANTO III

Forsaken Truth long seekes her love,
and makes the Lyon mylde,
Marres blind Devotions mart, and fals
in hand of treachour vylde.

CANTO IV

To sinfull house of Pride, Duessa
guides the faithfull knight,
Where brother's death to wreak, Sansjoy
doth chalenge him to fight.

CANTO V

The faithfull knight in equall field
subdewes his faithlesse foe;
Whom false Duessa saves, and for
his cure to hell does goe.

CANTO VI

From lawlesse lust by wondrous grace
fayre Una is releast;
Whom salvage nation does adore,
and learnes her wise beheast.

CANTO VII

The Redcrosse knight is captive made
by gyaunt proud opprest:
Prince Arthur meets with Una great-
ly with those newes distrest.

CANTO VIII

Faire virgin, to redeeme her deare,
brings Arthur to the fight:
Who slayes that Gyant, wounds the beast,
and strips Duessa quight.

CANTO IX

His loves and lignage Arthur tells:
the knights knit friendly bands:
Sir Trevisan flies from Despayre,
whom Redcrosse knight withstands.

CANTO X

Her faithfull knight faire Una brings
to house of Holinesse,
Where he is taught repentance, and
the way to heavenly blesse.

CANTO XI

The knight with that old Dragon fights
Two days incessantly:
The third him overthrowes, and gayns
Most glorious victory.

I

High time now gan it wex for Una fayre
To thinke of those her captive Parents deare,
And their forwasted kingdom to repayre:
Whereto whenas they now approched neare,
With hartie wordes her knight she gan to cheare,
And in her modest manner thus bespake:
"Deare knight, as deare as ever knight was deare,

---

[77] dire necessity.

[78] reproach.

That all these sorrowes suffer for my sake,
High heven behold the tedious toyle ye for me take!

II

"Now are we come unto my native soyle,
And to the place where all our perilles dwell;
Here hauntes that feend, and does his dayly spoyle;
Therefore, henceforth, bee at your keeping well,
And ever ready for your foeman fell:
The sparke of noble corage now awake,
And strive your excellent selfe to excell:
That shall ye evermore renowmed make
Above all knights on earth, that batteill undertake."

III

And pointing forth, "Lo! yonder is," (said she)
"The brasen towre, in which my parents deare
For dread of that huge feend emprisoned be;
Whom I from far see on the walles appeare,
Whose sight my feeble soule doth greatly cheare:
And on the top of all I do espye
The watchman wayting tydings glad to heare;
That, (O my Parents!) might I happily
Unto you bring, to ease you of your misery!"

IV

With that they heard a roaring hideous sownd,
That all the ayre with terror filled wyde,
And seemd uneath[1] to shake the stedfast ground.
Eftsoones that dreadful Dragon they espyde,
Where stretcht he lay upon the sunny side
Of a great hill, himselfe like a great hill:
But, all so soone as he from far descryde
Those glistring armes that heven with light did fill,
He rousd himselfe full blyth, and hastned them untill.

V

Then badd the knight his Lady yede[2] aloof,
And to an hill herselfe withdraw asyde;
From whence she might behold that battailles proof,
And eke be safe from daunger far descryde.
She him obayd, and turnd a little wyde.—
Now, O thou sacred Muse![3] most learned Dame,
Fayre ympe of Phœbus and his aged bryde,
The Nourse of time and everlasting fame,
That warlike handes ennoblest with immortall name;

VI

O! gently come into my feeble brest;
Come gently, but not with that mightie rage,
Wherewith the martiall troupes thou doest infest,
And hartes of great Heroës doest enrage,
That nought their kindled corage may aswage:
Soone as thy dreadful trompe begins to sownd,
The God of warre with his fiers equipage
Thou doest awake, sleepe never he so sownd;
And scared nations doest with horror sterne astownd.

VII

Fayre Goddesse, lay that furious fitt[4] asyde,
Till I of warres and bloody Mars doe sing,
And Bryton fieldes with Sarazin blood bedyde,
Twixt that great faery Queene and Paynim[5] king,
That with their horror heven and earth did ring;
A worke of labour long, and endlesse prayse:
But now a while lett downe that haughtie string,
And to my tunes thy second tenor rayse,
That I this man of God his godly armes may blaze.[6]

VIII

By this, the dreadful Beast drew nigh to hand,
Halfe flying and halfe footing in his haste,
That with his largenesse measured much land,
And made wide shadow under his huge waste,
As mountaine doth the valley overcaste.
Approching nigh, he reared high afore
His body monstrous, horrible, and vaste;
Which, to increase his wondrous greatnes more,
Was swoln with wrath and poyson, and with bloody gore;

IX

And over all with brasen scales was armd,
Like plated cote of steele, so couched neare
That nought mote perce; ne might his corse bee harmd
With dint of swerd, nor push of pointed speare:

---

[1] almost.
[2] go.
[3] Clio, Muse of history.
[4] strain of music.
[5] pagan.
[6] praise.

Which as an Eagle, seeing pray appeare,
His aery plumes doth rouze,[7] full rudely dight;
So shaked he, that horror was to heare:
For as the clashing of an Armor bright,
Such noyse his rouzed scales did send unto the knight.

X

His flaggy winges, when forth he did display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wynd
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
And eke the pennes[8] that did his pineons bynd,
Were like mayne-yardes with flying canvas lynd;
With which whenas him list[9] the ayre to beat,
And there by force unwonted passage fynd,
The cloudes before him fledd for terror great,
And all the hevens stood still amazed with his threat.

XI

His huge long tayle, wownd up in hundred foldes,
Does overspred his long bras-scaly back,
Whose wreathed boughtes[10] when ever he unfoldes,
And thick entangled knots adown does slack,
Bespotted as with shieldes of red and blacke,
It sweepeth all the land behind him farre,
And of three furlongs does but litle lacke;
And at the point two stinges in fixed arre,
Both deadly sharp, that sharpest steele exceeden farre.

XII

But stinges and sharpest steele did far exceed
The sharpnesse of his cruel rending clawes:
Dead was it sure, as sure as death in deed,
What ever thing does touch his ravenous pawes,
Or what within his reach he ever drawes.
But his most hideous head my tongue to tell
Does tremble; for his deepe devouring jawes
Wyde gaped, like the griesly mouth of hell,
Through which into his darke abysse all ravin fell.

XIII

And, that more wondrous was, in either jaw
Three ranckes of yron teeth enraunged were,
In which yett trickling blood, and gobbets raw,
Of late devoured bodies did appeare,
That sight thereof bredd cold congealed feare;
Which to increase, and all atonce to kill,
A cloud of smoothering smoke, and sulphure seare,
Out of his stinking gorge forth steemed still,
That all the ayre about with smoke and stench did fill.

XIV

His blazing eyes, like two bright shining shieldes,
Did burne with wrath, and sparkled living fyre:
As two broad Beacons, sett in open fieldes,
Send forth their flames far off to every shyre,
And warning give that enimies conspyre
With fire and sword the region to invade:
So flam'd his eyne with rage and rancorous yre;
But far within, as in a hollow glade,
Those glaring lampes were sett that made a dreadfull shade.

XV

So dreadfully he towardes him did pas,
Forelifting up a-loft his speckled brest,
And often bounding on the brused gras,
As for great joyance of his newcome guest
Eftsoones he gan advance his haughty crest,
As chauffed[11] Bore his bristles doth upreare;
And shoke his scales to battaile ready drest,
That made the Redcrosse knight nigh quake for feare,
As bidding bold defyaunce to his foeman neare.

XVI

The knight gan fayrely couch his steady speare,
And fiersely ran at him with rigorous might:
The pointed steele, arriving rudely theare,
His harder hyde would nether perce nor bight,
But, glauncing by, foorth passed forward right.
Yet sore amoved with so puissaunt push,
The wrathfull beast about him turned light,
And him so rudely, passing by, did brush
With his long tayle, that horse and man to ground did rush.

XVII

Both horse and man up lightly rose againe,
And fresh encounter towardes him addrest;

---

[7] ruffle. [8] feathers. [9] he wished. [10] coils.

[11] angered.

But th' ydle stroke yet backe recoyld in vaine,
And found no place his deadly point to rest.
Exceeding rage enflam'd the furious Beast,
To be avenged of so great despight;
For never felt his imperceable brest
So wondrous force from hand of living wight;
Yet had he prov'd the powre of many a puissant knight.

XVIII

Then, with his waving wings displayed wyde,
Himselfe up high he lifted from the ground,
And with strong flight did forcibly divyde
The yielding ayre, which nigh too feeble found
Her flitting parts, and element unsound,
To beare so great a weight: he, cutting way
With his broad sayles, about him soared round;
At last, low stouping with unweldy sway,
Snatcht up both horse and man, to beare them quite away.

XIX

Long he them bore above the subject[12] plaine,
So far as Ewghen bow a shaft may send,
Till struggling strong did him at last constraine
To let them downe before his flightes end:
As hagard[13] hauke, presuming to contend
With hardy fowle above his hable might,
His wearie pounces[14] all in vaine doth spend
To trusse[15] the pray too heavy for his flight;
Which, comming down to ground, does free it selfe by fight.

XX

He so disseized[16] of his gryping grosse,[17]
The knight his thrillant speare againe assayd
In his bras-plated body to embosse,
And three mens strength unto the stroake he layd;
Wherewith the stiffe beame quaked as affrayd
And glauncing from his scaly necke did glyde
Close under his left wing, then broad displayd:
The percing steele there wrought a wound full wyde,
That with the uncouth[18] smart the Monster lowdly cryde.

XXI

He cryde, as raging seas are wont to rore
When wintry storme his wrathful wreck does threat;
The rolling billowes beate the ragged shore,
As they the earth would shoulder from her seat;
And greedy gulfe does gape, as he would eat
His neighbour element in his revenge:
Then gin the blustring brethren[19] boldly threat
To move the world from off his stedfast henge,
And boystrous battaile make, each other to avenge.

XXII

The steely head stuck fast still in his flesh,
Till with his cruell clawes he snatcht the wood,
And quite a sunder broke. Forth flowed fresh
A gushing river of blacke gory blood,
That drowned all the land whereon he stood;
The streame thereof would drive a water-mill:
Trebly augmented was his furious mood
With bitter sence of his deepe rooted ill,
That flames of fire he threw forth from his large nosethril.

XXIII

His hideous tayle then hurled he about,
And therewith all enwrapt the nimble thyes
Of his froth-fomy steed, whose courage stout
Striving to loose the knott that fast him tyes,
Himselfe in streighter bandes too rash implyes,[20]
That to the ground he is perforce constraynd
To throw his ryder; who can quickly ryse[21]
From off the earth, with durty blood distaynd,[22]
For that reproachfull fall right fowly he disdaynd;

XXIV

And fercely tooke his trenchand blade in hand,
With which he stroke so furious and so fell,
That nothing seemed the puissance could withstand:
Upon his crest the hardned yron fell,
But his more hardned crest was armd so well,
That deeper dint therein it would not make;
Yet so extremely did the buffe him quell,
That from thenceforth he shund the like to take,

---

[12] lying below.
[13] wild.
[14] claws.
[15] grasp.
[16] relieved.
[17] heavy.
[18] unaccustomed.
[19] the winds.
[20] enfolds.
[21] rose (can ryse).
[22] stained.

But when he saw them come he did them still[23] forsake.

XXV

The knight was wroth to see his stroke beguyld,[24]
And smot againe with more outrageous might;
But backe againe the sparcling steele recoyld,
And left not any marke where it did light,
As if in Adamant rocke it had beene pight.
The beast, impatient of his smarting wound
And of so fierce and forcible despight,
Thought with his winges to stye[25] above the ground;
But his late wounded wing unserviceable found.

XXVI

Then full of griefe and anguish vehement,
He lowdly brayd, that like was never heard;
And from his wide devouring oven sent
A flake of fire, that flashing in his beard
Him all amazd, and almost made afeard:
The scorching flame sore swinged[26] all his face,
And through his armour all his body seard,
That he could not endure so cruell cace,
But thought his armes to leave, and helmet to unlace.

XXVII

Not that great Champion[27] of the antique world,
Whom famous Poetes verse so much doth vaunt,
And hath for twelve huge labours high extold,
So many furies and sharpe fits did haunt,
When him the poysoned garment did enchaunt,
When Centaures blood and bloody verses charmd;
As did this knight twelve thousand dolours daunt,
Whom fyrie steele now burnt, that erst him armd;
That erst him goodly armd, now most of all him harmd.

XXVIII

Faynt, wearie, sore, emboyled, grieved, brent,
With heat, toyle, wounds, armes, smart, and inward fire,
That never man such mischiefes did torment:
Death better were; death did he oft desire,
But death will never come when needes require.
Whom so dismayd when that his foe beheld,
He cast to suffer him no more respire,
But gan his sturdy sterne[28] about to weld,
And him so strongly stroke, that to the ground him feld.

XXIX

It fortuned, (as fayre it then befell)
Behynd his backe, unweeting, where he stood,
Of auncient time there was a springing well,
From which fast trickled forth a silver flood,
Full of great vertues, and for med'cine good:
Whylome, before that cursed Dragon got
That happy land, and all with innocent blood
Defyld those sacred waves, it rightly hot[29]
The well of life, ne yet his vertues had forgot:

XXX

For unto life the dead it could restore,
And guilt of sinful crimes cleane wash away;
Those that with sicknesse were infected sore
It could recure; and aged long decay
Renew, as one were borne that very day.
Both Silo[30] this, and Jordan, did excell,
And th' English Bath, and eke the German Spau:
Ne can Cephise, nor Hebrus, match this well:
Into the same the knight back overthrowen fell.

XXXI

Now gan the golden Phœbus for to steepe
His fierie face in billowes of the west,
And his faint steedes watred in Ocean deepe,
Whiles from their journall[31] labours they did rest;
When that infernall Monster, having kest
His wearie foe into that living well,
Gan high advaunce his broad discoloured brest
Above his wonted pitch, with countenance fell,
And clapt his yron wings as victor he did dwell.

XXXII

Which when his pensive Lady saw from farre,
Great woe and sorrow did her soule assay,
As weening that the sad end of the warre;
And gan to highest God entirely pray

---

[23] always. [24] foiled. [25] ascend. [26] singed.
[27] Hercules.
[28] tail. [29] was named.
[30] Siloam, the healing pool mentioned in the Bible. Names of famous streams or watering places follow.
[31] daily.

That feared chaunce from her to turne away:
With folded hands, and knees full lowly bent,
All night shee watcht, ne once adowne would lay
Her dainty limbs in her sad dreriment,
But praying still did wake, and waking did lament.

XXXIII

The morrow next gan earely to appeare,
That Titan rose to runne his daily race;
But earely, ere the morrow next gan reare
Out of the sea faire Titans deawy face,
Up rose the gentle virgin from her place,
And looked all about, if she might spy
Her loved knight to move his manly pace:
For she had great doubt of his safety,
Since late she saw him fall before his enimy.

XXXIV

At last she saw where he upstarted brave
Out of the well, wherein he drenched lay:
As Eagle, fresh out of the ocean wave,
Where he hath lefte his plumes all hory gray,
And deckt himselfe with fethers youthly gay,
Like Eyas[82] hauke up mounts unto the skies,
His newly-budded pineons to assay,
And marveiles at himselfe stil as he flies:
So new this new-borne knight to battell new did rise.

XXXV

Whom when the damned feend so fresh did spy,
No wonder if he wondred at the sight,
And doubted whether his late enimy
It were, or other new supplied knight.
He now, to prove his late-renewed might,
High brandishing his bright deaw-burning[83] blade,
Upon his crested scalp so sore did smite,
That to the scull a yawning wound it made:
The deadly dint his dulled sences all dismaid.

XXXVI

I wote not whether the revenging steele
Were hardned with that holy water dew
Wherein he fell, or sharper edge did feele,
Or his baptized hands now greater grew,
Or other secret vertue did ensew;
Els never could the force of fleshly arme,
Ne molten metall, in his blood embrew;[84]
For till that stownd[85] could never wight him harme
By subtilty, nor slight, nor might, nor mighty charme.

XXXVII

The cruell wound enraged him so sore,
That loud he yelled for exceeding paine;
As hundred ramping Lions seemd to rore,
Whom ravenous hunger did thereto constraine:
Then gan he tosse aloft his stretched traine,
And therewith scourge the buxome[86] aire so sore,
That to his force to yielden it was faine;
Ne ought his sturdy strokes might stand afore,
That high trees overthrew, and rocks in peeces tore.

XXXVIII

The same advauncing high above his head,
With sharpe intended sting so rude him smott,
That to the earth him drove, as stricken dead;
Ne living wight would have him life behott:[87]
The mortall sting his angry needle shott
Quite through his shield, and in his shoulder seasd,
Where fast it stucke, ne would thereout be gott:
The griefe thereof him wondrous sore diseasd,
Ne might his rancling paine with patience be appeasd.

XXXIX

But yet, more mindfull of his honour deare
Then of the grievous smart which him did wring,
From loathed soile he can him lightly reare,
And strove to loose the far infixed sting:
Which when in vaine he tryde with struggeling,
Inflam'd with wrath, his raging blade he hefte,
And strooke so strongly, that the knotty string
Of his huge taile he quite a sonder clefte;
Five joints thereof he hewd, and but the stump him lefte.

XL

Hart cannot thinke what outrage and what cries,
With fowle enfouldred[88] smoake and flashing fire,
The hell-bred beast threw forth unto the skies,
That all was covered with darknesse dire:
Then, fraught with rancour and engorged yre,
He cast at once him to avenge for all;

---

[82] young.
[83] glistening with dew.
[84] plunge.
[85] hour.
[86] pliant.
[87] given hope for.
[88] like a thunderstorm.

And, gathering up himselfe out of the mire
With his uneven wings, did fiercely fall
Upon his sunne-bright shield, and grypt it fast withall.

XLI

Much was the man encombred with his hold,
In feare to lose his weapon in his paw,
Ne wist yett how his talaunts[39] to unfold;
Nor harder was from Cerberus greedy jaw
To plucke a bone, then from his cruell claw
To reave by strength the griped gage away:
Thrise he assayd it from his foote to draw,
And thrise in vaine to draw it did assay;
It booted nought to thinke to robbe him of his pray.

XLII

Tho, when he saw no power might prevaile,
His trusty sword he cald to his last aid,
Wherewith he fiersely did his foe assaile,
And double blowes about him stoutly laid,
That glauncing fire out of the yron plaid,
As sparkles from the Andvile use to fly,
When heavy hammers on the wedge are swaid:
Therewith at last he forst him to unty
One of his grasping feete, him to defend thereby.

XLIII

The other foote, fast fixed on his shield,
Whenas no strength nor stroks mote him constraine
To loose, ne yet the warlike pledge to yield,
He smott thereat with all his might and maine,
That nought so wondrous puissance might sustaine:
Upon the joint the lucky steele did light,
And made such way that hewd it quite in twaine;
The paw yett missed not his minisht might,
But hong still on the shield, as it at first was pight.

XLIV

For griefe thereof and divelish despight,
From his infernall fournace forth he threw
Huge flames that dimmed all the hevens light,
Enrold in duskish smoke and brimstone blew:
As burning Aetna[40] from his boyling stew
Doth belch out flames, and rockes in peeces broke,
And ragged ribs of mountaines molten new,
Enwrapt in coleblacke clowds and filthy smoke,
That al the land with stench and heven with horror choke.

XLV

The heate whereof, and harmefull pestilence,
So sore him noyd, that forst him to retire
A little backeward for his best defence,
To save his body from the scorching fire,
Which he from hellish entrailes did expire.
It chaunst, (eternall God that chaunce did guide)
As he recoiled backeward, in the mire
His nigh forewearied feeble feet did slide,
And downe he fell, with dread of shame sore terrifide.

XLVI

There grew a goodly tree him faire beside,
Loaden with fruit and apples rosy redd,
As they in pure vermilion had been dide,
Whereof great vertues over-all were redd;
For happy life to all which thereon fedd,
And life eke everlasting did befall:
Great God it planted in that blessed stedd[41]
With his Almighty hand, and did it call
The tree of life, the crime of our first fathers fall.

XLVII

In all the world like was not to be fownd,
Save in that soile, where all good things did grow,
And freely sprong out of the fruitfull grownd,
As incorrupted Nature did them sow,
Till that dredd Dragon all did overthrow.
Another like faire tree eke grew thereby,
Whereof whoso did eat, eftsoones did know
Both good and ill. O mournfull memory!
That tree through one mans fault hath doen us all to dy.

XLVIII

From the first tree forth flowd, as from a well,
A trickling streame of Balme, most soveraine
And dainty deare, which on the ground still fell,
And overflowed all the fertile plaine,
As it had deawed bene with timely raine:
Life and long health that gracious ointment gave,
And deadly wounds could heale, and reare againe

[39] claws.

[40] a volcano in Sicily.

[41] place.

The sencelesse corse appointed for the grave:
Into that same he fell, which did from death him save.

XLIX

For nigh thereto the ever damned Beast
Durst not approach, for he was deadly made,
And al that life preserved did detest;
Yet he it oft adventur'd to invade.
By this the drouping day-light gan to fade,
And yield his rowme to sad succeeding night,
Who with her sable mantle gan to shade
The face of earth and wayes of living wight,
And high her burning torch set up in heaven bright.

L

When gentle Una saw the second fall
Of her deare knight; who, weary of long fight
And faint through losse of blood, moov'd not at all,
But lay, as in a dreame of deepe delight,
Besmeard with pretious Balme, whose vertuous might
Did heale his woundes, and scorching heat alay;
Againe she stricken was with sore affright,
And for his safetie gan devoutly pray,
And watch the noyous night, and wait for joyous day.

LI

The joyous day gan early to appeare;
And fayre Aurora[42] from the deawy bed
Of aged Tithone[43] gan herselfe to reare
With rosy cheekes, for shame as blushing red:
Her golden locks for haste were loosely shed
About her eares, when Una her did marke
Clymbe to her charet, all with flowers spred,
From heven high to chace the chearelesse darke;
With mery note her lowd salutes the mounting larke.

LII

Then freshly up arose the doughty knight,
All healed of his hurts and woundes wide,
And did himselfe to battaile ready dight;
Whose early foe awaiting him beside
To have devourd, so soone as day he spyde,
When now he saw himselfe so freshly reare,
As if late fight had nought him damnifyde,
He woxe dismaid, and gan his fate to feare:
Nathlesse with wonted rage he him advaunced neare.

LIII

And in his first encounter, gaping wyde,
He thought attonce him to have swallowd quight,
And rusht upon him with outragious pryde;
Who him rencountring fierce, as hauke in flight,
Perforce rebutted backe. The weapon bright,
Taking advantage of his open jaw,
Ran through his mouth with so importune might,
That deepe emperst his darksom hollow maw,
And, back retyrd, his life blood forth with all did draw.

LIV

So downe he fell, and forth his life did breath,
That vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift;
So downe he fell, that th' earth him underneath
Did grone, as feeble so great load to lift;
So downe he fell, as an huge rocky clift,
Whose false foundacion waves have washt away,
With dreadfull poyse[44] is from the mayneland rift,
And rolling downe great Neptune doth dismay:
So downe he fell, and like an heaped mountaine lay.

LV

The knight him selfe even trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a masse it seemd;
And his deare Lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approch for dread which she misdeemd;
But yet at last, whenas the direful feend
She saw not stirre, offshaking vaine affright
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end:
Then God she praysd, and thankt her faithful knight,
That had atchievde so great a conquest by his might.

(1590)

CANTO XII

Faire Una to the Redcrosse knight
betrouthed is with joy:
Though false Duessa it to barre
her false sleights doe imploy.

---

[42] the dawn.

[43] fabled consort of Aurora.

[44] crash.

Amoretti

To commemorate his love and courtship of the woman he married in 1594, Spenser wrote the *Amoretti*, a sonnet sequence, and for their wedding his wonderful marriage-hymn, *Epithalamion*. Some of the sonnets sound the conventional notes of sonneteers, such as the promise of immortality through the poet's verses, but many are original and personal. As is usual with Spenser, the music of the lines is lucid and delicate. The easeful flow of the words is inimitable; it would be hard, for instance, to imagine verse more fluent than that of sonnet 75. The poet elaborated his own rhyme scheme (*ababbcbccdcd ee*), a variation on the English sonnet, and much resembling in its interlocked quatrains the rhyme scheme of the Spenserian stanza.

1

Happy ye leaves![1] when as those lilly hands,
Which hold my life in their dead doing[2] might,
Shall handle you, and hold in loves soft bands,
Lyke captives trembling at the victors sight,
And happy lines! on which, with starry light,
Those lamping[3] eyes will deigne sometimes to look,
And reade the sorrowes of my dying spright,[4]
Written with teares in harts close bleeding book.
And happy rymes! bath'd in the sacred brooke
Of Helicon,[5] whence she derived is,
When ye behold that angels blessed looke,
My soules long lacked foode, my heavens blis.
Leaves, lines, and rymes, seeke her to please alone,
Whom if ye please, I care for other none.

34

Lyke as a ship, that through the Ocean wyde,
By conduct of some star doth make her way;
Whenas a storme hath dimd her trusty guyde,
Out of her course doth wander far astray!
So I, whose star, that wont with her bright ray
Me to direct with cloudes is over cast,
Doe wander now, in darknesse and dismay,
Through hidden perils round about me plast.
Yet hope I well that, when this storme is past,
My Helice,[1] the lodestar of my lyfe,
Will shine again, and looke on me at last,
With lovely light to cleare my cloudy grief.
Till then I wander carefull, comfortlesse,
In secret sorrow, and sad pensiveness.

72

Oft when my spirit doth spred her bolder winges,
In mind to mount up to the purest sky,
It down is weighd with thoght of earthly things,
And clogd with burden of mortality:
Where, when that soverayne beauty it doth spy,
Resembling heavens glory in her light,
Drawne with sweet pleasures bayt, it back doth fly,
And unto heaven forgets her former flight.
There my fraile fancy, fed with full delight,
Doth bath in blisse, and mantleth[1] most at ease:
Ne thinks of other heaven, but how it might
Her harts desire with most contentment please,
Hart need not wish none other happinesse,
But here on earth to have such hevens blisse.

75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washèd it away:
Agayne I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tyde, and made my paynes his pray.
Vayne man, sayd she, that doest in vaine assay
A mortall thing so to immortalize!
For I my selve shall lyke to this decay,
And eek my name bee wypèd out lykewize.
Not so, (quod I) let baser things devize
To dy in dust, but you shall live by fame:
My verse your vertues rare shall eternize,
And in the hevens wryte your glorious name;
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdew,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.

---

[1] pages of the sonnets. [2] death-dealing. [3] shining. [4] spirit. [5] A mountain in Greece sacred to the Muses.

[1] The constellation of Ursa Minor, containing the North Star.

[1] said of a hawk when he spreads his wings and rests from flying.

79

Men call you fayre, and you doe credit it,
For that your selfe ye dayly such doe see:
But the trew fayre, that is the gentle wit
And vertuous mind, is much more praysd of me.
For all the rest, how ever fayre it be,
Shall turne to nought and loose that glorious hew:
But onely that is permanent and free
From frayle corruption, that doth flesh ensew.
That is true beautie: that doth argue you
To be divine and borne of heavenly seed:
Deriv'd from that fayre Spirit from whom al true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed.
He onely fayre, and what he fayre hath made:
All other fayre, lyke flowres, untymely fade.

(1594)

Prothalamion[1]

This poem was written to celebrate the marriage of two daughters of the Earl of Worcester with Henry Gilford and William Peter. The harmony of the verse and the delicacy of the rhymes have rarely been equaled. The fourth stanza, for instance, beginning with the sixty-third line is radiant with light, as befits the idea, through the deft repetition of the vowel sound *ee*.

Calme was the day, and through the trembling ayre
Sweete breathing Zephyrus[2] did softly play,
A gentle spirit, that lightly did delay
Hot Titans[3] beames, which then did glyster fayre:
When I, whom sullein care,
Through discontent of my long fruitlesse stay
In princes court, and expectation vayne
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,
Like empty shaddowes, did aflict my brayne,
Walkt forth to ease my payne
Along the shoare of silver streaming Themmes;
Whose rutty[4] bancke, the which his river hemmes,
Was paynted all with variable flowers,
And all the meades adornd with daintie gemmes,
Fit to decke maydens bowres,
And crowne their paramours,
Against the brydale day, which is not long:
  Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

There, in a meadow, by the rivers side,
A flocke of nymphes I chaunced to espy,
All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
With goodly greenish locks all loose untyde,
As each had bene a bryde:
And each one had a little wicker basket,
Made of fine twigs entrayled curiously,
In which they gathered flowers to fill their flasket;
And with fine fingers cropt full feateously[5]
The tender stalkes on hye.
Of every sort, which in that meadow grew,
They gathered some; the violet pallid blew,
The little dazie, that at evening closes,
The virgin lillie, and the primrose trew,
With store of vermeil roses,
To decke their bridegromes posies
Against the brydale day, which was not long:
  Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

With that I saw two swannes of goodly hewe
Come softly swimming downe along the Lee;[6]
Two fairer birds I yet did never see:
The snow which doth the top of Pindus[7] strew
Did never whiter shew,
Nor Jove himselfe, when he a swan would be
For love of Leda,[8] whiter did appear:
Yet Leda was, they say, as white as he,
Yet not so white as these, nor nothing neare:
So purely white they were,
That even the gentle streame, the which them bare.
Seem'd foule to them, and bad his billowes spare
To wet their silken feathers, least they might
Soyle their fayre plumes with water not so fayre,
And marre their beauties bright,
That shone as heavens light,
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
  Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

---

[1] Written in honor of the double marriage of the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Katherine Somerset.

[2] the West Wind.

[3] the sun's.

[4] rooty.

[5] skilfully.

[6] river flowing into the Thames.

[7] a mountain in Greece.

[8] beloved by Jove in the shape of a swan.

Eftsoones[9] the nymphes, which now had flowers their fill,
Ran all in haste to see that silver brood,
As they came floating on the christal flood;
Whom when they sawe, they stood amazed still,
Their wondring eyes to fill.
Them seem'd they never saw a sight so fayre,
Of fowles so lovely, that they sure did deeme
Them heavenly borne, or to be that same payre
Which through the skie draw Venus silver teeme;
For sure they did not seeme
To be begot of any earthly seede,
But rather angels or of angels breede:
Yet were they bred of Somers-heat,[10] they say,
In sweetest season, when each flower and weede
The earth did fresh aray;
So fresh they seem'd as day,
Even as their brydale day, which was not long:
  Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

Then forth they all out of their baskets drew
Great store of flowers, the honour of the field,
That to the sense did fragrant odours yield,
All which upon those goodly birds they threw,
And all the waves did strew,
That like old Peneus[11] waters they did seeme,
When downe along by pleasant Tempes shore,
Scattred with flowres, through Thessaly they streeme,
That they appeare, through lillies plenteous store,
Like a brydes chamber flore.
Two of those nymphes, meane while, two garlands bound
Of freshest flowres which in that mead they found,
The which presenting all in trim array,
Their snowie foreheads therewithall they crownd,
Whil'st one did sing this lay,
Prepar'd against that day,
Against their brydale day, which was not long:
  Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

"Ye gentle birdes, the worlds faire ornament,
And heavens glorie, whom this happie hower
Doth leade unto your lovers blissfull bower,
Joy may you have and gentle hearts content
Of your loves couplement:
And let faire Venus, that is Queene of Love,
With her heart-quelling sonne upon you smile,
Whose smile, they say, hath vertue to remove
All loves dislike, and friendships faultie guile
For ever to assoile.
Let endlesse peace your steadfast hearts accord,
And blessed plentie wait upon your bord;
And let your bed with pleasures chast abound,
That fruitfull issue may to you afford,
Which may your foes confound,
And make your joyes redound,
Upon your brydale day, which is not long:
  Sweete Themmes, run softlie, till I end my song."

So ended she; and all the rest around
To her redoubled that her undersong,
Which said, their bridale daye should not be long.
And gentle Eccho from the neighbour ground
Their accents did resound.
So forth those joyous birdes did passe along.
Adowne the lee, that to them murmurde low,
As he would speake, but that he lackt a tong,
Yeat did by signes his glad affection show,
Making his streame run slow.
And all the foule which in his flood did dwell
Gan flock about these twaine, that did excell
The rest so far as Cynthia doth shend[12]
The lesser starres. So they, enranged well,
Did on those two attend,
And their best service lend,
Against their wedding day, which was not long:
  Sweete Themmes, run softly, till I end my song.

At length they all to mery London came,
To mery London, my most kyndly nurse,
That to me gave this lifes first native sourse:
Though from another[13] place I take my name,
An house of auncient fame.
There when they came, whereas those bricky towres,
The which on Themmes brode aged backe doe ryde,
Where now the studious lawyers[14] have their bowers,
There whylome wont the Templer Knights to byde,
Till they decayed through pride:
Next whereunto there standes a stately place,[15]

---

[9] immediately.
[10] a pun on Somerset.
[11] a river in Thessaly.
[12] put to shame, surpass.
[13] Lancashire, in northwestern England.
[14] the Temple, where law is still studied. It formerly belonged to the Knights Templars.
[15] the palace of the Earl of Leicester, Spenser's patron. But it was by that time occupied by the Earl of Essex (cf. line 145).

Where oft I gayned giftes and goodly grace
Of that great lord[16] which therein wont to dwell,
Whose want too well now feeles my freendles case:
But ah! here fits not well
Olde woes, but joyes to tell,
Against the bridale daye, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble peer,[17]
Great Englands glory and the worlds wide wonder,
Whose dreadful name late through all Spaine did thunder,
And Hercules two pillors[18] standing neere
Did make to quake and feare.
Faire branch of honor, flower of chevalrie,
That fillest England with thy triumphes fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie,
And endlesse happinesse of thine owne name
That promiseth the same:
That through thy prowesse and victorious armes
Thy country may be freed from forraine harmes;
And great Elisaes glorious name may ring
Through al the world, fil'd with thy wide alarmes,
Which some brave Muse may sing
To ages following,
Upon the brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song.

From those high towers this noble lord issuing,
Like radiant Hesper[19] when his golden hayre
In th' ocean billows he hath bathed fayre,
Descended to the rivers open vewing,
With a great traine ensuing.
Above the rest were goodly to bee seene
Two gentle knights of lovely face and feature,
Beseeming well the bower of anie queene,
With gifts of wit and ornaments of nature,
Fit for so goodly stature:
That like the twins of Jove[20] they seem'd in sight,
Which decke the bauldricke of the heavens bright.
They two, forth pacing to the rivers side,
Received those two faire brides, their loves delight,
Which, at th' appointed tyde,
Each one did make his bryde,
Against their brydale day, which is not long:
Sweete Themmes, runne softly, till I end my song

Elizabethan Lyrists

Anonymous

Hey Nonny No!

Hey nonny no!
Men are fools that wish to die!
Is't not fine to dance and sing
When the bells of death do ring?
Is't not fine to swim in wine,
And turn upon the toe,
And sing hey nonny no,
When the winds blow and the seas flow?
Hey nonny no!

Back and Side, Go Bare, Go Bare

(From *Gammer Gurton's Needle*)

Back and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold;
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But, sure, I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

---

[16] the Earl of Leicester.
[17] the Earl of Essex.
[18] the cliffs at the Straits of Gibraltar.
[19] the evening star. [20] Castor and Pollux, the twin stars.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

I love no roast, but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab[1] laid in the fire;
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, no wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if i[t] would,
I am so wrapt and thoroughly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek;
Then doth she trowl[2] to me the bowl,
Even as a malt-worm[3] should,
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old."

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

Now let them drink till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do;
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to.
And all poor souls that have scoured[4] bowls,
Or have them lustily trowled,
God save the lives of them and their wives,
Whether they be young or old.

Back and side, go bare, go bare, etc.

(?1560)

Queen Elizabeth

The Queen was complimented on every hand by her poets not only for her linguistic skill, which she certainly possessed, but for her gifts as poet as well. The author of *The Art of English Poesy* (1589) praises her verse for its "sense, sweetness, and subtility, be it in ode, elegy, epigram, or any other kind of poem heroic or lyric." Allowing for extravagance, some little of this praise seems not unmerited if we may judge from the pieces extant. The following is from the Rawlinson Poetry Ms. 85, Bodleian.

When I Was Fair and Young

When I was fair and young, and favor gracèd me,
Of many was I sought, their mistress for to be;
But I did scorn them all, and answered them therefore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Impòrtune me no more!

How many weeping eyes I made to pine with woe,
How many sighing hearts, I have no skill to show;
Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them therefore,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Impòrtune me no more!

Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious boy,
And said: Fine dame, since that you be so coy,
I will so pluck your plumes that you shall say no more,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Impòrtune me no more!

When he had spake these words, such change grew in my breast
That neither night nor day since that, I could take any rest.
Then lo! I did repent that I had said before,
Go, go, go, seek some otherwhere,
Impòrtune me no more!

---

[1] crab-apple.

[2] pass.

[3] a drinker of malt drinks; cf. *bookworm*.

[4] empty.

Edward Dyer

(1543-1607)

Few of Dyer's poems have come down to us, though a number of references by his contemporaries indicate that he was popular while he lived. Sidney was one of his best friends. R. M. Sargent's *At the Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1935) is the definitive work on him.

My Mind to Me a Kingdom Is

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such present joys therein I find
That it excels all other bliss
That earth affords or grows by kind.[1]
Though much I want which most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely pomp, no wealthy store,
No force to win the victory,
No wily wit to salve a sore,
No shape to feed a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as thrall—
For why? My mind doth serve for all.

I see how plenty surfeits oft,
And hasty climbers soon do fall;
I see that those which are aloft
Mishap doth threaten most of all;
They get with toil, they keep with fear—
Such cares my mind could never bear.

Content to live, this is my stay;
I seek no more than may suffice;
I press to bear no haughty sway;
Look, what I lack my mind supplies.
Lo, thus I triumph like a king,
Content with that my mind doth bring.

Some have too much, yet still do crave;
I little have, and seek no more.
They are but poor, though much they have,
And I am rich with little store.
They poor, I rich; they beg, I give;
They lack, I leave; they pine, I live.

I laugh not at another's loss;
I grudge not at another's pain;
No worldly waves my mind can toss;
My state at one doth still remain.
I fear no foe, I fawn no friend;
I loathe not life, nor dread my end.

Some weigh their pleasure by their lust,
Their wisdom by their rage of will;
Their treasure is their only trust;
A cloakéd craft their store of skill.
But all the pleasure that I find
Is to maintain a quiet mind.

My wealth is health and perfect ease;
My conscience clear my chief defense;
I neither seek by bribes to please,
Nor by deceit to breed offense.
Thus do I live; thus will I die;
Would all did so as well as I!

John Lyly

(1554?-1606)

Apelles' Song

Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses; Cupid paid.
He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows:[1]
Loses them too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on's cheek (but none knows how);
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple of his chin;
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he set her both his eyes;
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O Love, has she done this to thee?
What shall, alas! become of me?

(?1580)

---

[1] by nature, naturally.

[1] For the team of sparrows of Venus (Aphrodite) see Sappho's *Ode to Aphrodite*, p. 373.

Sir Philip Sidney
(1554-1586)

Brief as was his span of life, Sir Philip Sidney filled it with such distinction that he has been often cited as the typification of all that was admirable in the Renaissance. As poet and diplomat, scholar and courtier, gentleman and soldier, he well earned the respect that has been freely accorded him.

Luckily, he was born into circumstances that allowed full scope for a notable career. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, had been honored with a responsible position by Elizabeth; his mother was a sister of Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester; he himself studied at Oxford and possibly at Cambridge. In 1572 he accompanied an English ambassador to France, where his personal observation of the crucial struggle between Protestantism and the Roman Catholic Church seems to have strengthened his championship of the former. He traveled on to Germany, Hungary, and Italy before returning to England in 1575, when his uncle easily won him notice at the Court. In 1577 he was sent to Germany as an ambassador. When it seemed possible, in 1580, that Elizabeth might marry the Duke of Anjou, Sidney addressed a public letter to her urging her to break off the match. For this firm act of courage, he was for a while banished the court. While in retirement at the home of his sister, now the Countess of Pembroke, he began his pastoral romance, *Arcadia.* Knighted in 1583, he decided two years later to make an expedition to America with Sir Francis Drake, but was prevented by the Queen, who sent him to Holland as the Governor of Flushing. No mission could have been nearer his heart than, in thus aiding the Dutch against Spain, having a hand in making England the leader of Protestantism in Europe. At an engagement before the town of Zutphen, in September, 1586, he was mortally wounded. The story which tells of his rejecting a cup of water as he lay wounded in favor of a dying common soldier, saying: "Thy necessity is greater than mine," is famous.

True or invented, that story is entirely in keeping with the ideal of gentility with which his name had become synonymous.

> "As he fought
> And as he fell and as he lived and loved
> Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,"

wrote another rare spirit of him, Shelley, himself too a "defender" of poetry. The teachings of Petrarch and his successors in humanism were personified in Sidney. To combine statecraft and culture, soldiery and letters—that was the feat he accomplished. He knew not only the classics but the modern languages as well. And while his literary output, all published after his death, was exceeded in merit by several later Elizabethans, nothing he wrote was without worth and each was important in opening avenues of expression to his contemporaries.

His *Astrophel and Stella* started the vogue for sonnet sequences, in which Elizabethan poets were to prove prolific and skillful. Sidney's sonnets were written to Penelope Devereux, Essex's daughter, to whom he had been briefly engaged before her marriage to Lord Rich. In a position somewhat analogous to Petrarch's with Laura, Sidney chose the sonnet, like his great Italian predecessor, to express to his "Stella" his bitterness over love realized too late and never to be fulfilled, and the conflict waging in him between passion and reason. Neglected since Surrey, the sonnet became in Sidney's hands an eloquent instrument, which Spenser, Shakespeare, Drayton, Daniel, and a host of others were quick to employ for their own uses. Some of Sidney's sonnets are indeed guilty of a preciosity common to the Renaissance, and not absent from the poems of Petrarch himself. A number of them contain imitations of Petrarch and Ronsard. But at their best they are original, energetic, and brilliant in conception and image. There are in *Astrophel and Stella* besides one hundred and eight sonnets, eleven songs (some of which we print) even surpassing the former in lyrical directness.

The *Arcadia* is important as setting the style for the pastoral romance. The pastoral, originating with Theocritus (cf. *above*), and imitated by Virgil, was very popular in the Renaissance. The Spaniard Montemayor in his *Diana* had made a curious fusion of the pastoral and chivalric traditions. Apparently attracted by the hybrid, Sidney in his *Arcadia* brought the practice to England. In it he is at his most flamboyant. Published in 1590, it attracted many imitators. The only portion of permanent value in this extravagance is the series of lovely lyrics breaking up the ornate prose. The rest is marred by floridity, over-prettiness, and artifice. Much of the long line of boring shepherd amorists must be laid to Sidney's blame. On the other hand, Shakespeare drew an important part of the plot of *King Lear* from this book.

Though this pastoral romance bears testimony to

Sidney's live concern with the beauty of physical things that the Italian Renaissance had taught Europe, he shows most as the humanist and the scholar in his noble *Defence of Poesie.* A Puritan, Stephen Gosson, no doubt counting on Sidney's well-known advocacy of Protestantism, had dedicated to him an attack on poetry and the stage, *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579). Sidney's answer, divorcing him from any supposed alliance with Puritan dislike of art, circulated (like *Astrophel and Stella* and *Arcadia*) in manuscript for many years before it was published in 1595 by two different publishers, one calling it *The Defence of Poesie* and the other *An Apologie for Poetrie.*

Sidney's book goes far beyond being a mere answer to Gosson. Well-versed in the classics, he holds no brief for the "mongrel Tragicomedy" of the popular theatre, with its "mingling Kings and Clowns." But whatever attacks may be justified on the drama of London, he defends poetry from any charge of being hostile to morals. He traces the noble heritage of poetry, and speaks with pride of the great poets, like Chaucer, England has had. His young friend Spenser he recognizes as a promising genius. *Gorboduc,* the early Elizabethan tragedy, he compares favorably with the incomparable (for the Renaissance) Seneca. He shows good sense in his attack on Euphuistic images so popular in his day, but his own practice fails to exonerate him from the same guilt. Though tending, like much Renaissance criticism, to the pedantic through excessive worship of the classics, the *Defence* is a dignified, and sometimes exalted, appreciation of the high philosophical and esthetic function of poetry.

Standard biographies are M. W. Wallace's (1915) and Mona Wilson's (1931); the earliest, by his friend Fulke Greville, can be found in the Tudor and Stuart Library (1907). The collected edition of Sidney's works was made by A. Feuillerat (1922-6).

Astrophel and Stella

1

Loving in truth, and fain in verse my love to show,
That she, dear she, might take some pleasure of my pain,
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know,
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain,
I sought fit words to paint the blackest face of woe;
Studying inventions fine, her wits to entertain,
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sunburned brain.
But words came halting forth, wanting Invention's stay;
Invention, Nature's child, fled step-dame Study's blows;
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.
Thus, great with child to speak, and helpless in my throes,
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,
Fool, said my Muse to me, look in thy heart, and write.

31

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer[1] his sharp arrows tries?
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case;
I read it in thy looks; thy languished grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be loved, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

39

Come, Sleep! O Sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting-place[1] of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
Th' indifferent judge between the high and low;
With shield of proof shield me from out the prease[2]
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
O make in me those civil wars to cease;
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so.
Take thou of me smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A rosy garland and a weary head:
And if these things, as being thine in right,
Move not thy heavy grace, thou shalt in me,
Livelier than elsewhere, Stella's image see.

(1580-4)

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[1] Cupid.

[1] place of refreshment. [2] press, crowd.

Song

My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange one for another given:
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
There never was a better bargain driven:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides:
He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides:
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

(1593)

Love Is Dead

Ring out your bells, let mourning shows be spread;
For Love is dead:
All Love is dead, infected
With plague of deep disdain:
Worth, as naught worth, rejected,
And Faith fair scorn doth gain.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Weep, neighbors, weep; do you not hear it said
That Love is dead?
His death-bed, peacock's folly;
His winding-sheet is shame;
His will, false-seeming holy;
His sole exec'tor, blame.
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Let dirge be sung, and trentals rightly read
For Love is dead;
Sir Wrong his tomb ordaineth
My mistress' marble heart;
Which epitaph containeth,
'Her eyes were once his dart.'
From so ungrateful fancy,
From such a female franzie,
From them that use men thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

Alas, I lie: rage hath this error bred;
Love is not dead;
Love is not dead, but sleepeth
In her unmatchèd mind,
Where she his counsel keepeth,
Till due desert she find.
Therefore from so vile fancy,
To call such a wit a franzie,
Who Love can temper thus,
Good Lord, deliver us!

(1593)

The Nightingale

The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,
While late bare earth, proud of her new clothing, springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making,
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth
What grief her breast oppresseth
For Tereus'[1] force on her chaste will prevailing.

O Philomela fair, O take some gladness,
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness:
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.

Alas! she hath no other cause of anguish
But Tereus' love, on her by strong hand wroken;[2]
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish,
Full womanlike complains her will was broken.
But I, who, daily craving,
Can not have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me,
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.

O Philomela fair! etc.

(1593)

A Farewell

Oft have I mused, but now at length I find,
Why those that die, men say they do depart.
Depart!—a word so gentle, to my mind,
Weakly did seem to paint death's ugly dart.

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[1] Philomela, princess of Athens, changed into a nightingale to escape Tereus, who had ravished her.

[2] wreaked, forced.

But now the stars, with their strange course, do bind
Me one to leave, with whom I leave my heart;
I hear a cry of spirits, faint and blind,
That, parting thus, my chiefest part I part.
Part of my life, the loathèd part to me,
Lives to impart my weary clay some breath;
But that good part, wherein all comforts be,
Now dead, doth show departure is a death—
Yea, worse than death: death parts both woe and joy:
From joy I part, still living in annoy.

(1593)

Eleventh Song

"Who is it that this dark night
Underneath my window plaineth?"
It is one who from thy sight
Being, ah! exil'd, disdaineth
Every other vulgar light.

"Why, alas! and are you he?
Be not yet those fancies changed?"
Dear, when you find change in me,
Though from me you be estranged,
Let my change to ruin be.

"Well, in absence this will die;
Leave to see, and leave to wonder."
Absence sure will help, if I
Can learn how myself to sunder
From what in my heart doth lie:

"But time will these thoughts remove;
Time doth work what no man knoweth."
Time doth as the subject prove;
With time still the affection groweth
In the faithful turtle-dove.

"What if you new beauties see?
Will not they stir new affection?"
I will think they pictures be,
(Image-like, of saints' perfection)
Poorly counterfeiting thee.

"But your reason's purest light
Bids you leave such minds to nourish."
Dear, do reason no such spite;
Never doth thy beauty flourish
More than in my reason's sight.

"But the wrongs Love bears will make
Love at length leave undertaking."
No, the more fools it do shake,
In a ground of so firm making
Deeper still they drive the stake.

"Peace, I think that some give ear!
Come no more, lest I get anger!"
Bliss, I will my bliss forbear;
Fearing, sweet, you to endanger;
But my soul shall harbor there.

"Well, be gone! be gone, I say,
Lest that Argus'[1] eyes perceive you!"
O unjust is Fortune's sway,
Which can make me thus to leave you;
And from louts to run away.

From *The Defense of Poesie*

But since I have run so long a career in this matter, methinks, before I give my pen a full stop, it shall be but a little more lost time to inquire, why England, the mother of excellent minds, should be grown so hard a step-mother to poets, who certainly in wit ought to pass all others, since all only proceeds from their wit, being, indeed, makers of themselves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaim,

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine læso?[1]

Sweet poesy! that hath anciently had kings, emperors, senators, great captains, such as besides a thousand others, David, Adrian,[2] Sophocles, Germanicus,[3] not only to favor poets, but to be poets; and of our nearer times can present for her patrons a Robert, King of Sicily;[4] the great King Francis of France;[5] King James of Scotland;[6] such cardinals as Bembus and Bibiena;[7] such famous preachers and teachers as Beza and Melancthon;[8] so learned philosophers as Fracastorius and Scaliger;[9] so great orators as Pontanus and Muretus;[10] so piercing wits as George Buchanan;[11] so grave councilors as, besides many, but before all, that Hospital of France,[12] than whom, I think, that realm never brought forth a more accomplished judgment, more firmly builded upon virtue; I say these, with numbers of others, not only to read others' poesies, but to poetize for others' reading: that poesy, thus embraced in all other places, should only find in our time a hard welcome in England, I think the very earth laments it, and therefore decks our soil with fewer laurels than it was accustomed. For heretofore poets have in England also flourished; and, which is to be noted, even in those times when the trumpet of Mars did sound loudest. And now that an overfaint quietness should seem to strew the house for poets, they are almost in as good reputation as the mountebanks at Venice. Truly, even that, as of the one side it giveth great praise to poesy, which, like Venus (but to better purpose), had rather be troubled in the net with Mars, than enjoy the homely quiet of Vulcan;[13] so serves it for a piece of a reason why they are less grateful to idle England, which now can scarce endure the pain of a pen. Upon this necessarily followeth that base men with servile wits undertake it, who think it enough if they can be rewarded of the printer; and so as Epaminondas[14] is said, with the honor of his virtue, to have made an office by his exercising it, which before was contemptible, to become highly respected; so these men, no more but setting their names to it, by their own disgracefulness, disgrace the most graceful poesy. For now, as if all the Muses were got with child, to bring forth bastard poets, without any commission, they do post over the banks of Helicon, until they make their readers more weary than post-horses; while, in the meantime, they,

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[1] O Muse, tell me the causes by which the goddess had been offended. (Virgil, *Æneid*, I, 12.)

[1] the hundred-eyed giant.

[2] Hadrian, Roman emperor (76-138 A.D.).

[3] Nephew and adopted son of the emperor Tiberias (15 B.C.-19 A.D.).

[4] Robert II of Anjou (1275-1343).

[5] Francis I (1494-1547).

[6] James I (1394-1437).

Queis meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan,[15]

are better content to suppress the outflowings of their wit than by publishing them to be accounted knights of the same order.

But I that, before ever I durst aspire unto the dignity, am admitted into the company of the paper-blurrers, do find the very true cause of our wanting estimation is want of desert, taking upon us to be poets in despite of Pallas. Now, wherein we want desert, were a thankworthy labor to express. But if I knew, I should have mended myself; but as I never desired the title, so have I neglected the means to come by it; only, overmastered by some thoughts, I yielded an inky tribute unto them. Marry, they that delight in poesy itself, should seek to know what they do, and how they do, and, especially, look themselves in an unflattering glass of reason, if they be inclinable unto it.

For poesy must not be drawn by the ears, it must be gently led, or rather it must lead; which was partly the cause that made the ancient learned affirm it was a divine gift, and no human skill, since all other knowledges lie ready for any that have strength of wit; a poet no industry can make, if his own genius be not carried into it. And therefore is it an old proverb, *Orator fit, poeta nascitur.*[16] Yet confess I always, that, as the fertilest ground must be manured, so must the highest flying wit have a Dædalus[17] to guide him. That Dædalus, they say, both in this and in other, hath three wings to bear itself up into the air of due commendation; that is, art, imitation, and exercise. But these, neither artificial rules, nor imitative patterns, we much cumber ourselves withal. Exercise, indeed, we do, but that very fore-backwardly; for where we should exercise to know, we exercise as having known; and so is our brain delivered of much matter which never was begotten by knowledge. For there being two principal parts, matter to be expressed by words, and words to express the matter, in neither we use art or imitation rightly. Our matter is *quodlibet,*[18] indeed, although wrongly, performing Ovid's verse,

Quicquid conabar dicere, versus erit;[19]

never marshaling it into any assured rank, that almost the readers cannot tell where to find themselves.

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[7] Bembus (1470-1547); Bibiena (1470-1520).

[8] Beza (1519-1605); Melancthon (1497-1560).

[9] Frascatorius (1483-1553); Scaliger (1484-1558). Both were Italian.

[10] French scholar (1526-1585).

[11] Scottish scholar (1506-1582).

[12] Michel de l'Hôpital (1504-1573), Chancellor of France.

[13] Venus, unfaithful wife of Vulcan, the blacksmith god, was caught by him in a net with Mars, the god of war.

[14] Theban general (418?-362 B.C.).

[15] Whose hearts the Titan [Prometheus] has molded out of better clay.

[16] The orator is made, the poet born.

[17] The legendary hero who made the first flying machine with wax wings.

[18] what you will.

[19] Whatever I shall try to say will become poetry.

Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus and Criseyde*;[20] of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age go so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fit to be forgiven in so reverend antiquity. I account the *Mirror for Magistrates*[21] meetly furnished of beautiful parts. And in the Earl of Surrey's lyrics,[22] many things tasting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble mind. The *Shepherd's Calendar*[23] hath much poetry in its eclogues, indeed, worthy the reading, if I be not deceived. That same framing of its style to an old rustic language, I dare not allow; since neither Theocritus in Greek,[24] Virgil in Latin,[25] nor Sannazaro in Italian,[26] did affect it. Besides these, I do not remember to have seen but few (to speak boldly) printed that have poetical sinews in them. For proof whereof, let but most of the verses be put in prose, and then ask the meaning, and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first what should be at the last; which becomes a confused mass of words, with a tinkling sound of rime, barely accompanied with reason.

Our tragedies and comedies (not without cause, cried out against) observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skilful poetry, excepting *Gorboduc*[27] (again I say of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca's style, and as full of notable morality, which it does most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poesy; yet, in truth, it is very defectious in the circumstances, which grieves me because it might not remain as an exact model of all tragedies. For it is faulty both in place and time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions. For where the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept,[28] and common reason, but one day, there is both many days and many places inartificially imagined.

But if it be so in *Gorboduc*, how much more in all the rest? where you shall have Asia of the one side, and Afric of the other, and so many other under kingdoms, that the player, when he comes in, must ever begin with telling where he is, or else the tale will not be conceived. Now you shall have three ladies walk to gather flowers, and then we must believe the stage to be a garden. By and by, we hear news of shipwreck in the same place, and then we are to blame if we accept it not for a rock. Upon the back of that comes out a hideous monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bound to take it for a cave; while, in the meantime, two armies fly in, represented with four swords and bucklers, and then, what hard heart will not receive it for a pitched field?

Now, of time they are much more liberal; for ordinary it is, that two young princes fall in love; after many traverses she is got with child; delivered of a fair boy; he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get another child; and all this in two hours' space; which, how absurd it is in sense, even sense may imagine; and art hath taught and all ancient examples justified, and at this day the ordinary players in Italy will not err in. Yet will some bring in an example of the *Eunuch* in Terence,[29] that containeth matter of two days, yet far short of twenty years. True it is, and so was it to be played in two days, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though Plautus[30] have in one place done amiss, let us hit it with him, and not miss with him.

But they will say, How then shall we set forth a story which contains both many places and many times? And do they not know that a tragedy is tied to the laws of poesy, and not of history; not bound to follow the story, but having liberty either to feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical conveniency? Again, many things may be told, which cannot be showed: if they know the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As, for example, I may speak, though I am here, of Peru, and in speech digress from that to the description of Calicut; but in action I cannot represent it without Pacolet's horse.[31] And so was the manner the ancients took, by some *Nuntius*[32] to recount things done in former time, or other place.

Lastly, if they will represent an history, they must not, as Horace saith, begin *ab ovo*,[33] but they must come to the principal point of that one action which they will represent. By example this will be best expressed. I have a story of young Polydorus,[34] delivered, for safety's sake, with great riches, by his father Priamus to Polymnestor, King of Thrace, in the Trojan war time. He, after some years, hearing the overthrow of Priamus, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child; the body of the child is taken up by Hecuba; she, the same day, findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where, now, would one of our tragedy-writers begin, but with the delivery of the child? Then should he sail over into Thrace, and so spend I know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But where doth Euripides?[35] Even with the finding of the body; leaving the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. This needs no further to be enlarged; the dullest wit may conceive it.

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[20] Cf. p. 147. [21] Published in 1559. [22] Cf. p. 242.
[23] Cf. p. 250. [24] Cf. p. 243. [25] Cf. p. 247.
[26] Italian poet (1458-1530).
[27] by Thomas Sackville (Lord Buckhurst, 1536-1608) and Thomas Norton (1532-1584). First published in 1565.
[28] An unwarranted extension of Aristotle's remarks about unity of time and place. Cf. Aristotle's *Poetics, below*.
[29] Roman comedy writer (185?-159? B.C.).
[30] Roman comedy writer (died about 184 B.C.).
[31] A famous magic horse in the romance of *Valentine and Orson*.
[32] messenger.

But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in clowns by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius[36] did somewhat so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragi-comedies, as Plautus hath *Amphitruo*. But, if we mark them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals. So falleth it out, that, having, indeed, no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of any chaste ears; or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed fit to lift up a loud laughter, and nothing else; where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration.

But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong; for though laughter may come with delight, yet cometh it not of delight, as though delight should be the cause of laughter; but well may one thing breed both together. Nay, in themselves, they have, as it were, a kind of contrariety. For delight we scarcely do, but in things that have a conveniency to ourselves, or to the general nature. Laughter almost ever cometh of things most disproportioned to ourselves and nature: delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present; laughter hath only a scornful tickling. . . .

Now for the outside of it, which is words, or, as I may term it, diction, it is even well worse; so is that honey-flowing matron Eloquence, appareled, or rather disguised, in a courtesan-like painted affectation. One time with so far-fetched words, that may seem monsters, but must seem strangers to any poor Englishman: another time with coursing of a letter, as if they were bound to follow the method of a dictionary: another time with figures and flowers, extremely winter-starved.

But I would this fault were only peculiar to versifiers, and had not as large possession among prose printers: and, which is to be marveled, among many scholars, and, which is to be pitied, among some preachers. Truly, I could wish (if at least I might be so bold to wish, in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity) the diligent imitators of Tully[37] and Demosthenes,[38] most worthy to be imitated, did not so much keep Nizolian[39] paper-books of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation, as it were, devour them whole, and make them wholly theirs. For now they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to the table: like those Indians, not content to wear earrings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine. Tully, when he was to drive out Catiline, as it were with a thunderbolt of eloquence, often used the figure of repetition.

Vivit. Vivit? imo in Senatum venit,[40] *etc.*

Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, he would have his words, as it were, double out of his mouth; and so do that artificially which we see men do in choler naturally. And we, having noted the grace of those words, hale them in sometimes to a familiar epistle, when it were too much choler to be choleric.

How well, store of 'similiter[41] cadenses' doth sound with the gravity of the pulpit, I would but invoke Demosthenes' soul to tell, who with a rare daintiness useth them. Truly, they have made me think of the sophister, that with too much subtlety would prove two eggs three, and, though he might be counted a sophister, had none for his labor. So these men bringing in such a kind of eloquence, well may they obtain an opinion of a seeming fineness, but persuade few, which should be the end of their fineness.

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[33] from the egg (i.e. from the very beginning).

[34] in Euripides' *Hecuba*.

[35] Greek tragedian (480-406 B.C.).

[36] Roman writer (born about 125 A.D.). Reference is to his *Metamorphoses*.

[37] Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman orator (106-43 B.C.).

[38] Greek orator (384?-322 B.C.).

[39] Marius Nizolius (1498-1566), Italian author of a lexicon to Cicero.

[40] He lives. Lives? He even comes to the Senate.

[41] like endings.

Now for similitudes in certain printed discourses, I think all herbalists, all stories of beasts, fowls, and fishes are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to wait upon any of our conceits, which certainly is as absurd a surfeit to the ears as is possible. For the force of a similitude not being to prove anything to a contrary disputer, but only to explain to a willing hearer: when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling, rather overswaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applied, than any whit informing the judgment, already either satisfied, or by similitudes not to be satisfied. . . .

So that since the ever praiseworthy poesy is full of virtue-breeding delightfulness, and void of no gift that ought to be in the noble name of learning; since the blames laid against it are either false or feeble; since the cause why it is not esteemed in England is the fault of poet-apes, not poets; since, lastly, our tongue is most fit to honor poesy, and to be honored by poesy: I conjure you all that have had the evil luck to read this inkwasting toy of mine, even in the name of the Nine Muses, no more to scorn the sacred mysteries of poesy; no more to laugh at the name of poets, as though they were next inheritors to fools; no more to jest at the reverend title of a rimer; but to believe, with Aristotle, that they were the ancient treasurers of the Grecians' divinity; to believe, with Bembus, that they were the first bringers in of all civility; to believe, with Scaliger, that no philosopher's precepts can sooner make you an honest man, than the reading of Virgil; to believe, with Clauserus, the translator of Cornutus,[42] that it pleased the heavenly deity by Hesiod[43] and Homer, under the veil of fables, to give us all knowledge, logic, rhetoric, philosophy natural and moral, and *Quid non?*[44] to believe, with me, that there are many mysteries contained in poetry, which of purpose were written darkly, lest by profane wits it should be abused; to believe, with Landin,[45] that they are so beloved of the gods that whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury. Lastly, to believe themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortal by their verses.

Thus doing, your names shall flourish in the printers' shops: thus doing, you shall be of kin to many a poetical preface: thus doing, you shall be most fair, most rich, most wise, most all: you shall dwell upon superlatives: thus doing, though you be *Libertino patre natus,*[46] you shall suddenly grow *Herculea proles,*[47]

Si quid mea Carmina possunt:[48]

Thus doing, your soul shall be placed with Dante's Beatrice,[49] or Virgil's Anchises.[50]

But if (fie of such a but!) you be born so near the dull-making cataract of Nilus, that you cannot hear the planet-like music of poetry; if you have so earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift itself up to look to the sky of poetry, or rather, by a certain rustical disdain, will become such a Mome, as to be a Momus[51] of poetry; then, though I will not wish unto you the ass's ears of Midas,[52] nor to be driven by a poet's verses, as Bubonax was, to hang himself; nor to be rimed to death, as is said to be done in Ireland; yet thus much curse I must send you in the behalf of all poets; that while you live, you live in love, and never get favor, for lacking skill of a sonnet; and when you die, your memory die from the earth for want of an epitaph.

(?1583)

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[42] Roman commentator on Aristotle (d. after 68 A.D.).
[43] Greek poet somewhat later than Homer.
[44] What not?
[45] Italian scholar (1424-1504).
[46] Son of a freedman
[47] Herculean offspring.
[48] If my song can have any power.
[49] Cf. p. 101.
[50] Father of Æneas, hero of Virgil's *Æneid.*
[51] mocker.
[52] The Lydian king who had ass's ears

George Peele
(1558?-1596)

Beyond the bare facts of his being born in London and graduated from Oxford, little is known of Peele's early life. As actor and writer, he made his mark on the London stage as one of the chief predecessors of Shakespeare. A lyrical poet of real gifts, and something of a master at poetical drama, he is noteworthy for his well-contrived mixture of realism and fancy in *The Old Wives Tale* (1595). He is also the author of a number of fine songs and a lovely pastoral, *The Araygnment of Paris* (1584).

A. H. Bullen collected his works (1888) with a biographical and critical introduction.

Farewell to Arms[1]

His golden locks time hath to silver turned;
  O time too swift, O swiftness never ceasing!
His youth 'gainst time and age hath ever spurned,
  But spurned in vain; youth waneth by increasing:
Beauty, strength, youth, are flowers but fading seen;
Duty, faith, love, are roots, and ever green.

His helmet now shall make a hive for bees,
  And, lovers' sonnets turned to holy psalms,
A man-at-arms must now serve on his knees,
  And feed on prayers, which are age his[2] alms:
But though from court to cottage he depart,
His saint is sure of his unspotted heart.

And when he saddest sits in homely cell,
  He'll teach his swains this carol for a song,—
"Blessed be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
  Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong."
Goddess, allow this aged man his right,
To be your beadsman[3] now that was your knight.

Robert Greene
(1558?-1592)

Prototype of the modern literary Bohemian, living carelessly and doing hackwork to earn a living, was Robert Greene. Having traveled on the continent and taken his Master's degree at Cambridge, he came to London about 1584, began writing whatever he thought he could sell, and consorted with literary men, wastrels, and thieves. For the stage he wrote a number of plays, chief among them being *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (1589?), and the first play in which Oberon, King of the Fairies, appears on the English stage, *James IV* (1591?). He also made a play out of *Orlando Furioso* (1591?). As a writer of prose Greene was particularly prolific. He wrote several pieces of prose romance in imitation of *Euphues* and *Arcadia*: *Pandosto* (1588)—a source for Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale; Perimedes the Blacksmith* (1588); and *Menaphon* (1589)—the last the best of them. He wrote also a great many semi-autobiographical pamphlets giving vivid pictures of London low life. Of these, the most famous, *A Groatsworth of Witte bought with a Million of Repentance* (1592) contains an attack on Shakespeare. In addition, Greene is the author of many lovely songs. In that great age, even a rascal could sing sweetly.

His complete works were collected by A. B. Grosart (1881-6). The best study of him is by J. C. Jordan (1909).

Song

Sweet are the thoughts that savor of content;
  The quiet mind is richer than a crown.
Sweet are the nights in careless slumber spent;
  The poor estate scorns fortune's angry frown.
Such sweet content, such minds, such sleep, such bliss,
Beggars enjoy, when princes oft do miss.

The homely house that harbors quiet rest;
  The cottage that affords no pride nor care;
The mean that 'grees with country music best;
  The sweet consort of mirth and music's fare;
Obscurèd life sets down a type of bliss—
A mind content both crown and kingdom is.

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[1] Written to Queen Elizabeth.

[2] age's.

[3] one who prays for another.

Samuel Daniel
(1562-1619)

"Well-languaged" Daniel, as his contemporary Browne styled him, spent some time at Oxford without taking his degree, traveled in Europe, and returned to London to earn his living by tutoring. Following in the steps of Petrarch and Sidney, he fashioned a sonnet sequence, *Delia* (1592). He wrote also an important *Defence of Rime* (1603) and an ambitious historical poem on the War of the Roses (1595-1609). The *Defence*, by its good sense and sound judgment, terminated a long and, to us, futile controversy on the merits of classical versus English prosody.

Coleridge praised him as a "manly writer" in a style "which, as the neutral ground of prose and verse, is common to both."

The best edition is A. C. Sprague's *Poems and A Defence of Rime* (1930).

From *Delia*

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born:
Relieve my languish, and restore the light;
With dark forgetting of my care, return!
And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn,
Without the torment of the night's untruth.
Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires,
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars,
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow.
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain;
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

(pub. 1592)

Michael Drayton
(1563-1631)

One of the most prolific of Elizabethan poets, Drayton is, however, very uneven in his work. To study his career is to study the changing tastes of the time. His earliest work is a set of uninspired religious poems, *The Harmonie of the Church*. From these he turned to the writing of historical legends. In 1594 he published his famous sonnet sequence *Ideas Mirrour Amours in Quatorzains*, made up of fifty-one sonnets. So popular that by 1631 it had gone through eleven editions, it received Drayton's constant attention by revision, excision and addition. Some of the best are the latest, including the celebrated sixty-first, which we print. He wrote volumes of *Heroicall Epistles, Poems Lyrick and Pastorall, Odes, Eglogs, The Man in the Moon* (1605) and *Poly-Olbion* (1612), a topographical description of Britain. The complete list of his works and of his collaborations in the drama would be too long to give here. Few sonnets have had a more direct appeal than number 61, for it speaks the unaffected language of passion.

Prof. J. W. Hebel began a complete edition of Drayton's works (1931-). There is a splendid study of him by Oliver Elton (rev. 1905).

From *Idea*

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part,—
Nay I have done, you get no more of me;
And I am glad, yea, glad with all my heart,
That thus so cleanly I myself can free.
Shake hands for ever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain!
Now at the last gasp of Love's latest breath,
When his pulse failing, Passion speechless lies,
When Faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And Innocence is closing up his eyes,
—Now if thou would'st, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet recover!

Ode XII

To the Cambro-Britains and their Harp, His Ballad of Agincourt[1]

Fair stood the wind for France,
When we our sails advance;
Nor now to prove our chance
  Longer will tarry;
But putting to the main,
At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
With all his martial train
  Landed King Harry.

And taking many a fort,
Furnished in warlike sort,
Marcheth towards Agincourt
  In happy hour;
Skirmishing, day by day,
With those that stopped his way,
Where the French general lay
  With all his power.

Which, in his height of pride,
King Henry to deride,
His ransom to provide,
  To the King sending;
Which he neglects the while,
As from a nation vile,
Yet, with an angry smile,
  Their fall portending.

And turning to his men,
Quoth our brave Henry then:
"Though they to one be ten
  Be not amazèd!
Yet have we well begun:
Battles so bravely won
Have ever to the sun
  By Fame been raised!

"And for myself," quoth he,
"This my full rest shall be:
England ne'er mourn for me,
  Nor more esteem me!
Victor I will remain,
Or on this earth lie slain;
Never shall She sustain
  Loss to redeem me!

"Poitiers and Cressy[2] tell,
When most their pride did swell,
Under our swords they fell.
  No less our skill is,
Than when our Grandsire great,
Claiming the regal seat,
By many a warlike feat
  Lopped the French lilies."

The Duke of York so dread
The eager vanward led;
With the main, Henry sped
  Amongst his henchmen:
Exeter had the rear,
A braver man not there!
O Lord, how hot they were
  On the false Frenchmen!

They now to fight are gone;
Armour on armour shone;
Drum now to drum did groan:
  To hear, was wonder;
That, with the cries they make,
The very earth did shake;
Trumpet to trumpet spake;
  Thunder to thunder.

Well it thine age became,
O noble Erpingham,
Which didst the signal aim
  To our hid forces!
When, from a meadow by,
Like a storm suddenly,
The English archery
  Stuck the French horses.

With Spanish yew so strong;
Arrows a cloth-yard long,
That like to serpents stung,
  Piercing the weather.
None from his fellow starts;
But, playing manly parts,
And like true English hearts,
  Stuck close together.

When down their bows they threw.
And forth their bilboes drew,
And on the French. they flew:
  Not one was tardy.
Arms were from shoulders sent,
Scalps to the teeth were rent,

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[1] The battle of Agincourt won by the English over superior French forces, October 25, 1415. The English were commanded by Henry V.

[2] Earlier battles in the Hundred Years' War with France.

Down the French peasants went:
Our men were hardy.

This while our noble King,
His broad sword brandishing,
Down the French host did ding,
As to o'erwhelm it.
And many a deep wound lent;
His arms with blood besprent,
And many a cruel dent
Bruisèd his helmet.

Gloucester, that duke so good,
Next of the royal blood,
For famous England stood
With his brave brother.
Clarence, in steel so bright,
Though but a maiden knight,
Yet in that furious fight
Scarce such another!

Warwick in blood did wade;
Oxford, the foe invade,
And cruel slaughter made,
Still as they ran up.
Suffolk his axe did ply;
Beaumont and Willoughby
Bare them right doughtily;
Ferrers, and Fanhope.

Upon Saint Crispin's Day
Fought was this noble Fray;
Which Fame did not delay
To England to carry.
O when shall English men
With such acts fill a pen?
Or England breed again
Such a King Harry?

(1619)

Christopher Marlowe

(1564-1593)

Although Marlowe's importance is primarily in the drama (cf. *Dr. Faustus, below*), this pastoral lyric was among the most popular of Elizabethan poems—and with good reason, for its music is exquisite. It appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599) and in *England's Helicon* (1600).

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love

Come live with me and be my Love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Or woods or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the rocks
And see the shepherds feed their flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies;
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Fair-linéd slippers for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy buds
With coral clasps and amber studs—
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my Love.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning—
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me and be my Love.

(pub. 1600)

Sir Walter Ralegh

(1552?-1618)

This reply, which has generally been attributed to Ralegh (cf. *above, for a note on him*), appeared in *England's Helicon* signed "Ignoto."

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage, and rocks grow cold;
And Philomel becometh dumb;
The rest complains of cares to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward Winter reckoning yields;
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move,
To come to thee and be thy love.

But could youth last, and love still breed,
Had joys no date, nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move,
To live with thee and be thy love.

(pub. 1600)

Thomas Campion

(1577-1620)

Campion is perhaps the subtlest and most exquisite song-writer of the wonderful Elizabethan age. His career seems varied enough. Physician, student of law, and accomplished composer of music, he is responsible for four books of *Ayres* (1601, 1613, and 1617) in which he supplied much of the music, itself simple and delightful, for his own words. An admirer of the Latin lyric poets Horace and Catullus, like the Cavalier poets (cf. *below*), his muse is yet distinctly Elizabethan. Even without their music, his songs are enchanting in rhythm and sound.

His poems have been edited with a biography, by P. Vivian (1909), and Stainer and Bell have reprinted the music (1922, 1925). A recent study is M. M. Kastendieck, *England's Musical Poet* (1938).

My Sweetest Lesbia

My sweetest Lesbia, let us live and love;
And though the sager sort our deeds reprove,
Let us not weigh them: heaven's great lamps do dive
Into their west, and straight again revive:
But soon as once set is our little light,
Then must we sleep one ever-during night.

If all would lead their lives in love like me,
Then bloody swords and armor should not be;
No drum nor trumpet peaceful sleeps should move,
Unless alarm came from the camp of love:
But fools do live, and waste their little light,
And seek with pain their ever-during night.

When timely death my life and fortune ends,
Let not my hearse be vexed with mourning friends;
But let all lovers, rich in triumph, come
And with sweet pastimes grace my happy tomb:
And, Lesbia, close up thou my little light,
And crown with love my ever-during night.

(1601)

Follow Thy Fair Sun

Follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow,
Though thou be black as night,
And she made all of light,
Yet follow thy fair sun, unhappy shadow.

Follow her whose light thy light depriveth,
Though here thou liv'st disgraced,
And she in heaven is placed,
Yet follow her whose light the world reviveth.

Follow those pure beams whose beauty burneth,
That so have scorched thee,
As thou still[1] black must be,
Till her kind beams thy black to brightness turneth.

Follow her while yet her glory shineth:
There comes a luckless night,
That will dim all her light;
And this the black unhappy shade divineth.

Follow still since so thy fates ordainèd;
The Sun must have his shade,
Till both at once do fade,
The Sun still proud, the shadow still disdainèd.

(1601)

When to Her Lute Corinna Sings

When to her lute Corinna sings,
Her voice revives the leaden strings,
And doth in highest notes appear,
As any challenged echo clear;
But when she doth of mourning speak,
Ev'n with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die,
Led by her passion, so must I!
For when of pleasure she doth sing,
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring;
But if she doth of sorrow speak,
Ev'n from my heart the strings do break.

(1601)

Turn Back, You Wanton Flyer

Turn back, you wanton flyer,
And answer my desire
With mutual greeting.
Yet bend a little nearer,—
True beauty still shines clearer
In closer meeting!
Hearts with hearts delighted
Should strive to be united,
Each other's arms with arms enchaining,—
Hearts with a thought,
Rosy lips with a kiss still entertaining.

What harvest half so sweet is
As still to reap the kisses
Grown ripe in sowing?
And straight to be receiver
Of that which thou art giver,
Rich in bestowing?
There's no strict observing
Of times' or seasons' swerving
There is ever one fresh spring abiding;—
Then what we sow with our lips
Let us reap, love's gains dividing.

(1601)

When Thou Must Home

When thou must home to shades of underground,
And there arrived, a new admirèd guest,
The beauteous spirits do engirt thee round,
White Iope, blithe Helen, and the rest,
To hear the stories of thy finished love
From that smooth tongue whose music hell can move;

Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake;
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,
Then tell, O tell, how thou didst murder me.

(1601)

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[1] always.

Cherry Ripe

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow, which none may buy
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
Of orient pearl a double row;
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
They look like rosebuds filled with snow.
Yet them nor peer nor prince can buy
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threatening with piercing frowns to kill
All that attempt, with eye or hand,
Those sacred cherries to come nigh
Till "Cherry ripe" themselves do cry.

(?1617)

Thomas Dekker

(1570?-1632)

One of the busiest of Elizabethan writers, Dekker seems to have been a self-educated Londoner, of peculiarly happy nature. Of his many works the most important are his comedies: *Old Fortunatus* (1599), *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1599), and (in collaboration) *Patient Grissell* (1600) and *The Honest Whore* (1604). He chose as his sphere of interest the world of craftsmen and the London streets, and brought a lucky note of zestful wholesomeness and hearty spirits to all he did. Realistic beyond most of his contemporaries, he could fuse with his love of London a typically Elizabethan romanticism. His plays are the first masterpieces on common folk. As a poet, as Lamb said of him, he "had poetry enough for anything." This limpid lyric is characteristic not only of the many to be found in his dramas, but of the Renaissance feeling for the potential richness of life. His numerous prose works on London life, especially *The Belman of London* (1608) and *The Guls Horne Book* (1609), are among the raciest of contemporary Elizabethan writings.

The plays were collected by R. H. Shepherd (1873) and the prose by A. B. Grosart (1885). An important study of him was made by M. L. Hunt (1911).

Content

(From *Patient Grissell*)

Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed
To add to golden numbers golden numbers?
O sweet content, O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace! apace! apace! apace!
Honest labor bears a lovely face.
Then hey noney, noney; hey noney, noney!

Canst drink the waters of the crispèd spring?
O sweet content!
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O punishment!
Then he that patiently want's burden bears
No burden bears, but is a king, a king.
O sweet content, O sweet, O sweet content!

Work apace, apace, etc.

(1600)

John Fletcher

(1579-1625)

John Fletcher was the son of the Bishop of London, and cousin of two able poets, Phineas and Giles Fletcher. Educated at Cambridge, he was left in poverty at his father's death. Rapidly he won his way to the position of one of the chief dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare. Plays from his pen, written alone and in collaboration, are among the finest in an age of great drama. His best known partnership is with Francis Beaumont, with whom he wrote the beautiful *The Maid's Tragedy* (1611), the tragicomedy *Philaster* (1609), and the delightful parody *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607?). With Shakespeare he collaborated on *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (though some critics find Massinger's hand in them too). By himself he wrote the popular pastoral *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608?), *Valentinian* (1614), and a number of other dramas. Although he was an excellent lyricist, he seems to have written little poetry apart from his plays.

The Beaumont and Fletcher plays occupy ten volumes in the Glover and Waller edition (1905-13).

To Sleep

(From *Valentinian*)

Care-charming Sleep, thou easer of all woes,
Brother to Death, sweetly thyself dispose
On this afflicted prince; fall like a cloud,
In gentle showers; give nothing that is loud
Or painful to his slumbers;—easy, light,
And as a purling stream, thou son of Night,
Pass by his troubled senses; sing his pain
Like hollow murmuring wind or silver rain;
Into this prince gently, oh, gently slide,
And kiss him into slumbers like a bride!

(?1610)

John Webster

(1580?-1625)

Almost nothing is known of the life of the man who, of all the Elizabethans, has most often been compared with Shakespeare. Certainly outside of Shakespeare's masterpieces, no tragedies in English rank higher than Webster's *The White Devil* (1609?) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613-4). And their greatness is the greatness of high poetry. Even in these two lyrics that mysterious beauty, dark yet delicate, which Webster had mastered, may be perceived.

The standard edition of his works is by F. L. Lucas (1927). A stimulating commentary was written by Rupert Brooke: *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (1916).

Two Dirges

(From *The White Devil; or Vittoria Corombona*)

Call for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover,
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole[1]
The ant, the field-mouse and the mole,
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm,
And (when gay tombs are robbed) sustain no harm;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

(1611)

(From *The Duchess of Malfi*)

Hark, now everything is still,
The screech-owl, and the whistler shrill,
Call upon our dame aloud,
And bid her quickly don her shroud!
Much you had of land and rent;
Your length in clay's now competent:
A long war disturbed your mind;
Here your perfect peace is signed.
Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?

[1] grief.

Sin their conception, their birth weeping,
Their life a general mist of error,
Their death, a hideous storm of terror.
Strew your hair with powders sweet,
Don clean linen, bathe your feet,
And (the foul fiend more to check),
A crucifix let bless your neck:
'Tis now full tide 'tween night and day;
End your groan, and come away.

(1623)

William Shakespeare

(1564-1616)

No anthology can intelligently attempt to represent the work of the single greatest figure in our (and, many would say, world) literature. To print here even several of his masterpieces would leave his "infinite variety" still undemonstrated, and the rest of his career would remain uncharted. Nor can any comment, such as this, hope to be more than a meager sketch, no matter what its length. One might succeed in discussing individual facets of Shakespeare's unique genius, but it is utterly impossible to summarize his achievement. There is something miraculous about Shakespeare's peculiar gifts; and every sensitive reader will eventually discover the miracle for himself. Experience in life is the chief prerequisite for approaching Shakespeare. With questionable wisdom our grade schools force upon young minds the work of England's most adult poet; but the dislike and fear which are thus naturally generated are quickly overcome on a maturer inspection of his plays. There is nothing remote about Shakespeare; no poetry in the world is warmer than his, and to none can we come closer.

Like the two other leading poets of the age, Spenser and Marlowe, Shakespeare was a tradesman's son. Born in 1564, probably on April 23, in the lovely country town of Stratford-on-Avon, he must have received an adequate education at the excellent grammar school there. He never attended a university. Indeed, he was not out of adolescence when he assumed the responsibilities of an adult, for at the age of eighteen he was married to a woman eight years his senior. The marriage license is dated November 28, 1582; and in May 1583 his first child, Suzanna, was baptized. In 1585 were born the twin girl and boy, Judith and Hamnet, the latter dying eleven years later. Some time after the birth of the twins, Shakespeare left for London. The tale of his having had to run away because he had been caught poaching has been thoroughly discredited by Professor Hotson. It is not too much to conceive that he left Stratford because he desired to be connected with the London theatres.

By 1592 he had already become known as a dramatist, and the next year his narrative poem, *Venus and Adonis,* was published. Thereafter until his retirement, he wrote a series of plays which include the world's greatest, and won for himself recognition as one of the few masters of his craft. In 1597 he purchased a large estate at Stratford, and two years later he was granted a coat of arms by the College of Heralds. During these years he was also engaged in acting, and he purchased shares in his company. That he took a lively interest in business affairs is proved by a number of documents connected with his negotiations in real estate. Certain of his plays were appearing, probably all without his consent, in print—a further testimony of their popularity. In 1609 his sonnets were published. Two years later, at the height of his powers, he retired from the theatre and returned to Stratford. Except for his collaboration with Fletcher in *Henry VIII,* and possibly in *The Two Noble Kinsmen,* he never again wrote for the stage. After some five years spent as a country gentleman in his obscure native village, he died on April 23, 1616. In his will he left: most of his estate to his daughter Suzanna; a sum of money to his married daughter Judith; gifts to relatives, friends, and three fellow actors; and to his wife his "second-best bed" and its appurtenances. He was buried in the church at Stratford.

For the sentimental there is no comfort in Shakespeare's career. He was not neglected by the public, but recognized as a great dramatist. In fact, seven years after his death, two of the fellow actors remembered in his will, John Heminges and Henry Condell, "only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare," performed an unusual task for that age—they collected his plays into what is now known as the First Folio (1623), perhaps the greatest volume of poetic drama ever published. Moreover, Shakespeare did not starve, but made a fortune out of the theatre. Then there is his application for a coat of arms, the hardest blow to the idolatrous. Finally, he made the decision to leave his art, and settle down in his native village. Yes, Shakespeare was very much of this world, and it is hard to see why the man who of all poets could penetrate deepest into the souls of men should have been otherwise. He affords no answers to those who would probe into his private life. Spenser, Marlowe, and lesser men like Greene, reveal to us something of their personalities; but not so Shakespeare. The rest of humanity must have been so much more important to him as a writer than his own temperament, that he had little urge to exhibit himself. His magnificent impersonality, or rather his incomparable ability to identify himself with every kind of human being, is one of his rarest qualities.

The dates of his plays are largely conjectural, though most of them can be fixed within the limits of a few years. From 1591 to 1594 he was busy experimenting with every kind of play; among the most important of this period are: the courtly comedy *Love's Labor's Lost*, the dexterous Plautian comedy *The Comedy of Errors*, the romantic comedy *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* the histories of *Richard III* and *King John*, and his first masterpiece, the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet.* From 1594 to the end of the century he wrote a series of brilliant histories and comedies, including the lyrical *Richard II, Henry IV* Parts I and II with the incomparable Falstaff, the stirring *Henry V*, the moonlit *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* the dramatic *The Merchant of Venice*, the sparkling *Much Ado About Nothing*, the gay *As You Like It*, and the moving *Twelfth Night* (written 1601?). In the years 1600 to 1609 came *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth*—in the opinion of many the world's greatest tragedies—, and the bitter comedies *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure.* His last two plays (1611) were the enchanting and mellowed romantic comedies, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest.*

Shakespeare is perhaps the perfect expression of humanism. His profound sympathy for humanity enabled him to pierce to the very core of his characters; his unexcelled gifts as a poet made his men and women creatures of flesh and blood. This may be said as much of his earliest plays as of *The Tempest,* where Prospero is himself a kind of incarnation of the best of what the Renaissance had extended to mankind.

If we are not able to do justice in our volume to Shakespeare the dramatist, we can at least show him as one of our greatest lyric poets. His plays are studded with the loveliest songs in our language. And the best of his sonnets are the best of the world's. In the songs and the sonnets is found his marvelous musicianship; and in the sonnets will be seen a characteristic discoverable rarely outside his own plays—the power to express profound ideas with deep feeling.

The scholarship on Shakespeare is immense, and any suggested bibliography must be a matter of preference. The standard biographies are by J. Quincy Adams (1923), and E. K. Chambers, two volumes (1930). Among the most interesting studies are: A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1905), C. F. E. Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1936), and J. Dover Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare* (1932); but there are countless others.

Songs from the Plays

To the lovers of Shakespeare's plays—and who that has known them has not loved them?—it is somewhat teasing to find the songs separated from the context in the dramas. For nowhere is unity more indivisible than the song and the moment in his play when it is sung. To take Ariel's songs from *The Tempest,* the song sung while Bassanio meditates on the caskets in *The Merchant of Venice,* the song the boy sings for Mariana in *Measure for Measure*—or any of them—out of their plays, is like cutting an exquisite detail out of a master-painting of which it is an indispensable part. Yet, since they are among the most wonderful songs in our language, we cannot omit them. For, as Walter de la Mare has said: "Though flowers shine best in their natural haunts, Shakespeare's continue to flourish even when picked." Though all set to music, these songs seem to have little need of a composer, so rich and varied is their own music.

Tucker Brooke has collected them all in a precious volume, *The Shakespeare Songs* (1929).

From *Love's Labor's Lost*

When icicles hang by the wall,
  And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,[1]
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
  And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit, tu-who! a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel[2] the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
  And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
  And Marian's nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs[3] hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
Tu-whit, tu-who! a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

From *Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Who is Silvia? what is she,
  That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she;
  The heaven such grace did lend her
That she might admirèd be.

Is she kind as she is fair?
  For beauty lives with kindness.
Love doth to her eyes repair
  To help him of his blindness,
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing
  That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing
  Upon the dull earth dwelling—
To her let us garlands bring.

(1591)

From *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander everywhere,
Swifter than the moonës sphere;
And I serve the Fairy Queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be;
In their gold coats spots you see:
Those be rubies, fairy favors,
In those freckles live their savors.
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

From *The Merchant of Venice*

Tell me, where is fancy[1] bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?

---

[1] fingernail. [2] cool by stirring. [3] crab apples.

[1] love.

How begot, how nourishèd?
Reply, reply.

It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies:
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it,—Ding-dong, bell.
Ding, dong, bell.

(1596)

From *As You Like It*

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither! come hither! come hither!
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

(1599)

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, etc.

This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that a life was but a flower
In the spring time, etc.

And therefore take the present time,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crowned with the prime
In the spring time, etc.

(1599)

From *Twelfth Night*

O Mistress mine, where are you roaming?
Oh, stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is Love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty;
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

(1601)

From *Measure for Measure*

Take, O, take those lips away
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn.
But my kisses bring again,
Bring again;
Seals of love, but sealed in vain,
Sealed in vain!

(1603)

From *Cymbeline*

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced[1] flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes.
With every thing that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise!
Arise, arise!

(1610)

[1] cup-shaped.

From *Cymbeline*

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages.
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;
Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak.
The scepter, learning, physic must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan.
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have;
And renownèd be thy grave!

(1610)

From *The Tempest*

Full fathom five thy father lies.
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong!
Hark! now I hear them—Ding-dong, bell!

(1611)

Where the bee sucks, there suck I;
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry.
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily.
Merrily, merrily, shall I live now
Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.

(1611)

Twenty Sonnets

Composed at intervals between the beginning of his career and possibly the death of Queen Elizabeth (i.e. 1591-1603), Shakespeare's sonnets circulated among his friends in manuscript until the piratical publisher, Thomas Thorpe, issued them in 1609. The sequence consists of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets: one hundred and twenty-six addressed to a handsome young man of high birth, gentle, wealthy, and gifted—the rest to a "Dark Lady," a beautiful, immoral, and ungrateful woman. The poet professes to love both better than his own peace of mind.

To Wordsworth these sonnets were the key to the mystery of Shakespeare's soul, and many, in agreement with him, have written volumes of argument in an attempt to identify the Mr. W. H. to whom the book was dedicated by Thorpe. The apparent sincerity of many of the poems has spurred the search. But the hunt is futile. There is no reason to assume that there is anything autobiographical in these sonnets. Mr. W. H. may even have been a person unknown to the poet.

It is true that the sequence vaguely outlines happenings which are supposed to have given rise to the feelings expressed in the sonnets. After we read of the poet's profound love for his young friend, we learn that that friend has succumbed to the charms of the poet's mistress, the Dark Lady, and has betrayed the poet's trust. But the poet forgives his friend, prizing his love more after this test of affection. By this time, however, we have read only approximately one-fourth of the total number of sonnets, and thereafter it is by no means clear what is supposed to be occurring. Rather, if we insist upon a plot, we must admit that the story turns back on itself, and seems to repeat what has happened. The difficulty, of course, does not exist if we think of the sonnets as generally addressed to the young man and the Dark Lady, and do not force them into the framework of a plot.

It is safest simply to say that Shakespeare was following, as he did in his plays, the fashion of the time in writing in a form that had proved popular. Certainly many of the sonnets have to do with ideas conventional to the sonnet-sequence, and already dealt with by Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, Spenser, and (the fountain-head of such topics) Petrarch: the beauty of the loved one (*nos.* 1-14; 62-65), assurances of immortality through the verse of the poet (*nos.* 15-19; 104-108), the pain of separation (*nos.* 26-28; 43-52; 56-61; 87-93; 109-110; 117-120), the goodness or cruelty of the loved one (*nos.* 66-68; 75-76), the old-age and death of the poet (*nos.* 62-65; 71-74), etc. If many of the sonnets have the ring of deep feeling, it may be only further testimony of Shakespeare's genius to have written them so convincingly. As Fletcher said: "A man may write of love and not be in love"; if that was Shakespeare's case in the sequence, the greater poet he.

The sonnets are not all of even merit. Some of them are marred by overstraining and artifice. But autobiographical or not, the best of them are the greatest in our language. Had Shakespeare written only them, and none of the plays, he would still have to be counted among our few greatest poets. His incomparable ability to join high thinking with profound feeling, is to be seen here as well as in the plays. And nowhere else have the fourteen lines of the sonnet been managed with more varied music.

12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night;
When I behold the violet past prime,
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white;
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard,
Then of thy beauty do I question make,
That thou among the wastes of time must go,
Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow;
  And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defense
  Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment;
When I perceive that men as plants increase,
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night;
  And all in war with Time for love of you,
  As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say "This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces."
So should my papers yellow'd with their age
Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
And stretchèd metre of an antique song:
  But were some child of yours alive that time,
  You should live twice; in it and in my rhyme.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest;[1]
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
  So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

25

Let those who are in favor with their stars
Of public honor and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honor most.
Great princes' favorites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies burièd,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famousèd for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honor razèd quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
  Then happy I, that love and am beloved
  Where I may not remove nor be removed.

29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate;
  For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
  That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since canceled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight—
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
  But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
  All losses are restored and sorrows end.

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow;
But out, alack! he was but one hour mine;
The region[1] cloud hath masked him from me now.
  Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
  Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
  So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
  You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

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[1] ownest.

[1] of the upper air.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end;
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow,
Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow:
  And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
  Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,—
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disablèd,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly doctor-like controlling skill,
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,[1]
And captive good attending captain ill:
  Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
  Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly, sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell.
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it; for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot
If thinking on me then should make you woe.
Oh, if, I say, you look upon this verse
When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay,
  Lest the wise world should look into your moan
  And mock you with me after I am gone.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
  This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
  To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time removed was summer's time,
The teeming autumn, big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease:
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit;
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute;
  Or, if they sing, 'tis with so dull a cheer
  That leaves look pale, dreading the winter's near

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April dress'd in all his trim
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odor and in hue
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew;
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
  Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
  As with your shadow, I with these did play.

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[1] foolishness.

99

The forward violet thus did I chide:
Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed.
The lily I condemnèd for thy hand,
And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair.
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair;
A third, nor red nor white, had stol'n of both
And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath;
But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
  More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
  But sweet or color it had stol'n from thee.

106

When in the chronicles of wasted[1] time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon[2] of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
  For we, which now behold these present days,
  Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
  And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
  When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh, no! it is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
  If this be error and upon me proved,
  I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

146

Poor soul, and centre of my sinful earth,
[Amidst] these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
  So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
  And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

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[1] past. [2] description (usually of a coat-of-arms).

NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527)

(From *The Prince*)

(*Translated by Henry Morley*)

Machiavelli was born at Florence and spent most of his life in Florentine politics. He threw in his lot with Soderini, gonfalonier of his native city, and assumed the role of adviser to him for many years. In the end he was involved in the fall of Soderini.

In 1502 occurred Machiavelli's greatest experience: in October he was sent as an envoy to Cesare Borgia, duke of Valentinois, then camping in Romagna. This son of the Pope, Alexander VI, was carving out something of an empire for himself in Italy and, many think, attempting to insure his control of the papacy after his father's death. When Machiavelli met him he was at the most brilliant point of his career, and as the Florentine statesman watched him closely, he began to shape his political ideas around Cesare. Machiavelli was convinced that nothing but a strong man could save Italy, torn by endless wars between rival cities and rival factions within the cities; from Dante and Petrarch he had inherited the dream of a unified Italy, and it seemed to him that only a despot could deal with Italian political chaos. In Cesare he saw the type of leader for the task. Cesare's complete immorality and ruthlessness, his mixture of audacity with astuteness, his conscienceless cruelty and deception, and his firmness in dealing with the vanquished were all a culmination in one direction of Renaissance individualism. To Machiavelli the intrigues of the Duke were a pattern for an effective ruler. Allowing these ideas to germinate, Machiavelli at last produced *The Prince* (1513), giving to the world one of its basic books in political speculation. In its search for the fundamental principles of political conduct, *The Prince* has been called the first work in modern political science.

Machiavelli studied men as he found them in a particularly corrupt and licentious age, not as nobler souls have preconceived them. It was for this preoccupation with mankind as he thought it was, rather than as he thought it should be that Bacon admired Machiavelli; and the great Englishman's work shows the effect of Machiavelli's teachings. But *The Prince*, for some reason, seems to have remained untranslated in English during the sixteenth century, though Machiavelli's fame is to be read everywhere in the English literature of the period. Not knowing his book, popular imagination had distorted Machiavelli into the embodiment of Italian Renaissance corruption, and he became a synonym for "philosophical villainy" and immorality. He was thought to have advocated unscrupulous self-seeking, such as is to be found in Marlowe's hero, Tamburlaine.

The following chapter from *The Prince* is one of the crucial passages in the book. But it should be remembered that Machiavelli's great influence lay less in what he actually said than in what he was thought to have said.

J. M. Robertson has an excellent life and study of him (1907).

Ch. XVII. *Of Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether it is Best for a Prince to be Beloved or Feared.*

To come now to the other qualities proposed, I say every prince is to desire to be esteemed rather merciful than cruel, but with great caution that his mercy be not abused; Cæsar Borgia was counted cruel, yet that cruelty reduced Romagna, united it, settled it in peace, and rendered it faithful: so that if well considered, he will appear much more merciful than the Florentines, who rather than be thought cruel suffered Pistoia to be destroyed. A prince, therefore, is not to regard the reproach of being cruel, if thereby he keeps his subjects in their allegiance and united, seeing that by some few examples of justice he may be more merciful than they who by a universal exercise of pity permit several disorders to follow, which occasion rapine and murder; and the reason is, because that exorbitant mercy has an ill effect upon the whole community, whereas particular executions extend only to particular persons. But among all princes a new prince has the hardest task to avoid the scandal of being cruel by reason of the newness of his government, and the dangers which attend it: hence Virgil in the person of Dido excused the inhospitality of her government:

> Res dura, et regni novitas, me talia cogunt
> Moliri, et late fines Custode tueri.
>
> My new dominion and my harder fate
> Constrains me to't, and I must guard my state.

Nevertheless, he is not to be too credulous of reports, too hasty in his motions, nor create fears and jealousies to himself, but so to temper his administrations with prudence and humanity that neither too much confidence may make him careless, nor too much diffidence intolerable. And hence arises a new question, Whether it be better to be beloved than feared, or feared than beloved? It is answered, both would be convenient, but because that is hard to attain, it is better and more secure, if one must be wanting, to be feared than beloved; for in general men are ungrateful, inconstant, hypocritical, fearful of danger, and covetous of gain; while they receive any benefit by you, and the danger is at a distance, they are absolutely yours, and their blood, their estates, their lives and their children, as I said before, are all at your service; but when mischief is at hand, and you have present need of their help, they make no scruple to revolt; and that prince who leaves himself naked of other preparations, and relies wholly upon their professions, is sure to be ruined; for amity contracted by price, and not by the greatness and generosity of the mind, may seem a good pennyworth; yet when you have occasion to make use of it, you will find no such thing. Moreover, men do with less remorse offend against those who desire to be beloved than against those who are ambitious of being feared; the reason is that love is fastened only by a ligament of obligation, which the ill-nature of man breaks upon every occasion that is presented to his profit; but fear depends upon an apprehension of punishment, which is never to be dispelled. Yet a prince is to render himself awful in such sort that, if he gains not his subjects' love, he may escape their hatred; for to be feared and not hated are compatible enough, and he may be always in that condition if he offers no violence to their estates, nor attempts anything upon the honor of their wives, and when he has occasion to take away any man's life, if he takes his time when the cause is manifest, and he has good matter for his justification; but above all things he is to have a care of intrenching upon their estates, for men do sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony; besides, occasions of confiscation never fail, and he that once gives way to that humor or rapine shall never want temptation to ruin his neighbor. But, on the contrary, provocations to blood are more rare, and do sooner evaporate; but when a prince is at the head of his army, and has a multitude of soldiers to govern, then it is absolutely necessary not to value the epithet of cruel, for without that no army can be kept in unity, nor in disposition for any great act.

Among the several instances of Hannibal's[1] great conduct, it is one that, having a vast army constituted out of several nations, and conducted to make war in an enemy's country, there never happened any sedition among them, or any mutiny against their general, either in his adversity or prosperity. This can only be attributed to his great cruelty, which, added to his infinite virtues, rendered him both awful and terrible to his soldiers; without that all his virtues would have signified nothing. Some writers there are, but of little consideration, who admire his great exploits and condemn the true causes of them. But to prove that his other virtues would never have carried him through, let us reflect upon Scipio,[2] a person honorable not only in his own time, but in all history whatever; nevertheless his army mutinied in Spain, and the true cause of it was his too much gentleness and lenity, which gave his soldiers more liberty than was suitable or consistent with military discipline. Fabius Maximus[3] upbraided him for it in the senate, and called him corrupter of the Roman Militia; the inhabitants of Locris having been plundered and destroyed by one of Scipio's lieutenants, they were never redressed, nor the legate's insolence corrected, all proceeding from the mildness of Scipio's nature, which was so eminent in him, that a person undertaking to excuse him in the senate declared that there were many who knew better how to avoid doing ill themselves than to punish it in other people; which temper would doubtless in time have eclipsed the glory and reputation of Scipio, had that authority been continued in him; but receiving orders and living under the direction of the senate. that ill quality was not only not discovered in him, but turned to his renown. I conclude, therefore, according to what I have said about being feared or beloved, that forasmuch as men do love at their own discretion, but fear at their prince's, a wise prince is obliged to lay his foundation upon that which is in his own power, not that which depends on other people, but, as I said before, with great caution that he does not make himself odious.

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[1] Carthaginian general (247-183? B.C.).

[2] Roman general (234-183? B.C.).

[3] Roman general (died 203 B.C.)

Christopher Marlowe

(1564-1593)

The life of Marlowe, one of the greatest poets of his age, was as dramatic as it was brief. Born the son of a shoemaker at Canterbury in the same year as Shakespeare, he studied at King's School in his native city, and later went on a scholarship to Cambridge, where he took his M.A. in 1587. In the same year he was in London, one of a group of "university wits" with Greene, Lodge, Nashe, Lyly, and Peele, who were making the literary capital hum with their activity. Some of these men (particularly Peele, Lyly, and Greene) along with dramatists like Kyd, were having varying success in laying the foundations for London drama, when Marlowe's dazzling genius appeared like a meteor over the theatrical world.

By 1587 he had written the first part of *Tamburlaine*, and thus opened new possibilities for English playwrights. It was the first London stage play to center about a vital personality, and also the first to exploit the great line of English poetic drama, blank verse. Thus far the plays had been written chiefly in rhyme, inevitably inimical to dramatic reality; although discovered years before by Surrey, blank verse, with the exception of its dull use by the authors of *Gorboduc,* remained unappreciated for its potentialities until Marlowe made it ring in *Tamburlaine.* Perfected by Shakespeare, who was led to it by Marlowe's "mighty" example, blank verse has ever since been one of the few most important vehicles of poetic expression. Before *Tamburlaine* English drama had been floundering in uncertainty; with Marlowe's first play it entered at once on the glorious road that leads through Shakespeare and his great fellow-dramatists.

Ignited with imaginative power, Marlowe followed with a second play on Tamburlaine (1587?), *Doctor Faustus* (1588?), *The Jew of Malta* (1589?) and, with much deepening of insight, *Edward II* (1592?). Two other plays, *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and *The Massacre at Paris,* have been ascribed to him. At the time of his death he was working on a brilliant narrative poem, *Hero and Leander,* of which Swinburne says: "In melodious ease and simplicity of strength, it is not less pre-eminent than in the adorable beauty and impeccable perfection of separate lines or passages." He had also translated a work of Ovid and of Lucan, and written at least one fine lyric, *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love* (cf. *above*).

It is difficult to resist seeing the pagan, reckless Marlowe behind most of his creations. There is a curious consistency between the untamed genius whose life was snuffed out when he was twenty-nine, and the heroes of his plays. Tamburlaine, Faustus, and the Jew of Malta all desire to wrench from life a power not granted to mortals—Tamburlaine, world-dominion; Faustus, the empire of all knowledge; and the Jew of Malta, outrageous revenge. Edward, too, has a kinship with these in his desire of a friendship not permitted rulers of a state. These men will not bend to the limitations imposed on ordinary human beings in their passionate assertion of will.

Something of Marlowe's violent individualism, naturally nurtured by the Renaissance, is attributable to Elizabethan distortion of the teachings of Machiavelli. *The Prince* apparently was untranslated in Marlowe's day, but report had constructed a concept of its contents rather removed from actuality. The Elizabethans had exaggerated Machiavelli's homage to free individual expression into a justification of ruthless pursuit of power. Thus Machiavelli had come to symbolize the man without morals whose exertion of power was its own excuse. Marlowe, despising resignation or mere reasonableness, idealized in his heroes the "Machiavellian" concept, and exulted in having them hurl themselves against life, much as he seems to have done with himself. In fact, he introduces Machiavelli as the Prologue to *The Jew of Malta* and has him say:

To some perhaps my name is odious.
. . . I am Machevill,
And weigh not men, and therefore not men's words.
Admir'd I am of those who hate me most . . .
I count religion but a childish toy,
And hold there is no sin but ignorance.

(The last line is almost a *credo* of many Renaissance men!) The Jew of Malta in his overwhelming need of vengeance carries monomania to the verge of insanity. Cruelty and mad pride are so piled up in *Tamburlaine* that the play is saved from being ridiculous only by the magnificent radiance of its poetry.

And, paradoxical although it may be to say this of a man whose contribution to the future of English drama was the greatest in his day, Marlowe's hold on posterity is as poet rather than dramatist. There is a riot of color in his sonorous lines and a tireless energy of fancy that perfectly suit his childlike enthusiasm. Few moments in poetry are more magical than that in which Faustus ecstatically beholds Helen. With due allowance for overstatement, there is much truth in Swinburne's judgment of Marlowe: "He first, and he alone, guided Shakespeare into the right way of work; his music, in which there is no echo of any man's before him, found its echo in the more prolonged . . . harmony of Milton's."

In *Edward II* Marlowe began to show an interest in human suffering, unhinted at in his work before. Perhaps he was on the way to deep as well as glittering poetry? It is impossible to say. In May 1593 he spent his last day in the company of three scoundrels, one of them a known spy, at a tavern in Deptford. His murderer testified that he had stabbed Marlowe in the brain in self-defence in a squabble over the reckoning. No death was ever a greater loss to English poetry.

It would be too much to say that *Doctor Faustus* is Marlowe's best play; *Tamburlaine* has even more wonderful poetry, and *Edward II* is far more moving and is better designed. But *Doctor Faustus* has the noblest theme of all. It is said that Goethe, before writing his own masterpiece on the same story, had originally intended merely to translate Marlowe; greater tribute no play could have had. The drama has historical importance too, as the earliest attempt to delineate struggle within the mind of its hero. There are wonderful poetic passages, notably the concluding speech of Faustus. Finally, a special interest attaches to the hero as the embodiment of the Renaissance thirst for knowledge. On the other hand, the drama is very loosely constructed, and the possibilities of the theme inadequately realized. The "comic" scenes are unpleasant; but it is more than likely that they were not written by Marlowe, who shows no interest in comedy in any other play; they were probably composed by others to please the audience, and found their way into the text when it was printed years after Marlowe's death. As always in Marlowe, the chief interest is the poetic.

J. L. Hotson's *The Death of Marlowe* (1925) is a thrilling record of the author's discovery of the facts pertaining to Marlowe's murder. A recent biography is J. Bakeless's *Christopher Marlowe: The Man in His Time* (1937). C. F. Tucker Brooke has edited Marlowe's works (1910).

The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus

PERSONS IN THE PLAY

Chorus
Doctor Faustus
Wagner, *his servant*
Good, and Evil Angel
Valdes *and* Cornelius, *Conjurors*
Three Scholars
Mephistophilis, *a Devil*
The Clown

Baliol, Belcher, Lucifer, Belzebub *and Other Devils*
The Seven Deadly Sins
The Pope
Cardinal of Lorain
Friars
Robin, *the Hostler*
Rafe
A Vintner
The Emperor
A Knight and Attendants
Spirits of Alexander *and his Paramour*
A Horse-Courser
The Duke of Vanholt and his Duchess
An Old Man
The Spirit of Helen *of Troy*

Scene: The Study of Doctor Faustus; a Grove; the Pope's Privy-Chamber at Rome; the Courts of the Emperor and the Duke of Vanholt; and elsewhere.

Enter Chorus.

Chorus. Not marching now in fields of Trasimene,[1]
Where Mars did mate the Carthaginians;
Nor sporting in the dalliance of love,
In courts of kings where state is overturned;
Nor in the pomp of proud audacious deeds,
Intends our Muse to vaunt his heavenly verse:
Only this, gentlemen—we must perform
The form of Faustus' fortunes, good or bad;
To patient judgments we appeal our plaud,
And speak for Faustus in his infancy.
Now is he born, his parents base of stock,
In Germany, within a town called Rhodes;
Of riper years to Wittenberg[2] he went,
Whereas his kinsmen chiefly brought him up.
So soon he profits in divinity,
The fruitful plot of scholarism graced,
That shortly he was graced with doctor's name,
Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
In heavenly matters of theology;
Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,
His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
And, melting, heavens conspired his overthrow;[3]
For, falling to a devilish exercise,
And glutted now with learning's golden gifts,
He surfeits upon cursèd necromancy.[4]
Nothing so sweet as magic is to him,
Which he prefers before his chiefest bliss.
And this the man that in his study sits! [*Exit.*

Enter Faustus *in his Study.*

Faust. Settle thy studies, Faustus, and begin
To sound the depth of that thou wilt profess;[5]
Having commenced, be a divine in show,
Yet level at the end of every art,
And live and die in Aristotle's[6] works.
Sweet Analytics,[7] 'tis thou hast ravished me,
[*Reads*]
Bene disserere est finis logices.[8]
Is to dispute well logic's chiefest end?
Affords this art no greater miracle?
Then read no more, thou hast attained the end;
A greater subject fitteth Faustus' wit:
Bid ὂν καὶ μὴ ὂν[9] farewell; Galen[10] come,
Seeing *Ubi desinit philosophus ibi incipit medicus;*[11]

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[1] A lake in central Italy where Hannibal defeated the Romans in 217 B.C.

[2] A town in Saxony, famous for its University.

[3] Reference to the story of Icarus, who tried to fly by the use of waxen wings which his father Daedalus had invented; he flew so near the sun that the wax melted.

[4] black magic, sorcery.

[5] teach.

[6] the famous Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.).

[7] logic.

[8] "To argue well is the chief end of logic."

[9] a phrase of Aristotle's, "being and not being."

[10] Greek physician and writer on medicine (130-200? A.D.).

[11] "Where the philosopher stops the physician begins."

Be a physician, Faustus, heap up gold,
And be eternized for some wondrous cure.
[*Reads*]
Summum bonum medicinae sanitas,
The end of physic is our body's health.
Why, Faustus, hast thou not attained that end?
Is not thy common talk sound aphorisms?
Are not thy bills hung up as monuments,
Whereby whole cities have escaped the plague,
And thousand desperate maladies been eased?
Yet art thou still but Faustus and a man.
Wouldst thou make men to live eternally,
Or, being dead, raise them to life again,
Then this profession were to be esteemed.
Physic, farewell.—Where is Justinian?[12]
[*Reads*]
Si una eademque res legatur duobus, alter rem, alter valorem rei, etc.[13]
A pretty case of paltry legacies! [*Reads*]
Exhaereditare filium non potest pater nisi, etc.[14]
Such is the subject of the Institute
And universal body of the law.
His study fits a mercenary drudge,
Who aims at nothing but external trash;
Too servile and illiberal for me.
When all is done divinity is best;
Jerome's Bible,[15] Faustus, view it well. [*Reads*]
Stipendium peccati mors est. Ha! Stipendium, etc.
The reward of sin is death.[16] That's hard. [*Reads*]
Si peccasse negamus, fallimur, et nulla est in nobis veritas.
If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves,
and there's no truth in us.[17] Why, then, belike we
must sin, and so consequently die.

Ay, we must die an everlasting death.
What doctrine call you this, *Che sera sera,*
What will be, shall be? Divinity, adieu!
These metaphysics of magicians
And necromantic books are heavenly:
Lines, circles, scenes, letters, and characters:
Ay, these are those that Faustus most desires.
O, what a world of profit and delight,
Of power, of honor, of omnipotence
Is promised to the studious artisan!
All things that move between the quiet poles
Shall be at my command: emperors and kings
Are but obeyèd in their several provinces,
Nor can they raise the wind or rend the clouds;
But his dominion that exceeds in this
Stretcheth as far as doth the mind of man,
A sound magician is a mighty god:
Here, Faustus, try thy brains to gain a deity.
Wagner!

Enter WAGNER.

Commend me to my dearest friends,
The German Valdes and Cornelius;
Request them earnestly to visit me.
WAG. I will, sir. [*Exit.*
FAUST. Their conference will be a greater help to me
Than all my labors, plod I ne'er so fast.

Enter the Good Angel and the Evil Angel.

G. ANG. O Faustus! lay that damnèd book aside,
And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul,
And heap God's heavy wrath upon thy head.
Read, read the Scriptures: that is blasphemy.
E. ANG. Go forward, Faustus, in that famous art,
Wherein all Nature's treasure is contained:
Be thou on earth as Jove is in the sky,
Lord and commander of these elements.
[*Exeunt Angels*
FAUST. How am I glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?
I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates;
I'll have them read me strange philosophy
And tell the secrets of all foreign kings;
I'll have them wall all Germany with brass,
And make swift Rhine circle fair Wittenberg,
I'll have them fill the public schools with silk,
Wherewith the students shall be bravely clad;
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,
And chase the Prince of Parma[18] from our land,
And reign sole king of all the provinces;

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[12] Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire (483-565) who codified Roman laws in a work known as *The Institutes.*

[13] "If one and the same thing is bequeathed to two people, one of them shall have the thing, the other the value of the thing."

[14] "A father cannot disinherit his son unless."

[15] The Latin version of the Bible was made by St. Jerome about 390 A.D.

[16] cf. *Romans,* 6:23.

[17] cf. *I John,* 1:8.

[18] The representative of the Spanish government in the Netherlands.

Yea, stranger engines for the brunt of war
Than was the fiery keel at Antwerp's bridge,[19]
I'll make my servile spirits to invent.

Enter Valdes *and* Cornelius

Come, German Valdes and Cornelius,
And make me blest with your sage conference.
Valdes, sweet Valdes, and Cornelius,
Know that your words have won me at the last
To practise magic and concealèd arts:
Yet not your words only, but mine own fantasy
That will receive no object; for my head
But ruminates on necromantic skill.
Philosophy is odious and obscure,
Both law and physic are for petty wits;
Divinity is basest of the three,
Unpleasant, harsh, contemptible, and vile:
'Tis magic, magic that hath ravished me.
Then, gentle friends, aid me in this attempt;
And I that have with concise syllogisms
Gravelled the pastors of the German church,
And made the flowering pride of Wittenberg
Swarm to my problems, as the infernal spirits
On sweet Musaeus,[20] when he came to hell,
Will be as cunning as Agrippa[21] was,
Whose shadows made all Europe honor him.
Vald. Faustus, these books, thy wit, and our experience
Shall make all nations to canònize us.
As Indian Moors[22] obey their Spanish lords,
So shall the spirits of every element
Be always serviceable to us three;
Like lions shall they guard us when we please;
Like Almain rutters[23] with their horsemen's staves
Or Lapland giants,[24] trotting by our sides;
Sometimes like women or unwedded maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the queen of love:
From Venice shall they drag huge argosies,
And from America the golden fleece
That yearly stuffs old Philip's treasury;[25]
If learnèd Faustus will be resolute.
Faust. Valdes, as resolute am I in this
As thou to live; therefore object it not.
Corn. The miracles that magic will perform
Will make thee vow to study nothing else.
He that is grounded in astrology,
Enriched with tongues, well seen in minerals,
Hath all the principles magic doth require.
Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renowned,
And more frequented for this mystery
Than heretofore the Delphian Oracle.
The spirits tell me they can dry the sea,
And fetch the treasure of all foreign wracks,
Ay, all the wealth that our forefathers hid
Within the massy entrails of the earth;
Then tell me, Faustus, what shall we three want?
Faust. Nothing, Cornelius! O, this cheers my soul!
Come show me some demonstrations magical,
That I may conjure in some lusty grove,
And have these joys in full possession.
Vald. Then haste thee to some solitary grove,
And bear wise Bacon's[26] and Albanus' works,
The Hebrew Psalter and New Testament;
And whatsoever else is requisite.
We will inform thee ere our conference cease.
Corn. Valdes, first let him know the words of art;
And then, all other ceremonies learned,
Faustus may try his cunning by himself.
Vald. First I'll instruct thee in the rudiments,
And then wilt thou be perfecter than I.
Faust. Then come and dine with me, and after meat,
We'll canvass every quiddity[27] thereof;
For ere I sleep I'll try what I can do:
This night I'll conjure tho' I die therefore.
[*Exeunt.*

[*Before* Faustus' *House*]

Enter two Scholars.

1 Schol. I wonder what's become of Faustus that was wont to make our schools ring with *sic probo*?[28]

2 Schol. That shall we know, for see here comes his boy.[29]

Enter Wagner.

1 Schol. How now sirrah! Where's thy master?
Wag. God in heaven knows!

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[19] This refers to a successful stratagem of the Dutch against the Prince of Parma in 1585.

[20] A semi-mythical Greek bard, whom Aeneas met in the lower world.

[21] Cornelius Agrippa, a German theologian (1486-1535).

[22] American Indians.

[23] German horsemen.

[24] Lapland was thought of as a land of giants.

[25] Philip II of Spain (1527-'98).

[26] Roger Bacon (1214?-'94), an Oxford philosopher and alchemist.

[27] nice question.

[28] "Thus I prove it."

[29] servant.

2 Schol. Why, dost not thou know?

Wag. Yes, I know. But that follows not.

1 Schol. Go to, sirrah! leave your jesting, and tell us where he is.

Wag. That follows not necessary by force of argument, that you, being licentiate, should stand upon't: therefore acknowledge your error and be attentive.

2 Schol. Why, didst thou not say thou knewest?

Wag. Have you any witness on't?

1 Schol. Yes, sirrah, I heard you.

Wag. Ask my fellow if I be a thief.

2 Schol. Well, you will not tell us?

Wag. Yes, sir, I will tell you; yet if you were not dunces, you would never ask me such a question; for is not he *corpus naturale*?[80] and is not that *mobile*?[81] then wherefore should you ask me such a question? But that I am by nature phlegmatic, slow to wrath, and prone to lechery (to love, I would say), it were not for you to come within forty feet of the place of execution, although I do not doubt to see you both hanged the next sessions. Thus having triumphed over you, I will set my countenance like a precisian,[82] and begin to speak thus: Truly, my dear brethren, my master is within at dinner, with Valdes and Cornelius, as this wine, if it could speak, would inform your worships; and so the Lord bless you, preserve you, and keep you, my dear brethren, my dear brethren. [*Exit.*

1 Schol. Nay, then, I fear he has fallen into that damned art, for which they two are infamous through the world.

2 Schol. Were he a stranger, and not allied to me, yet should I grieve for him. But come, let us go and inform the rector,[83] and see if he by his grave counsel can reclaim him.

1 Schol. O, but I fear me nothing can reclaim him.

2 Schol. You let us try what we can do. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Faustus *to conjure* (*in a grove*).

Faust. Now that the gloomy shadow of the earth
Longing to view Orion's drizzling look,[84]
Leaps from the antarctic world unto the sky,
And dims the welkin[85] with her pitchy breath,
Faustus, begin thine incantations,
And try if devils will obey thy hest,
Seeing thou hast prayed and sacrificed to them.
Within this circle[86] is Jehovah's name,
Forward and backward anagrammatized,[87]
The breviated names of holy saints,
Figures of every adjunct[88] to the heavens,
And characters of signs and erring[89] stars,
By which the spirits are enforced to rise:
Then fear not, Faustus, but be resolute,
And try the uttermost magic can perform.

Sint mihi dei Acherontis propitii! Valeat numen triplex Jehovae! Ignei, aerii, aquatani spiritus, salvete! Orientis princeps Belzebub, inferni ardentis monarcha, et Demogorgon, propitiamus vos, ut appareat et surgat Mephistophilis. Quid tu moraris? per Jehovam, Gehennam, et consecratam aquam quam nunc spargo, signumque crucis quod nunc facio, et per vota nostra, ipse nunc surgat nobis dicatus Mephistophilis![40]

Enter (Mephistophilis,) *a Devil.*

I charge thee to return and change thy shape;
Thou art too ugly to attend on me.
Go, and return an old Franciscan friar;
That holy shape becomes a devil best.
[*Exit Devil.*
I see there's virtue in my heavenly words;
Who would not be proficient in this art?
How pliant is this Mephistophilis,
Full of obedience and humility!
Such is the force of magic and my spells:
Now Faustus, thou art conjuror laureat,
That canst command great Mephistophilis:
Quin redis Mephistophilis fratris imagine.[41]

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[80] physical body. [81] movable. [82] Puritan.

[83] head of a University.

[84] The appearance of the constellation Orion was supposed to bring rain.

[85] sky. [86] A magic circle, used in raising spirits.

[87] made into an anagram by means of rearranging the letters.

[88] fixed star. [89] wandering stars, i.e. planets.

[40] "May the gods of Acheron be propitious to me! May the three-formed deity of Jehovah prevail! Hail, ye spirits of fire, air and water! Belzebub, Prince of the East, monarch over burning hell, and Demogorgon, we propitiate you so that Mephistophilis may appear and arise. Why do you delay? By Jehovah, Gehenna, and the consecrated water which I now sprinkle, and the sign of the cross which I now make, and by our prayer, may Mephistophilis summoned by us now arise."

[41] "Thou returnest, Mephistophilis, in the likeness of a friar."

Enter Mephistophilis (*like a Franciscan Friar*).

Meph. Now, Faustus, what would'st thou have me to do?
Faust. I charge thee wait upon me whilst I live,
To do whatever Faustus shall command,
Be it to make the moon drop from her sphere,
Or the ocean to overwhelm the world.
Meph. I am a servant to great Lucifer,
And may not follow thee without his leave:
No more than he commands must we perform.
Faust. Did not he charge thee to appear to me?
Meph. No, I came hither of mine own accord.
Faust. Did not my conjuring speeches raise thee? Speak.
Meph. That was the cause, but yet *per accidens*;[42]
For when we hear one rack the name of God,
Abjure the Scriptures and his Savior Christ,
We fly in hope to get his glorious soul;
Nor will we come, unless he use such means
Whereby he is in danger to be damned:
Therefore the shortest cut for conjuring
Is stoutly to abjure the Trinity,
And pray devoutly to the Prince of Hell.
Faust. So Faustus hath
Already done; and holds this principle,
There is no chief but only Belzebub,
To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
This word "damnation" terrifies not him,
For he confounds hell in Elysium;[43]
His ghost be with the old philosophers!
But, leaving these vain trifles of men's souls,
Tell me what is that Lucifer thy lord?
Meph. Arch-regent and commander of all spirits.
Faust. Was not that Lucifer an angel once?
Meph. Yes, Faustus, and most dearly loved of God.
Faust. How comes it then that he is prince of devils?
Meph. O, by aspiring pride and insolence;
For which God threw him from the face of heaven.
Faust. And what are you that live with Lucifer?
Meph. Unhappy spirits that fell with Lucifer,
Conspired against our God with Lucifer,
And are for ever damned with Lucifer.
Faust. Where are you damned?
Meph. In hell.
Faust. How comes it then that thou art out of hell?
Meph. Why this is hell, nor am I out of it:
Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
In being deprived of everlasting bliss?
O Faustus! leave these frivolous demands,
Which strike a terror to my fainting soul.
Faust. What, is great Mephistophilis so passionate[44]
For being deprivèd of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess.
Go bear these tidings to great Lucifer:
Seeing Faustus hath incurred eternal death
By desperate thoughts against Jove's deity,
Say he surrenders up to him his soul,
So he will spare him four and twenty years,
Letting him live in all voluptuousness;
Having thee ever to attend on me;
To give me whatsoever I shall ask,
To tell me whatsoever I demand,
To slay mine enemies, and aid my friends,
And always be obedient to my will.
Go and return to mighty Lucifer,
And meet me in my study at midnight,
And then resolve me of thy master's mind.
Meph. I will, Faustus. [*Exit.*
Faust. Had I as many souls as there be stars,
I'd give them all for Mephistophilis.
By him I'll be great Emperor of the world,
And make a bridge thorough the moving air,
To pass the ocean with a band of men:
I'll join the hills that bind the Afric shore,
And make that country continent[45] to Spain,
And both contributory to my crown.
The Emperor shall not live but by my leave,
Nor any potentate of Germany.
Now that I have obtained what I desire,
I'll live in speculation[46] of this art
Till Mephistophilis return again. [*Exit.*

(*Before* Faustus' *house.*)

Enter Wagner *and Clown.*

Wag. Sirrah, boy, come hither.

Clown. How, boy! Swowns, boy! I hope you have seen many boys with such pickadevaunts[47] as I have; boy, quotha.

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[42] by accident.
[43] "Hell and Elysium (the abode of the Greek dead) are all the same to him."
[44] sad.
[45] joined.
[46] study.
[47] French *pic-à-devant*, a sharply pointed beard.

Wag. Tell me, sirrah, hast thou any comings in?

Clown. Ay, and goings out too. You may see else.

Wag. Alas, poor slave! see how poverty jesteth in his nakedness! The villian is bare and out of service, and so hungry that I know he would give his soul to the Devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw.

Clown. How? My soul to the Devil for a shoulder of mutton, though 'twere blood-raw! Not so, good friend. By'r lady, I had need have it well roasted and good sauce to it, if I pay so dear.

Wag. Well, wilt thou serve me, and I'll make thee go like *Qui mihi discipulus*?[48]

Clown. How, in verse?

Wag. No, sirrah; in beaten[49] silk and stavesacre.[50]

Clown. How, how, Knave's acre! Ay, I thought that was all the land his father left him. Do you hear? I would be sorry to rob you of your living.

Wag. Sirrah, I say in stavesacre.

Clown. Oho! Oho! Stavesacre! Why then belike if I were your man I should be full of vermin.

Wag. So thou shalt, whether thou beest with me or no. But, sirrah, leave your jesting, and bind yourself presently unto me for seven years, or I'll turn all the lice about thee into familiars,[51] and they shall tear thee in pieces.

Clown. Do you hear, sir? You may save that labor: they are too familiar with me already: swowns! they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for their meat and drink.

Wag. Well, do you hear, sirrah? Hold, take these guilders. [*Gives money*]

Clown. Gridirons! what be they?

Wag. Why, French crowns.

Clown. Mass, but in the name of French crowns, a man were as good have as many English counters. And what should I do with these?

Wag. Why, now, sirrah, thou art at an hour's warning, whensoever and wheresoever the Devil shall fetch thee.

Clown. No, no. Here, take your gridirons again.

Wag. Truly I'll none of them.

Clown. Truly but you shall.

Wag. Bear witness I gave them him.

Clown. Bear witness I give them you again.

Wag. Well, I will cause two devils presently to fetch thee away—Baliol and Belcher!

Clown. Let your Baliol and your Belcher come here, and I'll knock them, they were never so knocked since they were devils! Say I should kill one of them, what would folks say? "Do you see yonder tall fellow in the round slop[52]—he has killed the devil." So I should be called Kill-devil all the parish over.

Enter two Devils: the Clown runs up and down crying.

Wag. Baliol and Belcher! Spirits, away! [*Exeunt Devils*

Clown. What, are they gone? A vengeance on them, they have vile long nails! There was a he devil, and a she-devil! I'll tell you how you shall know them; all he-devils has horns, and all she-devils has clifts and cloven feet.

Wag. Well, sirrah, follow me.

Clown. But, do you hear—if I should serve you, would you teach me to raise up Banios and Belcheos?

Wag. I will teach thee to turn thyself to anything; to a dog, or a cat, or a mouse, or a rat, or anything.

Clown. How! a Christian fellow to a dog or a cat, a mouse or a rat! No, no, sir. If you turn me into anything, let it be in the likeness of a little pretty frisking flea, that I may be here and there and everywhere. O, I'll tickle the pretty wenches' plackets; I'll be amongst them, i' faith.

Wag. Well, sirrah, come.

Clown. But, do you hear, Wagner?

Wag. How! Baliol and Belcher!

Clown. O Lord! I pray, sir, let Banio and Belcher go sleep.

Wag. Villain—call me Master Wagner, and let thy left eye be diametarily fixed upon my right heel, with *quasi vestigiis nostris insistere*.[53] [*Exit.*

Clown. God forgive me, he speaks Dutch fustian Well, I'll follow him: I'll serve him, that's flat. [*Exit.*

Enter Faustus *in his Study.*

Faust. Now, Faustus, must
Thou needs be damned, and canst thou not be saved:
What boots it then to think of God or heaven?
Away with such vain fancies, and despair:
Despair in God, and trust in Belzebub;
Now go not backward: no, Faustus, be resolute:

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[48] "You who are my disciple," said to be the beginning of a Latin song.

[49] worn smooth.

[50] larkspur, used for destroying lice.

[51] familiar spirits.

[52] loose breeches.

[53] "as if to follow in my footsteps."

Why waver'st thou? O, something soundeth in mine ears
"Abjure this magic, turn to God again!"
Ay, and Faustus will turn to God again.
To God?—He loves thee not—
The God thou serv'st is thine own appetite,
Wherein is fixed the love of Belzebub;
To him I'll build an altar and a church,
And offer lukewarm blood of new-born babes.

Enter Good Angel and Evil.

G. Ang. Sweet Faustus, leave that execrable art.

Faust. Contrition, prayer, repentance! What of them?

G. Ang. O, they are means to bring thee unto heaven.

E. Ang. Rather, illusions—fruits of lunacy,
That makes men foolish that do trust them most.

G. Ang. Sweet Faustus, think of heaven, and heavenly things.

E. Ang. No, Faustus, think of honor and of wealth. [*Exeunt Angels.*

Faust. Of wealth!
Why the signiory of Embden[54] shall be mine.
When Mephistophilis shall stand by me,
What God can hurt thee? Faustus, thou art safe;
Cast no more doubts. Come, Mephistophilis,
And bring glad tidings from great Lucifer;
Is't not midnight? Come, Mephistophilis;
Veni,[55] *veni, Mephistophile!*

Enter Mephistophilis.

Now tell me, what says Lucifer, thy lord?

Meph. That I shall wait on Faustus whilst he lives,
So he will buy my service with his soul.

Faust. Already Faustus hath hazarded that for thee.

Meph. But, Faustus, thou must bequeath it solemnly,
And write a deed of gift with thine own blood,
For that security craves great Lucifer.
If thou deny it, I will back to hell.

Faust. Stay, Mephistophilis! and tell me what good
Will my soul do thy lord.

Meph. Enlarge his kingdom.

Faust. Is that the reason why he tempts us thus?

Meph. *Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.*[56]

Faust. Why, have you any pain that[57] torture others?

Meph. As great as have the human souls of men.
But tell me, Faustus, shall I have thy soul?
And I will be thy slave, and wait on thee,
And give thee more than thou hast wit to ask.

Faust. Ay, Mephistophilis, I give it thee.

Meph. Then, Faustus, stab thine arm courageously,
And bind thy soul that at some certain day
Great Lucifer may claim it as his own;
And then be thou as great as Lucifer.

Faust. [*stabbing his arm*] Lo, Mephistophilis, for love of thee,
I cut mine arm, and with my proper[58] blood
Assure my soul to be great Lucifer's,
Chief lord and regent of perpetual night!
View here the blood that trickles from mine arm,
And let it be propitious for my wish.

Meph. But, Faustus, thou must
Write it in manner of a deed of gift.

Faust. Ay, so I will. [*Writes*] But, Mephistophilis,
My blood congeals, and I can write no more,

Meph. I'll fetch thee fire to dissolve it straight [*Exit*

Faust. What might the staying of my blood portend?
Is it unwilling I should write this bill?
Why streams it not that I may write afresh?
Faustus gives to thee his soul. Ah, there it stayed.
Why should'st thou not? Is not thy soul thine own?
Then write again, *Faustus gives to thee his soul.*

Enter Mephistophilis *with a chafer*[59] *of coals.*

Meph. Here's fire. Come, Faustus, set it on.

Faust. So now the blood begins to clear again;
Now will I make an end immediately. [*Writes*]

Meph. O, what will not I do to obtain his soul. [*Aside*]

Faust. *Consummatum est:*[60] this bill is ended,
And Faustus hath bequeathed his soul to Lucifer.
But what is this inscription on mine arm?
Homo, fuge![61] Whither should I fly?
If unto God, he'll throw me down to hell.
My senses are deceived; here's nothing writ—

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[54] the rulership of Embden, a German city important in the commerce of the time.

[55] Come.

[56] "It is a comfort to the wretched to have companions in grief."

[57] *That* refers to *you.*

[58] own.

[59] burner

[60] "It is finished."

[61] "Man, fly!"

I see it plain; here in this place is writ
Homo, fuge! Yet shall not Faustus fly.
Meph. I'll fetch him somewhat to delight his mind. [*Exit.*

Enter Mephistophilis *with Devils, giving crowns and rich apparel to* Faustus, *and dance, and then depart.*

Faust. Speak, Mephistophilis, what means this show?
Meph. Nothing, Faustus, but to delight thy mind withal,
And to show thee what magic can perform.
Faust. But may I raise up spirits when I please?
Meph. Ay, Faustus, and do greater things than these.
Faust. Then there's enough for a thousand souls.
Here, Mephistophilis, receive this scroll,
A deed of gift of body and of soul:
But yet conditionally that thou perform
All articles prescribed between us both.
Meph. Faustus, I swear by hell and Lucifer
To effect all promises between us made.

Faust. Then hear me read them: *On these conditions following. First, that Faustus may be a spirit in form and substance. Secondly, that Mephistophilis shall be his servant, and at his command. Thirdly, that Mephistophilis shall do for him and bring him whatsoever. Fourthly, that he shall be in his chamber or house invisible. Lastly that he shall appear to the said John Faustus, at all times, in what form or shape soever he please. I, John Faustus, of Wittenberg, Doctor, by these presents do give both body and soul to Lucifer, Prince of the East, and his minister, Mephistophilis: and furthermore grant unto them, that twenty-four years being expired, the articles above written inviolate, full power to fetch or carry the said John Faustus, body and soul, flesh, blood, or goods, into their Habitation wheresoever. By me,*

John Faustus.

Meph. Speak, Faustus, do you deliver this as your deed?
Faust. Ay, take it, and the Devil give thee good on't!
Meph. Now, Faustus, ask what thou wilt.
Faust. First will I question thee about hell.
Tell me where is the place that men call hell?
Meph. Under the heavens.
Faust. Ay, but where about?
Meph. Within the bowels of these elements,
Where we are tortured and remain for ever;
Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place; for where we are is hell,
And where hell is there must we ever be:
And, to conclude, when all the world dissolves,
And every creature shall be purified,
All places shall be hell that is not heaven.
Faust. Come, I think hell's a fable.
Meph. Ay, think so still, till experience change thy mind.
Faust. Why, think'st thou then that Faustus shall be damned?
Meph. Ay, of necessity, for here's the scroll
Wherein thou hast given thy soul to Lucifer.
Faust. Ay, and body too; but what of that?
Think'st thou that Faustus is so fond[62] to imagine
That, after this life, there is any pain?
Tush; these are trifles, and mere old wives' tales.
Meph. But, Faustus, I am an instance to prove the contrary,
For I am damnèd, and am now in hell.
Faust. How! now in hell?
Nay, an this be hell, I'll willingly be damnèd here;
What? walking, disputing, etc.?
But, leaving off this, let me have a wife,
The fairest maid in Germany;
For I am wanton and lascivious,
And cannot live without a wife.
Meph. How—a wife?
I prithee, Faustus, talk not of a wife.
Faust. Nay, sweet Mephistophilis, fetch me one, for I will have one.
Meph. Well—thou wilt have one. Sit there till I come:
I'll fetch thee a wife in the Devil's name. [*Exit.*

Re-enter Mephistophilis *with a Devil dressed like a woman, with fireworks.*

Meph. Tell me, Faustus, how dost thou like thy wife?
Faust. A plague on her for a hot whore!
Meph. Tut, Faustus,
Marriage is but a ceremonial toy;
And if thou lovest me, think no more of it.
I'll cull thee out the fairest courtesans,
And bring them every morning to thy bed;
She whom thine eye shall like, thy heart shall have,
Be she as chaste as was Penelope,[63]
And as wise as Saba,[64] or as beautiful

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[62] foolish.

[63] the virtuous wife of Odysseus.

[64] the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon. Cf. *I Kings*, chap. 10.

As was bright Lucifer before his fall.
Here, take this book, peruse it thoroughly:
[*Gives a book*]
The iterating of these lines brings gold;
The framing of this circle on the ground
Brings whirlwinds, tempests, thunder and lightning;
Pronounce this thrice devoutly to thyself,
And men in armor shall appear to thee,
Ready to execute what thou desir'st.

Faust. Thanks, Mephistophilis; yet fain would I have a book wherein I might behold all spells and incantations, that I might raise up spirits when I please.

Meph. Here they are, in this book.
[*Turns to them*]

Faust. Now would I have a book where I might see all characters and planets of the heavens, that I might know their motions and dispositions.

Meph. Here they are too. [*Turns to them*]

Faust. Nay, let me have one book more—and then I have done—wherein I might see all plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon the earth.

Meph. Here they be.

Faust. O, thou art deceived.

Meph. Tut, I warrant thee.
[*Turns to them.*] [*Exeunt.*

Enter Faustus *in his Study, and* Mephistophilis.

Faust. When I behold the heavens, then I repent,
And curse thee, wicked Mephistophilis,
Because thou hast deprived me of those joys.

Meph. Why, Faustus,
Think'st thou heaven is such a glorious thing?
I tell thee 'tis not half so fair as thou,
Or any man that breathes on earth.

Faust. How prov'st thou that?

Meph. 'Twas made for man, therefore is man more excellent.

Faust. If it were made for man, 'twas made for me;
I will renounce this magic and repent.

Enter Good Angel and Evil Angel.

G. Ang. Faustus, repent; yet God will pity thee.

E. Ang. Thou art a spirit; God cannot pity thee.

Faust. Who buzzeth in my ears I am a spirit?
Be I a devil, yet God may pity me;
Ay, God will pity me if I repent.

E. Ang. Ay, but Faustus never shall repent.
[*Exeunt Angels.*

Faust. My heart's so hardened I cannot repent.
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven,
But fearful echoes thunder in mine ears
"Faustus, thou art damned!" Then swords and knives,
Poison, gun, halters, and envenomed steel
Are laid before me to dispatch myself,
And long ere this I should have slain myself,
Had not sweet pleasure conquered deep despair.
Have not I made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Oenon's[65] death?
And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sound of his melodious harp,[66]
Made music with my Mephistophilis?
Why should I die then, or basely despair?
I am resolved: Faustus shall ne'er repent—
Come, Mephistophilis, let us dispute again,
And argue of divine astrology.
Tell me, are there many heavens above the moon?
Are all celestial bodies but one globe,
As is the substance of this centric earth?

Meph. As are the elements, such are the spheres
Mutually folded in each other's orb,
And, Faustus,
All jointly move upon one axle-tree
Whose terminine is termed the world's wide pole;
Nor are the names of Saturn, Mars, or Jupiter
Feigned, but are erring stars.

Faust. But tell me, have they all one motion both, *situ et tempore*?[67]

Meph. All jointly move from east to west in twenty-four hours upon the poles of the world; but differ in their motion upon the poles of the zodiac.

Faust. Tush!
These slender trifles Wagner can decide;
Hath Mephistophilis no greater skill?
Who knows not the double motion of the planets?
The first is finished in a natural day;
The second thus: as Saturn in thirty years;
Jupiter in twelve; Mars in four; the Sun,
Venus, and Mercury in a year; the Moon
in twenty-eight days. Tush, these are freshmen's suppositions. But tell me, hath every sphere a dominion or *intelligentia*?[68]

Meph. Ay.

Faust. How many heavens, or spheres, are there?

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[65] The reference is to Homer's story of the desertion of Oenone by Alexander, or Paris, in order to carry off Helen of Sparta.

[66] Amphion, who erected the walls of Thebes to the accompaniment of his lyre.

[67] "in place and time."

[68] controlling spirit.

Meph. Nine: the seven planets, the firmament, and the empyreal heaven.[69]

Faust. Well, resolve me in this question: Why have we not conjunctions, oppositions, aspects, eclipses, all at one time, but in some years we have more, in some less?

Meph. *Per inaequalem motum respectu totius.*[70]

Faust. Well, I am answered. Tell me who made the world.

Meph. I will not.

Faust. Sweet Mephistophilis, tell me.

Meph. Move me not, for I will not tell thee.

Faust. Villain, have I not bound thee to tell me anything?

Meph. Ay, that is not against our kingdom; but this is. Think thou on hell, Faustus, for thou art damned.

Faust. Think, Faustus, upon God that made the world.

Meph. Remember this.

Faust. Ay, go, accursèd spirit, to ugly hell.
'Tis thou hast damned distressèd Faustus' soul.
Is't not too late?

Enter Good Angel and Evil Angel.

E. Ang. Too late.

G. Ang. Never too late, if Faustus can repent.

E. Ang. If thou repent, devils shall tear thee in pieces.

G. Ang. Repent, and they shall never raze thy skin. [*Exeunt Angels.*

Faust. Ah, Christ my Saviour,
Seek to save distressèd Faustus' soul!

Enter Lucifer, Belzebub, *and* Mephistophilis.

Luc. Christ cannot save thy soul, for he is just;
There's none but I have interest in the same.

Faust. O, who art thou that look'st so terrible?

Luc. I am Lucifer,
And this is my companion-prince in hell.

Faust. O Faustus! they are come to fetch away thy soul!

Luc. We come to tell thee thou dost injure us;
Thou talk'st of Christ contrary to thy promise;
Thou should'st not think of God: think of the Devil.

Belz. And his dam, too.

Faust. Nor will I henceforth: pardon me in this,
And Faustus vows never to look to heaven,
Never to name God, or to pray to him,
To burn his Scriptures, slay his ministers,
And make my spirits pull his churches down.

Luc. Do so and we will highly gratify thee. Faustus, we are come from hell to show thee some pastime: sit down, and thou shalt see all the Seven Deadly Sins appear in their proper shapes.

Faust. That sight will be as pleasing unto me,
As Paradise was to Adam the first day
Of his creation.

Luc. Talk not of Paradise nor creation, but mark this show: talk of the Devil, and nothing else: come away!

Enter the Seven Deadly Sins.

Now, Faustus, examine them of their several names and dispositions.

Faust. What art thou—the first?

Pride. I am Pride. I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea: I can creep into every corner of a wench; sometimes, like a periwig, I sit upon her brow; or like a fan of feathers, I kiss her lips; indeed I do—what do I not? But, fie, what a scent is here? I'll not speak another word, except the ground were perfumed, and covered with cloth of arras.

Faust. What art thou—the second?

Covet. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl in an old leathern bag; and, might I have my wish, I would desire that this house and all the people in it were turned to gold, that I might lock you up in my good chest. O, my sweet gold!

Faust. What art thou—the third?

Wrath. I am Wrath. I had neither father nor mother: I leapt out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce half an hour old; and ever since I have run up and down the world with this case of rapiers, wounding myself when I had nobody to fight withal. I was born in hell; and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.

Faust. What art thou—the fourth?

Envy. I am Envy, begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster-wife. I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burnt. I am lean with seeing others eat. O, that there would come a famine through all the world, that all might die, and I live alone! then thou should'st see how fat I would be. But must thou sit and I stand! Come down with a vengeance!

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[69] According to Ptolemaic astronomy the earth was surrounded by nine concentric spheres, each having its own motion.

[70] "Because of their unequal motion in respect to the whole."

Faust. Away, envious rascal! What art thou—the fifth?

Glut. Who, I, sir? I am Gluttony. My parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me, but a bare pension, and that is thirty meals a day and ten bevers[71]—a small trifle to suffice nature. O, I come of a royal parentage! My grandfather was a Gammon of Bacon, my grandmother was a Hogshead of Claret wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickle-herring, and Martin Martlemasbeef;[72] O, but my godmother, she was a jolly gentlewoman, and well beloved in every good town and city; her name was Mistress Margery March-beer. Now, Faustus, thou hast heard all my progeny, wilt thou bid me to supper?

Faust. No, I'll see thee hanged: thou wilt eat up all my victuals.

Glut. Then the Devil choke thee!

Faust. Choke thyself, glutton! Who art thou—the sixth?

Sloth. I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank, where I have lain ever since; and you have done me great injury to bring me from thence; let me be carried thither again by Gluttony and Lechery. I'll not speak another word for a king's ransom.

Faust. What are you, Mistress Minx, the seventh and last?

Lechery. Who, I, sir? I am the one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stock-fish; and the first letter of my name begins with L.

Luc. Away to hell, to hell! [*Exeunt the Sins.*
Now, Faustus, how dost thou like this?
Faust. O, this feeds my soul!
Luc. Tut, Faustus, in hell is all manner of delight.
Faust. O, might I see hell, and return again,
How happy were I then!
Luc. Thou shalt; I will send for thee at midnight.
In meantime take this book; peruse it thoroughly,
And thou shalt turn thyself into what shape thou wilt.
Faust. Great thanks, mighty Lucifer!
This will I keep as chary as my life.
Luc. Farewell, Faustus, and think on the Devil.
Faust. Farewell, great Lucifer! Come, Mephistophilis. [*Exeunt omnes.*

Enter Wagner *solus.*

Wag. Learned Faustus,
To know the secrets of astronomy,
Graven in the book of Jove's high firmament,
Did mount himself to scale Olympus' top,
Being seated in a chariot burning bright,
Drawn by the strength of yoky dragons' necks.
He now is gone to prove cosmography,
And, as I guess, will first arrive at Rome,
To see the Pope and manner of his court,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
That to this day is highly solemnized.
[*Exit* Wagner

[*The Privy-Chamber of the Pope*]

Enter Faustus *and* Mephistophilis.

Faust. Having now, my good Mephistophilis,
Passed with delight the stately town of Trier,
Environed round with airy mountain tops,
With walls of flint, and deep entrenchèd lakes,
Not to be won by any conquering prince;
From Paris next, coasting the realm of France,
We saw the river Maine fall into Rhine,
Whose banks are set with groves of fruitful vines;
Then up to Naples, rich Campania,
Whose buildings fair and gorgeous to the eye,
The streets straight forth, and paved with finest brick,
Quarter the town in four equivalents:
There saw we learned Maro's[73] golden tomb,
The way he cut, an English mile in length,
Thorough a rock of stone in one night's space;
From thence to Venice, Padua, and the rest,
In one of which a sumptuous temple stands,
That threats the stars with her aspiring top.
Thus hitherto has Faustus spent his time:
But tell me, now, what resting-place is this?
Hast thou, as erst I did command,
Conducted me within the walls of Rome?

Meph. Faustus, I have; and because we will not be unprovided, I have taken up his Holiness' privy chamber for our use.

Faust. I hope his Holiness will bid us welcome.
Meph. Tut, 'tis no matter, man, we'll be bold with his good cheer.
And now, my Faustus, that thou may'st perceive

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[71] refreshments served between meals.

[72] beef salted down at Martinmas (Nov. 11).

[73] Publius Virgilius Maro (70-19 B.C.), the famous Roman poet, became known in the Middle Ages as a great magician.

What Rome containeth to delight thee with,
Know that this city stands upon seven hills
That underprop the groundwork of the same:
Just through the midst runs flowing Tiber's stream,
With winding banks that cut it in two parts:
Over the which four stately bridges lean,
That make safe passage to each part of Rome:
Upon the bridge called Ponte Angelo
Erected is a castle passing strong,
Within whose walls such store of ordnance are,
And double cannons framed of carved brass,
As match the days within one complete year;
Besides the gates, and high pyramides,
Which Julius Caesar brought from Africa.

FAUST. Now, by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, of Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon,[74] I swear
That I do long to see the monuments
And situation of bright-splendent Rome:
Come, therefore, let's away.

MEPH. Nay, Faustus, stay; I know you'd fain see the Pope,
And take some part of holy Peter's feast,
Where thou shalt see a troop of bald-pate friars,
Whose *summum bonum*[75] is in bellycheer.

FAUST. Well, I'm content to compass them some sport,
And by their folly make us merriment.
Then charm me, Mephistophilis, that I
May be invisible, to do what I please
Unseen of any whilst I stay in Rome.

[MEPHISTOPHILIS *charms him*]

MEPH. So, Faustus, now
Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not be discerned.

Sound a sennet. Enter the POPE *and the Cardinal of Lorrain to the banquet, with Friars attending.*

POPE. My Lord of Lorrain, wilt please you draw near?

FAUST. Fall to, and the devil choke you an you spare!

POPE. How now! Who's that which spake?—Friars, look about.

FRIAR. Here's nobody, if it like your Holiness.

POPE. My lord, here is a dainty dish was sent me from the Bishop of Milan.

FAUST. I thank you, sir. [*Snatches it*]

POPE. How now! Who's that which snatched the meat from me? Will no man look? My lord, this dish was sent me from the Cardinal of Florence.

FAUST. You say true; I'll ha't.

[*Snatches the dish*]

POPE. What, again! My lord, I'll drink to your grace.

FAUST. I'll pledge your grace. [*Snatches the cup*]

C. OF LOR. My lord, it may be some ghost newly crept out of purgatory, come to beg a pardon of your Holiness.

POPE. It may be so. Friars, prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost. Once again, my lord, fall to.

[*The* POPE *crosseth himself*]

FAUST. What, are you crossing of yourself? Well, use that trick no more I would advise you.

[*Cross again*]

Well, there's the second time. Aware the third,
I give you fair warning.

[*Cross again, and* FAUSTUS *hits him a box of the ear; and they all run away*]

Come on, Mephistophilis, what shall we do?

MEPH. Nay, I know not. We shall be cursed with bell, book, and candle.

FAUST. How! bell, book, and candle—candle, book, and bell,
Forward and backward to curse Faustus to hell!
Anon you shall hear a hog grunt, a calf bleat, and an ass bray,
Because it is Saint Peter's holiday.

Enter all the Friars to sing the Dirge.

FRIAR. Come, brethren, let's about our business with good devotion. [*Sing this*]
Cursed be he that stole away his Holiness' meat from the table! *Maledicat Dominus!*[76]
Cursed be he that struck his Holiness a blow on the face! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that took Friar Sandelo a blow on the pate! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that disturbeth our holy dirge! *Maledicat Dominus!*
Cursed be he that took away his Holiness' wine! *Maledicat Dominus! Et omnes sancti!*[77] *Amen!*

[MEPHISTOPHILIS *and* FAUSTUS *beat the Friars, and fling fireworks among them: and so exeunt*]

Enter Chorus.

CHORUS. When Faustus had with pleasure ta'en the view

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[74] These are three of the five rivers of Hades.

[75] highest good.

[76] "May the Lord curse him!"

[77] "And all saints!"

Of rarest things, and royal courts of kings,
He stayed his course, and so returnèd home;
Where such as bear his absence but with grief,
I mean his friends, and near'st companions,
Did gratulate his safety with kind words,
And in their conference of what befell,
Touching his journey through the world and air,
They put forth questions of astrology,
Which Faustus answered with such learnèd skill,
As they admired and wondered at his wit.
Now is his fame spread forth in every land;
Amongst the rest the Emperor is one,
Carolus the Fifth, at whose palace now
Faustus is feasted 'mongst his noblemen.
What there he did in trial of his art,
I leave untold—your eyes shall see performed.
[*Exit.*

[*An Inn-yard*]

Enter Robin *the Ostler with a book in his hand.*

Robin. Oh, this is admirable! here I ha' stolen one of Dr. Faustus' conjuring books, and i' faith I mean to search some circles for my own use. Now will I make all the maidens in our parish dance at my pleasure, stark-naked before me; and so by that means I shall see more than e'er I felt or saw yet.

Enter Rafe *calling* Robin.

Rafe. Robin, prithee, come away; there's a gentleman tarries to have his horse, and he would have his things rubbed and made clean: he keeps such a chafing with my mistress about it; and she sent me to look thee out; prithee, come away.

Robin. Keep out, keep out, or else you are blown up; you are dismembered, Rafe: keep out, for I am about a roaring piece of work.

Rafe. Come, what dost thou with that same book? Thou can'st not read.

Robin. Yes, me master and mistress shall find that I can read, he for his forehead, she for her private study; she's born to bear with me, or else my art fails.

Rafe. Why, Robin, what book is that?

Robin. What book! Why, the most intolerable book for conjuring that e'er was invented by any brimstone devil.

Rafe. Can'st thou conjure with it?

Robin. I can do all these things easily with it; first, I can make thee drunk with ippocras[78] at any tabern in Europe for nothing; that's one of my conjuring works.

Rafe. Our Master Parson says that's nothing.

Robin. True, Rafe; and more, Rafe, if thou hast any mind to Nan Spit, our kitchen-maid, then turn her and wind her to thy own use as often as thou wilt, and at midnight.

Rafe. O brave Robin, shall I have Nan Spit, and to mine own use? On that condition I'd feed thy devil with horse-bread as long as he lives, of free cost.

Robin. No more, sweet Rafe: let's go and make clean our boots, which lie foul upon our hands, and then to our conjuring in the devil's name.
[*Exeunt.*

[*The Same*]

Enter Robin *and* Rafe *with a silver goblet.*

Robin. Come, Rafe, did not I tell thee we were for ever made by this Doctor Faustus' book? *ecce signum*,[79] here's a simple purchase for horse-keepers; our horses shall eat no hay as long as this lasts.

Rafe. But, Robin, here comes the Vintner.

Robin. Hush! I'll gull him supernaturally.

Enter Vintner.

Drawer, I hope all is paid: God be with you; come, Rafe.

Vint. Soft, sir; a word with you. I must yet have a goblet paid from you, ere you go.

Robin. I, a goblet, Rafe; I, a goblet! I scorn you, and you are but a, etc. I, a goblet! search me.

Vint. I mean so, sir, with your favor.
[*Searches him*]

Robin. How say you now?

Vint. I must say somewhat to your fellow. You, sir!

Rafe. Me, sir! me, sir! search your fill. [*Vintner searches him*] Now, sir, you may be ashamed to burden honest men with a matter of truth.

Vint. Well, t'one of you hath this goblet about you.

Robin. You lie, drawer, 'tis afore me. [*Aside*]—Sirrah you, I'll teach you to impeach honest men—stand by—I'll scour you for a goblet!—stand aside you had best, I charge you in the name of Belzebub.—Look to the goblet, Rafe. [*Aside to* Rafe]

Vint. What mean you, sirrah?

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[78] a spiced wine.

[79] "Behold the sign."

Robin. I'll teach you what I mean. [*Reads from a book*] *Sanctobulorum Periphrasticon*—nay, I'll tickle you, Vintner.—Look to the goblet, Rafe.
[*Aside to* Rafe]
[*Reads*] *Polypragmos Belseboramus framanto pacostiphos tostu, Mephistophilis,*[80] *etc.*

Enter Mephistophilis, *sets squibs at their backs, and then exit. They run about.*

Vint. *O nomine Domini!*[81] what meanest thou Robin? thou hast no goblet.

Rafe. *Peccatum peccatorum.*[82] Here's thy goblet, good Vintner.

[*Gives the goblet to Vintner, who exits.*]

Robin. *Misericordia pro nobis!*[83] What shall I do? Good Devil, forgive me now, and I'll never rob thy library more.

Enter to them Mephistophilis.

Meph. Monarch of hell, under whose black survey
Great potentates do kneel with awful fear,
Upon whose altars thousand souls do lie,
How am I vexèd with these villains' charms!
From Constantinople am I hither come
Only for pleasure of these damnèd slaves.

Robin. How, from Constantinople! You have had a great journey: will you take sixpence in your purse to pay for your supper, and begone?

Meph. Well, villains, for your presumption I transform thee into an ape, and thee into a dog; and so begone. [*Exit.*

Robin. How, into an ape; that's brave! I'll have fine sport with the boys. I'll get nuts and apples enow.

Rafe. And I must be a dog.

Robin. I'faith thy head will never be out of the pottage pot. [*Exeunt.*

[*The Court*]

Enter Emperor, Faustus, *and a Knight with Attendants.*

Emp. Master Doctor Faustus, I have heard strange report of thy knowledge in the black art, how that none in my empire nor in the whole world can compare with thee for the rare effects of magic; they say thou hast a familiar spirit, by whom thou canst accomplish what thou list. This, therefore, is my request, that thou let me see some proof of thy skill, that mine eyes may be witnesses to confirm what mine ears have heard reported; and here I swear to thee by the honor of mine imperial crown, that, whatever thou doest, thou shalt be no ways prejudiced or endamaged.

Knight. I'faith he looks much like a conjuror.
[*Aside*]

Faust. My gracious sovereign, though I must confess myself far inferior to the report men have published, and nothing answerable to the honor of your imperial majesty, yet for that love and duty binds me thereunto, I am content to do whatsoever your majesty shall command me.

Emp. Then, Doctor Faustus, mark what I shall say.
As I was sometimes solitary set
Within my closet, sundry thoughts arose
About the honor of mine ancestors,
How they had won by prowess such exploits,
Got such riches, subdued so many kingdoms
As we that do succeed, or they that shall
Hereafter possess our throne, shall
(I fear me) ne'er attain to that degree
Of high renown and great authority;
Amongst which kings is Alexander the Great,
Chief spectacle of the world's pre-eminence,
The bright shining of whose glorious acts
Lightens the world with his reflecting beams,
As when I hear but motion made of him
It grieves my soul I never saw the man.
If therefore thou by cunning of thine art
Canst raise this man from hollow vaults below,
Where lies entombed this famous conqueror,
And bring with him his beauteous paramour,[84]
Both in their right shapes, gesture, and attire
They used to wear during their time of life,
Thou shalt both satisfy my just desire,
And give me cause to praise thee whilst I live.

Faust. My gracious lord, I am ready to accomplish your request so far forth as by art, and power of my spirit, I am able to perform.

Knight. I'faith that's just nothing at all.
[*Aside*]

Faust. But, if it like your grace, it is not in my ability to present before your eyes the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes, which long since are consumed to dust.

Knight. Ay, marry, Master Doctor, now there's a sign of grace in you, when you will confess the truth. [*Aside*]

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[80] This is Latin nonsense. [81] "In the name of the Lord."
[82] "The sin of sins." [83] "Mercy on us."

[84] Thais; cf. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast, below.*

Faust. But such spirits as can lively resemble Alexander and his paramour shall appear before your grace in that manner that they best lived in, in their most flourishing estate; which I doubt not shall sufficiently content your imperial majesty.

Emp. Go to, Master Doctor, let me see them presently.

Knight. Do you hear, Master Doctor? You bring Alexander and his paramour before the Emperor!

Faust. How then, sir?

Knight. I'faith that's as true as Diana turned me to a stag!

Faust. No, sir, but when Actaeon[85] died, he left the horns for you. Mephistophilis, begone.

[*Exit* Meph.

Knight. Nay an you go to conjuring, I'll begone.

[*Exit Knight.*

Faust. I'll meet with you anon for interrupting me so. Here they are, my gracious lord.

Enter Mephistophilis *with spirits in the shape of* Alexander *and his Paramour.*

Emp. Master Doctor, I heard this lady while she lived had a wart or mole in her neck: how shall I know whether it be so or no?

Faust. Your highness may boldly go and see.

Emp. Sure these are no spirits, but the true substantial bodies of those two deceased princes.

[*Exeunt Spirits.*

Faust. Will't please your highness now to send for the knight that was so pleasant with me here of late?

Emp. One of you call him forth!

[*Exit Attendant.*

Enter the Knight with a pair of horns on his head.

How now, sir knight! why I had thought thou had'st been a bachelor, but now I see thou hast a wife, that not only gives thee horns,[86] but makes thee wear them. Feel on thy head.

Knight. Thou damnèd wretch and execrable dog,
Bred in the concave of some monstrous rock,
How darest thou thus abuse a gentleman?
Villain, I say, undo what thou hast done!

Faust. O, not so fast, sir; there's no haste; but, good, are you remembered how you crossed me in my conference with the Emperor? I think I have met with you for it.

Emp. Good Master Doctor, at my entreaty release him; he hath done penance sufficient.

Faust. My gracious lord, not so much for the injury he offered me here in your presence, as to delight you with some mirth, hath Faustus worthily requited this injurious knight; which, being all I desire, I am content to release him of his horns: and, sir knight, hereafter speak well of scholars. Mephistophilis, transform him straight. [Mephistophilis *removes the horns*] Now, my good lord, having done my duty I humbly take my leave.

Emp. Farewell, Master Doctor; yet, ere you go,
Expect from me a bounteous reward.

[*Exit Emperor.*

[*A Green, then* Faustus' *house. Enter* Faustus *and* Mephistophilis]

Faust. Now, Mephistophilis, the restless course
That Time doth run with calm and silent foot,
Shortening me days and thread of vital life,
Calls for the payment of my latest years:
Therefore, sweet Mephistophilis, let us
Make haste to Wittenberg.

Meph. What, will you go on horse-back or on foot?

Faust. Nay, till I'm past this fair and pleasant green,
I'll walk on foot.

Enter a Horse-Courser.

Horse-C. I have been all this day seeking one Master Fustian: mass, see where he is! God save you, Master Doctor!

Faust. What, Horse-Courser![87] You are well met.

Horse-C. Do you hear, sir? I have brought you forty dollars for your horse.

Faust. I cannot sell him so: if thou likest him for fifty, take him.

Horse-C. Alas, sir, I have no more.—I pray you speak for me.

Meph. I pray you let him have him: he is an honest fellow, and he has a great charge, neither wife nor child.

Faust. Well, come, give me your money. [*Horse-Courser gives* Faustus *the money*] My boy will deliver him to you. But I must tell you one thing before you have him; ride him not into the water at any hand.

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[85] Diana, having accidentally been seen naked by Actaeon turned him into a stag, so that he was killed by his own dogs.

[86] This scene is based on the superstition that husbands with unfaithful wives grow horns.

[87] horse-dealer.

Horse-C. Why, sir, will he not drink of all waters?

Faust. O, yes, he will drink of all waters, but ride him not into the water: ride him over hedge or ditch, or where thou wilt, but not into the water.

Horse-C. Well, sir.—Now am I made man for ever: I'll not leave my horse for twice forty: if he had but the quality of hey-ding-ding, hey-ding-ding, I'd make a brave living on him: he has a buttock as slick as an eel. [*Aside*] Well, God buy, sir, your boy will deliver him me: but hark you, sir; if my horse be sick or ill at ease, if I bring his water to you, you'll tell me what it is?

Faust. Away, you villain; what, dost think I am a horse-doctor? [*Exit Horse-Courser.*

What art thou, Faustus, but a man condemned to die?
Thy fatal time doth draw to final end;
Despair doth drive distrust unto my thoughts:
Confound these passions with a quiet sleep:
Tush, Christ did call the thief upon the cross;
Then rest thee, Faustus, quiet in conceit.[88]
[*Sleep in his chair.*

Re-enter Horse-Courser, all wet, crying.

Horse-C. Alas, alas! Doctor Fustian quotha? Mass, Doctor Lopus[89] was never such a doctor. Has given me a purgation has purged me of forty dollars; I shall never see them more. But yet, like an ass as I was, I would not be ruled by him, for he bade me I should ride him into no water. Now I, thinking my horse had had some rare quality that he would not have had me known of, I, like a venturous youth, rid him into the deep pond at the town's end. I was no sooner in the middle of the pond, but my horse vanished away, and I sat upon a bottle[90] of hay, never so near drowning in my life. But I'll seek out my Doctor, and have my forty dollars again, or I'll make it the dearest horse! —O, yonder is his snipper-snapper.—Do you hear? you hey-pass,[91] where's your master?

Meph. Why, sir, what would you? You cannot speak with him.

Horse-C. But I will speak with him.

Meph. Why, he's fast asleep. Come some other time.

Horse-C. I'll speak with him now, or I'll break his glass windows[92] about his ears.

Meph. I tell thee he has not slept this eight nights.

Horse-C. An he have not slept this eight weeks I'll speak with him.

Meph. See where he is, fast asleep.

Horse-C. Ay, this is he. God save you, Master Doctor, Master Doctor, Master Doctor Fustian!—Forty dollars, forty dollars for a bottle of hay!

Meph. Why, thou seest he hears thee not.

Horse-C. So-ho, ho!—so-ho ho! [*Hollas in his ear*] No, will you not wake? I'll make you wake ere I go. [*Pulls him by the leg, and pulls it away*] Alas, I am undone! What shall I do?

Faust. O, my leg, my leg! Help, Mephistophilis! call the officers. My leg, my leg!

Meph. Come, villain, to the constable.

Horse-C. O lord, sir, let me go, and I'll give you forty dollars more.

Meph. Where be they?

Horse-C. I have none about me. Come to my ostry[93] and I'll give them you.

Meph. Begone quickly. [*Horse-Courser runs away.*

Faust. What, is he gone? Farewell he! Faustus has his leg again, and the horse-courser, I take it, a bottle of hay for his labor. Well, this trick shall cost him forty dollars more.

Enter Wagner.

How now, Wagner, what's the news with thee?

Wag. Sir, the Duke of Vanholt doth earnestly entreat your company.

Faust. The Duke of Vanholt! an honorable gentleman, to whom I must be no niggard of my cunning. Come, Mephistophilis, let's away to him. [*Exeunt.*

[Court of the Duke]

Enter the Duke and the Duchess, Faustus, *and* Mephistophilis.

Duke. Believe me, Master Doctor, this merriment hath much pleased me.

Faust. My gracious lord, I am glad it contents you so well.—But it may be, madam, you take no delight in this. I have heard that great-bellied women do long for some dainties or other: what is it, madam? tell me, and you shall have it.

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[88] thought.

[89] Dr. Lopez, the Spanish physician of Queen Elizabeth, executed in 1594 on the charge of attempting to poison her.

[90] bundle.

[91] juggler.

[92] spectacles.

[93] hostelry.

Duchess. Thanks, good Master Doctor; and for I see your courteous intent to pleasure me, I will not hide from you the thing my heart desires; and were it now summer, as it is January and the dead time of the winter, I would desire no better meat than a dish of ripe grapes.

Faust. Alas, madam, that's nothing! Mephistophilis, begone. [*Exit* Mephistophilis] Were it a greater thing than this, so it would content you, you should have it.

Enter Mephistophilis *with the grapes.*

Here they be, madam; wilt please you taste on them?

Duke. Believe me, Master Doctor, this makes me wonder above the rest, that being in the dead time of winter, and in the month of January, how you should come by these grapes.

Faust. If it like your grace, the year is divided into two circles over the whole world, that, when it is here winter with us, in the contrary circle it is summer with them, as in India, Saba,[94] and farther countries in the East; and by means of a swift spirit that I have I had them brought hither, as you see.—How do you like them, madam; be they good?

Duchess. Believe me, Master Doctor, they be the best grapes that e'er I tasted in my life before.

Faust. I am glad they content you so, madam.

Duke. Come, madam, let us in, where you must well reward this learned man for the great kindness he hath showed to you.

Duchess. And so I will, my lord; and, whilst I live, rest beholding for this courtesy.

Faust. I humbly thank your grace.

Duke. Come, Master Doctor, follow us and receive your reward. [*Exeunt.*

[Faustus' *Study*]

Enter Wagner *solus.*

Wag. I think my master means to die shortly,
For he hath given to me all his goods;
And yet, methinks, if that death were (so) near,
He would not banquet, and carouse and swill
Amongst the students, as even now he doth,
Who are at supper with such belly-cheer
As Wagner ne'er beheld in all his life.
See where they come! belike the feast is ended.

Enter Faustus, *with two or three Scholars* (*and* Mephistophilis).

1 Schol. Master Doctor Faustus, since our conference about fair ladies, which was the beautifullest in all the world, we have determined with ourselves that Helen of Greece was the admirablest lady that ever lived: therefore, Master Doctor, if you will do us that favor, as to let us see that peerless dame of Greece, whom all the world admires for majesty, we should think ourselves much beholding unto you.

Faust. Gentlemen,
For that I know your friendship is unfeignèd,
And Faustus' custom is not to deny
The just requests of those that wish him well,
You shall behold that peerless dame of Greece,
No otherways for pomp and majesty,
Than when Sir Paris crossed the seas with her,
And brought the spoils to rich Dardania.[95]
Be silent, then, for danger is in words.

Music sounds and Helen *passeth over the stage.*

2 Schol. Too simple is my wit to tell her praise,
Whom all the world admires for majesty.

3 Schol. No marvel though the angry Greeks pursued
With ten years' war the rape of such a queen,
Whose heavenly beauty passeth all compare.

1 Schol. Since we have seen the pride of Nature's works,
And only paragon of excellence,

Enter an Old Man.

Let us depart; and for this glorious deed
Happy and blest be Faustus evermore

Faust. Gentlemen, farewell—the same I wish to you. [*Exeunt Scholars and* Wagner.

Old Man. Ah, Doctor Faustus, that I might prevail
To guide thy steps unto the way of life,
By which sweet path thou may'st attain the goal
That shall conduct thee to celestial rest!
Break heart, drop blood, and mingle it with tears,
Tears falling from repentant heaviness
Of thy most vile and loathsome filthiness,
The stench whereof corrupts the inward soul
With such flagitious crimes of heinous sins
As no commiseration may expel,

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[94] a city of Arabia.

[95] Troy.

But mercy, Faustus, of thy Savior sweet,
Whose blood alone must wash away thy guilt.
Faust. Where art thou, Faustus? wretch, what hast thou done?
Damned art thou, Faustus, damned; despair and die!
Hell calls for right, and with a roaring voice
Says, "Faustus! come! thine hour is (almost) come!"
And Faustus now will come to do thee right.
[Mephistophilis *gives him a dagger*]
Old Man. Ah stay, good Faustus, stay thy desperate steps!
I see an angel hovers o'er thy head,
And, with a vial full of precious grace,
Offers to pour the same into thy soul:
Then call for mercy, and avoid despair.
Faust. Ah, my sweet friend, I feel
Thy words do comfort my distressèd soul.
Leave me a while to ponder on my sins.
Old Man. I go, sweet Faustus, but with heavy cheer,
Fearing the ruin of thy hopeless soul. [*Exit.*
Faust. Accursèd Faustus, where is mercy now?
I do repent; and yet I do despair;
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast:
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?
Meph. Thou traitor, Faustus, I arrest thy soul
For disobedience to my sovereign lord;
Revolt, or I'll in piecemeal tear thy flesh.
Faust. Sweet Mephistophilis, entreat thy lord
To pardon my unjust presumption.
And with my blood again I will confirm
My former vow I made to Lucifer.
Meph. Do it then quickly, with unfeignèd heart,
Lest greater danger do attend thy drift.
[Faustus *stabs his arm and writes on a paper with his blood*]
Faust. Torment, sweet friend, that base and crookèd age,
That durst dissuade me from thy Lucifer,
With greatest torments that our hell affords.
Meph. His faith is great: I cannot touch his soul;
But what I may afflict his body with
I will attempt, which is but little worth.
Faust. One thing, good servant, let me crave of thee,
To glut the longing of my heart's desire—
That I might have unto my paramour
That heavenly Helen, which I saw of late,
Whose sweet embracings may extinguish clean
These thoughts that do dissuade me from my vow,
And keep mine oath I made to Lucifer.
Meph. Faustus, this or what else thou shalt desire
Shall be performed in twinkling of an eye.

Enter Helen.

Faust. Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
[*Kisses her*]
Her lips suck forth my soul; see where it flies!—
Come, Helen, come give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for heaven be in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy, shall Wittenberg be sacked;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,[96]
And wear thy colors on my plumèd crest:
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,[97]
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
O, thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele:
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azured arms:
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!
[*Exeunt.*

Enter the Old Man.

Old Man. Accursèd Faustus, miserable man,
That from thy soul exclud'st the grace of heaven,
And fly'st the throne of his tribunal seat!

Enter Devils.

Faust. Satan begins to sift me with his pride:
As in this furnace God shall try my faith,
My faith, vile hell, shall triumph over thee.
Ambitious fiends! see how the heavens smile
At your repulse, and laughs your state to scorn!
Hence, hell! for hence I fly unto my God.
[*Exeunt.*

[*The Same*]

Enter Faustus *with the Scholars.*

Faust. Ah, gentlemen!
1 Schol. What ails Faustus?

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[96] King of Sparta and husband of Helen.
[97] Achilles was vulnerable only in his heel.

FAUST. Ah, my sweet chamber-fellow, had I lived with thee, then had I lived still! but now I die eternally. Look, comes he not, comes he not?

2 SCHOL. What means Faustus?

3 SCHOL. Belike he is grown into some sickness by being over solitary.

1 SCHOL. If it be so, we'll have physicians to cure him. 'Tis but a surfeit. Never fear, man.

FAUST. A surfeit of deadly sin that hath damned both body and soul.

2 SCHOL. Yet, Faustus, look up to heaven: remember God's mercies are infinite.

FAUST. But Faustus' offence can ne'er be pardoned: the serpent that tempted Eve may be saved, but not Faustus. Ah, gentlemen, hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches! Though my heart pants and quivers to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years, O, would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book! And what wonders I have done, all Germany can witness, yea, all the world; for which Faustus hath lost both Germany and the world, yea heaven itself, heaven, the seat of God, the throne of the blessed, the kingdom of joy; and must remain in hell for ever, hell, ah, hell, for ever! Sweet friends! what shall become of Faustus being in hell for ever?

3 SCHOL. Yet, Faustus, call on God.

FAUST. On God, whom Faustus hath abjured! on God, whom Faustus hath blasphemed! Ah, my God, I would weep, but the Devil draws in my tears. Gush forth blood instead of tears! Yea, life and soul! O, he stays my tongue! I would lift up my hands, but see, they hold them, they hold them!

ALL. Who, Faustus?

FAUST. Lucifer and Mephistophilis. Ah, gentlemen, I gave them my soul for my cunning!

ALL. God forbid!

FAUST. God forbade it indeed; but Faustus hath done it: for vain pleasure of twenty-four years hath Faustus lost eternal joy and felicity. I writ them a bill with mine own blood: the date is expired; the time will come, and he will fetch me.

1 SCHOL. Why did not Faustus tell us of this before, that divines might have prayed for thee?

FAUST. Oft have I thought to have done so: but the Devil threatened to tear me in pieces if I named God; to fetch both body and soul if I once gave ear to divinity: and now 'tis too late. Gentlemen, away! lest you perish with me.

2 SCHOL. O, what shall we do to (save) Faustus?

FAUST. Talk not of me, but save yourselves, and depart.

3 SCHOL. God will strengthen me. I will stay with Faustus.

1 SCHOL. Tempt not God, sweet friend; but let us into the next room, and there pray for him.

FAUST. Ay, pray for me, pray for me! and what noise soever ye hear, come not unto me, for nothing can rescue me.

2 SCHOL. Pray thou, and we will pray that God may have mercy upon thee.

FAUST. Gentlemen, farewell: if I live till morning I'll visit you: if not—Faustus is gone to hell.

ALL. Faustus, farewell. [*Exeunt* SCHOLARS.

[*The clock strikes eleven*]

FAUST. Ah, Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually!
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come;
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul!
O lente, lente, currite noctis equi![98]
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The Devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
Oh, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul—half a drop: ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!—
Where is it now? 'tis gone; and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountain and hills come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No! no!
Then will I headlong run into the earth;
Earth gape! O, no, it will not harbor me!
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon laboring clouds,
That when you vomit forth into the air,
My limbs may issue from their smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to heaven,

[*The watch strikes* (*the half hour*)]

Ah, half the hour is past! 'twill all be past anon!
O God!
If thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Yet for Christ's sake whose blood hath ransomed me,

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[98] "Run slowly, slowly, horses of the night."—Ovid.

Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years—
A hundred thousand, and—at last—be saved!
O, no end is limited to damnèd souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
Ah, Pythagoras'[99] metempsychosis! were that true,
This soul should fly from me, and I be changed
Unto some brutish beast! all beasts are happy,
For, when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must live, still to be plagued in hell.
Curst be the parents that engendered me!
No, Faustus: curse thyself; curse Lucifer
That hath deprived thee of the joys of heaven.
[*The clock striketh twelve*]
O, it strikes, it stikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell.
[*Thunder and lightning*]
O soul, be changed into little water-drops,
And fall into the ocean—ne'er be found.
My God! My God! look not so fierce on me!

Enter Devils.

Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books!—Ah Mephistophilis!
[*Exeunt with him.*

Enter Chorus.

CHO. Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burnèd is Apollo's laurel bough,
That sometime grew within this learnèd man.
Faustus is gone; regard his hellish fall,
Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise
Only to wonder at unlawful things,
Whose deepness doth entice such forward wits
To practise more than heavenly power permits.
[*Exit.*
Terminat hora diem; terminat auctor opus.[1]
(?1588

Ben Jonson

(1573-1637)

The possessor of one of the most powerful personalities among Elizabethan writers was born in poverty, for a while followed his stepfather's trade of bricklayer, and studied at Westminster School. It would appear that he was later at Cambridge without taking his degree. He made a luckless marriage, fought in Flanders with the army, and around 1597 settled in London as a playwright and actor. Before many years had passed, Jonson's learning had attracted the notice of the pedantic James I, and won him a welcome place at the Court as a provider of entertainment. Jonson's vigorous character, typically Renaissance in its capacity for warm loves and great hates, stamped itself upon a number of younger poets, who came to revere his accomplishments as a scholar, to hear his pronouncements as literary dictator, and who proudly called themselves the "sons of Ben." His love of argument brought him into conflict with his fellow-dramatists, and he set himself the task of opposing current tastes in the drama.

One of the most learned men of his time in the classics, he early in life had formed the habit of copying out favorite passages which he put to good use during his literary career. The unrestrained imaginativeness, the bold flights of fancy and the flamboyancy of his Elizabethan predecessors were a source of irritation to Jonson. He tried to impose the contrary virtues of clarity, control, and order upon the poetry and prose of his time, and for some years battled against the stream of popular exuberance. His guides were his beloved classics whose proportioned and conscious artistry suggested criteria other than the spontaneity of Elizabethan literature; Horace's *Art of Poetry*, which he translated, fairly sums up the principles Jonson wished to force upon his time. In the end his victory was such that he was to be singled out in the Restoration as the best of his generation, for the standards of Dryden's day were on the whole the very ones for which Jonson had fought.

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[99] The belief of Pythagoras, the Greek philosopher of the sixth century B.C. that souls change from human beings to beasts and conversely.

[1] "The hour ends the day, the author ends his work."

His reputation was first made by two comedies, *Every Man in His Humor* (1598) and *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599), in the former of which Shakespeare is known to have acted. In these plays Jonson's bent as satirist and realist was revealed. The characters were typical Londoners, each with his peculiar "humor" (i.e. temperament). Unlike Shakespeare, Jonson made no attempt to present a full man, but deliberately narrowed the characterization to a predominant trait. Thus we find in his comedies caricatures rather than characters (much as in the novels of Dickens): the irate father, the reckless son, the jealous husband, the country simpleton, the braggart, etc. The models for this "comedy of humors" were Plautus and Terence, who dealt with stock Roman types. Such dramas miss all the deepest experiences and feelings of humanity. But from these comedies of Jonson, and particularly from his splendidly realistic painting in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), it is possible to reproduce a large cross-section of London life in his time.

His career was nothing if not varied. In 1598 he was in prison for killing a fellow-actor. In 1600 he engaged in a "war of the theatres," attacking the dramatists Dekker and Marston in the scathing satire of *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster*. In 1605 he collaborated with Chapman and Marston in the amusing piece of London realism, *Eastward Ho!*, and all three were jailed because the play gave offence.

The first of his classical tragedies, *Sejanus,* was written in 1603. Conscious that his knowledge of Roman history was far greater than Shakespeare's, whose anachronisms he could not tolerate, Jonson intended to put his great contemporary to shame with this play. *Sejanus* and his second Roman tragedy, *Catiline* (1611), are full of circumstantial historical touches which give them far greater accuracy than Shakespeare's Roman dramas, but the virtues are chiefly external. The characters never come to life and the plays fail to impress us with anything beyond their pomp.

His true dramatic vein was comedy, and his best plays are undoubtedly the fine ironic *Volpone* (1605?), the merry farce, *The Silent Woman* (1609-10), and the exciting exposé of impostors, *The Alchemist* (1610).

In 1605 Jonson began to display a completely new talent in the series of masques which he then was writing for court entertainment. In these playlets built around mythological stories and affording an opportunity for singing, dancing, music, costuming, and scene-designing, Jonson demonstrated a hitherto unrevealed genius for charming fancy. The many lovely songs which stud his masques and plays stand in strange contrast to his stubborn classicism and realism, and often represent the best of his talents. Here, too, should be stated the important fact that it was Jonson who established in English literature the Pindaric ode (cf. *Pindar, below*), a form dear to Cowley and Dryden, and modified by Wordsworth and the Romantics.

In 1618 he went to Scotland, and the record of his wonderful conversations has been happily preserved for us by the poet Drummond. In 1621 he was appointed Master of the Revels to the Court. This period found him at the height of his fame and prestige, well supplied with money, and surrounded by admiring disciples. But his last years are pathetic to contemplate. His large library was burned in 1623, his health began to fail, and poverty again overtook him. He died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The definitive edition of Jonson is being prepared by C. H. Herford and P. Simpson; Volumes I to IV have already appeared. J. Palmer, *Ben Jonson* (1934), and E. Welsford, *The Court Masque* (1927), are important studies. A refreshingly original work is L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937).

To Celia

This, one of the deathless lyrics of the age, would have been enough to insure Jonson's immortality. Undoubtedly of the period in its freshness, the song, however, exhibits Jonson's classicism in that it is a paraphrase, but a magical one, of a prose passage by Philostratus (c. 200 A.D.), a writer of Greek love-letters.

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
  And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup
  And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
  Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
  I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
  Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
  It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe,
  And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
  Not of itself but thee!

Simplex Munditiis[1]

(From *Epicœne*)

Still[2] to be neat, still to be drest,
As you were going to a feast;
Still to be powdered, still perfumed:
Lady, it is to be presumed,
Though art's hid causes are not found
All is not sweet, all is not sound.

Give me a look, give me a face
That makes simplicity a grace;
Robes loosely flowing, hair as free:
Such sweet neglect more taketh me
Than all th' adulteries of art;
They strike mine eyes, but not my heart.

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[1] In simple elegance.

[2] continually.

To the Memory of My Beloved Master, William Shakespeare

This remarkable poem was written by Jonson for the First Folio edition of Shakespeare's plays (1623). During Shakespeare's lifetime, Jonson alternated between a contemptuous distaste for Shakespeare's carelessness with historical fact, his exuberant imagination, his unclassical preferences, and an unwilling admiration for his rival's indisputable genius. Seven years after Shakespeare's death Jonson here makes more than ample restitution for whatever he had done to detract from his fellow dramatist's worth. It is amazing to think that Jonson, whose own tastes were completely different from Shakespeare's, should have been able to realize that his friendly enemy was a greater dramatist than any of his beloved ancients. For the truth would seem to be that Jonson was a friend of Shakespeare's, even when most violently disagreeing with his entire dramatic practice. Elsewhere he confesses, in a typically virile phrase, to having loved him "this side idolatry."

The poem itself is a compound of prosaic observation and inspired epithet. There are passages in this piece which have been quoted as often as any in our literature.

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man, nor muse, can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage.[1] But these ways
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For silliest ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin, where it seemed to raise.
These are, as[2] some infamous bawd or whore
Should praise a matron. What could hurt her more?
But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
Above the ill fortune of them, or the need.
I therefore will begin. Soul of the age!
The applause, delight, the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer, or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie

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[1] vote, opinion.

[2] as if.

A little farther off, to make thee a room:[3]
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still while thy book doth live
And we have wits to read and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great, but disproportioned Muses;
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lyly outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to honor thee, I would not seek
For names; but call forth thundering Æschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles[4] to us;
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,[5]
To life again, to hear thy buskin[6] tread,
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus,[7] now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of Nature's family.
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same
(And himself with it) that he thinks to frame,
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.
And such wert thou! Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turnèd and true filèd lines;
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,[8]
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Star of poets, and with rage
Or influence, chide or cheer the drooping stage,
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourned like night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

(1623)

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[3] These poets in Westminster Abbey need not make room for him. He does not need to be buried there to insure his fame.

[4] The three great Greek writers of tragedy.

[5] Roman tragedians. The last, Seneca, was born in Cordova, Spain.

[6] The buskin was the thick-soled boot worn by tragic actors; the sock was the thin-soled shoe worn by comic actors. The reference is therefore to tragedy and comedy.

[7] Aristophanes was the chief Greek writer of comedies, and Plautus and Terence were the chief Roman writers of comedy.

[8] A pun on Shakespeare's name.

Elizabethan Translations

As Professor Matthiessen aptly says, "A study of Elizabethan translations is a study of the means by which the Renaissance came to England." When the new learning began to take root in the sixteenth century, British men of letters became keenly aware of how far the continent had culturally outdistanced England. Translation then became an act of patriotic service. Just as her naval heroes were making paths across the seas to discover new worlds, so Elizabeth's scholars were adventuring among foreign books to open new intellectual horizons. "They sailed the wide ocean of knowledge," says Whibley, "to plant their colonies of the intellect where they might." Like explorers, the translators were bringing back treasures for the country's language and literature.

The time was auspicious and the need great enough to make such labors the equal of original composition. Books were being printed, the reading public was growing, and the translator wrote not for the scholars but for the country. The language was never richer, more vivid or energetic. Adventurers all, these translators were sublimely unscrupulous in their renditions. Their knowledge of other tongues was none too accurate; as often as not they translated from an intermediary rendition in French or Latin rather than from the original Greek or Italian. The result was a series of translations so profoundly English that much of the tone of the original language was completely lost. If accuracy was thus abandoned, so was pedantry; if any interest in the feeling of the original diction was missing, a concern for the feeling of the whole book took its place. The Elizabethan translations are free, but they are also spacious.

Among the most important are: Thomas Nicoll's Thucydides (1550); Holland's Livy (1600); Holland's Suetonious (1616); Golding's Caesar (1565); Sallust, Cicero, and Aristotle each by several translators; Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566-7) and Fenton's *Certain Tragical Discourses* (1567) containing many classic and Renaissance tales; Newton's Seneca (1581); North's Plutarch (1579); Chapman's Homer (1598-1614); Jonson's *Ars Poetica* of Horace; Florio's Montaigne (1603); Harington's Ariosto; Fairfax's *Jerusalem Delivered* of Tasso (1600); Hoby's Castiglione (1561); North's *Diall of Princes* of Guevara; and the great Bible of 1611.

We have already presented examples of Elizabethan translation in North's *Diall of Princes* and Fairfax's *Jerusalem Delivered.* In justice to the Elizabethans' preoccupation with translation (and we have barely indicated it) and their success in enriching our literature by making foreign books English books, we present here four other highly significant and estimable translations: Chapman's Homer, North's Plutarch, the Bible, and Florio's Montaigne—all of which have had far-reaching effects on English letters.

In addition a few words should be said about two other translations whose inclusion space does not permit. Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* (1566-7) proved an invaluable sourcebook for the dramatists; to these well-told, popularly written stories, Shakespeare, Webster, and Massinger (among many others) went for a number of plots. Hoby's translation of Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1561) perhaps more completely than any other work brought all the splendor of the Italian Renaissance to England; this description of the ideal scholar-gentleman was worth more, said Roger Ascham, "than three years' travel abroad spent in Italy"; the popularity of the book accelerated Elizabethan assimilation of the Renaissance.

F. O. Matthiessen's *Translation, an Elizabethan Art* (1931) is a fine study of Hoby, North, Florio, and Holland; and Chapter I of Vol. IV of the *Cambridge History of English Literature* is an excellent summation of Elizabethan translations.

From the Fifth Book of *The Odysseys of Homer*

(Translated by George Chapman, 1560?-1634)

Chapman began his career as a non-dramatic poet, but turned to the theatre where he lent the weight of his own learning to urging with Jonson classical ideals upon the public. Of his dramas the best are the comedies *May Day* (1611) and *Widow's Tears* (1612), and his tragedies *Bussy d'Ambois* (1604), *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* (1608) and *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (1610). In addition to writing other plays, Chapman completed the poem Marlowe had left unfinished, *Hero and Leander*, and made an important translation of Homer. As a poet Chapman is uneven, sometimes pedantic, sometimes magnificent in his dignity.

He began his translation with seven books of the *Iliad* (pub. 1598). In 1611 he issued the first complete *Iliad* in English. His translation of the twelve books of the *Odyssey* in 1614 was followed by the rest of that epic in 1615.

The qualities of Chapman's translation have been disputed, some critics finding it no more than jog-trot when compared with the sweep of the original Greek, and others maintaining that it is nearer to the spirit of the Greek than all the many English translations that have since been made. It has, at any rate, the Elizabethan spaciousness which is something akin to the open dignity of Homer. Moreover, it is Chapman who first gave Englishmen who knew no Greek (and that has always meant most Englishmen) their Homer. One of them, John Keats, in a famous sonnet, was to declare that Chapman had revealed new worlds to him. In fact, the passage we quote is the very one which so profoundly affected Keats. Cowden Clarke tells us of "a memorable night" in which he and Keats were reading through Chapman; when they came to the passage beginning, "Then forth he came, his both knees faltering etc.", Keats was stirred to the very root of his being. The sonnet records his reactions (cf. *Vol. II*).

H. H. Ellis has an important study of Chapman (1934). R. H. Shepherd's edition (1874-5) of Chapman's works include the Homeric translations.

But Minerva fetch'd
The winds from sea, and all their waves but one
Barr'd to their passage; the bleak North alone
She set to blow, the rest she charg'd to keep
Their rages in, and bind themselves in sleep.
But Boreas[1] still flew high to break the seas,
Till Jove-bred Ithacus[2] the more with ease
The navigation-skill'd Phaeacian states
Might make his refuge, Death and angry Fates
At length escaping. Two nights, yet, and days
He spent in wrastling with the sable seas;
In which space, often did his heart propose
Death to his eyes. But when Aurora[3] rose,
And threw the third light from her orient hair,
The winds grew calm, and clear was all the air,
Not one breath stirring. Then he might descry,
Rais'd by the high seas, clear, the land was nigh.
And then, look how to good sons that esteem
Their father's life dear, (after pains extreme,
Felt in some sickness, that hath held him long
Down to his bed, and with affections strong
Wasted his body, make his life his load,
As being inflicted by some angry God)
When on their pray'rs they see descend at length
Health from the heav'ns, clad all in spirit and strength,
The sight is precious; so, since here should end
Ulysses' toils, which therein should extend
Health to his country, held to him his sire,
And on which long for him disease did tire,
And then, besides, for his own sake to see
The shores, the woods so near, such joy had he,
As those good sons for their recover'd sire.
Then labor'd feet and all parts to aspire
To that wish'd continent; which when as near
He came, as Clamor might inform an ear,
He heard a sound beat from the sea-bred rocks,
Against which gave a huge sea horrid shocks,
That belch'd upon the firm land weeds and foam,
With which were all things hid there, where no room
Of fit capacity was for any port,
Nor from the sea for any man's resort,
The shores, the rocks, the cliffs, so prominent were.
"O," said Ulysses then, "now Jupiter
Hath giv'n me sight of an unhop'd for shore,
Though I have wrought these seas so long, so sore.
Of rest yet no place shows the slend'rest prints,
The rugged shore so bristled is with flints,
Against which ev'ry way the waves so flock,
And all the shore shows as one eminent rock.

---

[1] god of the winds.

[2] Ulysses, king of Ithaca.

[3] the dawn.

So near which 'tis so deep, that not a sand
Is there for any tirèd foot to stand,
Nor fly his death-fast-following miseries,
Lest, if he land, upon him foreright flies
A churlish wave, to crush him 'gainst a cliff,
Worse than vain rend'ring all his landing strife.
And should I swim to seek a hav'n elsewhere,
Or land less way-beat, I may justly fear
I shall be taken with a gale again,
And cast a huge way off into the main;
And there the great Earth-shaker[4] (having seen
My so near landing, and again his spleen
Forcing me to him) will some whale send out,
(Of which a horrid number here about
His Amphitrite[5] breeds) to swallow me.
I well have prov'd, with what malignity
He treads my steps." While this discourse he held,
A curs'd surge 'gainst a cutting rock impell'd
His naked body, which it gash'd and tore,
And had his bones broke, if but one sea more
Had cast him on it. But She prompted him,
That never fail'd, and bade him no more swim
Still off and on, but boldly force the shore,
And hug the rock that him so rudely tore;
Which he with both hands sigh'd and clasp'd, till past
The billow's rage was; when 'scap'd, back so fast
The rock repuls'd it, that it reft his hold,
Sucking him from it, and far back he roll'd
And as the polypus that (forc'd from home
Amidst the soft sea, and near rough land come
For shelter 'gainst the storms that beat on her
At open sea, as she abroad doth err)
A deal of gravel, and sharp little stones,
Needfully gathers in her hollow bones;
So he forc'd hither by the sharper ill,
Shunning the smoother, where he best hop'd, still
The worst succeeded; for the cruel friend,
To which he cling'd for succor, off did rend
From his broad hands the soaken flesh so sore
That off he fell, and could sustain no more.
Quite under water fell he; and, past fate,
Hapless Ulysses there had lost the state
He held in life, if, still the grey-eyed Maid[6]
His wisdom prompting, he had not assay'd
Another course, and ceas'd t' attempt that shore,
Swimming, and casting round his eye t' explore
Some other shelter. Then the mouth he found
Of fair Callicoe's flood, whose shores were crown'd
With most apt succors; rocks so smooth they seem'd
Polish'd of purpose; land that quite redeem'd
With breathless coverts th' others' blasted shores.
The flood he knew, and thus in heart implores:
"King of this river, hear! Whatever name
Makes thee invok'd, to thee I humbly frame
My flight from Neptune's furies. Rev'rend is
To all the ever-living Deities
What erring man soever seeks their aid.
To thy both flood and knees a man dismay'd
With varied suff'rance sues. Yield then some rest
To him that is thy suppliant profest."
This, though but spoke in thought, the Godhead heard,
Her current straight stay'd, and her thick waves clear'd
Before him, smooth'd her waters, and, just where
He pray'd half-drown'd, entirely sav'd him there.
—Then forth he came, his both knees falt'ring, both
His strong hands hanging down, and all with froth
His cheeks and nosthrils flowing, voice and breath
Spent to all use, and down he sunk to death.
The sea had soak'd his heart through; all his veins
His toils had rack'd t' a laboring woman's pains
Dead weary was he. But when breath did find
A pass reciprocal, and in his mind
His spirit was recollected, up he rose,
And from his neck did th' amulet unloose,
That Ino[7] gave him; which he hurl'd from him
To sea. It sounding fell, and back did swim
With th' ebbing waters, till it straight arriv'd
Where Ino's fair hand it again receiv'd.
Then kiss'd he th' humble earth; and on he goes,
Till bulrushes show'd place for his repose,
Where laid, he sigh'd, and thus said to his soul:
"O me, what strange perplexities control
The whole skill of thy pow'rs in this event!
What feel I? If till care-nurse night be spent
I watch amidst the flood, the sea's chill breath,
And vegetant dews, I fear will be my death,
So low brought with my labors. Towards day
A passing sharp air ever breathes at sea.
If I the pitch of this next mountain scale,
And shady wood, and in some thicket fall
Into the hands of Sleep, though there the cold
May well be check'd, and healthful slumbers hold
Her sweet hand on my pow'rs, all care allay'd,
Yet there will beasts devour me. Best appaid
Doth that course make me yet; for there, some strife,
Strength, and my spirit, may make me make for life;

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[4] Neptune. [5] the wife of Neptune. [6] Pallas Athena.

[7] daughter of Cadmus and Harmonia and wife to Athemas, son of Aeolus. Upon the madness of her husband she leapt into the sea and ever afterwards gave aid to those endangered by storms at sea.

Which, though impair'd, may yet be fresh applied,
Where peril possible of escape is tried.
But he that fights with heav'n, or with the sea,
To indiscretion adds impiety."
  Thus to the woods he hasted; which he found
Not far from sea, but on far-seeing ground,
Where two twin underwoods he enter'd on,
With olive-trees and oil-trees overgrown;
Through which the moist force of the loud-voic'd wind
Did never beat, nor ever Phoebus shin'd,
Nor show'r beat through, they grew so one in one,
And had, by turns, their pow'r t' exclude the sun.
Here enter'd our Ulysses; and a bed
Of leaves huge, and of huge abundance, spread
With all his speed. Large he made it, for there
For two or three men ample cov'rings were,
Such as might shield them from the winter's worst,
Through steel it breath'd, and blew as it would burst.

From *Plutarch's Life of Caesar*

(Translated by Sir Thomas North)

Plutarch saw history as the record of the deeds of prominent men set against the background of their times. The plan he chose for his *Lives* was to take a Greek and a Roman both notable for the same traits and write their parallel biographies. It was probably because of his interest in individuals that the great Greek biographer was extremely popular in the English Renaissance. When Lord Berners made the first translation of Guevara (1535), English readers found many of the best passages in the book to be anecdotes from Plutarch; North's fuller translation in 1557 of the same work (cf. *above*) continued the prestige of Guevara, and hence of Plutarch. Lyly is indebted to Guevara and also directly to Plutarch. Ascham cites Plutarch in his arguments for *Toxophilus.* Montaigne, later Englished by Florio, praises Plutarch as "inexhaustible of precious riches," and Bacon quotes him often. By the time we come to Jeremy Taylor (cf. *below*) we find a writer saturated with Plutarch's ideas and illustrations, and we realize that the classic biographer had become a basic element in English humanism.

If Plutarch came to play such a role in English literature it was because he had an incomparable translator in Sir Thomas North. Born the younger son of the first Baron North, Sir Thomas was educated at Cambridge and took up the study of law. Something of a linguist, he made the translation of Guevara which brought him immediate fame. He traveled abroad, and probably then became acquainted with Amyot's excellent French translation of Plutarch. It was from Amyot's version that North made his translation, which has been called the best of Elizabethan translations.

Of this version which he calls "memorable", Whibley says: "It is not Plutarch. In many respects it is Plutarch's antithesis. North composed a new masterpiece upon Plutarch's theme. . . . He saw Plutarch through Amyot's eye. And the result is neither Amyot nor Plutarch. . . . Amyot's book, which was Montaigne's breviary, came to Thomas North, who embellished Amyot, as Amyot had embellished Plutarch. . . . North, though he knew little of the classics, was a master of noble English. . . . He played upon English prose as upon an organ whose every stop he controlled with an easy confidence. He had a perfect sense of the weight and color of words; pathos and gaiety, familiarity and grandeur resound in his magnificently cadenced periods. . . . There are few who, were the choice given them, would not rather read Plutarch in the noble English of North than in the restrained and sometimes inexpressive Greek of Plutarch." It is true that in North's hands the great men of antiquity became vitalized into the images of Renaissance Englishmen.

If the translation had no other importance than this, it would be still significant: no book influenced Shakespeare more. In North, Shakespeare found the source of his great Roman tragedies, and there is in them the same sense of the contemporaneous. If the reader will compare the passage below with Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* he will have an idea of how much inspiration North furnished the dramatist.

A complete study of that problem can be made by reading the reprint of portions of North's Plutarch in *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (ed. W. W. Skeat, 1875). B. Blackwell edited the complete *Lives* (1928).

Now they that desired change and wished Brutus only their Prince and Governor above all other, they durst not come to him themselves to tell him what they would have him to do, but in the night did cast sundry papers into the Praetor's seat where he gave audience, and the most of them to this effect: "Thou sleepest, Brutus, and art not Brutus indeed." Cassius, finding Brutus' ambition stirred up the more by these seditious bills, did prick him forward and egg him on the more for a private quarrel he had conceived against Caesar: the circumstance whereof we have set down more at large in Brutus' life. Caesar also had Cassius in great jealousy and suspected him much: whereupon he said on a time to his friends, "What will Cassius do, think ye? I like not his pale looks." Another time, when Caesar's friends complained unto him of Antonius and Dolabella, that they pretended some mischief towards him: he answered them again, "As for those fat men and smooth-combed heads," quoth he, "I never reckon of them; but these pale-visaged and carrion lean people, I fear them most:" meaning Brutus and Cassius. Certainly, destiny may easier be foreseen than avoided: considering the strange and wonderful signs that were said to be seen before Caesar's death. For, touching the fires in the element and spirits running up and down in the night, and also the solitary birds to be seen at noon-days sitting in the great market place: are not all these signs perhaps worth the noting in such a wonderful chance as happened? But Strabo the Philosopher writeth that divers men were seen going up and down in fire: and furthermore, that there was a slave of the soldiers, that did cast a marvelous burning flame out of his hand, insomuch as they that saw it thought he had been burnt, but when the fire was out, it was found he had no hurt. Caesar self also, doing sacrifice unto the gods, found that one of the beasts which was sacrificed had no heart: and that was a strange thing in nature, how a beast could live without a heart. Furthermore, there was a certain Soothsayer that had given Caesar warning long time afore, to take heed of the day of the Ides of March (which is the fifteenth of the month), for on that day he should be in great danger. That day being come, Caesar going unto the Senate-house, and speaking merrily to the Soothsayer, told him, "The Ides of March be come:" "So be they," softly answered the Soothsayer, "but yet are they not past." And the very day before, Caesar, supping with Marcus Lepidus, sealed certain letters, as he was wont to do, at the board: so, talk falling out amongst them, reasoning what death was best, he preventing their opinions cried out aloud, "Death unlooked for." Then going to bed the same night as his manner was, and lying with his wife Calpurnia, all the windows and doors of his chamber flying open, the noise awoke him, and made him afraid when he saw such light: but more, when he heard his wife Calpurnia, being fast asleep, weep and sigh, and put forth many fumbling lamentable speeches For she dreamed that Caesar was slain, and that she had him in her arms. Others also do deny that she had any such dream, as amongst other Titus Livius writeth, that it was in this sort. The Senate having set upon the top of Caesar's house, for an ornament and setting forth of the same, a certain pinnacle, Calpurnia dreamed that she saw it broken down, and that she thought she lamented and wept for it. Insomuch that, Caesar rising in the morning, she prayed him if it were possible not to go out of the doors that day, but to adjourn the session of the Senate until another day. And if that he made no reckoning of her dream, yet that he would search further of the Soothsayers by their sacrifices, to know what should happen him that day. Thereby it seemed that Caesar likewise did fear and suspect somewhat, because his wife Calpurnia, until that time was never given to any fear or superstition: and then, for that he saw her so troubled in mind with this dream she had. But much more afterwards, when the Soothsayers, having sacrificed many beasts one after another, told him that none did like them: then he determined to send Antonius to adjourn the session of the Senate. But in the meantime came Decius Brutus, surnamed Albinus, in whom Caesar put such confidence, that in his last will and testament he had appointed him to be his next heir, and yet was of the conspiracy with Cassius and Brutus: he, fearing that if Caesar did adjourn the session that day the conspiracy would out, laughed the Soothsayers to scorn, and reproved Caesar, saying: that he gave the Senate occasion to mislike with him, and that they might think he mocked them, considering that by his commandment they were assembled, and that they were ready willingly to grant him all things, and to proclaim him king of all the provinces of the Empire of Rome out of Italy, and that he should wear his Diadem in all other places both by sea and land. And furthermore, that if any man should tell them from him they should depart for that present time, and return again when Calpurnia should have better dreams: what would his enemies and illwillers say, and how could they like of his friends' words? And who could persuade them otherwise, but that they would think his dominion a slavery unto them, and tyrannical in himself? "And yet, if it be so," said he, "that you utterly mislike of this day, it is better that you go yourself in person, and saluting the Senate to dismiss them till another time." Therewithal he took Caesar by the hand, and brought him out of his house. Caesar was not gone far from his house, but a bondman, a stranger, did what he could to speak with him; and, when he saw he was put back by the great press and multitude of people that followed him, he went straight unto his house, and put himself into Calpurnia's hands to be kept till Caesar came back again, telling her that he had great matters to impart unto him. And one Artemidorus also, born in the Isle of Gnidos, a Doctor of Rhetoric in the Greek tongue, who by means of his profession was very familiar with certain of Brutus' confederates, and therefore knew the most part of all their practices against Caesar, came and brought him a little bill written with his own hand, of all that he meant to tell him. He, marking how Caesar received all the supplications that were offered him, and that he gave them straight to his men that were about him, pressed nearer to him, and said: "Caesar, read this memorial to yourself, and that quickly, for they be matters of great weight, and touch you nearly." Caesar took it of him, but could never read it, though he many times attempted it, for the number of people that did salute him: but holding it still in his hand, keeping it to himself, went on withal into the Senate-house. Howbeit other are of opinion that it was some man else that gave him that memorial, and not Artemidorus, who did what he could all the way as he went to give it Caesar, but he was always repulsed by the people. For these things they may seem to come by chance: but the place where the murther was prepared, and where the Senate were assembled, and where also there stood up an image of Pompey dedicated by himself amongst other ornaments which he gave unto the Theatre: all these were manifest proofs that it was the ordinance of some god, that made this treason to be executed specially in that very place. It is also reported, that Cassius (though otherwise he did favor the doctrine of Epicurus) beholding the image of Pompey, before they entered into the action of their traitorous enterprise, he did softly call upon it to aid him. But the instant danger of the present time, taking away his former reason, did suddenly put him into a furious passion, and made him like a man half beside himself. Now Antonius, that was a faithful friend to Caesar, and a valiant man besides of his hands, him Decius Brutus Albinus entertained out of the Senate-house, having begun a long tale of set purpose. So, Caesar coming into the house, all the Senate stood up on their feet to do him honor. Then part of Brutus' company and confederates stood round about Caesar's chair, and part of them also came towards him, as though they made suit when Metellus Cimber, to call home his brother again from banishment: and thus, prosecuting still their suit, they followed Caesar, till he was set in his chair. Who denying their petitions, and being offended with them one after another, because the more they were denied, the more they pressed upon him, and were the earnester with him: Metellus at length, taking his gown with both his hands, pulled it over his neck, which was the sign given the confederates to set upon him. Then Casca behind him strake him in the neck with his sword: howbeit the wound was not great nor mortal, because, it seemed, the fear of such a devilish attempt did amaze him, and take his strength from him, that he killed him not at the first blow. But Caesar, turning straight unto him, caught hold of his sword, and held it hard: and they both cried out, Caesar in Latin: "O vile traitor Casca, what doest thou?" And Casca in Greek to his brother, "Brother, help me." At the beginning of this stir, they that were present, not knowing of the conspiracy, were so amazed with the horrible sight they saw, that they had no power to fly, neither to help him, not so much as once to make any outcry. They on th' other side that had conspired his death compassed him in every side with their swords drawn in their hands, that Caesar turned him nowhere but he was stricken at by some, and still had naked swords in his face, and was hacked and mangled among them, as a wild beast taken of hunters. For it was agreed among them that every man should give him a wound, because all their parts should be in this murther: and then Brutus himself gave him one wound about his privities. Men report also that Caesar did still defend himself against the rest, running every way with his body: but when he saw Brutus with his sword drawn in his hand, then he pulled his gown over his head, and made no more resistance, and was driven either casually or purposedly by the counsel of the conspirators against the base wherupon Pompey's image stood, which ran all of a gore-blood till he was slain. Thus it seemed that the image took just revenge of Pompey's enemy, being thrown down on the ground at his feet, and yielding up his ghost there for the number of wounds he had upon him. For it is reported that he had three-and-twenty wounds upon his body: and divers of the conspirators did hurt themselves, striking one body with so many blows. When Caesar was slain, the Senate (though Brutus stood in the midst amongst them, as though he would have said somewhat touching this fact,) presently ran out of the house, and flying filled all the city with marvelous fear and tumult. Insomuch as some did shut-to their doors, others forsook their shops and warehouses, and others ran to the place to see what the matter was: and others also that had seen it ran home to their houses again. But Antonius and Lepidus, which were two of Caesar's chiefest friends, secretly conveying themselves away, fled into other men's houses, and forsook their own. Brutus and his confederates on th' other side, being yet hot with this murther they had committed, having their swords drawn in their hands, came all in a troop together out of the Senate, and went into the market-place, not as men that made countenance to fly, but otherwise boldly holding up their heads like men of courage, and called to the people to defend their liberty, and stayed to speak with every great personage whom they met in their way. Of them some followed this troop and went amongst them as if they had been of the conspiracy, and falsely challenged part of the honor with them; among them was Caius Octavius, and Lentulus Spinther. But both of them were afterwards put to death, for their vain covetousness of honor, by Antonius and Octavius Caesar the younger: and yet had no part of that honor for the which they were put to death, neither did any man believe that they were any of the confederates, or of counsel with them. For they that did put them to death took revenge rather of the will they had to offend, than of any fact they had committed. The next morning Brutus and his confederates came into the market-place to speak unto the people, who gave them such audience, that it seemed they neither greatly reproved nor allowed the fact: for by their great silence they showed that they were sorry for Caesar's death, and also that they did reverence Brutus. Now the Senate granted general pardon for all that was past, and to pacify every man, ordained besides that Caesar's funerals should be honored as a god, and established all things that he had done: and gave certain provinces also and convenient honors unto Brutus and his confederates, whereby every man thought all things were brought to good peace and quietness again. But when they had opened Caesar's testament, and found a liberal legacy of money bequeathed unto every citizen of Rome, and that they saw his body (which was brought into the market place) all bemangled with gashes of swords: then there was no order to keep the multitude and common people quiet, but they plucked up forms, tables, and stools, and laid them all about the body, and setting them afire burnt the corpse. Then, when the fire was well kindled, they took the firebrands, and went unto their houses that had slain Caesar, to set them afire. Other also ran up and down the city to see if they could meet with any of them, to cut them in pieces: howbeit they could meet with never a man of them, because they had locked themselves up safely in their houses.

The Bible

(1611)

The *King James* or "Authorized Version" of the Bible is more than a translation. It is a great English book, perhaps the greatest prose work in the language.

In England, as in no other European country, the Bible had a long history of translation, and the 1611 Bible is, in a sense, only a culmination of English translations. In Old English days many attempts at partial versions in the popular tongue have been recorded—among others those by Aldhem; Bede; Alfred; Aldred; Ælfric; and the authors of the Vespasian Psalter, the Rushwell Gospels and the West-Saxon translation (c. 900). In 1384 followers of John Wyclif made a complete translation, now known as *Wyclif's Bible,* which was revised twelve years later. Tindale translated (1525-35) the New Testament and the Pentateuch. From Luther and the Vulgate, Miles Coverdale made the first complete English printed Bible in 1535. A new edition of the *Coverdale,* revised from the Hebrew and the Greek, and called the *Great Bible* was made in 1539. In 1560, the most popular of all these, the *Geneva Bible*, was printed in Switzerland for refugees. A revision of the *Great Bible* was made in 1568, and is known as the *Bishop's Bible*. At Rheims a literal translation of the New Testament was issued in 1582. Finally in 1611 came the noble *King James* version.

For this monumental work some fifty scholars from Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster were engaged; and the translation must be considered as the labor of the entire company. These men used not only Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, and modern-language texts, but, what is more important, also based their translations on those of their predecessors in English. Like the latter they selected the homely, clear, and racy diction of the common people; only everywhere there can be seen greater beauty of word and cadence.

But it is not merely the beauty of the prose that has made the English Bible so important to literature. England has been the great Protestant country of Western Europe; and one of the tenets of English Protestantism became, very early, that it was urgent for each man to read God's word in the Bible for himself. In the Roman Catholic Church, of course, Latin has been the official language of the Bible. The English Bible it became a duty for the English Protestant to know; he heard its beautiful cadences regularly in Church, and it formed a basic part of his education. In the seventeenth century and after, there was one book in most Englishmen's homes, and that was the *King James* Bible. Passages were read by the head of the family, in many homes, daily.

Small wonder, then, that its echoes are to be found throughout English literature—not only in works in which its inspiration plainly is heard, but in the very harmonies of thought and style of countless masters. The stories of Eden and Samson form the basis for Milton's two greatest works; the revolt against David gives Dryden a powerful analogy for his *Absalom and Achitophel*; the dramatic career of Saul stimulates Browning to one of his noblest efforts; the picture of Ruth is one of the most memorable in Keats' *Ode To a Nightingale*; Ruskin learns his style from the English Bible, and so does Jeremy Taylor and a number of his great contemporaries.

The reader may consult: A. S. Cook, *The Bible and English Prose Style* (1892), J. H. Gardiner, *The Bible as English Literature* (1905), and V. F. Storr (ed.), *The English Bible* (1938), for valuable comment.

The Garden of Eden

(Genesis 2:4-3:24)

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?

And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.

And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it was thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The Story of Ruth

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband: and how thou has left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens. And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: and let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she had sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz.

And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, the man is near kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, he said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshingfloor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou has shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning.

And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it. Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel. Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place ye are witnesses this day. So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife.

The Song of Solomon

(2:8-2:14)

The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he cometh
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh forth at the windows,
Shewing himself through the lattice.
My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love,
My fair one, and come away.
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
And the vines with the tender grape
Give a good smell. Arise, my love,
My fair one, and come away.
O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret places of the stairs,
Let me see thy countenance,
Let me hear thy voice;
For sweet is thy voice,
And thy countenance is comely.

The Psalms

PSALM I

"Blessed Is the Man"

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in his law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season;
His leaf also shall not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The ungodly are not so;
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous;
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM VIII

A Song of Praise

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!
Who hast set thy glory above the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies,
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou has ordained,
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor.
Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;

Thou has put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,
And whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

PSALM XXIII

"THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD"

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul;
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

PSALM XXIV

"THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S"

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?
Or who shall stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive the blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
This is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O Jacob.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

PSALM CXXI

"I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES"

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved;
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper;
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil;
He shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and even for evermore.

PSALM CXXX

"OUT OF THE DEPTHS"

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice;
Let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.
If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
That thou mayest be feared.
I wait for the Lord,
My soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning;
I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Let Israel hope in the Lord;
For with the Lord there is mercy,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

The Parable of the Talents

Matthew, Chapter 25

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou has not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Montaigne's Essays

(Translated by John Florio [1553?-1625])

Having participated for some years in political affairs, Montaigne retired in his thirties from active life to devote himself to study. Collecting a varied library in his château, he busied himself reading and annotating his favorite authors. This habit of making commentaries led him eventually to the idea of writing his famous *Essays*. But illness caused him to travel through Switzerland, Germany, and Italy in search of relief. While at Lucca he learned of his election as mayor of Bordeaux. Unwillingly he returned in 1581 to take up what was for him an unpleasurable duty. Despite his being more of a Renaissance scholar than a politician, he was re-elected in 1583. In 1585 he gladly gave up his responsibilities, and, loaded with honors, retired once more to his studies. In the meantime his first two books of *Essays* had appeared (1580) and had been amplified in 1582 (and later in 1587). In 1588 he published the third book. He never ceased revising his work until his death, shortly after which his friend, Marie de Gournay, edited his posthumous works (1595).

Epicurean and tranquil scholar, Montaigne in his skepticism is the philosophic ancestor of Voltaire and Anatole France. His was an alert, inquisitive, tolerant, urbane, and honest mind. Montaigne cannot be said to have a philosophic system; he is content to comment on men, manners, and books, and thus has pictured mankind in its characteristic and conflicting moods. Few writers have been quoted as often as he in English books. His influence is to be read in the whole history of the English essay, as well as in the pages of Shakespeare and other poets. His inspection of his own ideas and his indefatigable posing of questions did much to create the intellectual atmosphere in which the seventeenth-century "metaphysical poets", and prosewriters like Browne, flourished.

But if he shows us mankind it is always through the glass of his own personality. That is the very nature of the informal essay, which he invented. "It is myself I portray," he boldly asserts in his preface to the reader—a manifesto of egoism typical of the Renaissance. As he writes the essay, it becomes a kind of prose lyric. His method is indicated by the motto of the 1595 edition, *"Que sais-je?"* (i.e. What do I know?). He will start his speculation on any subject (on a passage from some poem, for instance), and follow his thoughts wherever they lead. Sometimes his essay will be finished in a page or two, sometimes it will be of considerable extent.

His famous translator, John Florio, was born in England the son of Italian Protestant refugee parents. Florio, brother-in-law of the poet Daniel, friend of Ben Jonson (and probably of Shakespeare), taught Italian and French at Oxford, published books on Italian grammar, and wrote an Italian-English dictionary. His translation of Montaigne, though rather free and superseded by others in accuracy, is still the most famous of all. To Montaigne's charm it adds the vivacity of Elizabethan English. Published in 1603, Florio's Montaigne is undoubtedly the form in which the *Essays* have been best known to English writers who have come under the great Frenchman's spell. The translation is itself a classic.

I. C. Willis, *Montaigne* (1927); E. Dowden, *Michel de Montaigne* (1905); and G. Compayre, *Montaigne* (1908) are to be recommended. A splendid estimate of Montaigne will be found in Emerson's *Representative Men.*

The Author to the Reader

Reader, lo here a well-meaning book. It doth at the first entrance forewarn thee that in contriving the same, I have proposed unto myself no other than a familiar and private end. I have no respect or consideration at all either to thy service or to my glory; my forces are not capable of any such design. I have vowed the same to the particular commodity of my kinsfolks and friends; to the end that losing me (which they are likely to do ere long) they may therein find some lineaments of my conditions and humors, and by that means reserve more whole, and more lively foster the knowledge and acquaintance they have had of me. Had my intention been to forestall and purchase the world's opinion and favor, I would surely have adorned myself more quaintly, or kept a more grave and solemn march. I desire therein to be delineated in mine own genuine, simple, and ordinary fashion, without contention, art, or study; for it is myself I portray. My imperfections shall therein be read to the life, and my natural form discerned, so far forth as public reverence hath permitted me. For if my fortune had been to have lived among those nations which yet are said to live under the sweet liberty of Nature's first and uncorrupted laws, I assure thee I would most willingly have portrayed myself fully and naked. Thus, gentle Reader, myself am the groundwork of my book. It is then no reason thou shouldest employ thy time about so frivolous and vain a subject. Therefore farewell. From *Montaigne,* the First of March, 1580.

That Our Intention Judgeth Our Actions

The common saying is that death acquits us of all our bonds. I know some that have taken it in another sense. Henry the Seventh, King of England, made a composition with Philip, son to Maximilian the Emperor, or, to give him a more honorable title, father to the Emperor Charles the Fifth, that the said Philip should deliver into his hands the Duke of Suffolk, his mortal enemy, who was fled out of England and saved himself in the Low countries, always provided the King should attempt nothing against the Duke's life, which promise, notwithstanding being near his end, he expressly by will and testament commanded his succeeding son, that immediately after his decease, he should cause him to be put to death. In the late tragedy which the Duke of Alva presented us withal at Brussels on the Earles of Horne and Egmond were many remarkable things, and worthy to be noted, and amongst others, that the said Count Egmond, upon whose faithful word and assurance the Earle of Horne was come in and yielded himself to the Duke of Alva, required very instantly to be first put to death, to the end his death might acquit and free him of the word and bond which he owed and was engaged for to the said Earle of Horne. It seemeth that death hath no whit discharged the former of his word given, and that the second, without dying, was quit of it. We cannot be tied beyond our strength and means. The reason is because the effects and executions are not any way in our power and except our will, nothing is truly in our power: on it only are all the rules of man's duty grounded and established by necessity. And therefore Count Egmond, deeming his mind and will indebted to his promise, howbeit the power to effect it lay not in his hands, was no doubt clearly absolved of his debt and duty, although he had survived the Count Horne. But the King of England failing of his word by his intention cannot be excused, though he delayed the execution of his disloyalty until after his death. No more than Herodotus his mason, who during his natural life having faithfully kept the secret of his master the King of Egypt's treasure, when he died discovered[1] the same unto his children. I have in my days seen many convicted by their own conscience for detaining other men's goods, yet by their last will and testament to dispose themselves, after their decease to make satisfaction. This is nothing to the purpose. Neither to take time for a matter so urgent, nor with so small interest or show of feeling, to go about to establish an injury. They are indebted somewhat more. And by how much more they pay incommodiously and chargeably, so much the more just and meritorious is their satisfaction. Penitence ought to charge, yet do they worse who reserve the revealing of some heinous conceit or affection towards their neighbor to their last will and affection, having whilst they lived ever kept it secret. And seem to have little regard of their own honor by provoking the party offended against their own memory, and less of their conscience, since they could never for the respect of death cancel their ill-grudging affection, and in extending life beyond theirs. O wicked and ungodly judges which refer the judgment of a cause to such time as they have no more knowledge of causes! I will as near as I can prevent, that my death reveal or utter any thing my life hath not first publicly spoken.

The Profit of One Man Is the Domage[1] of Another

Demades, the Athenian, condemned a man of the city, whose trade was to sell such necessaries as belonged to burials, under color,[2] he asked too much profit for them, and that such profit could not come unto him without the death of many people. This judgment seemeth to be ill taken, because no man profiteth but by the loss of others; by which reason a man should condemn all manner of gain. The merchant thrives not but by the licentiousness of youth; the husbandman by dearth of corn; the architect but by the ruin of houses; the lawyer by suits and controversies between men. Honor itself, and practice of religious ministers, is drawn from our death and vices. "No physician delighteth in the health of his own friend," sayeth the ancient Greek comic,[3] "nor no soldier is pleased with the peace of his city, and so of the rest." And which is worse, let every man sound his own conscience, he shall find that our inward desires are for the most part nourished and bred in us by the loss and hurt of others; which when I considered, I began to think how nature doth not gainsay herself in this concerning her general policy, for physicians hold that the birth, increase, and augmentation of everything is the alteration and corruption of another.

Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit,
Continuo hoc mors est illius, quod fuit ante.
—Lucr. i. 687, 813; ii. 762; iii. 536.
Whatever from its bounds doth changed pass,
That strait is death of that, which erst it was.

A Saying of Caesar

If we shall sometimes amuse ourselves and consider our estate and the time we spend in controlling others and to know the things that are without us, would we but employ the same in sounding ourselves thoroughly, we should easily perceive how all this contexture is built of weak and decaying pieces. Is it not an especial testimony of imperfection that we cannot settle our contentment on any one thing, and that even of our own desire and imagination it is beyond our power to choose what we stand in need of? Whereof the disputation that hath ever been among philosophers beareth sufficient witness to find out the chief felicity or *summum bonum*[1] of man, and which yet doth and shall eternally last without resolution or agreement.

—dum abest quod avemus, id exuperare videtur
Cætera; post aliud, cum contigit illud, avemus,
Et sitis æqua tenet.
—Lucretius, iii, 25.

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[1] revealed.

[1] loss. [2] for the reason that.

[3] comic writer.

[1] highest good.

While that is absent which we wish, the rest
That seems to pass, when ought else is addressed,
That we desire, with equal thirst oppressed.

Whatsoever it be that falleth into our knowledge and jouisance,[2] we find it doth not satisfy us, and we still follow and gape after future, uncertain, and unknown things, because the present and known please us not and do not satisfy us. Not, as I think, because they have not sufficiently wherewith to satiate and please us, but the reason is that we apprehend and seize on them with an unruly, disordered, and diseased taste and hold-fast.

Nam cum vidit hic ad usum quæ flagitat usus,
Omnia jam ferme mortalibus esse parata,
Divitiis homines et honore et laude potentes
Affluere, atque bona natorum excellere fama,
Nec minus esse domi, cuiquam tamen anxia corda,
Atque animum infestis cogi servire querelis:
Intellexit ibi vitium vas facere ipsum,
Omniaque illius vitio corrumpier intus
Quæ collata foris et commoda quæ que venirent.
—Lucretius, ix.

For when the wise man saw that all almost
That use requires for men prepared was,
That man enriches, honors, praises boast,
In good report of children others pass,
Yet none at home did bear less pensive heart
But that the mind was forced to serve complaint
He knew, that fault the vessel did impart
That all was marred within by vessel's taint,
Whatever good was wrought by any art.

Our appetite is irresolute and uncertain; it can neither hold nor enjoy anything handsomely or after a good fashion. Man, supposing it is the vice and fault of things he possesses, feedeth and filleth himself with other things which he neither knoweth nor hath understanding of, whereto he applieth both his desires and hopes and taketh them as an honor and reverence to himself; as saith Caesar:

Communi fit vitio naturæ, ut invisis, latitantibus atque incognitis rebus magis confidamus, vehementiusque exterreamur (Caesar, *Bellum Civile*, ii).

It happeneth by the common fault of nature that both we are more confident and more terrified by things unseen, things hidden and unknown.

Of Age

I cannot receive that manner whereby we establish the continuance of our life. I see that some of the wiser sort do greatly shorten the same in respect of the common opinion. What said Cato Junior[1] to those who sought to hinder him from killing himself? "Do I now live the age wherein I may justly be reproved to leave my life too soon?" Yet was he but eight and forty years old. He thought that age very ripe, yea, and well advanced, considering how few men come unto it. And such as entertain themselves with, I wot not what kind of course which they call natural promiseth some few years beyond, might do it, had they a privilege that could exempt them from so great a number of accidents, unto which each one of us stand subject by a natural subjection, and which may interrupt the said course they purpose unto themselves. What fondness is it for a man to think he shall die for and through a failing and defective strength which extreme age draweth with it and to propose that term unto our life, seeing it is the rarest kind of all deaths and least in use? We only call it natural as if it were against nature to see a man break his neck with a fall, to be drowned by shipwreck, to be surprised with a pestilence or pleurisy, and as if our ordinary condition did not prevent these inconveniences unto us all. Let us not flatter ourselves with these fond-goodly words: a man may peradventure rather call that natural which is general, common, and universal. To die of age is a rare, singular, and extraordinary death, and so much less natural than others. It is the last and extremest kind of dying. The further it is from us, so much the less is it to be hoped for. Indeed, it is the limit beyond which we shall not pass, and which the law of nature hath prescribed unto us as that which should not be outgone by any; but it is a rare privilege peculiar unto herself to make us continue unto it. It is an exemption which through some particular favor she bestoweth on some one man in the space of two or three ages, discharging him from the crosses, troubles, and difficulties she hath interposed between both in this long career and pilgrimage. Therefore my opinion is to consider that the age unto which we are come is an age whereto few arrive: since men come not unto it by any ordinary course, it is a sign we are very forward. And since we have passed the accustomed bounds, which is the true measure of our life, we must not hope that we shall go much further. Having escaped so many occasions of death wherein we see the world fall, we must acknowledge that such an extraordinary fortune as that is which maintaineth us and is beyond the common use is not likely to continue long. It is a fault of the very laws to have this false imagination. They allow not a man to be capable and of discretion to manage and dispose of his own goods until he be five and twenty years old; yet shall he hardly preserve the state of his life so long. Augustus abridged five years of the ancient Roman laws and declared that for any man that should take upon him the charge of judgment it sufficed to be thirty years old. Servius Tullius[2] dispensed with the knights who were seven and forty years of age from all voluntary services of war. Augustus brought them to forty and five. To send men to their place of sojourning before they be five and fifty or three score years of age, meseemeth carrieth no great appearance with it. My advice would be that our vacation and employment should be extended as far as might be for the public commodity, but I blame some and condemn most that we begin not soon enough to employ ourselves. The same Augustus had been universal and supreme judge of the world when he was but nineteen years old, and would have another to be thirty before he shall be made a competent judge of a cottage or farm. As for my part, I think our minds are as full ground and perfectly jointed at twenty years as they should be, and promise as much as they can. A mind which at that age hath not given some evident token or earnest of her sufficiency shall hardly give it afterward, put her to what trial you list. Natural qualities and virtues, if they have any vigorous or beauteous thing in them, will produce and show the same within that time or never. They say in Dauphine,

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[2] enjoyment.

[1] Roman philosopher (95-46 B.C.).

> *Si l'espine nou picque quand nai,*
> *A peine que picque jamai.*
> —French proverb.
>
> A thorn, unless at first it prick,
> Will hardly ever pierce to th' quick.

Of all humane, honorable, and glorious actions that ever came unto my knowledge, of what nature soever they be, I am persuaded I should have a harder task to number those which, both in ancient times and in ours, have been produced and achieved before the age of thirty years than such as were performed after, yea, often in the life of the same man. May not I boldly speak it of those of Hannibal and Scipio, his great adversary? They lived the better part of their life with the glory which they had gotten in their youth; and though afterward they were great men in respect of all others, yet were they but mean in regard of themselves. As for my particular, I am verily persuaded that since that age both my spirit and my body have more decreased than increased, more recoiled than advanced. It may be that knowledge and experience shall increase in them, together with life, that bestow their time well; but vivacity, promptitude, constancy, and other parts much more our own, more important, and more essential—they droop, they languish, and they faint.

> *—ubi jam validis quassatum est viribus ævi*
> *Corpus, et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus,*
> *Claudicat ingenium, delirat linguaque mensque.*
> —Lucr. iii. 457.
>
> When once the body by shrewd strength of years
> Is shaken and limbs drawn down from strength
> that wears,
> Wit halts, both tongue and mind
> Do daily dote, we find.

It is the body which sometimes yieldeth first unto age, and other times the mind; and I have seen many that have had their brains weaken before their stomach or legs. And for as much as it is a disease little or nothing sensible unto him that endureth it and maketh no great show, it is so much the more dangerous. Here I exclaim against our laws, not because they leave us so long and late in working and employment, but that they set us a work no sooner, and it is so late before we be employed. Methinks that considering the weakness of our life, and seeing the infinite number of ordinary rocks and natural dangers it is subject unto, we should not, so soon as we come into the world, allot so great a share thereof unto unprofitable wantonness in youth, ill-breeding idleness, and slow-learning prenticeage.

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[2] Sixth king of Rome (578-534 B.C.).

Francis Bacon

(1561-1626)

Few men in the world's history have had Bacon's nobility of intellect, and few have had a more unattractive character. His own contemporaries seem to have distrusted him, and (it would appear) with reason; in particular Queen Elizabeth, whose favor he eagerly sought, had little liking for him. Yet here was a man who could truthfully say: "I have taken all knowledge to be my province."

The son of Elizabeth's Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, Bacon studied at Cambridge and at Gray's Inn. For years he labored to advance himself at court, but the Queen would do nothing for him. He allied himself to the interests of the Earl of Essex, Elizabeth's last favorite, but it availed him nothing in her regard. When Essex headed a rebellion against the Queen, Bacon found it to his own advantage to turn on his benefactor, and actually undertook the role of prosecutor against him.

Elizabeth did not long survive Essex, and Bacon's fortunes fared better under her successor; her unfriendliness to Bacon could only have been a recommendation to James I. Bacon became a member of Parliament, then Attorney General, and in 1618 Lord Chancellor, Baron Verulam, and Viscount St. Albans. Two years later, however, he was accused of accepting bribes in cases which he was to try, and he pleaded guilty. It is likely that he was in this instance no more culpable than most judges of his time. He forfeited his offices and went into retirement, which he kept until his death. In 1626 he caught a death chill while experimenting with snow for its possibilities in preventing the decay of animal foods.

To turn from his private life to his intellectual achievement is to pass from the sordid to the magnificent. Bacon was an Elizabethan by birth and in the scope of his aims. But his role (second to no one's) in fostering the growth of the scientific spirit, makes him a man of the new century. It was in reversing the medieval attitude towards nature that Bacon was a prophet.

All through the Middle Ages the physical universe was held accursed; a man who, like Roger Bacon, had studied nature, was thought to have commerce with evil spirits. Renaissance humanism, however, in reviving the works of Greek philosophers and a poet like Lucretius, was reviving, in the long run, curiosity concerning natural phenomena. Francis Bacon, though no scientist himself (he actually rejected the most important scientific discoveries of his own day), became the popularizer of a new natural science.

He did the important work of undermining the medieval traditions of deductive logic as applied to nature; the schoolmen's speculations which, as he says "did out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of spirit spin out to us those laborious webs of learning . . . must be acknowledged as puerile or rather talkative than generative—as being fruitful in controversies, but barren of effects." This destructive criticism was half his task; the other half was to point the new method for adding to human knowledge—the inductive method of reasoning. "Nothing parcel of the world is denied to man's inquiry and invention," he proudly announces in the true scientific spirit. It is the business of thinkers, he adds, "to establish a true and legitimate union between the experimental and rational faculty."

Bacon planned in Latin a huge work which was to take a survey of existing knowledge as well as to plot the path to future knowledge. The first part (translated into English in 1605 as *The Advancement of Learning*) was followed by the *Novum Organum* (1620), in which is described the inductive method. In the latter book, Bacon also warns of the obstacles to scientific thinking: the power of traditional error, the personal limitations of the scientific investigator, the dangers inherent in words and rhetoric, and the common fear of heterodoxy. This analysis is one of Bacon's profoundest contributions to knowledge.

In 1627 was published his picture of a scientific Utopian society in the *New Atlantis*, a work markedly different from More's. In this world of the future Bacon envisioned the chief institution as being the "House of Solomon," a college of scientific research, fully equipped with laboratories for experimentation. This House of Solomon was taken by the seventeenth-century scientists as a model for their all-important Royal Society in London.

Bacon's *Essays*, by which alone, strictly speaking, he belongs to English literature, were considered by their author as trifles—a collection of "dispersed meditations" on life and human conduct. They are as remarkable for their succinctness and pungency of style as for the quality of thinking that produced them. In purely intellectual matters, Bacon's mind is revealed in all its scope; in matters of human relationship he is sometimes repellent in his inhuman materialism.

It was undoubtedly the example of Montaigne that moved him to the publication of the original ten essays in 1597 and to his increase of their number to fifty-eight by 1625; even the name "essay" is borrowed from the great Frenchman. But few essays are more unlike Montaigne's than Bacon's. The two men had dissimilar characters: Montaigne had been an unwilling participant in political affairs; Bacon spent much of his energies straining for a place of political power. Montaigne was genial, intimate, and humane; Bacon was cold, objective, and untouched by human kindliness. So too, their methods are different. Montaigne is discursive and leisurely; Bacon is pointed and sententious. We see Montaigne's world through his personality; Bacon impersonally examines his subject and, like a scientist, analyzes it to its various elements. Bacon's worldliness is akin to Machiavelli's (cf. *above*); ideals are no impediment to his ruthless intention of finding the greatest practical ends in people and affairs. His essays, therefore, leave us with varying reactions. When he speaks of matters of the mind (e.g. *Of Truth, Of Adversity, Of Studies*), we revere him. But when he speaks of the affections (e.g. *Of Parents and Children, Of Love*), we are likely to admire the wisdom of his head and wonder at the ignorance of his heart.

The brilliant style of the *Essays* calls for a word. Bacon's diction is amazing in its directness and clarity, and will strike us as more modern than that of any other Elizabethan prose-writer. But in one important respect his style is not like that of modern prose. Each sentence is packed with meaning, but the links between one sentence and the next must often be supplied by the reader. The flow from sentence to sentence is a later development in English prose.

The collected edition of his works is by J. Spedding, R. L. Ellis, and D. D. Heath (1857-74). There are many reprints of the *Essays*. The standard biography is J. Spedding's (1861-74). Among recent studies are: M. Sturt, *Francis Bacon* (1932), and Charles Williams, *Bacon* (1933).

Essays or Counsels Civil and Moral

Of Truth

"What is truth?" said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.[1] Certainly there be that delight in giddiness, and count it a bondage to fix a belief, affecting free-will in thinking, as well as in acting. And though the sects of philosophers of that kind be gone, yet there remain certain discoursing wits which are of the same veins, though there be not so much blood in them as was in those of the ancients. But it is not only the difficulty and labor which men take in finding out truth; nor again, that when it is found, it imposeth upon men's thoughts, that doth bring lies in favor: but a natural though corrupt love of the lie itself. One of the later school of the Grecians examineth the matter, and is at a stand[2] to think what should be in it, that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets, nor for advantage as with the merchant, but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell: this same truth is a naked and open day-light that doth not shew the masques and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candle-lights. Truth may, perhaps, come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? One of the fathers, in great severity, called poesy *vinum dæmonum*,[3] because it filleth the imagination, and yet it is but with the shadow of a lie. But it is not the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and settleth in it, that doth the hurt, such as we spake of before. But howsoever these things are thus in men's depraved judgments and affections, yet truth, which only doth judge itself, teacheth that the inquiry of truth, which is the lovemaking or wooing of it; the knowledge of truth, which is the presence of it; and the belief of truth, which is the enjoying of it, is the sovereign good of human nature. The first creature of God, in the works of the days, was the light of the sense; the last was the light of reason; and his sabbath work, ever since, is the illumination of his spirit. First he breathed light upon the face of the matter or chaos; then he breathed light into the face of man; and still he breatheth and inspireth light into the face of his chosen. The poet[4] that beautified the sect[5] that was otherwise inferior to the rest, saith yet excellently well: *It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea; a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth* (a hill not to be commanded, and where the air is always clear and serene), *and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests, in the vale below;* so always that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.

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[1] cf. *John*, 18:38.

[2] is puzzled.

To pass from theological and philosophical truth to the truth of civil business, it will be acknowledged, even by those that practice it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it; for these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet. There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious; and therefore Montaigne saith prettily, when he inquired the reason why the word of the lie should be such a disgrace and such an odious charge, "If it be well weighed, to say that a man lieth, is as much to say as that he is brave towards God and a coward towards men." For a lie faces God, and shrinks from man. Surely the wickedness of falsehood and breach of faith cannot possibly be so highly expressed as in that it shall be the last peal to call the judgments of God upon the generations of men; it being foretold, that when Christ cometh, "he shall not find faith upon the earth."

Of Revenge

Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence.* That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come: therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh: this is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent: but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable: *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.* But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: *Shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?* And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Cæsar; for the death of Pertinax;[1] for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.

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[3] the wine of devils. Cf. Augustine, *Confessions*, I, xvi.

[4] Lucretius.

[5] Epicurean.

Of Adversity

It was a high speech of Seneca,[1] after the manner of the Stoics, that the good things which belong to prosperity are to be wished, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be admired: *Bona rerum secundarum optabilia, adversarum mirabilia.* Certainly, if miracles be the command over nature, they appear most in adversity. It is yet a higher speech of his than the other, much too high for a heathen: It is true greatness to have in one the frailty of a man, and the security of a God: *Vere magnum habere fragilitatem hominis, securitatem Dei.* This would have done better in poesy, where transcendencies are more allowed. And the poets indeed have been busy with it; for it is in effect the thing which is figured in that strange fiction of the ancient poets, which seemeth not to be without mystery; nay, and to have some approach to the state of a Christian: that Hercules, when he went to unbind Prometheus, by whom human nature is represented, sailed the length of the great ocean in an earthen pot or pitcher; lively describing Christian resolution, that saileth in the frail bark of the flesh through the waves of the world. But to speak in a mean:[2] the virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament; adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes. We see in needle-works and embroideries, it is more pleasing to have a lively work upon a sad and solemn ground, than to have a dark and melancholy work upon a lightsome ground: judge therefore of the pleasure of the heart by the pleasure of the eye. Certainly virtue is like precious odors, most fragrant when they are incensed or crushed: for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue.

Of Parents and Children

The joys of parents are secret, and so are their griefs and fears: they cannot utter the one, nor they will not utter the other. Children sweeten labors, but they make misfortunes more bitter: they increase the cares of life, but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works are proper to men: and surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men, which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed: so the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses are most indulgent towards their children: beholding them as the continuance not only of their kind but of their work; and so both children and creatures.

The difference in affection of parents towards their several children is many times unequal, and sometimes unworthy, especially in the mother; as Solomon saith: "A wise son rejoiceth the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother."[1] A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons; but in the midst some that are as it were forgotten, who many times nevertheless prove the best. The illiberality of parents in allowance towards their children is an harmful error;

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[1] Emperor of Rome, born 126, killed 193 A.D.

[1] Roman Stoic philosopher (4 B.C.-65 A.D.).

[2] in a restrained manner.

[1] *Proverbs,* 10:1.

makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty: and therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards their children, but not their purse. Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers during childhood, which many times sorteth to discord when they are men, and disturbeth families. The Italians make little difference between children and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembleth an uncle or a kinsman more than his own parents, as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that which they have most mind to. It is true, that if the affection or aptness of the children be extraordinary, then it is good not to cross it; but generally the precept is good, *Optimum elige, suave et facile illud faciet consuetudo.*[2] Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

Of Marriage and Single Life

He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public. Yet it were great reason that those that have children should have greatest care of future times; unto which they know they must transmit their dearest pledges. Some there are, who though they lead a single life, yet their thoughts do end with themselves, and account future times impertinences. Nay, there are some other that account wife and children but as bills of charges. Nay more, there are some foolish rich covetous men, that take a pride in having no children, because they may be thought so much the richer. For perhaps they have heard some talk, *Such an one is a great rich man,* and another except to it, *Yea, but he hath a great charge of children;* as if it were an abatement to his riches. But the most ordinary cause of a single life is liberty, especially in certain self-pleasing and humorous[1] minds, which are so sensible of every restraint, as they will go near to think their girdles and garters to be bonds and shackles. Unmarried men are best friends, best masters, best servants; but not always best subjects; for they are light to run away; and almost all fugitives are of that condition. A single life doth well with churchmen; for charity will hardly water the ground where it must first fill a pool. It is indifferent for judges and magistrates; for if they be facile and corrupt, you shall have a servant five times worse than a wife. For soldiers, I find the generals commonly in their hortatives put men in mind of their wives and children; and I think the despising of marriage amongst the Turks maketh the vulgar soldier more base. Certainly wife and children are a kind of discipline of humanity; and single men, though they may be many times more charitable, because their means are less exhaust, yet, on the other side, they are more cruel and hardhearted (good to make severe inquisitors), because their tenderness is not so oft called upon. Grave natures, led by custom, and therefore constant, are commonly loving husbands, as was said of Ulysses, *vetulam suam prætulit immortalitati.*[2] Chaste women are often proud and forward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity. It is one of the best bonds both of chastity and obedience in the wife, if she think her husband wise; which she will never do if she find him jealous. Wives are young men's mistresses; companions for middle age; and old men's nurses. So as a man may have a quarrel[3] to marry when he will. But yet he[4] was reputed one of the wise men, that made answer to the question, when a man should marry—*A young man not yet, an elder man not at all.* It is often seen that bad husbands have very good wives; whether it be that it raiseth the price of their husband's kindness when it comes; or that the wives take a pride in their patience. But this never fails, if the bad husbands were of their own choosing, against their friends' consent; for then they will be sure to make good their own folly.

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[2] "Choose the best and habit will make this pleasant and easy."

[1] whimsical.

[2] He preferred his aged wife to immortality. (The nymph Calypso had offered to make him immortal.)

[3] excuse.

[4] Thales, one of the "seven wise men of Greece."

Of Love

The stage is more beholden to love, than the life of man. For as to the stage, love is ever a matter of comedies, and now and then of tragedies; but in life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a siren, sometimes like a fury. You may observe, that amongst all the great and worthy persons, whereof the memory remaineth, either ancient or recent, there is not one that hath been transported to the mad degree of love; which shows, that great spirits and great business do keep out this weak passion. You must except nevertheless, Marcus Antonius,[1] the half-partner of the empire of Rome, and Appius Claudius,[2] the decemvir and lawgiver; whereof the former was indeed a voluptuous man and inordinate; but the latter was an austere and wise man: and therefore it seems, though rarely, that love can find entrance, not only into an open heart, but also into a heart well fortified, if watch be not well kept. It is a poor saying of Epicurus; *Satis magnum alter alteri theatrum sumus*:[3] as if man, made for the contemplation of heaven, and all noble objects, should do nothing but kneel before a little idol, and make himself subject, though not of the mouth, as beasts are, yet of the eye, which was given him for higher purposes. It is a strange thing to note the excess of this passion; and how it braves the nature and value of things by this, that the speaking in a perpetual hyperbole is comely in nothing but in love. Neither is it merely in the phrase; for whereas it hath been well said, that the arch-flatterer, with whom all the petty flatterers have intelligence, is a man's self; certainly the lover is more. For there was never proud man thought so absurdly well of himself as the lover doth of the person loved; and therefore it was well said, *That it is impossible to love and to be wise*. Neither doth this weakness appear to others only, and not to the party loved; but to the loved most of all, except the love be reciproque.[4] For it is a true rule, that love is ever rewarded either with the reciproque or with an inward and secret contempt. By how much the more men ought to beware of this passion, which loseth not only other things, but itself! As for the other losses, the poet's relation doth well figure them: that he[5] that preferred Helena quitted the gifts of Juno and Pallas. For whosoever esteemeth too much of amorous affection quitteth both riches and wisdom. This passion hath his floods in the very times of weakness; which are great prosperity and great adversity; though this latter hath been less observed: both which times kindle love, and make it more fervent, and therefore show it to be the child of folly. They do best, who if they cannot but admit love, yet make it keep quarter;[6] and sever it wholly from their serious affairs and actions of life; for if it check[7] once with business, it troubleth men's fortunes, and maketh men that they can no ways be true to their own ends. I know not how, but martial men are given to love: I think it is but as they are given to wine; for perils commonly ask to be paid in pleasures. There is in man's nature a secret inclination and motion towards love of others, which if it be not spent upon some one or a few, doth naturally spread itself towards many, and maketh men become humane and charitable; as it is seen sometimes in friars. Nuptial love maketh mankind; friendly love perfecteth it; but wanton love corrupteth and embaseth it.

Of Great Place

Men in great place are thrice servants: servants of the sovereign or state; servants of fame; and servants of business. So as they have no freedom; neither in their persons, nor in their actions, nor in their times. It is a strange desire, to seek power and to lose liberty: or to seek power over others and to lose power over a man's self. The rising unto place is laborious; and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base; and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse, which is a melancholy thing. *Cum non sis qui fueris, non esse cur velis vivere.*[1] Nay, retire men cannot when they would, neither will they when it were reason; but are impatient of privateness, even in age and sickness, which require the shadow; like old townsmen, that will be still sitting at their street door, though thereby they offer age to scorn. Certainly great persons had need to borrow other men's opinions, to think themselves happy; for if they judge by their own feeling, they cannot find it: but if they think with themselves what other men think of them, and that other men would fain be as they are, then they are happy as it were by report; when perhaps they find the contrary within. For they are the first that find their own griefs, though they be the last that find their own faults. Certainly men in great fortunes are strangers to themselves, and while they are in the puzzle of business they have no time to tend their health either of body or mind. *Illi mors gravis incubat, qui notus nimis omnibus, ignotus moritur sibi.*[2] In place there is license to do good and evil; whereof the latter is a curse: for in evil the best condition is not to will; the second, not to can.[3] But power to do good is the true and lawful end of aspiring. For good thoughts (though God accept them) yet towards men are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place; as the vantage and commanding ground. Merit and good works is the end of man's motion; and conscience of the same is the accomplishment of man's rest. For if a man can be partaker of God's theater, he shall likewise be partaker of God's rest. *Et conversus Deus, ut aspiceret opera, quæ fecerunt manus suæ, vidit quod omnia essent bona nimis;*[4] and then the Sabbath. In the discharge of thy place, set before thee the best examples; for imitation is a globe of precepts. And after a time set before thee thine own example; and examine thyself strictly, whether thou didst not best at first. Neglect not also the examples of those that have carried themselves ill in the same place: not to set off thyself by taxing their memory; but to direct thyself what to avoid. Reform therefore, without bravery or scandal of former times and persons; but yet set it down to thyself, as well to create good precedents, as to follow them. Reduce things to the first institution, and observe wherein and how they have degenerated; but yet ask counsel of both times: of the ancient time what is best; and of the latter time what is fittest. Seek to make thy course regular; that men may know before hand what they may expect: but be not too positive and peremptory; and express thyself well when thou digressest from thy rule. Preserve the right of thy place, but stir not questions of jurisdiction: and rather assume thy right in silence and *de facto*,[5] than voice it with claims and challenges. Preserve likewise the rights of inferior places; and think it more honor to direct in chief than to be busy in all. Embrace and invite helps and advices touching the execution of thy place; and do not drive away such as bring thee information as meddlers, but accept of them in good part. The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility.[6] For delays; give easy access; keep times appointed; go through with that which is in hand; and interlace not business but of necessity. For corruption; do not only bind thine own hands or thy servants' hands from taking, but bind the hands of suitors also from offering. For integrity used doth the one; but integrity professed, and with a manifest detestation of bribery, doth the other. And avoid not only the fault, but the suspicion. Whosoever is found variable, and changeth manifestly without manifest cause, giveth suspicion of corruption. Therefore always when thou changest thine opinion or course, profess it plainly and declare it, together with the reasons that move thee to change; and do not think to steal[7] it. A servant or a favorite, if he be inward,[8] and no other apparent cause of esteem, is commonly thought but a by-way to close corruption. For roughness, it is a needless cause of discontent: severity breedeth fear, but roughness breedeth hate. Even reproofs from authority ought to be grave, and not taunting. As for facility, it is worse than bribery. For bribes come but now and then; but if importunity or idle respects lead a man, he shall never be without. As Solomon saith: "To respect persons is not good; for such a man will transgress for a piece of bread."[9] It is most true that was anciently spoken, "A place showeth the man": and it showeth some to the better, and some to the worse. *Omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset,*[10] saith Tacitus of Galba; but of Vespasian he saith, *Solus imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius:*[11] though the one was meant of sufficiency,[12] the other of manners and affection. It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit, whom honor amends. For honor is, or should be, the place of virtue; and as in nature things move violently to their place, and calmly in their place; so virtue in ambition is violent, in authority settled and calm. All rising to great place is by a winding stair; and if there be factions, it is good to side a man's self whilst he is in the rising, and to balance himself when he is placed. Use the memory of thy predecessor fairly and tenderly; for if thou dost not, it is a debt will sure be paid when thou art gone. If thou have colleagues, respect them, and rather call them when they look not for it, than exclude them when they have reason to look to be called. Be not too sensible or too remembering of thy place in conversation and private answers to suitors; but let it rather be said, "When he sits in place he is another man."

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[1] Roman statesman (83?-30 B.C.), lover of Cleopatra.

[2] Roman statesman (died after 280 B.C.), lover of Virginia.

[3] "We are a sufficient spectacle to one another."

[4] reciprocal.

[5] Paris, who, according to legend, awarded the golden apple to Venus, who promised him the love of Helen.

[6] keep within bounds.

[7] interfere.

[1] "When you are no longer what you were, there is no reason why you should wish to keep on living."

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[2] "It is a generous thing to die when one is too well known to others but is a stranger to himself."

[3] to know.

[4] "And God turned back and viewed the works which his hands had made and saw that they were all very good." (*Genesis,* 1:31, quoted from the Vulgate.)

[5] as a matter of fact.

[6] lack of firmness.

[7] hide.

[8] intimate.

[9] cf. *Proverbs,* 28:21.

[10] by common consent he would have been competent to rule, if he had not ruled.

[11] of all the emperors Vespasian alone changed for the better.

[12] ability.

Of Innovations

As the births of living creatures at first are ill-shapen, so are all innovations, which are the births of time. Yet notwithstanding, as those that first bring honor into their family are commonly more worthy than most that succeed, so the first precedent (if it be good) is seldom attained by imitation. For ill, to man's nature as it stands perverted, hath a natural motion, strongest in continuance; but good, as a forced motion, strongest at first. Surely every medicine is an innovation; and he that will not apply new remedies must expect new evils: for time is the greatest innovator; and if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end? It is true, that what is settled by custom, though it be not good, yet at least it is fit. And those things which have long gone together are as it were confederate within themselves: whereas new things piece not so well; but though they help by their utility, yet they trouble by their inconformity. Besides, they are like strangers more admired and less favored. All this is true, if time stood still; which contrariwise moveth so round, that a froward[1] retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as an innovation; and they that reverence too much old times are but a scorn to the new. It were good therefore that men in their innovations would follow the example of time itself, which indeed innovateth greatly, but quietly and by degrees scarce to be perceived: for otherwise, whatsoever is new is unlooked for; and ever it mends some, and pairs[2] other: and he that is holpen[3] takes it for a fortune, and thanks the time; and he that is hurt, for a wrong, and imputeth it to the author. It is good also not to try experiments in states, except the necessity be urgent, or the utility evident; and well to beware that it be the reformation that draweth on the change, and not the desire of change that pretendeth[4] the reformation. And lastly, that the novelty, though it be not rejected, yet be held for a suspect; and, as the Scripture saith, *that we make a stand upon the ancient way, and then look about us, and discover what is the straight and right way, and so to walk in it.*[5]

Of Seeming Wise

It hath been an opinion that the French are wiser than they seem, and the Spaniards seem wiser than they are. But howsoever it be between nations, certainly it is so between man and man. For as the Apostle saith of godliness, 'having a show of godliness, but denying the power thereof,' so certainly there are in points of wisdom and sufficiency that do nothing or little very solemnly—*magno conatu nugas.*[1] It is a ridiculous thing, and fit for a satire to persons of judgment, to see what shifts these formalists have, and what prospectives[2] to make superficies to seem body that hath depth and bulk. Some are so close and reserved as they will not show their wares but by a dark light, and seem always to keep back somewhat; and when they know within themselves they speak of that they do not well know would, nevertheless, seem to others to know of that which they may not well speak. Some help themselves with countenance and gesture, and are wise by signs, as Cicero saith of Piso, that when he answered him he fetched one of his brows up to his forehead and bent the other down to his chin—*respondes, altero ad frontem sublato altero ad mentum depresso supercilio, crudelitatem tibi non placere.* Some think to bear it by speaking a great word and being peremptory, and go on and take by admittance that which they cannot make good. Some, whatsoever is beyond their reach, will seem to despise or make light of it as impertinent or curious, and so would have their ignorance seem judgment. Some are never without a difference, and commonly, by amusing men with a subtlety, blanch the matter, of whom A. Gellius saith, *Hominem delirum, qui verborum minutiis rerum frangit pondera.*[3] Of which kind also Plato, in his *Protagoras*, bringeth in Prodicus in scorn, and maketh him make a speech that consisteth of distinctions from the beginning to the end. Generally, such men, in all deliberations, find ease to be of the negative side, and affect a credit to object and foretell difficulties; for when propositions are denied, there is an end of them; but if they be allowed, it requireth a new work; which false point of wisdom is the bane of business. To conclude, there is no decaying merchant, or inward beggar,[4] hath so many tricks to uphold the credit of their wealth, as these empty persons have to maintain the credit of their sufficiency. Seeming wise men may make shift to get opinion; but let no man choose them for employment; for, certainly, you were better take for business a man somewhat absurd than over-formal.

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[1] perverse.

[2] impairs. [3] helped. [4] makes a pretext of.

[5] cf. *Jeremiah*, 6.6.

[1] trifles (produced) with great effort.

[2] perspective glasses.

Of Riches

I cannot call riches better than the baggage of virtue. The Roman word is better, *impedimenta,*[1] for as the baggage is to an army so is riches to virtue. It cannot be spared, nor left behind, but it hindereth the march, yea, and the care of it sometimes loseth or disturbeth the victory. Of great riches there is no real use, except it be in the distribution; the rest is but conceit. So saith Solomon, 'Where much is, there are many to consume it; and what hath the owner but the sight of it with his eyes?'[2] The personal fruition in any man cannot reach to feel great riches; there is a custody of them, or a power of dole and donative of them, or a fame of them, but no solid use to the owner. Do you not see what feigned prices are set upon little stones and rarities? And what works of ostentation are undertaken, because there might seem to be some use of great riches? But then you will say, they may be of use, to buy men out of dangers or troubles. As Solomon saith, 'Riches are as a stronghold in the imagination of the rich man.'[3] But this is excellently expressed, that it is in imagination, and not always in fact. For certainly great riches have sold more men than they have bought out. Seek not proud riches, but such as thou mayest get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly. Yet have no abstract or friarly contempt of them, but distinguish, as Cicero saith well of Rabirius Posthumus, *in studio rei amplificandae, apparebat, non avaritiae praedam, sed instrumentum bonitati quaeri.*[4] Hearken also to Solomon, and beware of hasty gathering of riches: *Qui festinat ad divitias, non erit insons.*[5] The poets feign that when Plutus (which is riches) is sent from Jupiter, he limps, and goes slowly, but when he is sent from Pluto, he runs, and is swift of foot; meaning that riches gotten by good means and just labor pace slowly, but when they come by the death of others (as by the course of inheritance, testaments, and the like), they come tumbling upon a man: but it might be applied likewise to Pluto taking him for the devil; for when riches come from the devil (as by fraud, and oppression, and unjust means) they come upon speed. The ways to enrich are many, and most of them foul; parsimony is one of the best, and yet is not innocent, for it withholdeth men from works of liberality and charity. The improvement of the ground is the most natural obtaining of riches, for it is our great mother's blessing, the earth's; but it is slow: and yet, where men of great wealth do stoop to husbandry, it multiplieth riches exceedingly. I knew a nobleman in England that had the greatest audits[6] of any man in my time,—a great grazier, a great sheep master, a great timber man, a great collier, a great corn master, a great lead man, and so of iron and a number of the like points of husbandry; so as the earth seemed a sea to him in respect of the perpetual importation. It was truly observed by one. 'That himself came very hardly to a little riches, and very easily to great riches'; for when a man's stock is come to that, that he can expect the prime of markets,[7] and overcome[8] those bargains, which for their greatness are few men's money, and be partner in the industries of younger men, he cannot but increase mainly. The gains of ordinary trades and vocations are honest, and furthered by two things chiefly: by diligence, and by a good name for good and fair dealing; but the gains of bargains are of a more doubtful nature, when men shall wait upon others' necessity; broke by servants, and instruments to draw them on; put off others cunningly that would be better chapmen,[9] and the like practices, which are crafty and naught. As for the chopping of bargains, when a man buys not to hold, but to sell over again, that commonly grindeth double, both upon the seller and upon the buyer. Sharings do greatly enrich, if the hands be well chosen that are trusted. Usury is the certainest means of gain, though one of the worst, as that whereby a man doth eat his bread *in sudori vultus alieni*;[10] and besides, doth plough upon Sundays. But yet certain though it be, it hath flaws, for that the scriveners and brokers do value unsound men, to serve their own turn. The fortune in being the first in an invention, or in a privilege, doth cause sometimes a wonderful overgrowth in riches, as it was with the first sugar-man in the Canaries. Therefore, if a man can play the true logician, to have as well judgment as invention, he may do great matters, especially if the times be fit. He that resteth upon gains certain shall hardly grow to great riches. And he that puts all upon adventures, doth oftentimes break, and come to poverty: it is good therefore to guard adventures with certainties that may uphold losses. Monopolies, and co-emption of wares for resale, where they are not restrained, are great means to enrich, especially if the party have intelligence what things are like to come into request, and so store himself beforehand. Riches gotten by service, though it be of the best rise, yet when they are gotten by flattery, feeding humors, and other servile conditions, they may be placed amongst the worst. As for fishing for testaments and executorships, as Tacitus saith of Seneca, *Testamenta et orbos tanquam indagine capi*;[11] it is yet worse, by how much men submit themselves to meaner persons than in service. Believe not much them that seem to despise riches, for they despise them that despair of them, and none worse when they come to them. Be not penny-wise; riches have wings, and sometimes they fly away of themselves, sometimes they must be set flying to bring in more. Men leave their riches either to their kindred, or to the public; and moderate portions prosper best in both. A great estate left to an heir is as a lure to all the birds of prey round about to seize on him, if he be not the better stablished in years and judgments. Likewise glorious gifts and foundations are like sacrifices without salt, and but the painted sepulchres of alms, which soon will putrefy and corrupt inwardly. Therefore measure not thine advancements by quantity, but frame them by measure: and defer not charities till death; for, certainly, if a man weigh it rightly, he that doth so is rather liberal of another man's than of his own.

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[3] a foolish man who interrupts important business with small points concerning words.

[4] a man who conceals his poverty.

[1] hindrances. [2] cf. *Ecclesiastes*, 5:11. [3] cf. *Proverbs*, 18:11.

[4] "In his efforts to create his wealth it is clear that he did not seek an object of avarice but an instrument for doing good."

[5] "He who is in a hurry to be rich shall not remain innocent."

[6] accounts. [7] can wait for a high price.

[8] to take advantage of.

Of Studies

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business. For expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need proyning,[1] by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large,[2] except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously;[3] and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments, and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are like common distilled waters, flashy[4] things. Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit: and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtile; natural philosophy deep; moral grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend. *Abeunt studia in mores.*[5] Nay, there is no stond[6] or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies; like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises. Bowling is good for the stone and reins;[7] shooting for the lungs and breast; gentle walking for the stomach; riding for the head; and the like. So if a man's wit be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again. If his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the Schoolmen; for they are *cymini sectores.*[8] If he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call up one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases. So every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

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[9] merchants.

[10] in the sweat of another man's brow.

[11] "He took in bequests and wardships as with a net."

[1] pruning.

[2] in general, impractical.

[3] not with great care.

[4] insipid.

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[5] studies develop into character. [6] hindrance. [7] kidneys. [8] hair-splitters

CAVALIER AND PURITAN

The Stuarts and the Puritan Revolt

THE seventeenth century was probably the most remarkable of centuries for English literature, as well as one of the most crucial for English political life. Within it lie not only many major works loosely classed, because of their origins, as "Elizabethan"—the great tragedies of Shakespeare, Webster, and Ford; the comedies of Jonson, Dekker, and Massinger; the philosophic speculations of Bacon; and the Bible of 1611—but also the poetry of Milton; the great prose of Burton, Walton, Browne, and Taylor; the poetry and prose of Dryden; and Restoration Comedy. But one has only to turn from Shakespeare, the most imposing figure of the close of the sixteenth century, to Swift, the most significant figure of the opening of the eighteenth century, to discover the vast distances that the seventeenth century had carried English thought. Between the days of Shakespeare and of Swift enormous changes took place in the life of Englishmen.

The year 1600 found Elizabeth still on the throne of a unified England where the spirit of Sidney, Spenser, and Ralegh was predominant in poetry, and where the drama, most popular of literary forms, reflected the patronage of the London public. In religion, of which the Queen was national head, the bulk of the population was satisfied with a middle course between Catholicism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other. When James I succeeded to the crown, on the death of Elizabeth in 1603, he began to manifest that talent for mismanaging a country with which his new line, the Stuarts, proved gifted. His revival of the theory of "the divine right of kings" could not have found a more unfortunate sponsor; for James, besides being a singularly unattractive and undignified man, possessed a confused pedantic mind. The English court, under Elizabeth the admiration of the country and the continent, became the butt of jokes all over Europe. James I's rather narrow intellect led him to expend time attacking smoking as a "filthy" habit, and to make such researches into the practise of witchcraft as resulted in the execution of some fifty poor wretches for sorcery. Perhaps matters might have gone better had he devoted himself exclusively to such pursuits. But his expressed opinion that a king may consult the law but "is not bound thereto" was the basis of his system of government, and was soon preached as doctrine from English pulpits. He was determined to make the English Church his church by making it the instrument of his will. As for his critics, "I will make them conform," he announced, "or I will harry them out of the land." Wasteful and extravagant, in his need for money he resuscitated medieval royal prerogatives, sold peerages freely, and granted monopolies in trade to his courtiers. Under such despotism, public resistance stiffened, and the Puritan philosophy gained an ever-increasing hold on the population. The growing tide of discontent, economic and religious, was met only with stubbornness on the part of James and his son, Charles I.

Puritanism, under whose banner the economic contest was also to be waged, had been the faith of a minority in Elizabeth's time, when it had been chiefly a movement to remove hierarchy and ritual from the English Church. As Puritanism was fed by continental Calvinism, however, it deepened in its purposes. God in His Omniscience, Puritanism of the seventeenth century taught, has always known the destiny in eternity allotted to every soul. Some souls are to be saved and some are to be damned eternally, and, the Puritans reasoned, no human agency, no church, can interfere with God's intent. The sole authority for human conduct is God's Word, the Bible. Every man had to look inward for his faith and inspect his acts to see whether they were conformable to the prescriptions of the Bible. Hence, the Puritans opposed any but the sober and self-controlled life. They distrusted the arts as incitements to careless living; the beauties of Renaissance culture they came to detest as the corruptions of the Pharisees.

To these extremes the movement had not gone in Elizabeth's day, so that Spenser could be both Puritan and Renaissance poet. But under the religious repressions of the Stuarts, Puritanism became severer and darker, partly because it was taken up by the English trading class as its religion. Thrift, sobriety, and industry were respected by the manufacturers and merchants, and Puritanism offered them a theological basis for asserting the right to the economic freedom which commerce demands. Since God's plan for the fate of each soul in eternity was inscrutable, how dare any man vaunt himself the superior of any other in this world or make laws to limit the activity of any person living according to his own inner light? Out of such speculation grew the concept of democracy to assure the free expression of the individual in society—the great issue of the seventeenth century.

James sowed the seed and Charles I reaped the harvest. Uncompromising, Charles in 1629 dissolved Parliament and ruled without it for eleven years. With Strafford as his minister and Laud as his archbishop he tried to build a system more absolute than any Tudor had conceived. It was too late to impose High Anglicanism on a country that had become largely Puritan (cf. Milton's *Lycidas*), and absolutism was intolerable to mercantile Londoners and to landowners who had been unscrupulously taxed. The lines were clearly drawn between Cavalier and Puritan. In 1639 Charles became involved in a war with the Scotch Presbyterians, was forced to summon Parliament, and dismissed it almost at once in anger. The new Parliament of 1640 (the "Long Parliament") decided to take sides with the Scotch. The break came in 1641, and civil war followed. In 1649 Charles was beheaded by a Parliament of Puritan Independents. For the next four years the Puritan extremists tried prematurely to establish something like a democracy. In 1653 Cromwell instituted the firm rule of his Protectorate and made some attempt to form a Puritan Free State. For the first time toleration was extended to all religious views except "popery and prelacy." Dozens of new religious Puritan sects flourished, especially noteworthy being the Quakers. Jews were readmitted into England.

Upon Cromwell's death in 1658, his weak son surrendered his power to the Puritan generals, and a short period of anarchy ensued, during which the public sickened of the Independents and the standing army. When General Monk marched on London, virtually the whole nation eagerly recalled Charles I's son to become Charles II. For a brief period England restored the Stuarts. But the struggle for liberty had not been in vain, for the public had remained largely Puritan. When James II tried to follow in the footsteps of Charles I, he had to flee the country in 1688, and Englishmen were done with absolute monarchy.

Cavalier and Puritan

The cleavage between Cavalier and Puritan in politics left its mark on the literature of the period. The Puritan distrust of the arts as tending to seduce men from the path of sobriety and rectitude came to mean a hostility to the humanistic heritage of the Renaissance. A measure of the growth of Puritanism is the gradual withdrawal of public patronage from the theatres. The comprehensiveness of drama in Elizabeth's day—its rich poetic utterance, its occasional bombast and vulgarity, its broad vision, and its general good health—witness that it was an art for the people. Under James I and Charles I, as it becomes increasingly an amusement for an aristocratic few, drama becomes more refined and more elaborate in structure and more debased in its underlying moral tone. But it is not only in the drama that we see the withdrawing of men into two camps. The Puritans wrote much, but almost entirely in the form of controversial prose, little of which has any literary value. It was left to the narrowing circle of the Court to carry on cultural traditions. Milton is the great exception to the Puritans' abandonment of poetry, and Bunyan the great exception to their indifference to beauty in their prose. Only two other writers can be identified with the Puritan party—Marvell, whose Puritanism was never intense, and Wither, who ceased being a poet when he became a Puritan. The history of literature in the period, therefore, is chiefly a record of the works of Cavaliers and men of the King's party.

The dominating poets of the early century were Jonson and Donne. Learned Ben Jonson, first of our literary dictators, gathered about him a group of young men who proudly called themselves the "sons of Ben"—Carew, Lovelace, Waller, and Herrick. From his worship of classic lyric verse (cf. *below*), with its polish and finished grace, they caught the love of sharp outline and the easy expression characteristic of the Cavalier Lyric. The poems of these men, as well as those of Wither and Suckling, written for an aristocratic audience, have the limpidity of the Elizabethan lyric without its imaginative flights. These Cavalier lyrists, singers of amorous songs, are lighter and neater but less fresh than the Elizabethans.

John Donne (cf. *below*) exhibits another distinguishing sign of the age—its intense need of self-exploration, its search for spiritual truth. The popularity of Montaigne's sceptical essays (cf. *above*) did much to create the atmosphere in which the "metaphysical school" of poetry, founded by Donne, flourished. Just as Jonson modified the Elizabethan heritage in the interests of calm precise expression, Donne overthrew the imaginative excesses of the Spenserian tradition in his quest for emotional realities. The exquisite melodies of Elizabeth's poets and the gracious conventions of the Petrarchan sonneteers were alike distasteful to him. For the sake of spiritual sincerity, he abandoned sweetness and charm in behalf of a hot clash of ideas. Following him a group of men, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Traherne (cf. *below*), produced the finest body of religious poetry England possesses.

The lyrical poetry of the age is rivaled in the interest attaching to its prose. A number of rare souls, Burton, Walton, Browne, Taylor, and Fuller, gave our literature some of its most enchanting works in that medium. Each was a man of varied learning, humanity, and lively curiosity, and carried on the traditions of Renaissance culture. Each finding a style to his need (cf. *below*) was able to distill into his prose the quintessence of his delightful personality.

A new prose form, the Character, taking its cue from Theophrastus (cf. *below*), had a lively career in the century (cf. *Earle, below*), and paved the way for the eighteenth-century essay and the novel.

Apart from these creations stand the works of two great Puritans, Milton and Bunyan. In the career of Milton (cf. *below*), the intellectual issues of the time are clearly mirrored. His earliest masterpieces are in the best of the Renaissance tradition, full of grace, fancy, and melodious imagery. Puritan earnestness can be heard in undertone in *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,* and *Comus,* but in *Lycidas* it suddenly speaks out in stern clarity. When the Puritan struggle became critical, Milton, leaving poetry aside, devoted himself to the Puritan cause, writing numerous controversial pamphlets on religious, political, and social topics, and eventually accepting a post in the government of the Commonwealth. Retiring after many battles, participating in which he lost his eyesight, he again took up the writing of poetry, uniting his vast humanistic learning and his deep Puritan faith—to create the sublimest poems in our literature, *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.* It required genius such as his to reconcile poetry and Puritanism.

The one great author who arose from the ranks of Puritan craftsmen to voice the faith of a people in literature was Bunyan (cf. *below*). With no other learning than the Bible, he wrote his *Pilgrim's Progress* with an artlessness that is high art. And nowhere can be found a clearer insight into the spiritual conflicts of the Puritan than in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (cf. *below*).

Excellent studies of this period will be found in: B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (1934); J. H. B. Masterman, *The Age of Milton* (1897); B. Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature* (1904); Sir H. Grierson, *Cross-Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century* (1929); and W. Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (1938).

GREEK AND ROMAN LYRISTS

The lyric (so-called because in ancient Greece the term signified a kind of poetry sung to the accompaniment of a lyre), distinguished, as it is, by the subjective quality of its feeling and its melodiousness, is the most difficult kind of poem to translate. To read, for example, of the universal admiration accorded Sappho and then to turn to even the best translations of her poems is inevitably to be disappointed. The quintessence of any fine lyric is incommunicable in another language. All that we can hope to do, therefore, is hear faint echoes of the original music in the poems here printed, although each of these translations is a notable piece of work in its own right.

The Greek and Roman lyrists exercised a profound influence on Renaissance lyrical poets. In the lyrical outpourings of the Elizabethans, Greek and Latin traditions can be seen. But the classic lyric poets are better placed in the present connotation, for with the exceptions of Jonson and Campion, the rhapsodic, eager spirit of Elizabethan song-writers and sonneteers was somewhat foreign to the clarity of utterance of these ancient lyrists. Much closer to them in their concern for neatness and precision in word and form are the seventeenth-century Cavalier poets and, particularly, Herrick.

Sappho, Alcæus, and Anacreon wrote in stanzaic forms, to which their names have been given, and which were later imitated by the Romans. The Pindaric Ode comes in for later consideration (cf. *Vol. II*). We have already dealt with the pastoral poetry of Theocritus (cf. *above*).

SAPPHO (b. 600 B.C.?)

Little is known about the woman whom Plato called the "tenth Muse." She was born on the island of Lesbos where she led a girls' school of poetry and music. Of the scattered legends about her, the most persistent is that she hurled herself from a rock into the Ægean Sea because of unrequited love.

Of her works only a few poems and some fragments have, by accident, come down to us. The burning intensity of this handful of pieces makes the lack of the rest the most vexatious loss in Greek literature.

ODE TO APHRODITE

(*Translated by Edwin Arnold*)

Splendor-throned Queen, immortal Aphrodite,[1]
Daughter of Jove, Enchantress, I implore thee
Vex not my soul with agonies and anguish;
Slay me not, Goddess!
Come in thy pity—come, if I have prayed thee;
Come at the cry of my sorrow; in the old times
Oft thou hast heard, and left thy father's heaven,
Left the gold houses,
Yoking thy chariot. Swiftly did the doves fly,[2]
Swiftly they brought thee, waving plumes of wonder—
Waving their dark plumes all across the æther,
All down the azure
Very soon they lighted. Then didst thou, Divine one,
Laugh a bright laugh from lips and eyes immortal,
Ask me, What ailed me—wherefore out of heaven
Thus I had called thee?
What it was made me madden in my heart so?
Question me, smiling—say to me, "My Sappho,
"Who is it wrongs thee? Tell me who refuses
"Thee, vainly sighing.
"Be it who it may be, he that flies shall follow;
"He that rejects gifts, he shall bring thee many;
"He that hates now shall love thee dearly, madly—
"Aye, though thou wouldst not."
So once again come, Mistress; and, releasing
Me from my sadness, give me what I sue for,
Grant me my prayer, and be as heretofore now
Friend and protectress.

PEER OF THE GODS

(*Translated by J. A. Symonds*)

Peer of gods he seemeth to me, the blissful
Man who sits and gazes at thee before him,
Close beside thee sits, and in silence hears thee
Silvery speaking,
Laughing love's low laughter. Oh, this, this only
Stirs the troubled heart in my breast to tremble!
For should I but see thee a little moment,
Straight is my voice hushed;

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[1] Goddess of Love.

[2] Aphrodite's chariot was borne through the air by doves or sparrows.

Yea, my tongue is broken, and through and through me
'Neath the flesh impalpable fire runs tingling;
Nothing see mine eyes, and a noise of roaring
Waves in my ear sounds;
Sweat runs down in rivers, a tremor seizes
All my limbs, and paler than grass in autumn,
Caught by pains of menacing death, I falter,
Lost in the love-trance.

ONE GIRL

(*Translated by D. G. Rossetti*)

Like the sweet apple which reddens upon the topmost bough,
A-top on the topmost twig,—which the pluckers forgot, somehow,—
Forgot it not, nay, but got it not, for none could get it till now.

Like the wild hyacinth flower which on the hills is found,
Which the passing feet ot the shepherds for ever tear and wound,
Until the purple blossom is trodden in the ground.

THE SILVER MOON

(*Translated by J. A. Symonds*)

The silver moon is set;
The Pleiades are gone;
Half the long night is spent, and yet
I lie alone.

MOTHER, I CANNOT MIND MY WHEEL

(*Translated by Walter Savage Landor*)

Mother, I cannot mind my wheel;
My fingers ache, my lips are dry;
Oh! if you felt the pain I feel!
But oh, who ever felt as I!

ANACREON (563?-478? B.C.)

Born at Teos, Anacreon spent his later life at Athens. He is best known for his graceful celebrations of love and wine. He founded a school of poetry which closely imitated his work.

THE GRASSHOPPER

(*Translated by Cowley*)

Happy Insect! what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine,
The dewy Morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still,
And thy verdant cup does fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread,
Nature's self's thy Ganymede.[1]
Thou dost drink, and dance, and sing;
Happier than the happiest king!
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants, belong to thee;
All that summer hours produce,
Fertile made with early juice.
Man for thee does sow and plow;
Farmer he, and landlord thou!
Thou dost innocently joy;
Nor does thy luxury destroy;
The shepherd gladly heareth thee,
More harmonious than he.
Thee country hinds with gladness hear,
Prophet of the ripened year!
Thee Phoebus[2] loves, and does inspire;
Phoebus is himself thy sire.
To thee, of all things upon Earth,
Life's no longer than thy mirth,
Happy insect, happy thou!
Dost neither age nor winter know;
But, when thou'st drunk, and danced, and sung
Thy fill, the flowery leaves among,
(Voluptuous, and wise withal,
Epicurean[3] animal!)
Sated with thy summer feast,
Thou retir'st to endless rest.

---

[1] Cupbearer of the gods.

[2] Phoebus Apollo, identified with the sun.

[3] Having pleasure as the chief good.

THE GREEK ANTHOLOGY

The *Greek Anthology* is a collection of some four thousand lyrics (Gr. *anthos*, flower + *lego*, gather), some of them written as long ago as 490 B. C. and others dating from the sixth century A. D. Meleager of Gadara made the first collection during the century before Christ. About 100 A. D. the *Anthology* was increased by Philippus of Thessalonica, and the process of accretion continued through the Dark Ages. Most of the lyrics are epigrams, many in epitaph form, and few exceed a dozen lines. The *Greek Anthology* shows strikingly the classic love of chiseled and pithy expression, so much admired by the Cavalier and, even more, by the later neo-classical poets when in an epigrammatic mood.

NO MATTER

My name, my country, what are they to thee?
What, whether proud or base my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed all other men;
Perhaps I fell below them all. What then?
Suffice it, stranger, that thou seest a tomb.
Thou knowst its use. It hides—no matter whom.
—Paulus Silentiarius, *tr. by William Cowper*

MY STAR

Star-gazing, O my Star; would I could be
Heaven, with a host of eyes to gaze on thee.
—Plato, *tr. by Alexander Lothian*

A GARLAND FOR HELIODORA

I'll frame, my Heliodora! a garland for thy hair,
Which thou, in all thy beauty's pride, mayst not disdain to wear;
For I with tender myrtles white violets will twine,
White violets, but not so pure as that pure breast of thine;
With laughing lilies I will twine narcissus, and the sweet
Crocus shall, in its yellow hue, with purple hyacinth meet.

And I will twine with all the rest, and all the rest above,
Queen of them all, the red red rose, the flower which lovers love.
—Meleager, *tr. by Christopher North*

HERACLITUS

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of gray ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.
—Callimachus, *tr. by William Cory*

ANONYMOUS EPIGRAMS

I

Far happier are the dead, methinks, than they
Who look for death, and fear it ev'ry day.
(translated by William Cowper)

II

Eagle! why soarest thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and star-ypaven home
Floatest thou?—
I am the image of swift Plato's spirit
Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit
His corpse below.
(translated by P. B. Shelley)

LUCIAN (A.D. 120-200)

The frowning fates have taken hence
Callimachus, a childe
Five years of age: ah well is he
From cruell care exilde.
What though he lived but little tyme,
Waile nought for that at all:
For as his yeres not many were,
So were his troubles small.
(translated by Timothe Kendall, 1577)

CATULLUS (87?-54 B.C.)

Catullus, the first and most spontaneous Latin lyrical poet, was born at Verona. He early fell in love with the wife of Quintus Metellus Celer, Clodia, whom he has immortalized as Lesbia. His short life, spent in the glittering excitement of Roman society, is a record of alternating exhilaration and dejection. His Lesbia, free of her favors, was no more constant to him than to her husband.

Greek lyrical poetry undoubtedly helped shape his genius, and he has often been compared to Sappho. But though he is often sincere in his poems, just as often he seems to be more interested in the graceful turn of a phrase. Passionate, he has none of Sappho's pure fire. His greatest qualities are his ease, his fondness for painting charming vignettes of nature and Roman life, and his youthful spirit.

Petrarch reintroduced him to Renaissance Europe. Of all classic lyrists Catullus seems most to have impressed the Cavaliers, in whose amatory verses there are many familiar echoes of his one hundred and sixteen poems.

THE DEAD SPARROW

(*Translated by Byron*)

Ye Cupids, droop each little head,
Nor let your wings with joy be spread;
My Lesbia's favorite bird is dead,
  Whom dearer than her eyes she loved.
For he was gentle, and so true,
Obedient to her call he flew,
No fear, no wild alarm he knew,
  But lightly o'er her bosom moved:

And softly fluttering here and there,
He never sought to clear the air,
But chirruped oft, and, free from care,
  Tuned to her ear his grateful strain.
Now having passed the gloomy bourne
From whence he never can return,
His death and Lesbia's grief I mourn,
  Who sighs, alas! but sighs in vain.

Oh! curst be thou, devouring grave!
Whose jaws eternal victims crave,
From whom no earthly power can save;
  For thou hast ta'en the bird away:

From thee my Lesbia's eyes o'er flow,
Her swollen cheeks with weeping glow;
Thou art the cause of all her woe,
  Receptacle of life's decay.

LOVE IS ALL

(*Translated by Theodore Martin*)

Let us, Lesbia darling, still
Live our life, and love our fill;
Heeding not a jot, howe'er
Churlish dotards chide or stare!
Suns go down, but 'tis to rise
Brighter in the morning skies;
But when sets our little light,
We must sleep in endless night.
A thousand kisses grant me sweet;
With a hundred these complete;

Lip me a thousand more, and then
Another hundred give again.
A thousand add to these, anon
A hundred more, then hurry one
Kiss after kiss without cessation,
Until we lose all calculation;
So envy shall not mar our blisses
By numbering up our tale of kisses.

ON THE BURIAL OF HIS BROTHER

(*Translated by Aubrey Beardsley*)

By ways remote and distant waters sped,
  Brother, to thy sad graveside am I come
That I may give the last gifts to the dead,
  And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb;
Since She who now bestows and now denies
  Hath ta'en thee, hopeless brother, from mine eyes.
But lo! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years,
  Are made sad things to grace thy coffin-shell;
Take them, all drenched with a brother's tears,
  And brother, for all time, hail and farewell.

HORACE (65-8 B.C.)

The son of a freedman, Horace was educated at Rome and at Athens. He joined Brutus's republican army, was in the catastrophe at Philippi, returned to Rome to work as a clerk, and began original composition. His earliest work, the *Epodes* and *Satires*, drew the attention of Virgil and Varius. They made him known to the generous Mæcenas, from whom Horace received as a gift his beloved Sabine farm. In retirement, varied by visits and correspondence with his literary friends, his simple tastes and mellow personality found that ample pleasure which he expressed in a series of Odes that have been the delight of centuries. (Later we must take notice of him as a satirist; cf. *below*.)

Accepting Epicurus's postulate that the soul is mortal, Horace adopted as his motto: *Carpe diem* ("seize the day"—i.e. make the most of the present). Never falling into despair, he saw with urbanity and good manners the vanity of human endeavor, the transitoriness of glory and wealth. Since Man is assured only of this one existence let him make the most of it, Horace suggested. And one makes the most of life, he had learned from the Greeks, by desiring little, by dining and wining well but simply, by choosing pleasant companions and good books, by following the "golden mean." This gentle, kindly philosophy his odes tell and retell in verse that is as impeccable as was his nature; in his flawless lines no word can be spared nor need any be added. He is the most quoted of classic poets, and the secret of his apparent ease he tells us himself is *labor limae* ("the work of the file") —that tireless polishing and refining which made him a model in all ages for poets with like care for their art. In seventeenth-, and even more in eighteenth-century England Horace was loved, admired, and imitated as representing for the "correct" tastes of the times the highest that the lyrical art could achieve. His deliberate avoidance of deep feeling made him all the more admirable to poets that gave wit preeminence over emotion, charm over depth, and urbanity over powerful conviction.

Ode I, 5. TO PYRRHA

(*Translated by Goldwin Smith*)

What slender youth, with perfumed locks,
In some sweet nook beneath the rocks,
Pyrrha, where clustering roses grow,
Bends to thy fatal beauty now?
For whom is now that golden hair
Wreathed in a band so simply fair?
How often will he weep to find
Thy pledges frail, Love's power unkind?
And start to see the tempest sweep
With angry blast the darkening deep;
Though sunned by thy entrancing smile,
He fears no change, suspects no guile.
A sailor on bright summer seas,
He wots not of the fickle breeze.
For me—yon votive tablet scan;
It tells that I, a shipwrecked man,
Hung my dank weeds in Neptune's fane,
And ne'er will tempt those seas again.

Ode I, 22. INTEGER VITAE

(*Translated by Theodore Martin*)

Fuscus, the man of life upright and pure,
Needeth nor javelin, nor bow of Moor,
Nor arrows tipped with venom deadly sure,
Loading his quiver;

Whether o'er Afric's burning sands he rides,
Or frosty Caucasus'[1] bleak mountain-sides,
Or wanders lonely where Hydaspes[2] glides,
That storied river.

For as I strayed along the Sabine[3] wood,
Singing my Lalage in careless mood,
Lo, all at once a wolf before me stood,
Then turned and fled:

Creature so huge did warlike Daunia[4] ne'er
Engender in her forests' wildest lair,
Not Juba's[5] land, parched nurse of lions, e'er
Such monster bred.

Place me where no life-laden summer breeze
Freshens the meads, or murmurs 'mongst the trees,
Where clouds oppress and withering tempests freeze
From shore to shore.

Place me beneath the sunbeams' fiercest glare,

---

[1] mountains in southern Russia. [2] a river in India.
[3] near Horace's Sabine villa, not far from Tivoli, in Italy.
[4] Apulia, in southeastern Italy.
[5] Mauretania, in north Africa.

On arid sands, no dwelling anywhere;
Still Lalage's sweet smile, sweet voice even there
I will adore.

Ode I, 37. THE DEATH OF CLEOPATRA

(Translated by Sir Stephen E. De Vere)

Drink, comrades, drink; give loose to mirth!
With joyous footstep beat the earth,
And spread before the War-God's shrine
The Salian[1] feast, the sacrificial wine.

Bring forth from each ancestral hoard
Strong draughts of Cæcuban[2] long stored,
Till now forbidden. Fill the bowl!
For she is fallen, that great Egyptian Queen,[3]
With all her crew contaminate and obscene,
Who, mad with triumph, in her pride,
The manly might of Rome defied,
And vowed destruction to the Capitol.

As the swift falcon stooping from above
With beak unerring strikes the dove,
Or as the hunter tracks the deer
Over Hæmonian[4] plains of snow,
Thus Cæsar[5] came. Then on her royal State
With Mareotic[6] fumes inebriate,
A shadow fell of fate and fear,
And thro' the lurid glow
From all her burning galleys shed
She turned her last surviving bark, and fled.

She sought no refuge on a foreign shore.
She sought her doom: far nobler 't was to die
Than like a panther caged in Roman bonds to lie.
The sword she feared not. In her realm once more,
Serene amongst deserted fanes,
Unmoved 'mid vacant halls she stood;
Then to the aspic[7] gave her darkening veins,
And sucked the death into her blood.

Deliberately she died: fiercely disdained
To bow her haughty head to Roman scorn,
Discrowned, and yet a Queen; a captive chained;
A woman desolate and forlorn.

---

[1] The feast for the Salii, a college of priests, who had sumptuous banquets.
[2] a kind of wine.
[3] Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt (69-30 B.C.).
[4] Reference is to Thessaly, north of Greece.
[5] Augustus Caesar. [6] a kind of wine. [7] asp.

Ode I, 38. PERSIAN POMP

(Translated by Cowper)

Boy, I hate their empty shows,
Persian[1] garlands I detest,
Bring not me the late-blown rose
Lingering after all the rest:

Plainer myrtle pleases me
Thus outstretched beneath my vine,
Myrtle more becoming thee
Waiting with thy master's wine.

Ode II, 10. TO LICINIUS

(Translated by Cowper)

Receive, dear friend, the truths I teach;
So shalt thou live beyond the reach
Of adverse Fortune's power;
Not always tempt the distant deep,
Nor always timorously creep
Along the treacherous shore.

He that holds fast the golden mean,
And lives contentedly between
The little and the great,
Feels not the wants that pinch the poor,
Nor plagues that haunt the rich man's door,
Embittering all his state.

The tallest pines feel most the power
Of wintry blasts; the loftiest tower
Comes heaviest to the ground;
The bolts that spare the mountain's side,
His cloud-capt eminence divide,
And spread the ruin round.

The well-inform'd philosopher
Rejoices with a wholesome fear,
And hopes, in spite of pain;
If winter bellow from the north,
Soon the sweet spring comes dancing forth,
And Nature laughs again.

What if thine heaven be overcast?
The dark appearance will not last;
Expect a brighter sky.

---

[1] Persia is thought of as the center of luxury.

The god, that strings the silver-bow,
Awakes sometimes the Muses too,
  And lays his arrows by.

If hindrances obstruct thy way,
Thy magnanimity display,
  And let thy strength be seen;
But oh! if Fortune fill thy sail,
With more than a propitious gale,
  Take half thy canvas in.

Seventeenth Century Lyrists

George Wither

(1588-1667)

Educated at Oxford, Wither began his career writing elegies, satires, and pastorals. After his thirtieth year his sympathies turned more and more to the Puritans, and he wrote a number of books of hymns and psalms, and theological and political pamphlets. He became a captain in the army during the Puritan Revolution. Captured by the king's men, he barely escaped hanging for his writings against Charles. For a time his great bulk of Puritan preachings obscured the memory of his early light verse. Lamb, who rediscovered his sweetness and "free spirit", did much to bring him back in the nineteenth century.

Few poems of the period are written in a happier spirit of manly carelessness than *Shall I, Wasting in Despair.* F. Sidgwick collected his poetry in two volumes (1902).

Shall I, Wasting in Despair

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May,
  If she think not well of me,
  What care I how fair she be?

Should my silly heart be pined,
'Cause I see a woman kind?
Or a well disposéd nature
Joinéd with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder, than
Turtle dove or pelican,
  If she be not so to me,
  What care I how kind she be?

Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well deserving known,
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
Which may gain her name of best,
  If she be not such to me,
  What care I how good she be?

'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool, and die?
Those that bear a noble mind,
Where they want of riches find,
Think "What, with them, they would do
That, without them, dare to woo."
  And unless that mind I see,
  What care I though great she be?

Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair!
If she love me (this believe!)
I will die, ere she shall grieve.
If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn, and let her go!
  For if she be not for me,
  What care I for whom she be?

I Loved a Lass

I loved a lass, a fair one,
  As fair as e'er was seen;
She was indeed a rare one,
  Another Sheba Queen.
But, fool as then I was,
  I thought she loved me too;
But now, alas! she's left me,
  Falero, lero, loo!

Her hair like gold did glister,
  Each eye was like a star,
She did surpass her sister,

Which passed all others far.
She would me honey call,
She'd—O she'd kiss me too!
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

Many a merry meeting
My love and I have had;
She was my only sweeting,
She made my heart full glad.
The tears stood in her eyes
Like to the morning dew:
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

Her cheeks were like the cherry,
Her skin was white as snow;
When she was blithe and merry
She angel-like did show;
Her waist exceeding small,
The fives did fit her shoe:
But now alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

In summer time or winter
She had her heart's desire;
I still did scorn to stint her
From sugar, sack, or fire;
The world went round about,
No cares we ever knew:
But now, alas! she's left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

To maidens' vows and swearing
Henceforth no credit give;
You may give them the hearing,
But never them believe;
They are as false as fair,
Unconstant, frail, untrue:
For mine, alas! hath left me,
Falero, lero, loo!

William Browne

(1591-1643?)

Friend of Wither, and a late Elizabethan in his writings, Browne is best remembered for this epitaph, which in its neatness achieves the ideal set by the Caroline poets. He wrote chiefly pastorals, of which *Britannia's Pastorals* is the finest and seems to have impressed Milton and Keats.

W. C. Hazlitt has edited his works, with a memoir (1868). A more accessible edition is contained in the Muses' Library.

On the Countess Dowager of Pembroke

Underneath this sable herse[1]
Lies the subject of all verse:
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast slain another
Fair and learn'd and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

John Donne

(1573-1631)

Donne is one of the most remarkable of England's minor poets; and interest in him has never been greater than in our time, when he has exerted a strong influence on some of our best writers.

Born a Catholic, he could not for that reason take his degree at Oxford or Cambridge, at both which universities he studied. Although he was admitted to Lincoln's Inn, he found the study of law not to his taste, and took to writing poetry. He volunteered under Essex, and was with him at Cadiz in 1596 and at the Azores in 1597. On his return to London, he entered the service of Sir Thomas Egerton, and came to be known as "a great visitor of ladies, a great frequenter of plays, a great writer of conceited verses". Falling in love with Egerton's niece, he married her in 1601 without consent, and was therefore dismissed. The next years he spent in wretched poverty. At length yielding to the persuasion of his friends, he took orders in the English Church, being ordained in 1615. Among his parishioners was our first notable biographer, Izaak Walton, who has left us a classic life of him. The beauty of his sermons made him soon famous and in 1621 he was made Dean of St. Paul's.

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[1] monument.

Only a few of his verses were published in his lifetime, and these he regretted having allowed to find their way into print. But his poems circulated widely in manuscript. Two years after his death they were published and became immensely popular. For he was something of a pioneer. Wearied of the sweet melodies of the Petrarchan and pastoral Elizabethans, he put an end to their exquisite compliments with: *For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love.*

Deliberately avoiding delicacy, indeed often preferring harshness and violence, he writes of no ideal adventures, but of his own intellectual and emotional experiences. Beauty is nothing of his concern. Rather do we find a ceaseless brilliant exercise of intellect in all his work. With Donne the play of reason was a passion; if his poems are emotionally stirring, it is because he follows ideas with white-hot intensity. The younger poets delighted in him, and, often to their undoing, tried to imitate him, who is indeed inimitable.

Sir H. Grierson's edition of his poems (1929) is the best. W. H. Draper collected the prose *Devotions* (1925). E. Gosse's *Life and Letters of John Donne* (1899) is fascinating reading.

Love's Deity

I long to talk with some old lover's ghost
Who died before the god of love was born.
I cannot think that he who then loved most
Sunk so low as to love one which did scorn.
But since this god produced a destiny
And that vice-nature, custom, lets it be,
I must love her that loves not me.

Sure, they which made him god, meant not so much,
Nor he in his young godhead practiced it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondency
Only his subject was; it cannot be
Love till I love her who loves me.

But every modern god will now extend
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purlieu of the god of love.
O! were we wakened by this tyranny
To ungod this child again, it could not be
I should love her who loves not me.

Rebel and atheist too, why murmur I,
As though I felt the worst that love could do?
Love may make me leave loving, or might try
A deeper plague, to make her love me too;
Which, since she loves before, I'm loath to see.
Falsehood is worse than hate; and that must be,
If she whom I love, should love me.

(pub. 1633)

Sweetest Love, I Do Not Go

Sweetest love, I do not go
For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
A fitter love for me;
But since that I
Must die at last, 'tis best
To use myself in jest
Thus by feign'd deaths to die.

Yesternight the Sun went hence,
And yet is here today,
He hath no desire nor sense,
Nor half so short a way:
Then fear not me,
But believe that I shall make
Speedier journeys, since I take
More wings and spurs than he.

O how feeble is man's power,
That if good fortune fall,
Cannot add another hour,
Nor a lost hour recall!
But come bad chance,
And we join to't our strength,
And we teach it art and length,
Itself o'er us t' advance.

When thou sigh'st thou sigh'st not wind,
But sigh'st my soul away;
When thou weep'st unkindly kind,
My life's blood doth decay.
It cannot be
That thou lov'st me, as thou say'st;
If in thine my life thou waste,
That art the best of me.

Let not thy divining heart
Forethink me any ill,
Destiny may take thy part
And may thy fears fulfill;

But think that we
Are but turn'd aside to sleep:
They who one another keep
Alive, ne'er parted be.

(pub. 1633)

Song

Go and catch a falling star,
Get with child a mandrake[1] root,
Tell me where all past years are,
Or who cleft the devil's foot;
Teach me to hear mermaids singing,
Or to keep off envy's stinging,
And find
What wind
Serves to advance an honest mind.

If thou be'st born to strange sights,
Things invisible go see,
Ride ten thousand days and nights
Till Age snow white hairs on thee;
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell me
All strange wonders that befell thee,
And swear
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

If thou find'st one, let me know;
Such a pilgrimage were sweet.
Yet do not; I would not go,
Though at next door we might meet.
Though she were true when you met her,
And last till you write your letter,
Yet she
Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

(pub. 1633)

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
"Now his breath goes," and some say "No";

So let us meet and make no noise,
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
'Twere profanation of our joys,
To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' Earth brings harm and fears,
Men reckon what it did and meant;
But trepidation[1] of the spheres,
Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love,
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit
Of absence, 'cause it doth remove
The thing which elemented[2] it.

But we by a love so far refined,
That ourselves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Careless eyes, lips, and hands, to miss;

Our two souls therefore, which are one,
Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
As stiff twin compasses are two,
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely run,
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And makes me end where I begun.

(pub. 1633)

Death

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death; nor yet canst thou kill me.
From Rest and Sleep, which but thy picture be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must
flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go—
Rest of their bones and souls' delivery!

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[1] The mandrake, having a forked root, has frequently been compared to a human being.

[1] movement. [2] formed, caused.

Thou'rt slave to Fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die!

(pub. 1633)

A Hymn to God the Father

Wilt Thou forgive that sin where I begun,
Which was my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin through which I run,
And do run still, though still I do deplore?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I have won
Others to sin, and made my sins their door?
Wilt Thou forgive that sin which I did shun
A year or two, but wallow'd in a score?
When Thou hast done, Thou hast not done;
For I have more.

I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
But swear by Thyself that at my death Thy Son
Shall shine as He shines now and heretofore;
And having done that, Thou hast done;
I fear no more.

(pub. 1633)

(Religious Poets)

Though the Cavaliers had produced a quantity of delightful amatory verse, the best poetry of the period is religious. Donne's strange admixture of intellectualized passion and passionate intellectuality had found superb expression in his "divine" poems. Following him, Herbert, Vaughan, Crashaw, and Traherne turned from the controversy raging around English church and state, to find spiritual certainty within themselves. Like Donne, they delighted in the poetic exercise of "wit," which, as indicated by Samuel Johnson, meant in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the combining "of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." These "metaphysical poets," as Johnson later called them, gave England her only considerable religious poetry—a contribution unsurpassed in her literature for intensity and mystical vision.

George Herbert

(1593-1633)

When Herbert took his M.A. at Cambridge in 1616, he had already written much religious verse. For a while he was a fellow of his college, but then took the position of Public Orator of Cambridge in 1619. Entering the Church of England under the influence of Bishop Laud in 1630 he became rector at Bemerton near Salisbury. Having thus settled a matter over which he had been debating, he took up his duties in the Church with enthusiasm and earned from his first biographer, Izaak Walton, the title of "holy Mr. Herbert." Sometimes, indeed, he was still troubled by an urge to take part in secular affairs; expressing the conflict in poetry seems to have given him peace again. His skill as a musician must also have helped him to tranquillity. When he was dying he committed the manuscript of his poems, all still unpublished, to a friend with the injunction that if the picture the verses afforded "of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul" might give help to "any dejected poor soul, let it be made public; if not let him [i.e. his friend] burn it." *The Temple* appeared in 1633 and made disciples of Crashaw and Vaughan. Twenty thousand copies are said to have been sold by 1670.

A follower of Donne both in his "metaphysical" manner and in his recording of intimate personal experience, Herbert is distinctive in the saintly quality of his character as revealed in his poems. Even a Puritan, Baxter, had to admit that "Herbert speaks to God like one that really believeth in God." He is the voice of the Church of England, expressing the "beauty of holiness."

Coleridge first edited his works (1835), but the best modern edition is that of G. H. Palmer (1905-15). A study of *George Herbert and His Times* was made by A. G. Hyde (1906).

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky!
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

(1633)

The Pulley

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by;
Let us (said he) pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches which dispersed lie
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flow'd, then wisdom, honor, pleasure;
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone, of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

For if I should (said he)
Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.

(1633)

The Collar

I struck the board, and cry'd, "No more;
I will abroad!
What, shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it;
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it,
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted,
All wasted?
Not so, my heart; but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures; leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not; forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands
Which petty thoughts have made; and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! take heed;
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's-head there, tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load."
But as I rav'd, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child";
And I reply'd, "My Lord."

(1633)

Henry Vaughan
(1622-1695)

A Welshman by birth and descent, Vaughan for a while attended Oxford, which he left to study law in London. The Civil War, however, disrupted his plans, and he returned to Wales to study medicine. The war over, he settled down to the quiet life of a country doctor in his homeland. In 1650 and 1655 he published the two parts of his *Silex Scintillans*, a collection of his religious poems, which was followed by another in 1678, *Thalia Rediviva.*

A disciple of Herbert and exhibiting much indebtedness to *The Temple,* Vaughan has nevertheless little in common with his master. His inspiration came not from the orderliness of the English Church, to which he was indeed loyal, but from his imaginative apprehending of God in Nature. Like his contemporary Traherne, and like Blake and Wordsworth later, he sings his mystical vision of God's creation. His work is uneven, and the subtle verse-forms which Herbert managed with such facility often prove stumbling-blocks to him. Yet when he achieves ecstasy, he is quite beyond anything Herbert tried to attain.

His poems were practically unknown until the late nineteenth century. The standard edition is by L. C. Martin (1914). Edmund Blunden has a fine essay *On the Poems of Henry Vaughan* (1927).

The World

I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright;
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the world
And all her train were hurled.
The doting lover in his quaintest strain
Did there complain;
Near him, his lute, his fancy, and his flights,
Wit's sour delights,
With gloves, and knots, the silly snares of pleasure,
Yet his dear treasure,
All scattered lay, while he his eyes did pour
Upon a flower.

The darksome statesman, hung with weights and woe,
Like a thick midnight-fog moved there so slow,
He did not stay, nor go;
Condemning thoughts, like sad eclipses, scowl
Upon his soul,
And clouds of crying witnesses without
Pursued him with one shout.
Yet digged the mole, and lest his ways be found,
Worked under ground,
Where he did clutch his prey; but one did see
That policy;
Churches and altars fed him; perjuries
Were gnats and flies;
It rained about him blood and tears, but he
Drank them as free.

The fearful miser on a heap of rust
Sat pining all his life there, did scarce trust
His own hands with the dust,
Yet would not place one piece above, but lives
In fear of thieves.
Thousands there were as frantic as himself,
And hugged each one his pelf;
The downright epicure placed heaven in sense,
And scorned pretense;
While others, slipped into a wide excess,
Said little less;
The weaker sort, slight, trivial wares enslave,
Who think them brave;
And poor, despiséd Truth sat counting by
Their victory.

Yet some, who all this while did weep and sing,
And sing and weep, soared up into the ring;
But most would use no wing.
O fools, said I, thus to prefer dark night
Before true light!
To live in grots and caves, and hate the day
Because it shows the way,
The way, which from this dead and dark abode
Leads up to God;
A way there you might tread the sun, and be
More bright than he!
But, as I did their madness so discuss,
One whispered thus,
"This ring the Bridegroom[1] did for none provide,
But for his bride."

(1650)

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[1] Christ, the Bridegroom and the Church, the bride.

The Retreat

Happy those early days, when I
Shined in my angel-infancy!
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,[1]
Or taught my soul to fancy aught
But a white, celestial thought;
When yet I had not walked above
A mile or two from my first love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face;
When on some gilded cloud or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinful sound,
Or had the black art to dispense,
A several sin to every sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dress
Bright shoots of everlastingness.
O, how I long to travel back,
And tread again that ancient track!
That I might once more reach that plain,
Where first I left my glorious train;
From whence th' enlightened spirit sees
That shady city[2] of palm trees.
But ah! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way!
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move;
And when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return. (1650)

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[1] existence.

[2] Paradise.

Richard Crashaw

(1612-1649)

Son of a Protestant clergyman, Crashaw took his degree at Cambridge, and at the commencement of the Civil War fled to the continent. He became a convert to Catholicism, traveled to Rome, and in 1647 entered the household of Cardinal Palotto.

His *Steps to the Temple* appeared in 1648, and again two years later with many additions. In 1652 *Carmen Deo Nostro* was printed at Paris; this volume republishes many of the previous poems together with some new ones. The most dazzling of the religious mystical poets of his time, Crashaw is also the most unrestrained. His images are daring and sometimes hard to accept. But he is one of our most inspired poets, and has been called "the mystic of the flame."

L. C. Martin's edition of the *Complete Works* (1927) contains an excellent biographical introduction.

On the Blessed Virgin's Bashfulness

That on her lap she casts her humble eye,
'Tis the sweet pride of her humility.
The fair star is well fixt, for where, O where
Could she have fixt it on a fairer sphere?
'Tis heav'n, 'tis heaven she sees, heaven's God
there lies;
She can see heaven, and ne'er lift up her eyes:
This new guest to her eyes new laws hath given,
'Twas once look up, 'tis now look down to
heaven.

(1646)

The Tear

What bright soft thing is this?
Sweet Mary, thy fair eyes expense?
A moist spark it is,
A wat'ry diamond; from whence
The very term, I think, was found,
The water of a diamond.

O 'tis not a tear,
'Tis a star about to drop
From thine eye its sphere;
The sun will stoop and take it up.
Proud will his sister be to wear
This, thine eye's jewel, in her ear.

O 'tis a tear,
Too true a tear; for no sad eyne,
How sad so e'er,
Rain so true a tear as thine;

Each drop leaving a place so dear,
Weeps for itself, is its own tear.

Such a pearl as this is,
(Slipt from Aurora's[1] dewy breast)
The rose bud's sweet lip kisses;
And such the rose itself when vext
With ungentle flames, does shed,
Sweating in too warm a bed.

Such the maiden gem
By the wanton spring put on,
Peeps from her parent stem,
And blushes on the manly sun;
This wat'ry blossom of thy eyne
Ripe, will make the richer wine.

Fair drop, why quak'st thou so?
'Cause thou straight must lay thy head
In the dust? O no;
The dust shall never be thy bed;
A pillow for thee will I bring,
Stuft with down of angels' wing.

Thus carried up on high,
(For to heaven thou must go)
Sweetly shalt thou lie,
And in soft slumbers bathe thy woe;
Till the singing orbs awake thee,
And one of their bright chorus make thee.

There thy self shalt be
An eye, but not a weeping one;
Yet I doubt of thee,
Whether th'hadst rather there have shone
An eye of heaven; or still shine here
In th'heaven of Mary's eye, a tear.

(1646)

Upon the Body of Our Blessed Lord, Naked and Bloody

They have left thee naked, Lord; O that they had!
This garment too I would they had denied.

Thee with thyself they have too richy clad,
Opening the purple wardrobe in thy side.

O never could there be garment too good
For thee to wear, but this, of thine own blood.

(1646)

Thomas Traherne

(1634-1674)

Traherne published two books during his life, an attack on the Roman Catholic Church and a treatise on *Christian Ethics.* His name was consigned to oblivion until a manuscript of his poems was discovered and published in 1903. Another manuscript turned up in the British Museum and was published in 1910.

Somewhat prosy and verbose as a poet, Traherne nevertheless achieves the rapture and wonder of Vaughan. In some respects he is close to a later mystic, Wordsworth. Like the great Romantic poet of the nineteenth century, he found felicity in the simple things of nature and in the innocence of childhood.

Traherne is at his best, however, in prose. In 1908 B. Dobell published for the first time Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations*, containing some of his most beautiful writing.

His complete *Poetical Works* will be found in G. I. Wade's edition (1932). A good study is G. Willett's *Thomas Traherne, an Essay* (1918).

Shadows in the Water

In unexperienced infancy
Many a sweet mistake doth lie,—
Mistake, tho' false, intending true;
A seeming somewhat more than view
That doth instruct the mind
In things that lie behind,
And many secrets to us show
Which afterwards we come to know.

Thus did I by the water's brink
Another world beneath me think;
And while the lofty spacious skies
Reversèd there abused mine eyes,
I fancied other feet
Came mine to touch or meet;
As by some puddle I did play
Another world within it lay.

---

[1] the dawn.

Beneath the water people drowned,
Yet with another heaven crowned,
In spacious regions seemed to go
As freely moving to and fro;
  In bright and open space
  I saw their very face;
Eyes, hands, and feet they had like mine;
Another sun did with them shine.

'Twas strange that people there should walk
And yet I could not hear them talk,
That through a little wat'ry chink,
Which one dry ox or horse might drink,
  We other worlds should see,
  Yet not admitted be;
And other confines there behold
Of light and darkness, heat and cold.

I called them oft, but called in vain;
No speeches we could entertain:
Yet did I there expect to find
Some other world, to please my mind.
  I plainly saw by these
  A new Antipodes,[1]
Whom, though they were so plainly seen,
A film kept off that stood between.

By walking men's reversèd feet
I chanced another world to meet;
Though it did not to view exceed
A phantasm, 'tis a world indeed,
  Where skies beneath us shine,
  And earth, by art divine,
Another face presents below,
Where people's feet against ours go.
Within the regions of the air,
Compassed about with heavens fair,
Great tracts of land there may be found
Enriched with fields and fertile ground;
  Where many num'rous hosts,
  In those far distant coasts,
For other great and glorious ends
Inhabit, my yet unknown friends.

O ye that stand upon the brink,
Whom I so near me, through the chink,
With wonder see; what faces there,
Whose feet, whose bodies, do ye wear?
  I my companions see
  In you, another me.
They seemèd others, but are we;
Our second selves those shadows be.

Look how far off those lower skies
Extend themselves! Scarce with mine eyes
I can them reach. O ye, my friends,
What secret borders on those ends?
  Are lofty heavens hurled
  'Bout your inferior world?
Are ye the representatives
Of other peoples' distant lives?

Of all the playmates which I knew
That here I do the image view
In other selves, what can it mean,
But that below the purling stream
  Some unknown joys there be
  Laid up in store for me,
To which I shall, when that thin skin
Is broken, be admitted in?

(pub. 1903)

Thomas Carew

(1594?-1639)

Graduated from Oxford, Carew for a while trifled with the law, but found himself, at last, perfectly in place as a Cavalier poet. Living a carefree and dissolute life among the courtiers of Charles I, Carew possessed just such talents of cleverness and tact as were sure to win him esteem in aristocratic circles. His poems are perfect examples of the Cavalier taste, with their wit, lightness, and grace. A great admirer of Ben Jonson, he was even more influenced by the poetry of Donne, whose "metaphysical" manner he adopted with ease and skill to his amorous subjects.

Few of his poems were published in his lifetime. A. Vincent's edition in the Muses' Library (n.d.) is the best. It contains an excellent introduction.

Ingrateful Beauty Threatened

Know, Celia, since thou art so proud,
  'Twas I that gave thee thy renown.
Thou hadst in the forgotten crowd

---

[1] Inhabitants of the southern hemisphere, the opposite from our own.

Of common beauties lived unknown,
Had not my verse extoll'd thy name,
And with it imp'd[1] the wings of Fame.

That killing power is none of thine;
I gave it to thy voice and eyes;
Thy sweets, thy graces, all are mine;
Thou art my star, shin'st in my skies;
Then dart not from thy borrow'd sphere
Lightning on him that fix'd thee there.

Tempt me with such affrights no more,
Lest what I made I uncreate;
Let fools thy mystic form adore,
I know thee in thy mortal state.
Wise poets, that wrapt Truth in tales,
Knew her themselves through all her veils.

(pub. 1640)

Persuasions to Joy: A Song

If the quick spirits in your eye
Now languish and anon must die;
If every sweet and every grace
Must fly from that forsaken face;
Then, Celia, let us reap our joys
Ere Time such goodly fruit destroys.

Or if that golden fleece must grow
For ever free from agèd snow;
If those bright suns must know no shade,
Nor your fresh beauties ever fade;
Then fear not, Celia, to bestow
What, still being gather'd, still must grow.

Thus either Time his sickle brings
In vain, or else in vain his wings.

(pub. 1640)

An Epitaph

This little vault, this narrow room,
Of love and beauty is the tomb;
The dawning beam, that 'gan to clear
Our clouded sky, lies darken'd here,
For ever set to us: by death
Sent to enflame the world beneath.
'Twas but a bud, yet did contain
More sweetness than shall spring again;
A budding star, that might have grown
Into a sun when it had blown.
This hopeful beauty did create
New life in love's declining state;
But now his empire ends, and we
From fire and wounding darts are free;
His brand, his bow, let no man fear:
The flames, the arrows, all lie here.

(pub. 1640)

The Unfading Beauty

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires:
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never-dying fires.
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.

(pub. 1640)

Song

Would you know what's soft? I dare
Not bring you to the down, or air,
Nor to stars to show what's bright,
Nor to snow to teach you white;

Nor, if you would music hear,
Call the orbs to take your ear;
Nor, to please your sense, bring forth
Bruisèd nard,[1] or what's more worth;

Or on food were your thoughts placed,
Bring you nectar for a taste;
Would you have all these in one,
Name my mistress, and 'tis done!

(pub. 1640)

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[1] a technical word in falconry meaning to repair a wing with additional feathers.

[1] a plant producing a fragrant ointment.

Edmund Waller

(1606-1687)

While still young, Waller earned a reputation in Parliament for his eloquence, and also addressed amatory verses to the Earl of Leicester's daughter, whom he called Sacharissa. Though of a Royalist family, he took sides at first with the revolutionists under Cromwell. But in 1643 he was one in a plot to turn London over to the enemy; for his complicity he was banished from England. Obtaining the right to return, he wrote in praise of Cromwell—and when Charles II was restored he indited him a welcome. During the Restoration he was very popular, and did much to establish the heroic couplet as a medium for poetic expression. Dryden gives him credit for being the first to teach the "excellence and dignity" of rhyme and to make "writing easily an art." He was among the most admired of poets during the whole Augustan age (cf. Addison's *Ned Softly the Poet*), probably because he possessed the great virtues of clarity and grace. His heroic couplets, however, have been forgot in the admiration accorded his lyrics.

G. T. Drury's edition in the Muses' Library (n.d.) is the best. Samuel Johnson wrote a biography of him in the *Lives of the Poets*.

Go, Lovely Rose

Go, lovely Rose—
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired,
And not blush so to be admired,

Then die—that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee;
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair!

(1645)

On a Girdle

That which her slender waist confined,
Shall now my joyful temples bind;
No monarch but would give his crown,
His arms might do what this has done.

It was my heaven's extremest sphere,
The pale which held that lovely deer.
My joy, my grief, my hope, my love,
Did all within this circle move!

A narrow compass! and yet there
Dwelt all that's good, and all that's fair;
Give me but what this ribband bound,
Take all the rest the sun goes round.

(1645)

Sir John Suckling

(1609-1642)

A graduate of Cambridge, Suckling toured the continent. Back in England he lived the life of wit and abandonment expected of Charles' courtiers, and became notorious as a gambler. He took sides with the king, attracting comment by the lavishness with which he outfitted his troops. For his part in trying to rescue Strafford from the Tower in 1641, he was forced to flee to France where, it is said, he committed suicide. Few of his poems appeared until 1646, though he produced several plays no longer remembered.

Dryden said of him that he expressed better than any other poet "the conversation of a gentleman." For us he typifies, more than any other of the Cavalier poets, the cloak-over-the-shoulder pose which they liked to affect. He is the gayest, wittiest, and most superficial of them all.

A. H. Thompson edited his works (1910).

A Doubt of Martyrdom

O for some honest lover's ghost,
Some kind unbodied post
Sent from the shades below!
I strangely long to know
Whether the noble chaplets wear
Those that their mistress' scorn did bear
Or those that were used kindly.

For whatsoe'er they tell us here
To make those sufferings dear,
'Twill there, I fear, be found
That to the being crown'd
T' have loved alone will not suffice,
Unless we also have been wise
And have our loves enjoy'd.

What posture can we think him in
That, here unloved, again
Departs, and 's thither gone
Where each sits by his own?
Or how can that Elysium be
Where I my mistress still must see
Circled in other's arms?

For there the judges all are just,
And Sophronisba[1] must
Be his whom she held dear,
Not his who loved her here.
The sweet Philoclea, since she died,
Lies by her Pirocles his side,
Not by Amphialus.

Some bays, perchance, or myrtle bough
For difference crowns the brow
Of those kind souls that were
The noble martyrs here:
And if that be the only odds
(As who can tell?), ye kinder gods,
Give me the woman here!

The Constant Lover

Out upon it, I have loved
Three whole days together!
And am like to love three more,
If it prove fair weather.

Time shall molt away his wings
Ere he shall discover
In the whole wide world again
Such a constant lover.

But the spite on't is, no praise
Is due at all to me;
Love with me had made no stays,
Had it any been but she.

Had it any been but she,
And that very face,
There had been at least ere this
A dozen dozen in her place.

Why So Pale and Wan, Fond Lover?

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do 't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit for shame! This will not move;
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her.
The devil take her!

---

[1] fanciful Greek names given English lovers.

Richard Lovelace

(1618-1657?)

One of the handsomest men of his time, Lovelace was granted, through the intervention of a great lady, his M.A. degree after only two years at Oxford. This seems to have been only an instance of his being "much admired and adored by the female sex." Passionately devoted to the king's cause, he fought for him, taking his farewell to "Lucasta" in a famous lyric. In 1648 he was imprisoned for his participation in the uprisings in Kent; in prison he wrote *To Althea.* Released in 1649, he collected his poems in a volume *Lucasta* (1649), and after his death his brother collected other pieces in *Lucasta, Posthume Poems* (1659).

Lovelace shows the serious side of the Cavalier. Although his name is usually coupled with Suckling's, there is little affinity between the latter's flippancy and Lovelace's ardent devotion to the Royalist cause, on which he spent his entire fortune. Certainly few poems have been more often quoted than the two we print, and both show a man of high personal integrity.

The standard edition is C. H. Wilkinson's (1925).

To Lucasta, Going to the Wars

Tell me not, Sweet, I am unkind,
  That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
  To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
  The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
  A sword, a horse, a shield.

Yet this inconstancy is such
  As thou too shalt adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
  Loved I not honor more.

(1649)

To Althea, from Prison

When Love with unconfinèd wings
  Hovers within my gates,
And my divine Althea brings
  To whisper at the grates;
When I lie tangled in her hair
  And fettered to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
  Know no such liberty.

When flowing cups run swiftly round
  With no allaying Thames,[1]
Our careless heads with roses bound,
  Our hearts with loyal flames;
When thirsty grief in wine we steep,
  When healths and drafts go free—
Fishes that tipple in the deep
  Know no such liberty.

When, like committed linnets, I
  With shriller throat shall sing
The sweetness, mercy, majesty,
  And glories of my King;
When I shall voice aloud how good
  He is, how great should be,
Enlargéd winds, that curl the flood,
  Know no such liberty.

Stone walls do not a prison make,
  Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
  That for an hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
  And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
  Enjoy such liberty.

(1642)

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[1] Here means "water." The Thames is the river on which London is situated.

Abraham Cowley

(1618-1667)

While still a schoolboy of fifteen, Cowley published his volume of *Poetical Blossoms* (1633), followed five years later by his pastoral comedy *Love's Riddle* (1638). At Cambridge he wrote and published a Latin comedy (1638). Expelled from the university for being a Royalist, he went to Oxford, and seems to have acted as a secret agent for the Royalists. Retiring to France, he returned at the Restoration, and spent his last two years on a small estate given him by the Duke of Buckingham.

Like many prodigies, he received exaggerated praise for his talents, and passed for a long time as a great poet. But, again like that of many prodigies, his reputation has steadily declined. One of the last and the most extreme of the "metaphysical poets," he served as the chief exhibit in Johnson's condemnation of them for their love of "the unexpected and surprising." Today it is his essays which are most admired.

A. R. Waller's is the standard edition (1905-6). Johnson's *Life* of him provides one of the best criticisms ever made of his work. A. N. Nethercot's *Abraham Cowley* (1931) is valuable.

The Wish

Well then! I now do plainly see
This busy world and I shall ne'er agree.
The very honey of all earthly joy
Does of all meats the soonest cloy;
  And they, methinks, deserve my pity
Who for it can endure the stings,
The crowd and buzz and murmurings,
  Of this great hive, the city.

Ah, yet, ere I descend to the grave
May I a small house and large garden have;
And a few friends, and many books, both true,
Both wise, and both delightful too!
  And since love ne'er will from me flee,
A Mistress moderately fair,
And good as guardian angels are,
  Only beloved and loving me.

O fountains! when in you shall I
Myself eased of unpeaceful thoughts espy?
O fields! O woods! when, when shall I be made
The happy tenant of your shade?
  Here's the spring-head of Pleasure's flood;
Here's wealthy Nature's treasury,
Where all the riches lie that she
  Has coined and stamped for good.

Pride and ambition here
Only in far-fetched metaphors appear;
Here nought but winds can hurtful murmurs scatter,
And nought but Echo flatter.
  The gods, when they descended, hither
From heaven did always choose their way;
And therefore we may boldly say
  That 'tis the way too thither.

How happy here should I
And one dear She live, and embracing die!
She who is all the world, and can exclude
In deserts solitude.
  I should have then this only fear:
Lest men, when they my pleasures see,
Should hither throng to live like me,
  And so make a city here.

(1647)

The Thief

Thou robbest my days of business and delights
  Of sleep thou robbest my nights;
  Ah, lovely thief, what wilt thou do?
  What, rob me of Heaven too?
  Thou even my prayers dost steal from me,
  And I, with wild idolatry,
Begin to God, and end them all to thee.

Is it a sin to love, that it should thus
  Like an ill conscience, torture us?
  Whate'er I do, where e'er I go,
  (None guiltless e'er was haunted so)
  Still, still, methinks thy face I view,
  And still thy shape does me pursue,
As if not you me, but I had murdered you.

From books I strive some remedy to take,
  But thy name all the letters make;
  Whate'er 'tis writ, I find that there
  Like points and commas everywhere.

Me blest for this let no man hold;
For I, as Midas[1] did of old,
Perish by turning everything to gold.

What do I seek, alas, or why do I
Attempt in vain from thee to fly?
For making thee my deity
I give thee then ubiquity.
My pains resemble hell in this:
The divine presence there too is,
But to torment men, not to give them bliss.

(pub. 1647)

Andrew Marvell

(1621-1678)

An upright man of such scholarly attainments as even Milton could praise, Andrew Marvell was educated at Cambridge. In 1657 he was appointed assistant to Milton, and two years later was elected to Parliament. Re-election kept him there until his death, and he was forced to neglect his lyrical vein because he took his political duties very seriously. The corruptness of the Restoration, however, led him to write satires. It is noteworthy that despite his participation in Cromwell's government, he could win the respect of Charles II. His fame rests on his lyrical poems which, availing themselves of what was best in the "metaphysical" school, avoid any straining. His garden poetry is among the finest in our literature.

The standard edition is by E. M. Margoliouth (1927). P. Legouis' study of him is the best (1928).

On a Drop of Dew

See, how the orient dew,
Shed from the bosom of the morn,
Into the blowing roses,
(Yet careless of its mansion new,
For the clear region where 'twas born)
Round in its self incloses:
And in its little globe's extent,
Frames as it can its native element.
How it the purple flow'r does slight,
Scarce touching where it lies,
But gazing back upon the skies,
Shines with a mournful light;
Like its own tear,
Because so long divided from the sphere.
Restless it rolls and unsecure,
Trembling lest it grow impure:
Till the warm sun pity its pain,
And to the skies exhale it back again.
So the soul, that drop, that ray
Of the clear fountain of eternal day,
Could it within the human flow'r be seen,
Rememb'ring still its former height,
Shuns the sweet leaves and blossoms green;
And, recollecting its own light,
Does, in its pure and circling thoughts, express
The greater heaven in an heaven less.
In how coy a figure wound,
Every way it turns away:
So the world excluding round,
Yet receiving in the day,
Dark beneath, but bright above:
Here disdaining, there in love.
How loose and easy hence to go:
How girt and ready to ascend.
Moving but on a point below,
It all about does upwards bend,
Such did the manna's sacred dew distill;
White, and entire, though congeal'd and chill.
Congeal'd on earth: but does, dissolving, run
Into the glories of th' Almighty Sun.

(pub. 1681)

The Garden

I

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;
And their incessant labors see
Crown'd from some single herb or tree.
Whose short and narrow vergéd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all flow'rs and all trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

II

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And innocence, thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then

---

[1] the fabled King of Lydia who received this gift.

In busy companies of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

III

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name.
Little, alas, they know, or heed,
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! where soe'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

IV

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods, that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race.
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow.
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.[1]

V

What wondrous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
And luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine, and curious peach,
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons, as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

VI

Meanwhile the mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds, and other seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

VII

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There like a bird it sits, and sings,
Then whets, and combs its silver wings;
And, till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

VIII

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate:
After a place so pure, and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there:
Two paradises 'twere in one
To live in Paradise alone.

IX

How well the skillful gardener drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new;
Where from above the milder sun
Does through a fragrant Zodiac run[2];
And, as it works, the industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers!

(1681)

---

[1] As the poem indicates, both Apollo and Pan pursued mortal sweethearts who turned respectively into a laurel (Daphne) and a reed (Syrinx).

[2] The progress of the sun during the year is through the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

Robert Herrick

(1591-1674)

For the last we leave the best of these poets—excluding Milton, the finest lyric poet of his age. His life was one of adverse chance, but Fate seems to have been unable to darken the sunlight of his nature.

Herrick took his M.A. at Cambridge in 1620. During the next decade, he spent most of his time in London in the company of poets and wits, "the sons of Ben" (Jonson). More likely because of the need of earning a livelihood than from any inner calling, he became vicar of Dean Prior in Devonshire in 1629. Here he lived yearning for the exciting talk of London, yet coming to make the most of the simple things in the country life about him. The victory of the Puritans, unhappily, cost him his living, and he was thrown back upon London, where in 1648 he published his *Noble Numbers* (dated 1647) and *Hesperides.* In the stress in the midst of which they appeared, such volumes could have no great success. At last, after the Restoration, he too was restored to security at Dean Prior.

As neat in his verse as any poet of his age, Herrick has none of the Cavalier brittleness or sophistication. In his limpidity he is a son of the Elizabethans; yet he is as free from their romancing and conceits as he is from the "metaphysical" subtleties of the followers of Donne. Like Ben Jonson he wished order in his verses, and, lacking Jonson's heaviness, is much closer than he to the tone of Anacreon, Horace, and Catullus. Not interested in the flippant pose of Suckling, in the Royalist devotion of Lovelace, nor in the amorous lightness of Carew, he imparts a note of genuine feeling and tenderness to his poems without ever losing his sunny grace. His nature was frankly pagan, and he drank fully of the beauty that resides in transient or unimportant things. The *Argument* to his book well sums up the sphere of his interests. He had, moreover, like the master prose-writers of his century, a genius for happy phrases (as in the third and fifth lines of *Upon Julia's Clothes*).

But the shadow of Puritanism was over the land, and even Herrick was sometimes worried as to whether he had the right to enjoy living so much. On those occasions he turned to God with the trusting simplicity of a child and wrote the religious poems in *Holy Numbers*, which are no greater in proportion to the others than the last two lines of the *Argument* indicate. By no means mystical, these devotional verses, unsophisticated and direct, show how pure, even if predominantly pagan, was the heart of Herrick. He is a poet whom it is not hard to love.

The standard edition is F. W. Moorman's (1921). The same scholar wrote the excellent *Robert Herrick, a Biographical and Critical Study* (1910).

The Argument of His Book

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July flowers;
I sing of May-poles, hock-carts,[1] wassails,[2] wakes,[3]
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.
I write of Youth, of Love, and have access
By these, to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and ambergris;
I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white;
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab,[4] and of the Fairy King.
I write of Hell; I sing and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

(1648)

Corinna's Going a-Maying

Get up, get up for shame! The blooming morn
Upon her wings presents the god[1] unshorn.
  See how Aurora[2] throws her fair,
  Fresh-quilted colors through the air.
  Get up, sweet slug-a-bed, and see
  The dew bespangling herb and tree!
Each flower has wept and bowed toward the east
Above an hour since, yet you not drest;
  Nay! not so much as out of bed?
  When all the birds have matins said

---

[1] the last carts loaded at the harvest home festival.
[2] drinking bouts.
[3] country festivals.
[4] the fairy queen; see Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet,* I, iv, 53ff.

[1] Apollo, the sun.
[2] the dawn.

And sung their thankful hymns, 'tis sin,
Nay, profanation, to keep in,
Whenas a thousand virgins on this day
Spring sooner than the lark, to fetch in May.

Rise and put on your foliage, and be seen
To come forth, like the springtime, fresh and green,
And sweet as Flora.[3] Take no care
For jewels for your gown or hair.
Fear not; the leaves will strew
Gems in abundance upon you.
Besides, the childhood of the day has kept
Against you come, some orient pearls unwept.
Come, and receive them while the light
Hangs on the dew-locks of the night;
And Titan[4] on the eastern hill
Retires himself, or else stands still
Till you come forth! Wash, dress, be brief in praying;
Few beads are best when once we go a-Maying.

Come, my Corinna, come; and coming, mark
How each field turns a street, each street a park,
Made green and trimmed with trees! see how
Devotion gives each house a bough
Or branch! each porch, each door, ere this,
An ark, a tabernacle is,
Made up of whitethorn neatly interwove,
As if here were those cooler shades of love.
Can such delights be in the street
And open fields, and we not see't?
Come, we'll abroad; and let's obey
The proclamation made for May,
And sin no more, as we have done, by staying;
But, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

There's not a budding boy or girl this day
But is got up and gone to bring in May.
A deal of youth ere this is come
Back, and with whitethorn laden home.
Some have dispatched their cakes and cream,
Before that we have left to dream;
And some have wept and wooed, and plighted troth,
And chose their priest, ere we can cast off sloth.
Many a green-gown has been given,
Many a kiss, both odd and even;
Many a glance, too, has been sent
From out the eye, love's firmament;
Many a jest told of the keys betraying
This night, and locks picked; yet we're not a-Maying!

Come, let us go, while we are in our prime,
And take the harmless folly of the time!
We shall grow old apace, and die
Before we know our liberty.
Our life is short, and our days run
As fast away as does the sun.
And, as a vapor or a drop of rain,
Once lost, can ne'er be found again,
So when or you or I are made
A fable, song, or fleeting shade,
All love, all liking, all delight
Lies drowned with us in endless night.
Then, while time serves, and we are but decaying,
Come, my Corinna, come, let's go a-Maying.

(1648)

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old Time is still a-flying,
And this same flower that smiles today
Tomorrow will be dying.

The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.

That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.

Then be not coy, but use your time,
And while ye may, go marry;
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

(1648)

Upon Julia's Clothes

Whenas in silks my Julia goes,
Then, then, methinks, how sweetly flows
The liquefaction of her clothes.
Next, when I cast mine eyes, and see
That brave vibration, each way free,
O, how that glittering taketh me!

(1648)

---

[3] Goddess of flowers. [4] the sun.

Upon Mistress Susanna Southwell Her Feet

Her pretty feet
Like snails did creep
A little out, and then,
As if they played at bo-peep,
Did soon draw in again.

(1648)

An Ode for Ben Jonson

Ah, Ben![1]
Say how or when
Shall we, thy guests,
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun?
Where we such clusters[2] had
As made us nobly wild, not mad;
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

My Ben,
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus;
But teach us yet
Wisely to husband it,
Lest we that talent spend,
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit the world should have no more.

(1648)

To Daffodils

Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,
We have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.
We die
As your hours do, and dry
Away
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

(1648)

A Grace for a Child

Here a little child I stand,
Heaving up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks[1] though they be.
Here I lift them up to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all. Amen.

(1647)

A Thanksgiving to God for His House

Lord, thou hast given me a cell
Wherein to dwell,
A little house, whose humble roof
Is weather-proof,
Under the spars of which I lie
Both soft and dry;
Where thou, my chamber for to ward,
Hast set a guard
Of harmless thoughts to watch and keep
Me, while I sleep.
Low is my porch, as is my fate,
Both void of state;
And yet the threshold of my door
Is worn by th' poor,
Who thither come and freely get
Good words, or meat.
Like as my parlor, so my hall
And kitchen's small;
A little buttery, and therein
A little bin,
Which keeps my little loaf of bread
Unchipped, unflead;[1]

---

[1] Cf. p. 336.

[2] of grapes; i.e., wine.

[1] frogs.

[1] unflayed: i.e., with the crust intact.

Some brittle sticks of thorn or briar
Make me a fire,
Close by whose living coal I sit,
And glow like it.
Lord, I confess, too, when I dine,
The pulse is thine,
And all those other bits that be
There placed by thee;
The worts,[2] the purslain,[3] and the mess
Of water-cress,
Which of thy kindness thou hast sent;
And my content
Makes those, and my belovèd beet,
To be more sweet.
'T is thou that crown'st my glittering hearth
With guiltless mirth,
And giv'st me wassail bowls to drink,
Spiced to the brink.
Lord, 't is thy plenty-dropping hand
That soils my land,
And giv'st me, for my bushel sown,
Twice ten for one;
Thou mak'st my teeming hen to lay
Her egg each day;
Besides my healthful ewes to bear
Me twins each year;
The while the conduits of my kine
Run cream, for wine.
All these, and better thou dost send
Me, to this end,
That I should render, for my part,
A thankful heart,
Which, fired with incense, I resign,
As wholly thine;
But the acceptance, that must be,
My Christ, by thee.

(1647)

To Keep a True Lent

Is this a fast, to keep
The larder lean,
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look, and sour?

No; 'tis a fast, to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat
And meat
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate,
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

(1647)

His Litany to the Holy Spirit

In the hour of my distress,
When temptations me oppress,
And when I my sins confess,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When I lie within my bed,
Sick in heart and sick in head,
And with doubts discomforted,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the house doth sigh and weep,
And the world is drowned in sleep,
Yet mine eyes the watch do keep,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the artless[1] doctor sees
No one hope, but of his fees,
And his skill runs on the lees,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When his potion and his pill,
His, or none, or little skill,
Meet for nothing but to kill,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the passing-bell doth toll,
And the furies in a shoal

---

[2] cabbage.

[3] a plant used for salad.

[1] ignorant, unskilled.

Come to fright a parting soul,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tapers now burn blue,
And the comforters are few,
And that number more than true,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the priest his last hath prayed,
And I nod to what is said,
'Cause my speech is now decayed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When, God knows, I'm tossed about,
Either with despair or doubt,
Yet, before the glass be out,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the tempter me pursu'th
With the sins of all my youth,
And half damns me with untruth,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the flames and hellish cries
Fright mine ears and fright mine eyes,
And all terrors me surprise,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

When the Judgment is revealed,
And that opened which was sealed,
When to thee I have appealed,
Sweet Spirit, comfort me!

(1647)

Seventeenth Century Masters of Prose

Lacking a tradition, seventeenth-century prose was much closer to poetry in its rhythms and diction than, since Dryden, we have allowed prose to be. If the English Renaissance achieved its finest poetic expression in the Elizabethan period, it was in the seventeenth century that it found its culmination in prose.

The great seventeenth-century prose writers were all men of distinctive personalities which their works exhibit for the world to see. And their styles are as individual as their natures. Some things they can be said to have in common: a richness of learning, a harmony and intimacy of tone, and a genius for turning a beautiful phrase. Most of them were Royalist and Anglican, active or passive, during the Civil War.

In addition to the writers we present, mention should be made of two others. Robert Burton (1577-1640) at the beginning of this period issued *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), one of the most amazing books in English, a favorite of Johnson's, Sterne's, and Lamb's, and, as Arthur Machen has said, "a world of literature in itself." Purporting to be a treatise on the symptoms, causes, and cures of melancholy, it is the product of a lifetime of loving care by its whimsical author, who spent most of his life at Oxford. It is a discursive compendium in which all kinds of curious lore are collected; in its enchanting meanderings the style is a combination of all qualities from the sublime to the ironic.

Thomas Fuller (1608-1661), antiquary, and Anglican divine, was beloved of Coleridge and Lamb for his quaintness of mind and his gift of phrase. His *Holy and Profane State* (1641) contains many diverting character-types; but it is the gentle, good-humored Fuller himself who has delighted readers of this book and of his *Worthies of England.*

Izaak Walton

(1593-1683)

One of the best loved of English writers, Walton, though Royalist in sympathies, kept clear of the fierce dissensions of his day. A dealer in ironware, at London, he began his literary career in his late forties with a short *Life of Donne* (1640). To it he added a *Life of Sir Henry Wotton* (1651), a *Life of Hooker* (1665), and a *Life of Herbert* (1670), which were all collected in 1670 to form a volume of the most readable biographies of the seventeenth century.

It is not, however, his delightfully anecdotal *Lives* but a book on his favorite hobby, fishing, that has endeared him to posterity. To Walton fishing was more than a pastime; it was an art and a science worthy of intensive cultivation. When he wrote of it he was writing of his deepest interest, and hence intimately revealed himself. His passion brought all that he had read and thought to bear upon his loved sport. In fishing he seemed to find a panacea for the world.

The Compleat Angler appeared in 1653, and went into five editions during Walton's lifetime. It opens with a conversation among a fisherman (Piscator), a hunter (Venator), and a falconer (Auceps), in which each argues that his sport is the finest. But Piscator makes short work of the others' contempt for his "art" and of their claims for their own. Is not angling the most Christian of all occupations? Is it not an enricher of men's minds and a minister to their spirits? When Walton was writing his book, England was in a ferment of religious hates and disputes. But his soul was unruffled. "We anglers," he calmly affirms, "all love one another." No prejudice disturbed him but the one against angling. To the charge that fishing is "a heavy, contemptible, dull recreation," he hotly responds: "'Tis an easy thing to scoff . . . ; a little wit, mixed with ill-nature, confidence, and malice will do it." Fishermen are above all detraction, Walton is positive, because "they be such honest, civil, quiet men."

Such devotion, though *The Compleat Angler* is still authoritative on most matters piscatorial, would not alone suffice to make a classic. "The whole Discourse," Walton admits, "is, or rather was, a picture of my own disposition." The book is written in a style of disarming clarity and is filled with scenes of vernal charm. There is an idyllic freshness in Walton's own unassuming personality, much like that to be read in Herrick's dewy poems. It is likely that the colloquial quality of his prose and its easy pace are the result of careful artistry, for there is not a jarring tone or color in the whole book.

After Walton's death, *The Compleat Angler* was augmented by his friend Charles Cotton. Some three hundred editions have since appeared, among the best being R. Le Gallienne's charmingly illustrated one (1897). The *Lives* were edited by G. Saintsbury (1927). Two important works on Walton are R. H. Shepherd, *Waltoniana* (1878); and J. Martin, *Izaak Walton and His Friends* (1904).

From *The Compleat Angler*

And next you are to note, That till the sun gets to such a height as to warm the earth and the water, the Trout is sick, and lean, and lousy, and unwholesome; for you shall, in winter, find him to have a big head, and, then, to be lank and thin and lean; at which time many of them have sticking on them Sugs, or Trout-lice; which is a kind of a worm, in shape like a clove, or pin with a big head, and sticks close to him, and sucks his moisture; those, I think, the Trout breeds himself: and never thrives till he free himself from them, which is when warm weather comes; and, then, as he grows stronger, he gets from the dead still water into the sharp streams and the gravel, and, there, rubs off these worms or lice; and then, as he grows stronger, so he gets him into swifter and swifter streams, and there lies at the watch for any fly or minnow that comes near to him; and he especially loves the May-fly, which is bred of the codworm, or cadis; and these make the Trout bold and lusty, and he is usually fatter and better meat at the end of that month than at any time of the year.

Now you are to know that it is observed, that usually the best Trouts are either red or yellow; though some, as the Fordidge Trout, be white and yet good; but that is not usual: and it is a note observable, that the female Trout hath usually a less head, and a deeper body than the male Trout, and is usually the better meat. And note, that a hog back and a little head, to either Trout, Salmon or any other fish, is a sign that the fish is in season.

But yet you are to note, that as you see some willows or palm-trees bud and blossom sooner than others do, so some Trouts be, in rivers, sooner in season: and as some hollies, or oaks, are longer before they cast their leaves, so are some Trouts, in rivers, longer before they go out of season.

And you are to note, that there are several kinds of Trouts: but these several kinds are not considered but by very few men; for they go under the general name of Trouts; just as pigeons do, in most places; though it is certain, there are tame and wild pigeons; and of the tame, there be helmits and runts, and carriers and cropers, and indeed too many to name. Nay, the Royal Society,[1] have found and published lately, that there be thirty and three kinds of spiders; and yet all, for aught I know, go under that one general name of spider. And it is so with many kinds of fish, and of Trouts especially; which differ in their bigness, and shape, and spots, and color. The great Kentish hens may be an instance, compared to other hens: and, doubtless, there is a kind of small Trout, which will never thrive to be big; that breeds very many more than others do, that be of a larger size: which you may rather believe, if you consider that the little wren and titmouse will have twenty young ones at a time, when, usually, the noble hawk, or the musical thrassel or black-bird, exceed not four or five.

And now you shall see me try my skill to catch a Trout; and at my next walking, either this evening or to-morrow morning, I will give you direction how you yourself shall fish for him.

Venator.[2] Trust me, master, I see now it is a harder matter to catch a Trout than a Chub; for I have put on patience, and followed you these two hours, and not seen a fish stir, neither at your minnow nor your worm.

Piscator.[3] Well, scholar, you must endure worse luck sometime, or you will never make a good angler. But what say you now? There is a Trout now, and a good one too, if I can but hold him; and two or three turns more will tire him. Now you see he lies still, and the sleight is to land him: reach me that landing-net. So, Sir, now he is mine own: what say you now, is not this worth all my labor and your patience?

Ven. On my word, master, this is a gallant Trout; what shall we do with him?

Pisc. Marry, e'en eat him to supper: we'll go to my hostess from whence we came; she told me, as I was going out of door, that my brother Peter, a good angler and a cheerful companion, had sent word he would lodge there to-night, and bring a friend with him. My hostess has two beds, and I know you and I may have the best: we'll rejoice with my brother Peter and his friend, tell tales, or sing ballads, or make a catch,[4] or find some harmless sport to content us, and pass away a little time without offence to God or man.

Ven. A match, good master, let's go to that house, for the linen looks white, and smells of lavender, and I long to lie in a pair of sheets that smell so. Let's be going, good master, for I am hungry again with fishing.

Pisc. Nay, stay a little, good scholar. I caught my last Trout with a worm; now I will put on a minnow, and try a quarter of an hour about yonder trees for another; and, so, walk towards our lodging. Look you, scholar, thereabout we shall have a bite presently, or not at all. Have with you, Sir: o' my word I have hold of him. Oh! it is a great logger-headed Chub; come, hang him upon that willow twig, and let's be going. But turn out of the way a little, good scholar! toward yonder high honeysuckle hedge; there we'll sit and sing, whilst this shower falls so gently upon the teeming earth, and gives yet a sweeter smell to the lovely flowers that adorn these verdant meadows.

Look! under that broad beech-tree I sat down, when I was last this way a-fishing; and the birds in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly contention with an echo, whose dead voice seemed to live in a hollow tree near to the brow of that primrose-hill. There I sat viewing the silver streams glide silently towards their centre, the tempestuous sea; yet sometimes opposed by rugged roots and pebble-stones, which broke their waves, and turned them into foam; and sometimes I beguiled time by viewing the harmless lambs; some leaping securely in the cool shade, whilst others sported themselves in the cheerful sun; and saw others craving comfort from the swollen udders of their bleating dams. As I thus sat, these and other sights had so fully possest my soul with content, that I thought, as the poet has happily exprest it,

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[1] an association founded in London about 1660 for the advancement of science.

[2] hunter.

[3] fisherman.

[4] a snatch of a song.

I was for that time lifted above earth;
And possest joys not promised in my birth.

As I left this place, and entered into the next field, a second pleasure entertained me; 'twas a handsome milk-maid, that had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load her mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men too often do; but she cast away all care, and sung like a nightingale. Her voice was good, and the ditty fitted for it; it was that smooth song which was made by Kit Marlow, now at least fifty years ago; and the milk-maid's mother sung an answer to it, which was made by Sir Walter Raleigh, in his younger days.[5] They were old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good; I think much better than the strong lines that are now in fashion in this critical age. Look yonder! on my word, yonder, they both be a-milking again. I will give her the Chub, and persuade them to sing those two songs to us.

God speed you, good woman! I have been a-fishing; and am going to Bleak Hall to my bed; and having caught more fish than will sup myself and my friend, I will bestow this upon you and your daughter, for I use to sell none.

MILK-WOMAN. Marry! God requite you, Sir, and we'll eat it cheerfully. And if you come this way a-fishing two months hence, a grace of God! I'll give you a syllabub of new verjuice,[6] in a new-made hay-cock, for it. And my Maudlin shall sing you one of her best ballads; for she and I both love all anglers, they be such honest, civil, quiet men. In the meantime will you drink a draught of red cow's milk? you shall have it freely.

PISC. No, I thank you; but, I pray, do us a courtesy that shall stand you and your daughter in nothing, and yet we will think ourselves still something in your debt: it is but to sing us a song that was sung by your daughter when I last passed over this meadow, about eight or nine days since.

MILK-WOMAN. What song was it, I pray? Was it, "Come, Shepherds, deck your herds"? or, "As at noon Dulcina rested"? or, "Phillida flouts me"? or, "Chevy Chace"? or, "Johnny Armstrong"? or, "Troy Town"?[7]

PISC. No, it is none of those; it is a Song that your daughter sung the first part, and you sung the answer to it.

MILK-WOMAN. O, I know it now. I learned the first part in my golden age, when I was about the age of my poor daughter; and the latter part, which indeed fits me best now, but two or three years ago, when the cares of the world began to take hold of me: but you shall, God willing, hear them both; and sung as well as we can, for we both love anglers. Come Maudlin, sing the first part to the gentlemen with a merry heart, and I'll sing the second, when you have done.

THE MILKMAID'S SONG[8]

Come, live with me, and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove
That valleys, groves, or hills, or field,
Or woods and steepy mountains yield;

Where we will sit upon the rocks,
And see the shepherds feed our flocks
By shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of roses,
And then a thousand fragrant posies.
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool
Which from our pretty lambs we pull;
Slippers lined choicely for the cold,
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and ivy-buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs:
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come, live with me, and be my love.

Thy silver dishes for my meat,
As precious as the gods do eat,
Shall on an ivory table be
Prepared each day for thee and me.

The shepherd swains shall dance and sing,
For thy delight, each May morning.
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love.

VEN. Trust me, master, it is a choice song, and sweetly sung by honest Maudlin. I now see it was not without cause that our good Queen Elizabeth did so often wish herself a milkmaid all the month of May, because they are not troubled with fears and cares, and sing sweetly all the day and sleep securely all the night; and without doubt, honest, innocent, pretty Maudlin does so. I'll bestow Sir Thomas Overbury's[9] milkmaid's wish upon her, "That she may die in the spring, and being dead may have good store of flowers stuck round about her winding-sheet."

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[5] Cf. p. 237.
[6] sour fruit juice.
[7] songs well-known at the time.
[8] Cf. p. 299.

THE MILKMAID'S MOTHER'S ANSWER[10]

If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

But time drives flocks from field to fold,
When rivers rage and rocks grow cold;
Then Philomel becometh dumb,
And age complains of care to come.

The flowers do fade, and wanton fields
To wayward winter reckoning yields.
A honey tongue, a heart of gall,
Is fancy's spring, but sorrow's fall.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy beds of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy belt of straw and ivy-buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee, and be thy love.

What should we talk of dainties then,
Of better meat than 's fit for men?
These are but vain; that 's only good
Which God hath blest, and sent for food.

But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date nor age no need;
Then those delights my mind might move
To live with thee, and be thy love.

MOTHER. Well! I have done my song. But stay, honest angler, for I will make Maudlin to sing you one short song more. Maudlin, sing that song that you sung last night when young Coridon the shepherd played so purely on his oaten pipe to you and your cousin Betty.

MAUD. I will, mother.

I married a wife of late,
The more's my unhappy fate:
I married her for love,
As my fancy did me move,
And not for a worldly estate.
But oh! the green sickness
Soon changed her likeness;
And all her beauty did fail.
But 'tis not so
With those that go
Through frost and snow,
As all men know,
And carry the milking-pail.

PISC. Well sung! Good woman, I thank you. I'll give you another dish of fish one of these days, and then beg another song of you. Come, scholar! let Maudlin alone: do not you offer to spoil her voice. Look, yonder comes mine hostess to call us to supper. How now! is my brother Peter come?

HOSTESS. Yes, and a friend with him. They are both glad to hear that you are in these parts; and long to see you; and long to be at supper, for they be very hungry.

(1653)

Sir Thomas Browne

(1605-1682)

Hailed by some critics as the greatest prose stylist in English, Browne probably never thought of himself as a literary artist. After an excellent education at Oxford and on the continent, where he studied medicine at Montpellier, Padua, and Leyden, he spent a few years in London, and then settled down in 1637 as a provincial doctor in the town of Norwich. Not a very partisan Royalist, he was kept busy during the Civil War at his profession and his studies. He was knighted by Charles II in 1671.

Living in a time when science was making its first great strides, Browne took a certain interest in its progress, though most modern scientists would be astonished to find a man like him in their numbers. He maintained a large correspondence, was on good terms with the Royal Society, and had one of the largest scientific libraries in England. But science to him was not a process of relentlessly seeking out the cold and final fact, but rather a search that only increased the wonder of God's creation. Science today would find endless contradictions between Browne's scientific curiosity and his deep-rooted mysticism; in the crucible of Browne's meditation these opposites had been reconciled into a unity. *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (1642), an examination of "vulgar errors", his most elaborate work, exhibits the poles of his temperament. On the one hand he asserts that "any confident adherence unto Authority" is "a powerful enemy unto knowledge" and he rebukes men for "believing at first ear, what is delivered by others", while on the other he warns them against "obstinate incredulity." He disproves the possible existence of the phoenix, but gravely considers the physiology of the unicorn. He discusses the physical location of the human heart, but also denies that Adam and Eve could have possessed navels. Yet, worthless as the book must be held as scientific thinking, it has the attraction of all his writings, itself a commentary on their scientific value—the stamp upon every sentence of the author's personality.

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[9] a well-known writer of *characters* (1581-1613).

[10] Cf. p. 300.

His greatest books are his first, *Religio Medici*, i.e. The Religion of a Physician (1642), and his last, *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial* (1658). It is in these that we find perfectly mirrored Browne's strangely exalted spirit, to which he himself gave the best clue when he said: "I love to lose my self in a mystery, to pursue my Reason to an *O altitudo*!" The *Religio Medici*, which was one of Charles Lamb's most treasured books, is a confession of faith. Browne is, he tells us, a Christian who contents himself rather "to enjoy that happy style, than maligning those who refuse so glorious a title." Browne prefers for himself the Church of England, but would not think of insisting on it for others, since any man may adore his Creator anywhere. The mysteries of religion are no disturbance to him, scientist though he is: "methinks, there be not impossibilities enough in Religion", for the test of his religion is faith, not reason. We perceive the beauty of Browne's faith when he says: "I have so fixed my contemplations on Heaven, that I have almost forgot the Idea of Hell. . . ; I fear God, yet am not afraid of him; his mercies make me ashamed of my sins, before his Judgments afraid thereof." He sees little use in controversy: "I cannot fall out, or contemn a man for error, or conceive why a difference in Opinion should divide an affection." "No man can justly censure or condemn another, because indeed no man truly knows another. . . ; God, who truly knows me, knows that I am nothing." "Methinks there is no man bad; . . . there is no man's mind of such discordant and jarring a temper, to which a tunable disposition may not strike a harmony." We can well believe that such a religion could entitle Browne to say: "In brief, I am content, and what should providence add more? Surely this is it we call Happiness, and this do I enjoy."

This masterpiece, frankly personal and intimate, is as characteristic of its author in its style as in its content. The mystical quality of his thinking is communicated to the prose, which moves majestically—fusing the sweetness and the gentle melancholy of the ideas. The same music, though deepened, is to be heard in *Hydriotaphia* (published together with *The Garden of Cyrus*, a mystical fantasy on the quincunx). Some sepulchral urns having been discovered in Norfolk, Browne's fancy was led to this meditation on historical methods of disposing of the dead, the sepulchral antiquities of Britain, man's belief in immortality, and the mutability of all things. The work is a magnificent prose-poem, whose rich, darkly-colored Latinized diction seems to bear an inner glow. But it is futile to attempt to dissassociate the sweep of Browne's imagination from the style that so perfectly expresses it. Professor Saintsbury's enthusiastic comment on the portion we print is worth repeating: "Almost every word abides in the memory by dint of Browne's marmoreal phrase, his great and grave meaning, and the wonderful clangor and echo of his word-music. . . . His style, like his theme, rises, till after a wonderful burst of mysticism, we are left with such a dying close as never had been heard in English before."

Writers of such varied talents as Johnson, Coleridge, Lamb, De Quincey, Pater, and Stevenson have been powerfully affected by Browne in their own style. But this learned and elevated prose could hardly lie in the highroad of English; it remains one of the "high places" in English stylistic achievement.

The fullest modern edition of Browne was prepared by G. L. Keynes (1928-31). E. Gosse's *Sir Thomas Browne* (1905) is interesting. Excellent critical essays on Browne will be found in S. T. Coleridge's *Literary Remains* and L. Strachey's *Books and Characters* (1922).

From *Religio Medici*

Now for my life, it is a miracle for thirty years, which to relate, were not a history, but a piece of poetry, and would sound to common ears like a fable. For the world, I count it not an inn, but an hospital; and a place not to live, but to die in. The world that I regard is myself; it is the microcosm[1] of my own frame that I cast mine eye on: for the other, I use it but like my globe, and turn it round sometimes for my recreation. Men that look upon my outside, perusing only my condition and fortunes, do err in my altitude; for I am above Atlas's[2] shoulders. That mass of flesh that circumscribes me limits not my mind. That surface that tells the heavens it hath an end cannot persuade me I have any. I take my circle to be above three hundred and sixty. Though the number of the ark[3] do measure my body, it comprehendeth not my mind. Whilst I study to find how I am a microcosm, or little world, I find myself something more than the great. There is surely a piece of divinity in us; something that was before the elements, and owes no homage unto the sun. Nature tells me I am the image of God, as well as scripture. He that understands not thus much hath not his introduction or first lesson, and is yet to begin the alphabet of man. Let me not injure the felicity of others, if I say I am as happy as any. *Ruat coelum, fiat voluntas tua,*[4] salveth all; so that, whatsoever happens, it is but what our daily prayers desire. In brief, I am content; and what should providence add more? Surely this is it we call happiness, and this do I enjoy; with this I am, happy in a dream, and as content to enjoy a happiness in a fancy, as others in a more apparent truth and reality. There is surely a nearer apprehension of anything that delights us, in our dreams, than in our waked senses. Without this I were unhappy; for my awaked judgment discontents me, ever whispering unto me that I am from my friend, but my friendly dreams in the night requite me, and make me think I am within his arms. I thank God for my happy dreams, as I do for my good rest; for there is a satisfaction in them unto reasonable desires, and such as can be content with a fit of happiness. And surely it is not a melancholy conceit to think we are all asleep in this world, and that the conceits of this life are as mere dreams, to those of the next, as the phantasms of the night, to the conceit of the day. There is an equal delusion in both; and the one doth but seem to be the emblem or picture of the other. We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleeps; and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking of the soul. It is the ligation[5] of sense, but the liberty of reason; and our waking conceptions do not match the fancies of our sleeps.

(1642)

From *Hydriotaphia*[1]

If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death, our life is a sad composition; we live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah[2] were work for Archimedes;[3] common counters sum up the life of Moses his[4] man.[5] Our days become considerable, like petty sums, by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our days of a span long make not one little finger.

If the nearness of our last necessity brought a nearer conformity into it, there were a happiness in hoary hairs and no calamity in half-senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; when avarice makes us the sport of death, when even David grew politicly cruel and Solomon could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our days, misery makes Alcmena's nights,[6] and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish itself, content to be nothing, or never to have been, which was beyond the malcontent of Job, who cursed not the day of his life but his nativity; content to have so far been as to have a title to future being, although he had lived here but in an hidden state of life and as it were an abortion.

What song the sirens[7] sang, or what name

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[1] a little world, especially man as the epitome of the exterior universe.

[2] the giant who supported the earth on his shoulders.

[3] 360 degrees.

[4] Let the heavens perish so that thy will be done.

[5] binding.

[1] urn burial (Greek). [2] a patriarch who lived 969 years.

[3] Greek mathematician (287?-212 B.C.) [4] Moses's.

[5] the Egyptian whom he killed; cf. *Exodus*, 2:12.

[6] The night on which Zeus begot Hercules of Alcmena, wife of Amphitryon, was magically lengthened.

[7] the sea nymphs, who tried in vain to entice Odysseus by their singing.

Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women,[8] though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question about antiquarism, not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators.[9] Had they made as good provision for their names as they had done for their relics, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which, in the oblivion of names, persons, times and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vainglory, and madding vices! Pagan vain-glories, which thought the world might last forever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no *Atropos*[10] unto the immortality of their names, were never damped with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already out-lasted their monuments and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias;[11] and Charles the Fifth[12] can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.[13]

And therefore restless inquietude for the diuturnity[14] of our memories unto present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and a superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons: one face of Janus[15] holds no proportion to the other. 'T is too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time are providentially taken off from such imaginations; and, being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration which maketh pyramids pillars of snow and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle[16] must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things: our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Gravestones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare inscriptions like many in Gruter,[17] to hope for eternity by enigmatical epithets or first letters of our names, to be studied by antiquaries, who we were, and have new names given us like many of the mummies, are cold consolations unto the students of perpetuity, even by everlasting languages.

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in Cardan,[18] disparaging his horoscopal inclination and judgment of himself. Who cares to subsist like Hippocrates's[19] patients, or Achilles's horses in Homer,[20] under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories, the *entelechia*[21] and soul of our subsistences? To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman[22] lives more happily without a name than Herodias[23] with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief than Pilate?[24]

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[8] Achilles attempted to escape going to the Trojan war by hiding himself among women.

[9] guardian spirits.

[10] that one of the three Greek Fates who cut the thread of life.

[11] that the world may last but six thousand years.

[12] Emperor of Germany, 1500-1558.

[13] Hector, having enjoyed fame for more than two lives of Methuselah before the birth of Charles V.

[14] everlastingness.

[15] the two-faced god of the Romans.

[16] the character of death (according to Browne's note).

[17] Jan Gruytere (1560-1627), Dutch author of a book on inscriptions.

[18] Geronimo Cardan (1501-1576), Italian astrologer.

[19] Greek physician of the fifth century B.C.

[20] mentioned but not named in the *Iliad*.

[21] actual being (a term in Aristotelian philosophy).

[22] whose daughter Jesus healed; cf. *Matthew*, 15:22-28.

[23] the wicked wife of King Herod.

[24] Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor on the occasion of Christ's crucifixion.

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy[25] and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana;[26] he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse,[27] confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations, and Thersites[28] is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favor of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetic, which scarce stands one moment. And since death must be the *Lucina*[29] of life, and even pagans could doubt whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes; since the brother of death daily haunts us with dying mementoes, and time, that grows old itself, bids us hope no long duration: diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosites, miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and, our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls. A good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses[30] or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth: Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.[31]

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon; men have been deceived even in their flatteries above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osiris in the dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth; durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts: whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales;[32] and the spots that wander about the sun, with Phæthon's[33] favor, would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end: (all others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction) which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted, as not to suffer even from the power of itself. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration; wherein there is so much of chance, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape[34] in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal luster nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

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[25] the symbol of forgetfulness.

[26] 356 B.C.

[27] Hadrian, emperor of Rome 76-138 A.D.

[28] a rogue mentioned in the *Iliad.*

[29] the Roman goddess of childbirth.

[30] king of Persia (d. 521 B.C.), who conquered Egypt but spared the tombs.

[31] powdered mummy was used as a medicine in the Middle Ages.

[32] telescopes.

[33] son of Apollo, the sun god, here used for the god himself.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus.[35] But the wisdom of funeral laws found the folly of prodigal blazes, and reduced undoing fires, unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an urn.

Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus.[36] The man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing human discovery. Enoch and Elias,[37] without either tomb or burial, in an anomalous state of being, are the great examples of perpetuity in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory[38] term of the world we shall not all die, but be changed, according to received translation, the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepultures: some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus[39] be no wonder, when many that feared to die shall groan that they can die but once. The dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilation shall be courted.

While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them, and some have been so vainly boisterous that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus[40] seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla,[41] that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world that they are not afraid to meet them in the next; who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead and are not touched with that poetical taunt[42] of Isaiah. Pyramids, arches, obelisks were but the irregularities of vain-glory and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity unto which all others must diminish their diameters and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.[43]

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity made little more of this world than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of preordination and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ectasies, exolution,[44] liquefaction,[45] transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation of God,[46] and ingression[47] into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions,[48] to exist in their names and predicament[49] of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysics of true belief. To live indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent' church-yard,[50] as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the *moles* of Adrianus.[51]

> —*tabesne cadavera solvat,*
> *An rogus, haud refert.*—LUCAN.[52]

(1658)

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[34] chance.

[35] Persian king who, when besieged, set fire to his palace and burned himself and his court.

[36] Emperor of Rome in the third century.

[37] Both of these men passed to heaven without dying; cf. *Genesis*, 5:24 and *II Kings*, 2:1-11.

[38] pertaining to the final judgment.

[39] raised from the dead by Jesus; cf. *John*, 12:1.

[40] Alaric, king of the Visigoths (d. 410).

[41] Lucius Sulla, Roman dictator (138-78 B.C.).

[42] Cf. *Isaiah*, 14:9-23.

[43] the smallest of angles.

[44] release.

[45] melting of the soul in contemplation of the Divine.

[46] holy communion.

[47] the final passing of the soul.

[48] building.

[49] condition of ghosts or wild fancies.

[50] a churchyard in Paris where bodies are rapidly consumed.

[51] the famous tomb of Hadrian in Rome.

[52] Whether corruption decays bodies or the funeral pile consumes them does not matter. (Lucan, *Pharsalia*, vii, 809-10).

Jeremy Taylor

(1613-1667)

In view of the differences in the lives of the two men, it is worthy of note that Taylor was at Cambridge during the same time as Milton. While Milton rebelled against the English Church, refusing to enter it, Taylor made it his career, and indeed was granted his first advance through the notice of that Archbishop Laud whom Milton detested. Laud was attracted by young Taylor's grace and eloquence, procured him a fellowship at Oxford, and made him his chaplain. While Milton was preparing to aid the revolutionists, Taylor, devoted to the King's cause, joined the Royalist forces, and was later captured and imprisoned. After the war, he opened a school and in 1665 married as his second wife a woman said to be Charles I's natural daughter. He spent most of his remaining years in Ireland, was one of the signers of the request for Charles II's return, and after the Restoration was elevated in the English Church.

Most of Taylor's work is theological, which fact accounts for the recent neglect of him, although he was for a long time one of the most widely read of English authors. The reading of sermons was a favorite recreation of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Taylor's sermons are stylistically magnificent. Of all his many works, however, only two are still familiar, *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650) and *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* (1651). Their relative popularity is somewhat due to their character as books of religious conduct, of which they are the classic Anglican examples. In them, as everywhere in his prose, Taylor's mild, cultivated, and beautiful character can be read. His preoccupation with death is perhaps partly attributable to his experience of it in the Civil War, in his own family, and in that of his royal patron, but the topic was a favorite one in the seventeenth century. His was a gentle soul, and his *Liberty of Prophesying* (1647) was the first work on religious toleration by an Anglican clergyman.

Taylor's style has been by some critics rated even higher than Browne's, from which it greatly differs. There is a simplicity, reminiscent of the King James Bible in its cadences, and an air of naturalness about Taylor's prose, that constitute an art far removed from the somber complicated harmonies of the mystic of Norwich. Nor does it resemble the periodic, powerful, and sometimes lofty controversial prose of Milton. Its ease, however, is of another order from that of the sunny direct expression of Walton. Mason, Gray's biographer, called Taylor "the Shakespeare of English prose," and the epithet is appropriate. It is clear that Taylor knew his Shakespeare well; the wealth of imagery and imagination with which he enriches everything he touches, is much like the gift of his great predecessor; and there are, even in his discoursing on death, a freshness and a pastoral charm truly Elizabethan. Coleridge placed Taylor, with Shakespeare, Bacon, and Milton, as one of the four principal masters of the English language. It would be impossible to improve on Coleridge's appreciation of Taylor's writings: "A miraculous combination of erudition, broad, deep, and omnigeneous, of logic subtle as well as acute, and as robust as agile . . . and of genuine imagination, with its streaming force unifying all at one moment like that of the setting sun when, through an interspace of blue sky no larger than itself, it emerges from the cloud to sink behind the mountain."

The latest complete edition of Taylor was made by C. P. Eden (1847-51). L. P. Smith's *The Golden Grove* (1930) contains a choice selection in one volume and an admirable introduction. E. Gosse has written the standard biography (1903); a more recent one is by W. J. Brown (1925).

From *Holy Dying*

A man is a bubble (said the Greek proverb), which Lucian[1] represents with advantages and its proper circumstances to this purpose: saying, All the world is a storm, and men rise up in their several generations, like bubbles descending *à Jove pluvio*, from God and the dew of heaven, from a tear and drop of rain, from nature and Providence; and some of these instantly sink into the deluge of their first parent, and are hidden in a sheet of water, having had no other business in the world, but to be born, that they might be able to die: others float up and down two or three turns, and suddenly disappear, and give their place to others: and they that live longest upon the face of the waters, are in perpetual motion, restless and uneasy; and, being crushed with the great drop of a cloud, sink into flatness and a froth; the change not being great, it being hardly possible it should be more a nothing than it was before. So is every man: he is born in vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air, and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness: some of them without any other interest in the affairs of the world, but that they made their parents a little glad, and very sorrowful; others ride longer in the storm; it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then peradventure the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble, empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colors are fantastical; and so he dances out the gaiety of his youth, and is all the while in a storm, and endures, only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humor: and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities, is as great a miracle as to create him; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an almighty power. And therefore the wise men of the world have contended, who shall best fit man's condition with words signifying his vanity and short abode. Homer calls a man "a leaf," the smallest, the weakest piece of a short-lived, unsteady plant. Pindar calls him "the dream of a shadow": Another, "the dream of the shadow of smoke." But St. James spake by a more excellent Spirit, saying, "Our life is but a vapor,"[2] viz. drawn from the earth by a celestial influence; made of smoke, or the lighter parts of water, tossed with every wind, moved by the motion of a superior body, without virtue in itself, lifted upon high, or left below, according as it pleases the sun, its foster-father. But it is lighter yet. It is but appearing; a fantastic vapor, an apparition, nothing real: it is not so much as a mist, not the matter of a shower, nor substantial enough to make a cloud; but it is like Cassiopeia's chair,[3] or Pelops' shoulder,[4] or the circles of heaven, φαινόμενα,[5] for which you cannot have a word that can signify a verier nothing. And yet the expression is one degree more made diminutive: a *vapor*, and *fantastical*, or a *mere appearance*, and this but for a little while neither; the very dream, the fantasm disappears in a small time, "like the shadow that departeth; or like a tale that is told; or as a dream when one waketh." A man is so vain, so unfixed, so perishing a creature, that he cannot long last in the scene of fancy: a man goes off and is forgotten, like the dream of a distracted person. The sum of all is this: that thou art a man, than whom there is not in the world any greater instance of heights and declensions, of lights and shadows, of misery and folly, of laughter and tears, of groans and death.

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[1] Greek satirist (120?-200?).

And because this consideration is of great usefulness and great necessity to many purposes of wisdom and the spirit; all the succession of time, all the changes in nature, all the varieties of light and darkness, the thousand thousands of accidents in the world, and every contingency to every man, and to every creature, doth preach our funeral sermon, and calls us to look and see, how the old sexton Time throws up the earth, and digs a grave, where we must lay our sins or our sorrows, and sow our bodies, till they rise again in a fair or an intolerable eternity. Every revolution which the sun makes about the world, divides between life and death; and death possesses both those portions by the next morrow; and we are dead to all those months which we have already lived, and we shall never live them over again: and still God makes little periods of our age. First we change our world, when we come from the womb to feel the warmth of the sun. Then we sleep, and enter into the image of death, in which state we are unconcerned in all the changes of the world: and if our mothers or our nurses die, or a wild boar destroy our vineyards, or our king be sick, we regard it not, but during that state, are as disinterested, as if our eyes were closed with the clay that weeps in the bowels of the earth. At the end of seven years our teeth fall and die before us, representing a formal prologue to the tragedy; and still every seven years, it is odds, but we shall finish the last scene: and when nature, or chance, or vice, takes our body in pieces, weakening some parts and loosing others, we taste the grave and the solemnities of our own funerals, first, in those parts that ministered to vice; and next, in them that served for ornament; and in a short time, even they that served for necessity become useless and entangled like the wheels of a broken clock. Baldness is but a dressing to our funerals, the proper ornament of mourning, and of a person entered very far into the regions and possession of death: and we have many more of the same signification: gray hairs, rotten teeth, dim eyes, trembling joints, short breath, stiff limbs, wrinkled skin, short memory, decayed appetite. Every day's necessity calls for a reparation of that portion, which death fed on all night, when we lay in his lap, and slept in his outer chambers. The very spirits of a man prey upon the daily portion of bread and flesh, and every meal is a rescue from one death, and lays up for another; and while we think a thought, we die; and the clock strikes and reckons on our portion of eternity; we form our words with the breath of our nostrils, we have the less to live upon for every word we speak.

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[2] Cf. *James*, 4:14.

[3] a group of stars in the northern sky.

[4] said to have been made of ivory.

[5] phenomena.

Thus nature calls us to meditate of death by those things which are the instruments of acting it: and God, by all the variety of his providence, makes us see death everywhere, in all variety of circumstances, and dressed up for all the fancies, and the expectation of every single person. Nature hath given us one harvest every year, but death hath two: and the spring and the autumn send throngs of men and women to charnel-houses; and all the summer long, men are recovering from their evils of the spring, till the dog-days come, and then the Sirian star[6] makes the summer deadly; and the fruits of autumn are laid up for all the year's provision, and the man that gathers them, eats and surfeits, and dies, and needs them not, and himself is laid up for eternity; and he that escapes till winter, only stays for another opportunity, which the distempers of that quarter minister to him with great variety. Thus death reigns in all the portions of our time. The autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us, and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases, and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse, and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves. Calentures[7] and surfeit,[8] cold and agues, are the four quarters of the year, and all minister to death; and you can go no whither but you tread upon a dead man's bones.

The wild fellow in Petronius,[9] that escaped upon a broken table from the furies of a shipwreck, as he was sunning himself upon the rocky shore, espied a man rolled upon his floating bed of waves, ballasted with sand in the folds of his garment, and carried by his civil enemy, the sea, towards the shore to find a grave: and it cast him into some sad thoughts: that peradventure this man's wife, in some part of the continent, safe and warm, looks next month for the good man's return; or, it may be, his son knows nothing of the tempest; or his father thinks of that affectionate kiss, which still is warm upon the good old man's cheek, ever since he took a kind farewell; and he weeps with joy to think, how blessed he shall be, when his beloved boy returns into the circle of his father's arms. These are the thoughts of mortals, this is the end and sum of all their designs: a dark night and an ill guide, a boisterous sea and a broken cable, a hard rock and a rough wind, dashed in pieces the fortune of a whole family, and they that shall weep loudest for the accident, are not yet entered into the storm, and yet have suffered shipwreck. Then looking upon the carcass, he knew it, and found it to be the master of the ship, who, the day before, cast up the accounts of his patrimony and his trade, and named the day when he thought to be at home. See how the man swims, who was so angry two days since; his passions are becalmed with the storm, his accounts cast up, his cares at an end, his voyage done, and his gains are the strange events of death, which whether they be good or evil, the men, that are alive, seldom trouble themselves concerning the interest of the dead.

But seas alone do not break our vessel in pieces; everywhere we may be shipwrecked. A valiant general, when he is to reap the harvest of his crowns and triumphs, fights unprosperously, or falls into a fever with joy and wine, and changes his laurel into cypress, his triumphal chariot to a hearse; dying the night before he was appointed to perish, in the drunkenness of his festival joys. It was a sad arrest of the loosenesses and wilder feasts of the

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[6] Sirius, the dog-star, rises at the same time as the sun in early August.

[7] delirious fevers occasioned by excessive heat, but here used generally to include all maladies resulting from heat, as sun stroke, etc.

[8] sicknesses produced by overeating.

[9] Encolpius, a character in a work of Petronius (1st century) known as "The Banquet of Trimalchio."

French court, when their king (Henry II.) was killed really by the sportive image of a fight.

It is a mighty change that is made by the death of every person, and it is visible to us who are alive. Reckon but from the sprightfulness of youth and the fair cheeks and full eyes of childhood, from the vigorousness and strong flexure of the joints of five-and-twenty, to the hollowness and dead paleness, to the loathsomeness and horror of a three days' burial, and we shall perceive the distance to be very great and very strange. But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age: it bowed the head and broke its stalk, and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman: the heritage of worms and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonor, and our beauty so changed that our acquaintance quickly know us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who six hours ago tended upon us, either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot without regret stay in the room alone where the body lies stripped of its life and honor. I have read of a fair young German gentleman, who, living, often refused to be pictured, but put off the importunity of his friends' desire by giving away that, after a few days' burial, they might send a painter to his vault, and, if they saw cause for it, draw the image of his death unto the life. They did so, and found his face half eaten, and his midriff and backbone full of serpents; and so he stands pictured among his armed ancestors. So does the fairest beauty change, and it will be as bad for you and me; and then what servants shall we have to wait upon us in the grave? what friends to visit us? what officious people to cleanse away the moist and unwholesome cloud reflected upon our faces from the sides of the weeping vaults, which are the longest weepers for our funeral? (1651)

THEOPHRASTUS (372?-287 B.C.)

Theophrastus, a philosopher of the Peripatetic School and the author of *The History of Plants* and *The Causes of Plants*, was the foremost botanist of antiquity. His *Characters* were unknown to modern times until discovered and published in 1592 by Casaubon, the French scholar. These sketches give us some vivid pictures of Greek life in Theophrastus' day, but they are even more important for the influence they had upon the English Character-writers, whose work was a preparation for the English novel. Theophrastus defined his purpose in writing the *Characters* as the setting down of "the manners of each several kind of men both good and bad," and thus "the behavior proper to them."

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THE CHARACTERS

(*Translated by J. M. Edmonds*)

Loquacity

Loquacity, should you wish to define it, would seem to be an incontinence of speech; and the Loquacious man will say to any that meets him, if he but open his lips, "You are wrong; I know all about it, and if you will listen to me you shall learn the truth." And in the midst of the other's answer he whispers him such words as these: "Pray bethink you what you are about to say"; or "I thank you for reminding me"; or "There's nothing like a talk, is there?" or "I forgot to say"; or "You have not taken long to understand it"; or "I had long expected you would come round to my way of thinking"; and provides himself other such openings, so that his friend can hardly get his breath. And when he has worn out such as go singly, he is prone to march upon those who stand together in troops, and put them to flight in the midst of their business. It is a habit of his to go into the schools and wrestling-places and keep the children from learning their tasks, he talks so much to their teachers and trainers. And if you say you must go your ways, he loves to bear you company and see you to your doorstep. And when he has news of the meetings of Assembly he retails it, with the addition of an account of the famous battle of the orators, and the speeches he too was used to make there so greatly to his credit, all this interlarded with tirades against democracy, till his listeners forget what it is all about, or fall half-asleep, or get up and leave him to his talk. On a jury this man hinders your verdict, at the play your entertainment, at the table your eating, with the plea that it is hard for the talkative to hold his peace, or that the tongue grows in a wet soil, or he could not cease though he should outbabble the very swallows. And he is content to be the butt of his own children, who when it is late and he would fain be sleeping and bids them do likewise, cry, "Talk to us, daddy, and then we shall go to sleep."

John Earle

(1600?-1665)

The Character, a literary type that flourished in the seventeenth century, has been defined by Miss G. Murphy as "a short, concise, objective account of the properties of a typical person, place, or object which are combined together to make a small whole. The most effective examples illustrate the properties of a person by describing actions, with a minimum of theory or comment." The influence of the Character on the future of English literature was twofold: it played an important role in the development of the essay (e.g. Addison's *Ned Softly the Poet,* cf. *below*), and it was an experiment in the depiction of human beings which had significant consequences on the development of the novel.

The earliest examples in English of the Theophrastian Character are Jonson's descriptions of the *dramatis personæ* of *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600). The first collection of English Characters is Joseph Hall's *The Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), which follows more closely than its successors in Theophrastus' ethical method. Sir Thomas Overbury's collection, appended to his second edition of his poem *A Wife* (1614), was probably written by several hands, and became quite famous. Overbury described the Character as "a picture (real or personal) quaintly drawn in various colors, all of them heightened by one shadowing. It is a quick and soft touch of many strings, all shutting up in one musical close." A great many writers followed with other collections. Noteworthy are John Stephens' *Satirical Essays, Characters and Others* (1615) and Owen Feltham's *Resolves; Divine, Moral, and Political* (1620?).

But the finest set of Characters was written by John Earle in his *Microcosmographie* (1628). A Yorkshireman, Earle took his M. A. at Oxford, where he composed his book during his undergraduate days. It circulated in manuscript for some years before being published anonymously. Ten editions were printed before the author's death. He had a varied life, was Charles II's personal chaplain during his exile, and was rewarded with the Deanship of Westminster after the Restoration.

The *Microcosmographie* is the wisest of the character-books. Alone of the school, Earle is a psychologist interested not only in the description of his man but also in the causes of his actions. There is a splendid impersonality in his depictions, and his judgment is as shrewd and just as his style is pithy and sharp. He has many beautiful turns of phrase, typical of his age of great phrase-makers.

There are many modern reprints of Earle's book. Three delightful miscellanies of Characters are: H. Morley, *Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century* (1891); R. Aldington, *A Book of Characters* (1924); and G. Murphy, *A Cabinet of Characters* (1925).

Microcosmography; or, A Piece of the World Characterized

A Child

Is a Man in a small letter, yet the best copy of Adam before he tasted of Eve or the apple; and he is happy whose small practice in the world can only write his character. He is nature's fresh picture newly drawn in oil, which time and much handling dims and defaces. His Soul is yet a white paper unscribbled with observations of the world, wherewith at length it becomes a blurred note-book. He is purely happy, because he knows no evil, nor hath made means by sin to be acquainted with misery. He arrives not at the mischief of being wise, nor endures evils to come by foreseeing them. He kisses and loves all, and when the smart of the rod is past, smiles on his beater. Nature and his parents alike dandle him, and tice[1] him on with a bait of sugar to a draught of wormwood. He plays yet, like a young prentice the first day, and is not come to his task of melancholy. All the language he speaks yet is tears, and they serve him well enough to express his necessity. His hardest labor is his tongue, as if he were loath to use so deceitful an organ; and he is best company with it when he can but prattle. We laugh at his foolish sports, but his game is our earnest; and his drums, rattles and hobby-horses but the emblems and mocking of men's business. His father hath writ him as his own little story, wherein he reads those days of his life that he cannot remember, and sighs to see what innocence he has outlived. The older he grows, he is a stair lower from God; and like his first father much worse in his breeches.[2] He is the Christian's example, and the old man's relapse; the one imitates his pureness, and the other falls into his simplicity. Could he put off his body with his little coat[3] he had got eternity without a burthen and exchanged but one heaven for another.

A Downright Scholar

Is one that has much learning in the ore, unwrought and untried, which time and experience fashions and refines. He is good metal in the inside, though rough and unscoured without, and therefore hated of the courtier, that is quite contrary. The time has got a vein[1] of making him ridiculous, and men laugh at him by tradition, and no unlucky absurdity but is put upon his profession and "done like a scholar." But his fault is only this, that his mind is somewhat too much taken up with his mind, and his thoughts not laden with any carriage besides. He has not put on the quaint garb of the age, which is now become a man's *Imprimis* and all the *Item*.[2] He has not humbled his meditations to the industry of compliment, not afflicted his brain in an elaborate leg.[3] His body is not set upon nice pins, to be turning and flexible for every motion, but his scrape is homely, and his nod worse. He cannot kiss his hand and cry "Madame," nor talk idly enough to bear her company. His smacking of a gentlewoman is somewhat too savory, and he mistakes her nose for her lips. A very woodcock would puzzle him in carving, and he wants the logic of a capon. He has not the glib faculty of sliding over a tale, but his words come squeamishly out of his mouth, and the laughter commonly before the jest. He names this word "College" too often, and his discourse beats too much on the University. The perplexity of mannerliness will not let him feed, and he is sharp set at an argument when he should cut his meat. He is discarded for a gamester at all games but one-and-thirty,[4] and at tables[5] he reaches not beyond doublets.[6] His fingers are not long and drawn out to handle a fiddle, but his fist is clenched with the habit of disputing. He ascends a horse somewhat sinisterly, though not on the left side, and they both go jogging in grief together. He is exceedingly censured by the Inns-o'-Court men for that heinous vice being out of fashion. He cannot speak to a dog in its own dialect, and understands Greek better than the language of a falconer. He has been used to a dark room and dark clothes, and his eyes dazzle at a satin suit. The hermitage of his study has made him somewhat uncouth in the world, and men make him worse by staring on him. Thus is he silly and ridiculous, and it continues with him for some quarter of a year out of the University. But practice him a little in men, and brush him over with good company, and he shall out-balance those glisterers as much as a solid substance does a feather, or gold gold-lace.

A Mere Young Gentleman of the University

Is one that comes there to wear a gown, and to say hereafter, he has been at the University. His father sent him thither because he heard there were the best fencing and dancing schools; from these he has his education, from his tutor the oversight. The first element of his knowledge is to be shown the colleges, and initiated in a tavern by the way, which hereafter he will learn of himself. The two marks of his seniority is the bare velvet of his gown and his proficiency at tennis, where when he can once play a set he is a Freshman no more. His study has commonly handsome shelves, his books neat silk strings, which he shows to his father's man, and is loth to untie or take down for fear of misplacing. Upon foul days for recreation he retires thither, and looks over the pretty book his tutor reads to him, which is commonly some short history, or a piece of Euphormio;[1] for which his tutor gives him money to spend next day. His main loitering is at the Library, where he studies arms and books of honor,[2] and turns a gentleman-critic in pedigrees. Of all things he endures not to be mistaken for a scholar, and hates a black suit though it be made of satin. His companv is ordinarily some stale fellow, that has been notorious for an ingle to gold hatbands,[3] whom he admires at first, afterwards scorns. If he have spirit or wit, he may light of better company and may learn some flashes of wit, which may do him knight's service in the country hereafter. But he is now gone to the Inns-of-Court,[4] where he studies to forget what he learned before, his acquaintance and the fashion.

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[1] entice.

[2] Like Adam, he has lost his first innocence when he attains to his breeches.

[3] petticoat.

[1] habit.

[2] *Imprimis* is used at the beginning of a list in a legal document. Each succeeding item begins with the word *Item*.

[3] A "leg" (or "scrape") is a bow made by bending one leg while drawing back the other.

[4] a very simple game of cards.

[5] dice games.

[6] a simple form of backgammon.

A Vulgar-spirited Man

Is one of the herd of the world. One that follows merely the common cry, and makes it louder by one. A man that loves none but who are publicly affected, and he will not be wiser than the rest of the town. That never owns a friend after an ill name, or some general imputation, though he knows it most unworthy. That opposes to reason, "thus men say," and "thus most do," and "thus the world goes," and thinks this enough to poise[1] the other. That worships men in place, and those only, and thinks all a great man speaks oracles. Much taken with my Lord's jest, and repeats you it all to a syllable. One that justifies nothing out of fashion, nor any opinion out of the applauded way. That thinks certainly all Spaniards and Jesuits very villainous, and is still cursing the Pope and Spinola.[2] One that thinks the gravest cassock the best scholar and the best clothes the finest man. That is taken only with broad and obscene wit, and hisses anything too deep for him. That cried, "Chaucer for his money above all our English poets," because the voice[3] has gone so, and he had read none. That is much ravished with such a nobleman's courtesy, and would venture his life for him because he put off his hat. One that is foremost still to kiss the King's hand, and cries "God bless his Majesty" loudest. That rails on all men condemned and out of favor, and the first that says "away with the Traitors": yet struck with much ruth at executions, and for pity to see a man die could kill the hangman. That comes to London to see it, and the pretty things in it, and the chief cause of his journey the bears. That measures the happiness of the kingdom by the cheapness of corn; and conceives no harm of state but ill trading. Within this compass too, come those that are too much wedged into the world, and have no lifting thoughts above those things; that call to thrive to do well, and preferment only the grace of God. That aim all studies at this mark, and show you poor scholars as an example to take heed by. That think the prison and want a judgment for some sin, and never like well hereafter of a jail-bird. That know no other content but wealth, bravery, and the town-pleasures; that think all else but idle speculation, and the philosophers madmen. In short, men that are carried away with all outwardnesses, shows, appearances, the stream, the people; for there is no man of worth but has a piece of singularity, and scorns something.

A Pretender to Learning

Is one that would make all others more fools than himself; for though he know nothing, he would not have the world know so much. He conceits[1] nothing in learning but the opinion, which he seeks to purchase without it, though he might with less labor cure his ignorance than hide it. He is indeed a kind of Scholar-Mountebank, and his art our delusion. He is tricked out in all the accouterments of learning, and at the first encounter none passes better. He is oftener in his study than at his book, and you cannot pleasure him better than to deprehend him: yet he hears you not till the third knock, and then comes out very angry, as interrupted. You will find him in his slippers, and a pen in his ear, in which formality he was asleep. His table is spread wide with some Classic Folio, which is as constant to it as the carpet, and hath laid open in the same page this half year. His candle is always a longer sitter-up than himself, and the boast of his window at midnight. He walks much alone in the posture of meditation, and has a book still before his face in the fields. His pocket is seldom without a Greek Testament, or Hebrew Bible, which he opens only in Church, and that when some stander-by looks over. He has his sentences for company, some scatterings of Seneca and Tacitus,[2] which are good upon all occasions. If he reads anything in the morning, it comes up all at dinner; and as long as that lasts, the discourse is his. He is a great plagiary of tavern-wit, and comes to sermons only that he may talk of Austin.[3] His parcels are the mere scrapings from company, yet he complains at parting what time he has lost. He is wondrously capricious to seem a judgment, and listens with a sour attention to what he understands not. He talks much of Scaliger and Casaubon[4] and the Jesuits, and prefers some unheard-of Dutch name before them all. He has verses to bring in upon these and these hints, and it shall go hard but he will wind in his opportunity. He is critical in a language he cannot construe, and speaks seldom under Arminius[5] in divinity. His business and retirement and caller away is his study, and he protests no delight to it comparable. He is a great nomenclator of authors, which he has read in general in the catalogue, and in particular in the title, and goes seldom so far as the Dedication. He never talks of anything but learning, and learns all from talking. Three encounters with the same men pump him, and then he only puts in or gravely says nothing. He has taken pains to be an ass, though not to be a scholar, and is at length discovered and laughed at.

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[1] John Barclay (1582-1621), a Scottish satirical writer.

[2] books giving the pedigrees of noble families.

[3] a hanger-on to noblemen (who wore hats with gold tassels).

[4] where he studies law.

[1] outweigh.

[2] a Spanish general (1569-1630).

[3] opinion.

[1] values.

An Affected Man

Is an extraordinary man in ordinary things. One that would go a strain beyond himself, and is taken in it. A man that overdoes all things with great solemnity of circumstance; and whereas with more negligence he might pass better, makes himself, with a great deal of endeavor, ridiculous. The fancy of some odd quaintnesses have put him clean beside his nature; he cannot be that he would, and hath lost what he was. He is one must be point-blank in every trifle, as if his credit and opinion hung upon it: the very space of his arms in an embrace studied before and premeditated; and the figure of his countenance of a fortnight's contriving. He will not curse you without book and *extempore*, but in some choice way, and perhaps as some great man curses. Every action of his cries "Do ye mark me?" and men do mark him how absurd he is: for affectation is the most betraying humor, and nothing that puzzles a man less to find out than this. All the actions of his life are like so many things bodged in without any natural cadence or connection at all. You shall track him all through like a schoolboy's theme, one piece from one author and this from another, and join all in this general, that they are none of his own. You shall observe his mouth not made for that tone, nor his face for that simper; and it is his luck that his finest things most misbecome him. If he affect the Gentleman, as the humor most commonly lies that way, not the least punctilio[1] of a fine man but he is strict in to a hair, even to their very negligences, which he cons as rules. He will not carry a knife with him to wound reputation; and pay double a reckoning rather than ignobly question it. And he is full of this "Ignobly" and "Nobly" and "Genteelly" and this mere fear to trespass against the Genteel way puts him out most of all. It is a humor runs through many things besides, but is an ill-favored ostentation in all, and thrives not. And the best use of such men is, they are good parts in a play.

(1633)

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[2] Latin writers of the first century A.D.

[3] Saint Augustine (354-430).

[4] two of the leading literary critics of the sixteenth century.

[5] a Dutch theologian (1560-1609).

[1] petty formality of behavior.

John Milton

(1608-1674)

One feels the same hopelessness in attempting to describe the achievement of Milton as in the case of Shakespeare, to whom only he is second. Here too, the more one understands of the master's work, the more wonderful does his accomplishment seem. But, unlike Shakespeare, we can see the man clearly, towering "like a lone and inaccessible peak," as Professor Osgood puts it, above his contemporaries. Everything about Milton—his work, his character, his mind, and his deeds—suggests the heroic. It is likely that we would think of him as a great man even if we were not indebted to him for the priceless bequest of his poetry. He lived in a time when a number of amiable men—Herrick, Herbert, Browne, Fuller, Walton, Taylor—made books that have endeared them to us. If there is too much austerity in Milton's character for us to think of him as we do of them, we must reflect that a rolling countryside is always more companionable, but less magnificent than a lofty mountain. Those men guarded their inner peace by retiring or flying from the strenuous issues of their time; Milton plunged into the thick of the fight, battled with all his powers, and emerged scarred but triumphant.

Milton had battles to fight with himself as well as with public enemies. There are many ways of viewing his career; one of them is to see his development as a conflict, imposed by the age, between the Renaissance man and the Puritan. When Milton was born England was luxuriating in one of the richest decades of her Renaissance—the decade of Shakespeare's great tragedies—and most of the best work of Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Heywood, Webster, Dekker, and Ford was doing or yet to do. Sensitive artist as he was, the young Milton grew up enamored of humanistic tradition, and drank profoundly of its learning. But while he was in his twenties, England was undergoing rapid changes, and the Puritan revolution was preparing. By training and conviction Milton was also a Puritan; and the Puritan cause had come to be hostile to artistic endeavor. No other important poet of the century was a Puritan. Yet Milton remained not only a poet *and* the great voice of Puritanism, but a greater poet than any man of his (or any succeeding) century. His artistic allegiances thus divide his work into three creative periods: the first, up to 1641, during which time he is to be seen chiefly as a son of the humanists and Elizabethans, although his Puritanism is not absent; the second, from 1641 to 1654, when the Puritan is in such complete ascendency, that he writes almost no poetry; the third, from 1655 to 1671, when humanist and Puritan have been fused into an exalted entity, the period of his great sonnets, *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.*

The materials for Milton's biography are ample, and few poets have openly revealed so much of their lives as he. Milton was born December 9, 1608, on Bread Street, Cheapside, London. Not many poets have been so fortunate in their parents. Milton's mother was a woman noted for her deeds of charity; his father, a scrivener by profession, had a considerable reputation as a composer of music. Their home was cultivated and well-to-do. It was also firmly Puritan, Milton's father having been disinherited for renouncing the Roman Catholic faith of his parents. Puritanism in Milton's boyhood had not yet come to be incompatible with a love for the arts, and Milton's was a profoundly understanding father. He "destined me," Milton tells us, "from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious that, from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches, which, however, could not chill the ardor of my curiosity." After studying at St. Paul's School, Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625.

At college, though a diligent scholar, Milton was no happier than most young men of spirit. He was going to be a poet, yet, he complains in the Latin *Elegy* to his dear friend, Charles Diodati, "how ill that place suits the votaries of Apollo. Nor am I in the humor still to bear the threats of a harsh master." He rejoiced in his vacations at home: "I have time now free for the tranquil Muses. My books—my very life—claim me wholly. When I am weary, the pomp of the theatre with its sweeping pall, awaits me. . . . But I do not stay indoors always. . . . I visit the neighboring park, thick-set with elms or the noble shade of some suburban place. There often one may see the virgin bands go past, stars that breathe alluring flames." This gifted youth was exceedingly handsome and no less inflammable than other young men. "Ah how many times have I stood stupified before the miracle of some gracious form, such as might give old Jove his youth again!" But he had made up his mind to write such poetry as posterity "should not willingly let die." And for that, he had decided, as he later put it, "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem." Already he had set for himself the task of living with austerity and integrity—this young "lady of Christ's" as his schoolmates affectionately called him.

In 1632 he took his M.A., and retired to the little village of Horton, near London, where his father had purchased a home. Though students went to his college to prepare for the Church, Milton had decided against taking orders as too limiting for the kind of life he wished to lead. Few parents would feel justified in continuing to encourage the literary ambitions of a son who at the age of twenty-four had so little to show as Milton had at this time. He had written some Latin verses and a handful of English poems that gave no promise of genius. There are some good lines in his *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629), but some very bad ones in the "metaphysical" manner; the poem *On Shakespeare* (1630) shows better intention than performance; the sonnet *To a Nightingale* (1631) has a certain naïve charm. As can be seen from the sonnet *On His Being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-Three* (cf. *below*), Milton himself was under no illusions that he had accomplished anything. But his father had faith in him and allowed him to continue his studies without interruption at Horton (1632-38). This must have been the period when Milton did much of that enormous reading which made him the most learned of English poets, for at its conclusion his life gave him less leisure for books. He was, however, a prodigious worker, and continued his studies whenever he had opportunity. Milton must have often questioned his right to delay choosing some profession; but he decided that his studies were making him more fit for his calling as a poet. "Those that came latest," he wrote on this subject to a friend, "lost nothing when the master of the vineyard came to give each one his hire."

Towards the close of his stay at Horton, Milton's genius began at last to flower with such beauty as must have fully rewarded his father's faith. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* (cf. *below*) are his earliest masterpieces, in which we find Milton a true offspring of the Renaissance, a scholar of exquisite taste and rare culture. *Comus,* a masque for which Henry Lawes, the distinguished composer, wrote music, followed, and was presented for the entertainment of the family of the Countess of Derby, once the friend of Sidney and Spenser. But *Comus,* although it shows Milton's familiarity with the Jonsonian tradition, differs widely from the typical court masque, chiefly because of the earnestness which Milton injected into it. Here again are Elizabethan grace and artistry, but the Puritan side of Milton's temperament also makes its appearance. For the story is an allegory on the ideal of chastity so dear to Milton: A girl and her two brothers, having lost their way at night in a forest, become separated; Comus, son of Bacchus and Circe, finds the girl, and leads her to his dwelling where are many creatures whom his sorcery has made bestial; Comus tries to work a like enchantment on the girl, but she will not yield to the call of the senses; she is rescued by her two brothers and a guardian spirit. The virtuous mind is safe from the attacks of vice and wrong. His next major work was *Lycidas* (cf. *below*), the greatest of these early creations, a pastoral elegy on the death of a college mate, Edward King. It is a miracle of the lyric art, dazzling in its learning and music; but while in it Milton is most the inheritor of the English Renaissance, the voice of the Puritan breaks through the enchanting music to attack the corruption of the clergy.

"I then," says Milton, "became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission." In April 1638, Milton set out for a tour of the continent. He visited first Paris, Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, and Pisa. At Florence he met many distinguished Italian literary men "and was a constant attendant at their literary parties." Thence he went to Siena, Rome, and Naples, where he met J. P. Manso, friend of Tasso. Intending to proceed to Greece, Milton heard of the civil discords which were coming to a climax in his native land, and decided it was his duty to return home. On his way back he passed through Lucca, Bologna, Ferrara, Venice, Verona, Milan, and Geneva. Arrived in England he was greeted with the bitter news that his best friend, Charles Diodati, had died. To commemorate his loss, Milton wrote his finest Latin poem, the *Epitaphium Damonis* (1641), a pastoral elegy rivaling *Lycidas* in its beauty (cf. Introduction to *Lycidas, below*).

Milton now settled in London and undertook the education of his two nephews and, apparently, several other young men. In 1641 he began a long period of pamphleteering, for the writing of which to render service to the cause of democracy and Puritanism, he put aside the composition of his "great poem." For some fifteen years after 1640, if we are to judge by what he wrote, the sensitive artist, the scion of the Elizabethans, was silenced in Milton, and the Puritan in him alone ruled his acts. There was no public sign during these years that the great work for which he had been preparing himself would be forthcoming. That proud integrity from which Milton never deviated caused him to sacrifice his poetic ambitions to the call of the liberty for which Puritans were fighting. He entered the fierce contest waging among pamphleteers, with his first piece of argumentative prose, *Of Reformation,* in June 1641, tracing the history of the English Church from Henry VIII's time, exposing the political corruption of a clergy subservient to the King, and urging democracy in the structure of the church. Within a month he issued his *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* to prove the superiority of the presbyterian over the episcopal system of church government. Shortly after followed his *Animadversions* attacking Bishop Hall of the English Church. *The Reason of Church Government,* published in March 1642, is the longest and most interesting of Milton's ecclesiastical writings; condemning the English Church for its subjection to political power, Milton argues for the separation of Church and State. The rapid division of the Puritans into new sects alarmed some observers, but made Milton rejoice. A man's conscience is his only judge in spiritual matters, Milton says, and so each man must have the courage to respect his own beliefs as to how to serve God best. This work contains a long and interesting personal digression on Milton's reasons for postponing the writing of a noble poem in order to devote himself to the task of helping to purify religion. The last of these anti-episcopal pamphlets, written in 1642, was *An Apology,* an answer to personal attacks on him by Bishop Hall and the Church party.

In 1643 Milton made the one grave error of his life. "He took a journey into the country," as Milton's nephew phrased it, and "after a month's stay, home he returns a married man, that went out a bachelor." His bride, Mary Powell, daughter of a Cavalier family, soon regretted her marriage, and refused to come to London to join her husband, with whom she had been for not more than a month. Milton's messages to her remained unanswered. The sudden failure of his adventure in matrimony must have been a severe shock to Milton, who had built up a lofty conception of marriage, and had lived austerely for its sake. The situation in which he found himself turned Milton's thoughts to the inflexibility of the divorce laws, and he thus began the second series of his polemics—i.e. his tracts on individual liberty. *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* was published by August 1643, *The Judgment of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce* in July 1644, and *Tetrachordon* and *Colasterion* in March 1645. In these four works on divorce, probably moti vated by his own experience, Milton has little to say about desertion (his own case) as grounds for divorce. His argument is purely impersonal: all that should be necessary, he asserts, for the disrupting of the marriage-tie is the willingness of both parties to separate. Incompatibility of temperament he believed to be as important a justification for divorce as adultery. Milton was bitterly attacked for his opinions, which indeed have been in few states completely adopted, though it is true that the tendency, for good or ill, has been towards his elastic view. In spite of his stand, when his wife in 1645 came to him and asked to be taken back, he agreed to a reconcilement. She bore him three daughters (1646, 1648, and 1652) and died in 1652.

Milton continued his efforts in behalf of personal liberty with his important tract *Of Education* (1644) in which his experience as a teacher bore its fruit. It is a humanistic education he advocates, and his theories have been important to educational method because of his urging the "contact with men of practical experience" and the "observation of actual institutions and activities" to supplement the education of books. On the whole Milton's objective here was to train public leaders to be well rounded men of the Renaissance. The same year appeared his most important treatise, *Areopagitica* (cf. *below*), a noble and immortal defence of the freedom of the press.

In the succeeding years the struggle of the Puritans came to a crux. King Charles was captured, brought to trial, and beheaded in February 1649. To quiet the fear of the public, Milton wrote *Of the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (cf. *below*), in which, without mentioning Charles, he asserts that the people, being free by nature, may end, whenever they see fit, the rule of their monarch. As a reward for this service, the Commonwealth appointed Milton to the post of Latin Secretary in March 1649; it was his duty, among many other matters, to defend the new republic against attacks upon it. Among the numerous works in this kind with which his energies were now entirely occupied was *Eikonoklastes* (1649). His intense occupation with a mass of state correspondence and these polemics resulted in Milton's becoming blind in one eye in 1650. Threatened with the loss of the sight of the other as well, when there appeared a new dangerous attack on the Commonwealth, Milton devoted himself to answering it in *The Defense of the English People* (1651). From his work on this task, he emerged in 1652 a blind man.

What must blindness have meant to one who above all our other poets loved books, who performed expertly on the organ, and whose perceptions were peculiarly sensitive to beauty? Yet no word of weak complaint ever escaped from Milton. In the sonnet to Cyriack Skinner (cf. *below*) he could even speak with pride of having lost his eyesight "overplied in liberty's defence." He had given his most treasured possession to the Commonwealth. When in 1652, another enemy of the republic, hearing of Milton's blindness, attacked him in particular as having been punished by God for his part in Charles' execution, Milton countered with his spirited *Second Defense of the English People* (1654) which contains a long stirring autobiographical section. It is an elevated defence of his conduct, and contains many moving passages: "When my medical attendants clearly announced that if I did engage in the work [i.e. *The Defense of the English People*] it [i.e. his eyesight] would be irreparably lost, their premonitions caused no hesitation and inspired no dismay. . . . I considered that many had purchased a less good by a greater evil. . . . If the choice were necessary, I would, sir, prefer my blindness to yours [i.e. his opponent's]; yours is a cloud spread over the mind, which darkens both the light of reason and of conscience; mine keeps from my view only the colored surfaces of things, while it leaves me at liberty to contemplate the beauty and stability of virtue and of truth."

Despite his blindness, Milton continued his defence of the revolution with *Pro Se Defensio* (1655), *A Treatise of Civil Power* (1659), *Considerations* (1659), *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660)—in the last of which he pleaded against the Restoration of the Stuarts only a month before Parliament voted for it. His prose works also include a *History of Britain* (1646-1660), *Of Christian Doctrine* (1655-1660), *Of True Religion* (1672), an account of Russia, a Latin grammar, and a Latin dictionary. In the meantime he had retired (1655) from active service in the Council. In November 1656 he married Katherine Woodcock, who died in February 1658 with the daughter to which she had given birth; on Katherine he wrote his most touching sonnet.

Free to take up the vocation of poet again, Milton in 1655 began to write once more. The sonnets on his blindness, to Cyriack Skinner, and on the massacre of Protestants in Piedmont (cf. *below*) were composed in that year. And now, at last, he turned to the composition of that great poem for which he looked upon his entire life as a discipline. But he was not destined to end his life in the happy peace he had earned. At the Restoration, Milton was forced to conceal himself in a friend's home, was arrested for a while, and released on the payment of a heavy fine. His last years must have been embittered by the dislike and neglect of his three daughters. In 1663, feeling the need of some one to take care of him, he married Elizabeth Minshull, thirty years his junior. To her he left his estate because, as he told his brother, his children had "been very undutiful." In the court proceedings on his will, there was testimony that his "children did combine together and counsel his maid servant to cheat him the deceased in her marketings, and that his said children had made away some of his books and would have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill women."

Environed thus with petty meanness and living in an age that now exalted everything he detested, Milton courageously continued to work on his last great poems. Composing it chiefly as he lay abed nights, and dictating it during the day to his amanuensis, Milton finished *Paradise Lost* in 1665, and published it two years later (cf. *below*). Though the cause for which he had fought seemed lost, Milton, in the very midst of Restoration libertinism issued his great Puritan poem. *Paradise Regained* (1665-7), a sequel to it, hardly less wonderful, relates the final victory of Christ over Satan. The poem has been somewhat neglected because of the greater tragic interest in its predecessor, though Wordsworth called it the most perfect of Milton's works. It was published in 1671 together with Milton's last masterwork, *Samson Agonistes* (cf. *below*).

Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and *Samson Agonistes,* which, exclusive of Shakespeare, form the greatest accomplishment of any English poet, are the fruit of the long contest within Milton of Renaissance traditions and his Puritan faith. In Milton alone, it would seem, Puritanism could not extinguish the lover of beauty, and in these works we find humanism and Puritanism merged in magnificence. The austerity of his Puritan ideals is tempered and humanized by his rich inheritance from the Renaissance; his Renaissance devotion to beauty is dignified and stripped of surface prettiness by the burning sincerity of his Puritan faith. In the place of the lyric lightness of *L'Allegro* we hear that mighty "organ tone" of his great blank verse.

If we have thus dealt with Milton's career at some length, we have done so because no poet or biography merits fuller consideration. Certainly no English poet has wielded so great an influence on his successors as Milton. Much of the best and the worst in eighteenth and nineteenth century practise can be traced to the authority of Milton's minor and major poems.

A splendid edition of Milton's complete works (seventeen volumes, 1931-4), has been published under the editorial direction of F. A. Patterson. D. Masson's three-volume edition of the poems (1874, 2d rev. ed. 1890) is important. An excellent one-volume edition of the poems was edited by W. V. Moody (1899, rev. ed. E. K. Rand 1924). The prose works are to be found in J. A. St. John's five-volume edition (1848-53). The great biography of Milton is D. Masson's, seven volumes (1849-80). Of the one-volume biographies the best are: Mark Pattison's (1880), Richard Garnett's (1890), W. P. Trent's (1899), Sir W. Raleigh's (1900), D. Saurat's (1924), and E. M. Tillyard's (1930)—all of which contain critical comment on Milton's works. J. H. Hanford's *A Milton Handbook* (1926) will be found very useful. Of the critical studies particular mention must be made of S. B. Liljegren, *Studies in Milton* (1918), J. H. Hanford, *The Youth of Milton* (in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton, and Donne,* 1925), R. D. Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (1922), Sir H. Grierson, *Milton and Wordsworth,* R. Bridges, *Milton's Prosodv* (1894, rev. ed. 1921), and E. M. Tillyard, *The Miltonic Setting* (1938).

On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three

Milton could not deceive himself that the poems he wrote while still at Cambridge had any great merit. This sonnet, written for his twenty-third (or possibly his twenty-fourth) birthday, is remarkable not only for the severity of its self-criticism but also for the conviction that he would yet achieve high things. The concluding lines show how strong already was the Puritan bent in him.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arrived so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

(1631)

L'Allegro

After Milton had been granted his M.A. at Cambridge, he spent some five years on l father's estate near London in the village of Horton where, as he tells us, "I enjoyed interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of Greek a Latin authors; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasi books, or of learning something new in mathematics or music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement." As a matter of fact, Milton succeeded in doing a great deal more than studying during these years. For by the time he left Horton in 1638, he had written *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus,* and *Lycidas*—a collection of poems of such merit as would already have assured their author immortality.

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* (i.e. *The Joyful Man* and *The Thoughtful Man*) are companion pieces that show perfectly two sides of Milton's character before he became involved in Puritan polemics, at a time when he still felt free to enjoy his appreciation of nature, music, literature, people, and quiet reflection. Their titles, taken from the vocabulary of music, indicate that they may be considered together as a composition in two movements. They parallel each other not only in their lengths, which are approximately the same, and in the ten-line prelude which opens each, but in their metre as well. Together they form a record of twenty-four hours' spiritual experience—*L'Allegro* opening at dawn and ending at dark, *Il Penseroso* beginning there and ending with the new dawn.

In these, Milton's first masterpieces, the art is flawless. Notice that masterful manipulation of the syllables can make the same metre in the first poem trip gaily and in the second move with a slow stateliness. Here we find the freshness of a Herrick combined with the perfect culture of a profound scholar.

Hence, loathèd Melancholy,
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian[1] cave forlorn
'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!
Find out some uncouth[2] cell,
Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;
There, under ebon shades and low-browed rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian[3] desert ever dwell.
But come, thou Goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept[4] Euphrosyne,[5]
And by men heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more,
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus[6] bore;
Or whether—as some sager sing—
The frolic wind that breathes the spring,
Zephyr,[7] with Aurora[8] playing,
As he met her once a-Maying,
There, on beds of violets blue,
And fresh-blown roses washed in dew,
Filled her with thee, a daughter fair,
So buxom, blithe, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks and wreathèd smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's[9] cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrinkled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Come, and trip it, as you go,
On the light, fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain-nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honor due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free:
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-brier or the vine
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-door,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar[10] hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill;
Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great Sun begins his state,
Robed in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;[11]
While the plowman, near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale[12]
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the landskip round it measures:
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray;
Mountains on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied;
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where perhaps some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighboring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met
Are at their savory dinner set
Of herbs and other country messes,

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[1] referring to the river Styx in the lower world.
[2] unknown.
[3] In Homer the Cimmerians lived in a land of mist and darkness.
[4] called. [5] one of the Three Graces. [6] the god of wine.
[7] the west wind. [8] the dawn. [9] goddess of youth.
[10] covered with frost. [11] dressed. [12] counts his flock.

Which the neat-handed Phyllis dresses;
And then in haste her bower she leaves
With Thestylis[13] to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tanned haycock in the mead.
Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the checkered shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail;
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How Faëry Mab[14] the junkets eat.
She was pinched and pulled, she said;
And he, by Friar's lantern led,[15]
Tells how the drudging goblin[16] sweat
To earn his cream-bowl duly set,
When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubber-fiend,[17]
And, stretched out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of doors he flings,
Ere the first cock his matin rings.
Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lulled asleep.
Towered cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen[18] oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock[19] be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood notes wild.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian[20] airs,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout[21]
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus'[22] self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heaped Elysian flowers, and hear
Such strains as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regained Eurydice.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

(1631-2)

Il Penseroso

Hence, vain, deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bestèd,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toys!
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus'[1] train.
But, hail! thou Goddess, sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!

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[13] These names are in imitation of Greek pastoral poetry.

[14] queen of the fairies.

[15] will-o'-th'-wisp.

[16] Robin Goodfellow, who would perform farm labor if he was properly rewarded.

[17] Lob-lie-by-the-fire.

[18] god of marriage.

[19] the symbol of comedy. Comic actors wore the sock, or low slipper.

[20] voluptuous music.

[21] turn.

[22] whose harping persuaded Pluto, god of the underworld, to permit him to take his wife, Eurydice, back to earth, provided he would not turn to look at her. He could not refrain, and lost her.

[1] bodyguards of the god of sleep.

Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister[2] might beseem,
Or that starred Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The Sea-nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she; in Saturn's reign[3]
Such mixture was not held a stain.
Oft in glimmering bowers and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's[4] inmost grove,
Whilst yet there was no fear of Jove.
Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of cypress lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come; but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes;
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad, leaden, downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And join with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Aye round about Jove's altar sing;
And add to these retirèd Leisure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplation;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel[5] will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia[6] checks her dragon yoke
Gently o'er the accustomed oak.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo, to hear thy evensong;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry, smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandering moon
Riding near her highest noon,
Like one that had been led astray
Through the heaven's wide, pathless way,
And oft, as if her head she bowed,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the air will not permit,
Some still, removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,
Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the bellman's drowsy charm
To bless the doors from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high, lonely tower,
Where I may oft outwatch the Bear,[7]
With thrice-great Hermes,[8] or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those demons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or underground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Sometime let gorgeous Tragedy
In sceptered pall come sweeping by,
Presenting Thebes, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine.[9]
Or what—though rare—of later age

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[2] Sister of the handsome Prince Memnon, ally of the Trojans. The Ethiop queen was Cassiopeia who boasted that her daughter Andromeda's beauty was greater than that of the Nereids. She was later made into a constellation.

[3] Saturn belonged to the older gods before the reign of Jove. Saturn is associated with contemplation.

[4] Mount Ida, in Crete, the home of the Muses, where infant Jove was brought up.

[5] the nightingale.

[6] the moon.

[7] the constellation near the North Star, generally known as the Dipper. It never sets; hence to outwatch it is to wait until dawn.

[8] Hermes Trismegistus (thrice great), a mythical Egyptian king and magician.

[9] The Greek tragedies frequently use these subjects.

Ennobled hath the buskined[10] stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus[11] from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus[12] sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what love did seek;
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold,[13]
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canace to wife,
That owned the virtuous[14] ring and glass,
And of the wondrous horse of brass
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if aught else great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of tourneys, and of trophies hung,
Of forests, and enchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited[15] Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced, as she was wont
With the Attic boy[16] to hunt,
But kerchiefed in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves,
With minute-drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Silvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oak,
Where the rude ax with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honeyed thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered Sleep.
And let some strange, mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture displayed,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some Spirit to mortals good,
Or the unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,[17]
And love the high embowèd roof,
With antique pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
  These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
  And I with thee will choose to live.

(1631-2)

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[10] a symbol of tragedy. The tragic actors wore a buskin or high boot.

[11] a mythical Greek poet.

[12] See *L'Allegro,* note 22.

[13] This refers to the unfinished *Squire's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales.*

[14] having magic power.

[15] soberly dressed.

[16] Cephalus.

[17] enclosure.

Lycidas

Within two years of the publication of *Lycidas*, Milton was to hear of the death of his dearest friend, Charles Diodati. The loss and the grief were great for Milton. But, as was remarkably the case through his entire career, Milton was not tempted to exploit his personal suffering as a theme for poetry. Nowhere does he come closer to doing that, however, than in the Latin elegy he wrote on this bitter occasion, the *Epitaphium Damonis*. He felt freer, perhaps, to show his personal sorrow in a language of which the readers must needs be fewer. It is indeed unfortunate that English literature is thus deprived of a master work of Milton, and that many of his admirers have never been able to read a work as great, and in the same kind, as *Lycidas*.

On the other hand, *Lycidas* has the distinction of having been hailed by many as the crowning achievement of English lyrical poetry. It was written upon the death of a man who was also a friend, but nothing so close to him as was Diodati. Edward King, a fellow alumnus of Milton's, was drowned in the Irish Sea on August 10, 1637. As a memorial to him, a group of his former acquaintances at Cambridge printed a volume, *Obsequies to the Memory of Mr. Edward King* (1638). Under these unostentatious auspices did this magnificent elegy find its first publication.

When the poem appeared Milton was still, as he tells us in the final passage, unknown ("uncouth"); for of the great lyrical poems he had written, *Comus* alone had been printed, and that anonymously. His thoughts had been busy, in the midst of his studies, with the great poem he knew he could write, and he gives us to understand that only the "constraint" of the "occasion" could have made him thus alter his plans. He little guessed, in 1637, that many years of bitter political conflict would consume his talents and his eyesight, before he would be able to turn to his great creation.

It is not so much for the expression of personal grief as for the thoughts that King's death awakened in Milton, that we come to *Lycidas*. King had been something of a poet and had prepared himself for the Church: and it is from this dual career that Milton's ideas spring. After the occasion for the poem is given, and in pastoral style he has addressed the Muse, Milton proceeds to speak of experiences shared in common with his departed friend—their love of nature and of poetry, their amusements, and their hope for fame. Now Milton asks himself: "Of what use are such high purposes, if one can be thus cut off suddenly by Death? Is it not better simply to sport and dally with life, as the Cavalier poets are doing?" And then the clear answer of the Puritan comes: "No. God demands higher aims of a poet." Next Milton pictures the forces of Nature and the associations of Cambridge coming to mourn his lost friend. Then, by a masterstroke, Milton brings the founder of Christ's Church to the scene, not only to share in the general sorrow, but, more importantly, to rebuke the clergy for corrupting religion. Here the Puritan in Milton speaks out in stirring, manly scorn. The poem proceeds with floral tributes to King, the consoling thoughts of the soul's immortality, and concludes, in the last line, with Milton's promise to enter greater creative fields.

Nothing is more characteristic of Milton's mind, enriched beyond all other minds with vast stores of learning, than that its very thinking should be in terms of the great lore of the past. This was true even when he came to write of his blindness. And so in *Lycidas* we find him following in the traditions of the pastoral elegy, as set by the first Idyl of Theocritus (cf. p. 243, *above*), and as elaborated by Moschus in his *Lament for Bion* (cf. Vol. II), and in Virgil's final *Eclogue*. In these, as in all pastoral poetry, the *poet* is spoken of as a shepherd. But Milton boldly identifies this convention with the Christian convention of calling the *priest* the shepherd ("pastor"). Thus pagan and Christian lore meet in the words of Peter—a passage which cannot be seriously considered (many critics notwithstanding) a digression; moreover it expresses Milton's conviction that the poet's function is a high and holy one, akin to the priest's.

Samuel Johnson was mightily disturbed, in his stubborn unimaginativeness, over this mingling of "sacred truths" with "trifling fictions," and he found the "combinations" to be "indecent." Johnson hated the pastoral, and had, moreover, no ear for the subtleties of great poetry: he thus condemns the diction as "harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing." Accustomed to the regularity of the heroic couplet, the pedantic Johnson could not understand the artistry of Milton's varying the iambic pentameter, and the mixture of couplet with intricate rhyme schemes. (The concluding stanza, for instance, is in *ottava rima.*)

But the verdict of posterity has put this eighteenth century judgment to shame. One modern critic has said, find unity or confusion in these ideas of Milton, *Lycidas* still remains the most exquisite piece of music in English lyrical poetry. Tennyson judged his prospective friends by their feeling for *Lycidas*; if they failed they could come no closer. And Mark Pattison has declared *Lycidas* to be the touchstone to a man's literary taste.

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles[1] brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forced fingers rude[2]
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rime.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of some melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well,[3]
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring;
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse;
So may some gentle muse
With lucky words favor my destined urn,
And as he passes turn
And bid fair peace be to my sable shroud!
For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,[4]
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at evening, bright,
Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Tempered to the oaten flute;
Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns[5] with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damoetas[6] loved to hear our song.
But, oh! the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their echoes, mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
When first the white-thorn blows—
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to Shepherd's ear.
Where were ye, Nymphs,[7] when the remorseless deep

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[1] Myrtles, symbolic of death, and laurels, symbolic of the crown of poetry.

[2] He is forced by the untimely death of his friend to write poetry before he feels himself prepared to do so.

[3] The Muses, who had their home in the Pierian Spring near Mt. Olympus.

[4] They went to college together at Cambridge. Here they are compared to shepherds in the usual manner of the pastoral.

[5] Satyrs and fauns were always associated with shepherds in Greek pastoral poetry.

[6] This name of an old shepherd probably refers to one of Milton's tutors in college.

[7] sea nymphs.

Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona[8] high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wizard stream.
Aye me! I fondly dream
"Had ye been there"—for what could that have done?
What could the Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
The Muse herself, for her enchanting son,
Whom universal nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His gory visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?[9]
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better done as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?[10]
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
But, the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus replied, and touched my trembling ears;
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies,
But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse,[11] and thou honored flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crowned with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
But now my oat[12] proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea[13]
That came in Neptune's[14] plea.
He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain!
And questioned every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beaked promontory.
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotades[15] their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed;
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panope with all her sisters[16] played.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus,[17] reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscribed with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;[18]
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:
"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold![19]
Of other care they little reckoning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,

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[8] Mona, the island of Anglesey; Deva, the river Dee.

[9] Calliope, the muse of epic poetry, could not save her son Orpheus from being torn to pieces by the Thracian women whom he treated with contempt when, mad for grief at the loss of his wife Eurydice, he intruded on their Bacchanalian orgies. His head was thrown into the river Hebrus where, with his lyre, it floated down to the shores of Lesbos. The latter tradition is a poetic expression of the fact that Lesbos was the first great center of lyrical music.

[10] conventional names of shepherdesses. The reference is to such light lyrics of the Cavalier poets as those of Suckling.

[11] Arethuse, in Sicily, is associated with Theocritus, Mincius with Virgil (in his *Eclogues*). Theocritus is the father of pastoral poetry, and Virgil his great successor.

[12] flute.

[13] Triton.

[14] god of the sea.

[15] Hippotades (Aeolus, god of the winds).

[16] daughters of the sea-god Nereus.

[17] Camus (the River Cam at Cambridge), sanguine flower (hyacinth, supposed to bear on itself the Greek word for "alas").

[18] Saint Peter, who bears the keys of heaven and wears the miter as first bishop of Rome.

[19] This refers to those who are entering the Christian ministry.

Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim wolf[20] with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,[21]
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameled eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honeyed showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Aye me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus[22] old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.
Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth;
And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
  Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky.
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.
  Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
While the still morn went out with sandals gray;
He touched the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay.
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
And now was dropped into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue;
Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

(1637)

On His Blindness

It is well to consider what blindness must have meant to the greatest scholar among English poets. A catastrophe for any man, for him it must have been a tragedy beyond expression. Nor would Milton's great soul stoop to public lamentation. Three years elapsed after his affliction before he ventured to sing again. And then it was not to complain. In the sonnet to Cyriack Skinner there is pride in having lost his eyesight in the cause of Liberty. And in this sonnet, Milton chose to speak of his burden only through the allegorical use of the Parable of the Talents from the New Testament. To miss the reference, as many readers have done, is to miss the powerful pathos. (Cf. p. 353.)

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent[1] which is death to hide

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[20] the church of Rome.

[21] Pastoral poetry was always connected with Sicily because that country was the scene of the pastorals of Theocritus.

[22] Bellerus was said to have lived at Land's End, Cornwall, near where St. Michael's Mount faces cities in Spain.

[1] Cf. *Matthew*, 25:14. Cf. p. 353.

Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly; thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

(1655)

To Cyriack Skinner

Cyriack, this three years' day these eyes, though clear
  To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
  Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
  Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun or moon or star throughout the year,
  Or man or woman. Yet I argue not
  Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
  Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
  The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
  In liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe talks from side to side.
  This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
  Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

(1655)

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont

In April 1655 the Duke of Savoy massacred the Protestants living in the mountains of Piedmont. England was shocked, and Milton wrote to European states strong protests on the persecution. He preferred to express his personal feelings on the subject in this amazing sonnet.

There is nothing like it in English. Within the scope of fourteen lines and the severity of the Petrarchan form, we hear the mighty voice that was soon to peal in the noble measures of *Paradise Lost.* Notice the predominance of long open vowels, and the dignity of the sentence-structure. The poem has the largeness of a Bach organ prelude.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshiped stocks and stones,
Forget not; in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant;[1] that from these may grow
A hundredfold, who, having learnt thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian[2] woe.

(1655)

On His Deceased Wife

Milton was already blind when in 1656 he married Katherine Woodcock. After giving birth to a child, she died in 1658, the child soon following her. Milton, who loved her, had never seen her. The pathos of the last five lines, though restrained, is profound.

Methought I saw my late espousèd saint
Brought to me like Alcestis[1] from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from Death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom washed from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in heaven without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
Her face was veiled; yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
So clear as in no face with more delight.
But, oh! as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night.

(1658)

[1] the Pope, who wore a tiara, surrounded by three crowns.

[2] This refers to the woe to be visited on Babylon (here interpreted as the Church of Rome); cf. *Revelation,* chap. 18.

[1] Alcestis, who volunteered to die in place of her husband, was rescued by Hercules, who wrestled with Death.

THE LEGENDS OF THE JEWS

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a fusion of two stories—the war in Heaven ending with Satan's defeat, and the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden—originally told in barest outline, respectively, in *Revelation 12* and *Genesis 2* and *3* of the Bible. These were considerably elaborated by rabbinical and early Christian commentators on the Scripture. The extent and complexity of these Hebrew and Patristic writings are such as to make it impossible to establish the direct influence of any of them upon *Paradise Lost.* But that Milton had read widely in the Talmud and early Greek and Latin fathers of the church is evident from his many references to them in his prose. That the essentials of Milton's version of the Satan and Adam stories come from these sources is equally plain. In *Revelation*, for instance, this is almost all we are given germane to Milton's epic:

> "And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

Again, the full account of the temptation of Eve and the fall of Man, to which Milton devotes some eight hundred lines, takes in *Genesis* (cf. Vol. I, p. 347) but four short paragraphs. From the selections here printed, it will be seen how the Biblical commentators had been expanding these stories.

Out of the abundance of post-Biblical folklore, fairy-tales, and legends, which make up the rich stores of these Jewish and early Christian scholars, Mr. Louis Ginzberg has made a fascinating collection (1909-1938) of cardinal interest to the student of Milton. Through the generous permission of The Jewish Publication Society, by whom it is copyrighted, we are enabled to print a number of Miss Henrietta Szold's translations from Mr. Ginzberg's scholarly *The Legends of the Jews*, a compendium of those stories the study of which helped shape Milton's mighty epic.

Creation: The Serpent

The serpent, too, is other than it was at first. Before the fall of man it was the cleverest of all animals created, and in form it resembled man closely. It stood upright, and was of extraordinary size. Afterward, it lost the mental advantages it had possessed as compared with other animals, and it degenerated physically, too; it was deprived of its feet, so that it could not pursue other animals and kill them.

The Angels and the Creation of Man

God in His wisdom having resolved to create man, He asked counsel of all around Him before He proceeded to execute His purpose—an example to man, be he never so great and distinguished, not to scorn the advice of the humble and lowly. First God called upon heaven and earth, then upon all other things He had created, and last upon the angels.

The angels were not all of one opinion. The Angel of Love favored the creation of man, because he would be affectionate and loving; but the Angel of Truth opposed it, because he would be full of lies. And while the Angel of Justice favored it, because he would practice justice, the Angel of Peace opposed it, because he would be quarrelsome.

To invalidate his protest, God cast the Angel of Truth down from heaven to earth, and when the others cried out against such contemptuous treatment of their companion, He said, "Truth will spring back out of the earth."

The objections of the angels would have been much stronger, had they known the whole truth about man. God had told them only about the pious, and had concealed from them that there would be reprobates among mankind, too. And yet, though they knew but half the truth, the angels were nevertheless prompted to cry out: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" God replied: "The fowl of the air and the fish of the sea, what were they created for? Of what avail a larder full of appetizing dainties, and no guest to enjoy them?" And the angels could not but exclaim: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Do as is pleasing in Thy sight."

For not a few of the angels their opposition bore fatal consequences. When God summoned the band under the archangel Michael, and asked their opinion on the creation of man, they answered scornfully: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" God thereupon stretched forth His little finger, and all were consumed by fire except their chief Michael. And the same fate befell the band under the leadership of the archangel Gabriel; he alone of all was saved from destruction.

The third band consulted was commanded by the archangel Labbiel. Taught by the horrible fate of his predecessors, he warned his troop: "You have seen what misfortune overtook the angels who said, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?' Let us have a care not to do likewise, lest we suffer the same dire punishment. For God will not refrain from doing in the end what He has planned. Therefore it is advisable for us to yield to His wishes." Thus warned, the angels spoke: "Lord of the world, it is well that Thou hast thought of creating man. Do Thou create him according to Thy will. And as for us, we will be his attendants and his ministers, and reveal unto him all our secrets." Thereupon God changed Labbiel's name to Raphael, the Rescuer, because his host of angels had been rescued by his sage advice. He was appointed the Angel of Healing, who has in his safe-keeping all the celestial remedies, the types of the medical remedies used on earth.

The Fall of Satan

The extraordinary qualities with which Adam was blessed, physical and spiritual as well, aroused the envy of the angels. They attempted to consume him with fire, and he would have perished, had not the protecting hand of God rested upon him, and established peace between him and the heavenly host. In particular, Satan was jealous of the first man, and his evil thoughts finally led to his fall. After Adam had been endowed with a soul, God invited all the angels to come and pay him reverence and homage. Satan, the greatest of the angels in heaven, with twelve wings, instead of six like all the others, refused to pay heed to the behest of God, saying, "Thou didst create us angels from the splendor of the Shekinah, and now Thou dost command us to cast ourselves down before the creature which Thou didst fashion out of the dust of the ground!" God answered, "Yet this dust of the ground has more wisdom and understanding than thou." Satan demanded a trial of wit with Adam, and God assented thereto, saying: "I have created beasts, birds, and reptiles. I shall have them all come before thee and before Adam. If thou art able to give them names, I shall command Adam to show honor unto thee, and thou shalt rest next to the Shekinah of My glory. But if not, and Adam calls them by the names I have assigned to them, then thou wilt be subject to Adam, and he shall have a place in My garden, and cultivate it." Thus spake God, and He betook Himself to Paradise, Satan following Him. When Adam beheld God, he said to his wife, "O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Now Satan attempted to assign names to the animals. He failed with the first two that presented themselves, the ox and the cow. God led two others before him, the camel and the donkey, with the same result. Then God turned to Adam, and questioned him regarding the names of the same animals, framing His questions in such wise that the first letter of the first word was the same as the first letter of the name of the animal standing before him. Thus Adam divined the proper name, and Satan was forced to acknowledge the superiority of the first man. Nevertheless he broke out in wild outcries that reached the heavens, and he refused to do homage unto Adam as he had been bidden. The host of angels led by him did likewise, in spite of the urgent representations of Michael, who was the first to prostrate himself before Adam in order to show a good example to the other angels. Michael addressed Satan: "Give adoration to the image of God! But if thou doest it not, then the Lord God will break out in wrath against thee." Satan replied: "If He breaks out in wrath against me, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High!" At once God flung Satan and his host out of heaven, down to the earth, and from that moment dates the enmity between Satan and man.

When God was on the point of making Eve, he said: "I will not make her from the head of man, lest she carry her head high in arrogant pride; not from the eye, lest she be wanton-eyed; not from the ear, lest she be an eavesdropper; not from the neck, lest she be insolent; not from the mouth, lest she be a tattler; not from the heart, lest she be inclined to envy; not from the hand, lest she be a meddler; not from the foot, lest she be a gadabout. I will form her from a chaste portion of the body," and to every limb and organ as He formed it, God said, "Be chaste! Be chaste!" Nevertheless, in spite of the great caution used, woman has all the faults God tried to obviate. The daughters of Zion were haughty and walked with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes; Sarah was an eavesdropper in her own tent, when the angel spoke with Abraham; Miriam was a talebearer, accusing Moses; Rachel was envious of her sister Leah; Eve put out her hand to take the forbidden fruit, and Dinah was a gadabout.

Paradise

The Garden of Eden was the abode of the first man and woman, and the souls of all men must pass through it after death, before they reach their final destination. For the souls of the departed must go through seven portals before they arrive in the heaven 'Arabot. There the souls of the pious are transformed into angels, and there they remain forever, praising God and feasting their sight upon the glory of the Shekinah. The first portal is the Cave of Machpelah, in the vicinity of Paradise, which is under the care and supervision of Adam. If the soul that presents herself at the portal is worthy, he calls out, "Make room! Thou art welcome!" The soul then proceeds until she arrives at the gate of Paradise guarded by the cherubim and the flaming sword. If she is not found worthy, she is consumed by the sword; otherwise she receives a pass-bill, which admits her to the terrestrial Paradise. Therein is a pillar of smoke and light extending from Paradise to the gate of heaven, and it depends upon the character of the soul whether she can climb upward on it and reach heaven. The third portal, Zebul, is at the entrance of heaven. If the soul is worthy, the guard opens the portal and admits her to the heavenly Temple. Michael presents her to God, and conducts her to the seventh portal, 'Arabot, within which the souls of the pious, changed to angels, praise the Lord, and feed on the glory of the Shekinah.

In Paradise stand the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, the latter forming a hedge about the former. Only he who has cleared a path for himself through the tree of knowledge can come close to the tree of life, which is so huge that it would take a man five hundred years to traverse a distance equal to the diameter of the trunk, and no less vast is the space shaded by its crown of branches. From beneath it flows forth the water that irrigates the whole earth, parting thence into four streams, the Ganges, the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates.

THE FALL OF MAN

Among the animals the serpent was notable. Of all of them he had the most excellent qualities, in some of which he resembled man. Like man he stood upright upon two feet, and in height he was equal to the camel. Had it not been for the fall of man, which brought misfortune to them, too, one pair of serpents would have sufficed to perform all the work man has to do, and, besides, they would have supplied him with silver, gold, gems and pearls. As a matter of fact, it was the very ability of the serpent that led to the ruin of man and his own ruin. His superior mental gifts caused him to become an infidel. It likewise explains his envy of man, especially of his conjugal relations. Envy made him meditate ways and means of bringing about the death of Adam. He was too well acquainted with the character of the man to attempt to exercise tricks of persuasion upon him, and he approached the woman, knowing that women are beguiled easily. The conversation with Eve was cunningly planned, she could not but be caught in a trap. The serpent began, "Is it true that God hath said, Ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" "We may," rejoined Eve, "eat of the fruit of all the trees in the garden, except that which is in the midst of the garden, and that we may not even touch, lest we be stricken with death." She spoke thus, because in his zeal to guard her against the transgressing of the Divine command, Adam had forbidden Eve to touch the tree, though God had mentioned only the eating of the fruit. It remains a truth, what the proverb says, "Better a wall ten hands high that stands, than a wall a hundred ells high that cannot stand." It was Adam's exaggeration that afforded the serpent the possibility of persuading Eve to taste of the forbidden fruit. The serpent pushed Eve against the tree, and said: "Thou seest that touching the tree has not caused thy death. As little will it hurt thee to eat the fruit of the tree. Naught but malevolence has prompted the prohibition, for as soon as ye eat thereof, ye shall be as God. As He creates and destroys worlds, so will ye have the power to create and destroy. As He doth slay and revive, so will ye have the power to slay and revive. He Himself ate first of the fruit of the tree, and then He created the world. Therefore doth He forbid you to eat thereof, lest you create other worlds. Everyone knows that 'artisans of the same guild hate one another.' Furthermore, have ye not observed that every creature hath dominion over the creature fashioned before itself? The heavens were made on the first day, and they are kept in place by the firmament made on the second day. The firmament, in turn, is ruled by the plants, the creation of the third day, for they take up all the water of the firmament. The sun and the other celestial bodies, which were created on the fourth day, have power over the world of plants. They can ripen their fruits and flourish only through their influence. The creation of the fifth day, the animal world, rules over the celestial spheres. Witness the ziz, which can darken the sun with its pinions. But ye are masters of the whole of creation, because ye were the last to be created. Hasten now and eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, and become independent of God, lest He bring forth still other creatures to bear rule over you."

To give due weight to these words, the serpent began to shake the tree violently and bring down its fruit. He ate thereof, saying: "As I do not die of eating the fruit, so wilt thou not die." Now Eve could not but say to herself, "All that my master"—so she called Adam—"commanded me is but lies," and she determined to follow the advice of the serpent. Yet she could not bring herself to disobey the command of God utterly. She made a compromise with her conscience. First she ate only the outside skin of the fruit, and then, seeing that death did not fell her, she ate the fruit itself. Scarce had she finished, when she saw the Angel of Death before her. Expecting her end to come immediately, she resolved to make Adam eat of the forbidden fruit, too, lest he espouse another wife after her death. It required tears and lamentations on her part to prevail upon Adam to take the baleful step. Not yet satisfied, she gave of the fruit to all other living beings, that they, too, might be subject to death. All ate, and they all are mortal, with the exception of the bird malham, who refused the fruit, with the words: "Is it not enough that ye have sinned against God, and have brought death to others? Must ye still come to me and seek to persuade me into disobeying God's command, that I may eat and die thereof? I will not do your bidding." A heavenly voice was heard then to say to Adam and Eve: "To you was the command given. Ye did not heed it; ye did transgress it, and ye did seek to persuade the bird malham. He was steadfast, and he feared Me, although I gave him no command. Therefore he shall never taste of death, neither he nor his descendants—they all shall live forever in Paradise."

Adam spoke to Eve: "Didst thou give me of the tree of which I forbade thee to eat? Thou didst give me thereof, for my eyes are opened, and the teeth in my mouth are set on edge." Eve made answer, "As my teeth were set on edge, so may the teeth of all living beings be set on edge."

The first result was that Adam and Eve became naked. Before, their bodies had been overlaid with a horny skin, and enveloped with the cloud of glory. No sooner had they violated the command given them than the cloud of glory and the horny skin dropped from them, and they stood there in their nakedness, and ashamed. Adam tried to gather leaves from the trees to cover part of their bodies, but he heard one tree after another say: "There is the thief that deceived his Creator. Nay, the foot of pride shall not come against me, nor the hand of the wicked touch me. Hence, and take no leaves from me!" Only the fig-tree granted him permission to take of its leaves. That was because the fig was the forbidden fruit itself. Adam had the same experience as that prince who seduced one of the maid-servants in the palace. When the king, his father, chased him out, he vainly sought a refuge with the other maid-servants, but only she who had caused his disgrace would grant him assistance.

HOMER (c. 10th century B.C.)

It is beyond the purposes of our study to enter into the complex questions which have been raised around the composition of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey.* Whether Homer ever actually lived, whether the two poems had different authors, or whether they represent the contributions of many authors—are matters which have been debated for a long time. What concerns us is that these two noble epics exist, that they record the heroic deeds of legendary Greek heroes, and that they have since served as models for epic writers. When Virgil came to the writing of his *Æneid,* basing the first half of his poem on *The Odyssey* and the second half on *The Iliad,* he consciously patterned his work on the Homeric epics. The Renaissance humanists were thus enabled to discover in Homer and Virgil certain "epic-conventions" which they and later poets adopted.

Quite clearly, Milton wished his audience to understand that he was following in Homeric and Virgilian traditions. Because *The Iliad* is the acknowledged elder of the two Homeric epics, and hence may be considered the fount of epic-conventions, we present its opening passage to illustrate some of them. There is no intention in so brief a selection of giving any idea of the contents of *The Iliad,* a monumental work which every reader owes it to himself to read in its entirety.

The following list of some of the epic practises which Milton employed, may be of assistance:

1. The statement of the subject in the opening lines.
2. The invocation to the Muse. (In Homer this prayer for inspiration probably emanated from a genuinely religious impulse. There can be little doubt that in Virgil and later poets the invocation is a purely literary decoration. In Milton, however, it will be noted that this old convention takes on new life because the poet's prayer is profoundly sincere.)
3. The beginning the story in the middle of the action. (In *The Iliad* Homer begins near the conclusion of the long siege of Troy; in *Paradise Lost* Milton begins after Satan's expulsion from Heaven.)
4. The enumeration of the host of warriors. (The Greeks in *The Iliad,* Satan's followers in *Paradise Lost.*)

5. Long dramatic dialogue, extended descriptive passages, and elaborate similes.

There are, of course, many other points of resemblance between *Paradise Lost* and the ancient epics. F. Buff made a complete study of them (1904).

From THE ILIAD

(*Translated by W. C. Bryant*)

Book I

O Goddess! sing the wrath of Peleus' son,
Achilles; sing the deadly wrath that brought
Woes numberless upon the Greeks, and swept
To Hades many a valiant soul, and gave
Their limbs a prey to dogs and birds of air,—
For so had Jove appointed,—from the time
When the two chiefs, Atrides,[1] king of men,
And great Achilles, parted first as foes.
Which of the gods put strife between the chiefs,
That they should thus contend? Latona's son
And Jove's.[2] Incensed against the king, he bade
A deadly pestilence appear among
The army, and the men were perishing.
For Atreus' son with insult had received
Chryses the priest, who to the Grecian fleet
Came to redeem his daughter, offering
Uncounted ransom. In his hand he bore
The fillets of Apollo, archer-god,
Upon the golden sceptre, and he sued
To all the Greeks, but chiefly to the sons
Of Atreus, the two leaders of the host:—
"Ye sons of Atreus, and ye other chiefs,
Well-greaved Achaians, may the gods who dwell
Upon Olympus give you to o'erthrow
The city of Priam, and in safety reach
Your homes; but give me my beloved child,
And take her ransom, honoring him who sends
His arrows far, Apollo, son of Jove."
Then all the other Greeks, applauding, bade
Revere the priest and take the liberal gifts
He offered, but the counsel did not please
Atrides Agamemnon; he dismissed
The priest with scorn, and added threatening words:—
"Old man, let me not find thee loitering here,
Beside the roomy ships, or coming back
Hereafter, lest the fillet thou dost bear
And sceptre of thy god protect thee not.
This maiden I release not till old age
Shall overtake her in my Argive home,
Far from her native country, where her hand
Shall throw the shuttle and shall dress my couch.
Go, chafe me not, if thou wouldst safely go."
He spake; the aged man in fear obeyed
The mandate, and in silence walked apart,
Along the many-sounding ocean-side,
And fervently he prayed the monarch-god,
Apollo, golden-haired Latona's son:—
"Hear me, thou bearer of the silver bow
Who guardest Chrysa, and the holy isle
Of Cilla, and art lord in Tenedos,
O Smintheus! if I ever helped to deck
Thy glorious temple, if I ever burned
Upon thy altar the fat thighs of goats
And bullocks, grant my prayer, and let thy shafts
Avenge upon the Greeks the tears I shed."
So spake he supplicating, and to him
Phœbus Apollo hearkened. Down he came,
Down from the summit of the Olympian mount,[3]
Wrathful in heart; his shoulders bore the bow
And hollow quiver; there the arrows rang
Upon the shoulders of the angry god,
As on he moved. He came as comes the night,
And, seated from the ships aloof, sent forth
An arrow; terrible was heard the clang
Of that resplendent bow. At first he smote
The mules and the swift dogs, and then on man
He turned the deadly arrow. All around
Glared evermore the frequent funeral piles.
Nine days already had his shafts been showered
Among the host, and now, upon the tenth,
Achilles called the people of the camp
To council. Juno, of the snow-white arms,
Had moved his mind to this, for she beheld
With sorrow that the men were perishing.
And when the assembly met and now was full,
Stood swift Achilles in the midst and said:—
"To me it seems, Atrides, that 't were well,
Since now our aim is baffled, to return
Homeward, if death o'ertake us not; for war
And pestilence at once destroy the Greeks.
But let us first consult some seer or priest,
Or dream-interpreter,—for even dreams
Are sent by Jove,—and ask him by what cause
Phœbus Apollo has been angered thus;
If by neglected vows or hecatombs,
And whether savor of fat bulls and goats
May move the god to stay the pestilence."
He spake, and took again his seat; and next
Rose Calchas, son of Thestor, and the chief
Of augurs, one to whom were known things past

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[1] sons of Atreus, here referring to Agamemnon.

[2] Apollo.

[3] where the gods had their dwelling.

And present and to come. He, through the art
Of divination, which Apollo gave,
Had guided Iliumward the ships of Greece.
With words well ordered courteously he spake:—
"Achilles, loved of Jove, thou biddest me
Explain the wrath of Phœbus, monarch-god,
Who sends afar his arrows. Willingly
Will I make known the cause; but covenant thou,
And swear to stand prepared, by word and hand,
To bring me succor. For my mind misgives
That he who rules the Argives, and to whom
The Achaian race are subject, will be wroth.
A sovereign is too strong for humbler men,
And though he keep his choler down awhile,
It rankles, till he sate it, in his heart.
And now consider: wilt thou hold me safe?"
Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:—
"Fear nothing, but speak boldly out whate'er
Thou knowest, and declare the will of Heaven.
For by Apollo, dear to Jove, whom thou,
Calchas, dost pray to, when thou givest forth
The sacred oracles to men of Greece,
No man, while yet I live, and see the light
Of day, shall lay a violent hand on thee
Among our roomy ships; no man of all
The Grecian armies, though thou name the name
Of Agamemnon, whose high boast it is
To stand in power and rank above them all."
Encouraged thus, the blameless seer went on:—
"'T is not neglected vows or hecatombs
That move him, but the insult shown his priest,
Whom Agamemnon spurned, when he refused
To set his daughter free, and to receive
Her ransom. Therefore sends the archer-god
These woes, and still will send them on the Greeks,
Nor ever will withdraw his heavy hand
From our destruction, till the dark-eyed maid
Freely, and without ransom, be restored
To her beloved father, and with her
A sacred hecatomb to Chrysa sent.
So may we haply pacify the god."
Thus having said, the augur took his seat.
And then the hero-son of Atreus rose,
Wide-ruling Agamemnon, greatly chafed.
His gloomy heart was full of wrath, his eyes
Sparkled like fire; he fixed a menacing look
Full on the augur Calchas, and began:—
"Prophet of evil! never hadst thou yet
A cheerful word for me. To mark the signs
Of coming mischief is thy great delight.
Good dost thou ne'er foretell nor bring to pass.
And now thou pratest, in thine auguries,
Before the Greeks, how that the archer-god
Afflicts us thus, because I would not take
The costly ransom offered to redeem
The virgin child of Chryses. 'T was my choice
To keep her with me, for I prize her more
Than Clytemnestra, bride of my young years,
And deem her not less nobly graced than she,
In form and feature, mind and pleasing arts.
Yet will I give her back, if that be best;
For gladly would I see my people saved
From this destruction. Let meet recompense,
Meantime, be ready, that I be not left,
Alone of all the Greeks, without my prize.
That were not seemly. All of you perceive
That now my share of spoil has passed from me."
To him the great Achilles, swift of foot,
Replied: "Renowned Atrides, greediest
Of men, where wilt thou that our noble Greeks
Find other spoil for thee, since none is set
Apart, a common store? The trophies brought
From towns which we have sacked have all been shared
Among us, and we could not without shame
Bid every warrior bring his portion back.
Yield, then, the maiden to the god, and we,
The Achaians, freely will appoint for thee
Threefold and fourfold recompense, should Jove
Give up to sack this well-defended Troy."
Then the king Agamemnon answered thus:—
"Nay, use no craft, all valiant as thou art,
Godlike Achilles; thou hast not the power
To circumvent nor to persuade me thus.
Think'st thou that, while thou keepest safe thy prize,
I shall sit idly down, deprived of mine?
Thou bid'st me give the maiden back. 'T is well,
If to my hands the noble Greeks shall bring
The worth of what I lose, and in a shape
That pleases me. Else will I come myself,
And seize and bear away thy prize, or that
Of Ajax or Ulysses, leaving him
From whom I take his share with cause for rage.
Another time we will confer of this.
Now come, and forth into the great salt sea
Launch a black ship, and muster on the deck
Men skilled to row, and put a hecatomb
On board, and let the fair-cheeked maid embark,
Chryseis. Send a prince to bear command,—
Ajax, Idomeneus, or the divine
Ulysses;—or thyself, Pelides,[4] thou
Most terrible of men, that with due rites
Thou soothe the anger of the archer-god."
Achilles the swift-footed, with stern look,
Thus answered: "Ha, thou mailed in impudence

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[4] Achilles, son of Peleus.

And bent on lucre! Who of all the Greeks
Can willingly obey thee, on the march,
Or bravely battling with the enemy?
I came not to this war because of wrong
Done to me by the valiant sons of Troy.
No feud had I with them; they never took
My beeves or horses, nor, in Phthia's realm,
Deep-soiled and populous, spoiled my harvest fields.
For many a shadowy mount between us lies,
And waters of the wide-resounding sea.
Man unabashed! we follow thee that thou
Mayst glory in avenging upon Troy
The grudge of Menelaus and thy own,[5]
Thou shameless one! and yet thou hast for this
Nor thanks nor care. Thou threatenest now to take
From me the prize for which I bore long toils
In battle; and the Greeks decreed it mine.
I never take an equal share with thee
Of booty when the Grecian host has sacked
Some populous Trojan town. My hands perform
The harder labors of the field in all
The tumult of the fight; but when the spoil
Is shared, the largest share of all is thine,
While I, content with little, seek my ships,
Weary with combat. I shall now go home
To Phthia; better were it to return
With my beaked ships; but here, where I am held
In little honor, thou wilt fail, I think,
To gather, in large measure, spoil and wealth."
  Him answered Agamemnon, king of men:—
"Desert, then, if thou wilt; I ask thee not
To stay for me; there will be others left
To do me honor yet, and, best of all,
The all-providing Jove is with me still.
Thee I detest the most of all the men
Ordained by him to govern; thy delight
Is in contention, war, and bloody frays.
If thou art brave, some deity, no doubt,
Hath thus endowed thee. Hence, then, to thy home,
With all thy ships and men! there domineer
Over thy Myrmidons; I heed thee not,
Nor care I for thy fury. Thus, in turn,
I threaten thee; since Phœbus takes away
Chryseis, I will send her in my ship
And with my friends, and, coming to thy tent,
Will bear away the fair-cheeked maid, thy prize,
Briseis, that thou learn how far I stand
Above thee, and that other chiefs may fear
To measure strength with me, and brave my power."
  The rage of Peleus' son, as thus he spake,
Grew fiercer; in that shaggy breast his heart
Took counsel, whether from his thigh to draw
The trenchant sword, and, thrusting back the rest,
Smite down Atrides, or subdue his wrath
And master his own spirit. While he thus
Debated with himself, and half unsheathed
The ponderous blade, Pallas Athene came,
Sent from on high by Juno, the white-armed,
Who loved both warriors and made both her care.
She came behind him, seen by him alone,
And plucked his yellow hair. The hero turned
In wonder, and at once he knew the look
Of Pallas and the awful-gleaming eye,
And thus accosted her with winged words:—
"Why com'st thou hither, daughter of the god
Who bears the ægis? Art thou here to see
The insolence of Agamemnon, son
Of Atreus? Let me tell thee what I deem
Will be the event. That man may lose his life,
And quickly too, for arrogance like this."
  Then thus the goddess, blue-eyed Pallas, spake:—
"I came from heaven to pacify thy wrath,
If thou wilt heed my counsel. I am sent
By Juno the white-armed, to whom ye both
Are dear, who ever watches o'er you both.
Refrain from violence; let not thy hand
Unsheathe the sword, but utter with thy tongue
Reproaches, as occasion may arise,
For I declare what time shall bring to pass;
Threefold amends shall yet be offered thee,
In gifts of princely cost, for this day's wrong.
Now calm thy angry spirit, and obey."
  Achilles, the swift-footed, answered thus:—
"O goddess, be the word thou bring'st obeyed,
However fierce my anger; for to him
Who hearkens to the gods, the gods give ear."
  So speaking, on the silver hilt he stayed
His strong right hand, and back into its sheath
Thrust his good sword, obeying. She, meantime,
Returned to heaven, where ægis-bearing Jove
Dwells with the other gods.

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[5] The Trojan war was caused by the desire for revenge on the part of Menelaus, whose wife, Helen, had been stolen by Paris, Prince of Troy. Agamemnon, Menelaus's brother and Helen's brother-in-law, commanded the expedition.

Paradise Lost

The composition of the greatest of English narrative poems was the result of more than twenty-five years' planning by Milton. To study the evolution of *Paradise Lost* is to know a great deal of Milton's inner life. When only nineteen, the young poet in his *Vacation Exercise* voices his desire to write an English poem

> *Such where the deep transported mind may soar*
> *Above the wheeling poles, and at Heav'ns door*
> *Look in,*

on a subject equal in dignity to Homer's epics. In his sixth Latin Elegy, written in December 1629, he announces his intention of living such a stainless life as will prepare him for the writing of a poem of high seriousness. The opening lines of *Lycidas* (1637) complain of Milton's having to write again before he was ready; the digression on fame shows where his thoughts were fixed; and the promise of a great poem is renewed in the last line:

> *Tomorrow to fresh woods and pastures new.*

At this time, it is clear, Milton thought to make his subject the Arthurian legends. In the Latin poem *Mansus* (1639) he promises "to bring back in song our native kings and Arthur" or else "the great-hearted heroes of the Round Table bound together in comradeship." Next year in the *Epitaphium Damonis*, Milton hints that he has already begun to work on the Arthur story:

> *I have a theme of the Trojans cruising our southern headlands*
> *Shaping to song . . .*
> *Aye, and the womb of Igraine fatally pregnant with Arthur,*
> *Uther's son.*

By 1642, in *The Reason of Church Government*, he tells us that he cannot decide the form in which to write his great poem, and is hesitating in the choice of a subject from British history or the Scripture. Soon after his return from Italy, Milton set down a list of about a hundred possible subjects from British and Scriptural lore. By degrees he seems to have decided on the story of *Paradise Lost*, though at first he evidently planned it as a drama.

From 1641 Milton was deeply engaged in the controversies of the Commonwealth. Though doubtless never absent from his thoughts, his great poem had to wait while he attended to the more immediate issues of his political and religious faith. It was not, therefore, until after 1655, when, blind and relieved of his duties, he had the required leisure, that he turned at last to the actual composition of *Paradise Lost*. A lifetime of self-discipline and fearless integrity had gone into the making of it. Much of it must have been composed after the Restoration of 1660, during years in which, as Shelley puts it,

> *his country's pride*
> *The priest, the slave, and the liberticide*
> *Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite*
> *Of lust and blood.*

Never doubting the justice of the cause for which he had proudly sacrificed so much, Milton continued his grand project and completed it by 1665. It was published in 1667, and for it Milton received the sum of ten pounds.

Like the *Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost* is a synthesis of the faith of a people. In it we read no narrow Calvinism, for Milton rejected the conception of human beings as "sinners in the hands of an angry God," and asserted the freedom of mankind to choose between right and wrong. Accepting the best of Protestantism, Milton, son too of the Renaissance, passionately urged the importance of Knowledge in the search for a virtuous life. Thus his great epic has become the symbolic answer of Protestant humanism to the ageless problem of man's relation to forces greater than himself.

Probably no other poem has had poured into it such vast learning. All the poetry, knowledge, and legend of ancient, medieval, and Renaissance times seem to have been Milton's. The Bible, the Talmud, and the writings of the Church Fathers contributed the outlines of the story; *The Iliad, The Odyssey, The Æneid,* and ancient Greek tragedy suggested much of the structure; but everywhere in the poem are transmuted for his purposes fragments and echoes from Greek mythology, the Scripture, Ovid, Ariosto, Tasso, Spenser, and Renaissance Italian, Latin, French, and English writers. But these innumerable references to the stores of knowledge are not mere decorations to the poem—they are part of its very tissue. It should be remembered that *Paradise Lost* was the work of a blind man, nearly all of whose encyclopedic reading was behind him, and that it was composed, not with volumes of other men's writings before him, but in bed with the help of his

Celestial Patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse.

For Milton the natural way of thinking was in terms of the great learning of the past. He was no pedant for whom study is an end in itself; all that he had read he had made his, to make deeper what he wished to say. The endless wealth of allusion in Milton serves to widen and enrich his ideas; in every sentence the horizons expand through these multitudinous analogies with experiences of other men in other times.

As complex as is the art that lifts *Paradise Lost* to the heights of poetic utterance, so simple is its story. Satan, who in Heaven was the first of the Archangels, resents the elevation of the Son of God to God's "right hand" as the Head of the "Progeny of Light," and resolves

With all his Legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipped, unobeyed the throne supreme.

He forms a rebellion against Deity, is defeated, and with his forces is hurled into Hell. To replace the loss in Heaven, God creates

Another World, out of one man a Race
Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
. . . till by degrees of merit raised
They open to themselves at length the way

to Heaven. But Satan urges his followers to take revenge on God by visiting earth's "puny habitants" and marring God's plans. Satan himself undertakes the perilous voyage through Chaos, slips into the Garden of Eden, tempts Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and causes Man's fall from innocence. Adam and Eve are turned out of their Earthly Paradise with a promise that their race will yet be restored.

The story is told with the immensities of the physical universe as a background. The scene is now in Hell, now in Heaven, now in vast Chaos, now in the ten concentric spheres circling the Earth, now in the Garden of Eden. It was inevitable, therefore, that not Adam, but Satan, who moves across the entire extent of this cosmic setting, should be the heroic figure of the poem. Milton was writing "to justify the ways of God to men," but his artistic conscience caused him to do full justice to Satan who, in his fall from greatness, possessed all the qualities for a lofty tragic hero. The passages in which Satan appears are the most stirring in the poem. Those in Heaven, with God, His Son, and the Angels, are full of poetic light, but Satan's is the dramatic figure of the story. It is Satan who has lost most and who suffers most; he is, moreover, as Milton himself had been, an uncompromising rebel. In spite of himself, for all the power and beauty he lavished on the Adam-and-Eve story, Milton was most the artist when dealing with Satan. It is true that later in the poem, as a part of his scheme, Milton deliberately debased Satan's heroic proportions. But it is then too late, for by that time we feel Satan's grievances to be so great that all he does seems to have dramatic justification. The part he must play makes him almost a personification of the passionate will in revolt against Authority. Milton's own fierce partisanship for the Puritan cause, unquenched by the Restoration victory, seems to speak in Satan's lines:

> *What though the field be lost?*
> *All is not lost; the unconquerable will . . .*
> *And courage never to submit or yield,*
> *And what is else not to be overcome?*

Observing the consequent difficulty in interpreting the poem, William Blake said: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

It is an injustice to all great works of literature to present them in segments—a truth one feels most keenly in the case of *Paradise Lost.* The first two books of the twelve will indeed give the reader a good idea of the grandeur and sweep of the poem, of its cosmic scope, and of the heroic proportions of Satan. But they leave unrepresented the shining passages in Heaven, the exquisite descriptions and lyrical beauties of the scenes in Eden, the touching and deeply human conversations of Adam and Eve with all the wonder of life felt by the two first inhabitants of Earth, and the final spiritual message of the poem as expressed in Michael's parting words to Adam. The reader will investigate, it is hoped, further. No poem of equal length has so many rewards to the lover of great poetry.

For *Paradise Lost* Milton forged a style of many elements, a style truly unique and personal. His medium is the blank verse first perfected by Marlowe. But whereas the blank verse of Elizabethan drama approximates the rhythms and idioms of spoken English, Milton's is purely literary, intellectual, and strengthened to epic purposes. That "organ tone" which it has been recognized to possess results from many distinctive traits: its inversion of normal English order, its compression of diction, its Latinized vocabulary and archaisms, its substitution of one part of speech for another, its frequent use of apposition and parenthesis. These characteristics lay like a shadow over English poetry for two succeeding centuries, and many are the poets who, in reaching for sublimity, chose to adopt the "Miltonic style"—rarely with success. In Milton's hands this style is a rich instrument capable of every effect. Complex as is its structure, its music is clear and simple.

There are many good reprints of *Paradise Lost,* among the best being those of A. W. Verity (1910) and G. H. Cowling (1926).

Book I

ARGUMENT

This First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject,—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed: then touches the prime cause of his fall,—the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of heaven, with all his crew, into the great deep. Which action passed over, the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan, with his angels, now fallen into hell, described here, not in the center (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos: here Satan with his angels, lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who next in order and dignity lay by him. They confer on their miserable fall; Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise; their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech, comforts them with hope yet of regaining heaven, but tells them lastly of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in heaven—for, that the angels were long before this visible creation, was the opinion of many ancient fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the deep: the infernal peers there sit in council.

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man[1]
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai,[2] did'st inspire
That shepherd[3] who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of chaos: or, if Sion[4] hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's[5] brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian[6] mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rime.
And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like, sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
  Say first—for heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of hell—say first, what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favored of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will,
For[7] one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
  The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind; what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels; by whose aid, aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God,
Raised impious war in heaven, and battle proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition; there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
  Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
Confounded, though immortal. But his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
Mixed with obdurate pride, and steadfast hate.
At once, as far as angels' ken, he views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
Such place eternal justice had prepared
For those rebellious; here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heaven,
As from the center thrice to the utmost pole.[8]
O, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns; and weltering by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine,[9] and named
Beëlzebub. To whom the arch-enemy,
And thence in heaven called Satan, with bold words

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[1] Christ.

[2] Horab and Sinai were mountains on which God spoke directly to Moses.

[3] Moses, to whom the authorship of *Genesis* is ascribed.

[4] Mount Zion, the height on which Jerusalem is built.

[5] a stream in Jerusalem usually spelled Shiloah.

[6] Mount Helicon in Greece, sacred to the Muses. Milton means that he will surpass the work of those who drew their inspiration from these Muses.

[7] except for.

[8] the outermost of the ten celestial spheres.

[9] Milton assumes that the fallen angels later became pagan gods who were worshipped in the countries surrounding Palestine.

Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:—
"If thou beest he—but O, how fall'n! how changed
From him who, in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads, though bright! If he, whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what height fall'n, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome;
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire—that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy, and shame beneath
This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of gods,
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail:
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and, in the excess of joy
Sole reigning, holds the tyranny of heaven."
So spake the apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:—
"O prince, O chief of many-thronèd powers
That led the embattled seraphim to war
Under thy conduct and in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered heaven's perpetual King,
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate;
Too well I see, and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow, and foul defeat,
Hath lost us heaven, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heavenly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remain
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire,
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be,
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands, in the gloomy deep?
What can it then avail, though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?"
Whereto with speedy words the arch-fiend replied:—
"Fallen cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering; but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil,
Which ofttimes may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see, the angry Victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heaven; the sulphurous hail,
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown, hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.

Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
There rest, if any rest can harbor there;
And, re-assembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy; our own loss how repair;
How overcome this dire calamity;
What reinforcement we may gain from hope;
If not, what resolution from despair."
  Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood; in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon,[10] whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held; or that sea-beast
Leviathan,[11] which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean stream.
Him, haply, slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays:
So stretched out huge in length the arch-fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake: nor ever thence
Had risen, or heaved his head; but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs;
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others; and, enraged, might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On man by him seduced; but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.
  Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave i' the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight; till on dry land
He lights, if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue; as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,[12] or the shattered side
Of thundering Etna,[13] whose combustible
And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom, all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate:
Both glorying to have 'scaped the Stygian[14] flood,
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.
  "Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,"
Said then the lost archangel, "this the seat
That we must change for heaven; this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he,
Who now is Sovereign, can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail
Infernal world! and thou profoundest hell,
Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time:
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be; all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free: the Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice,
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished[15] on the oblivious[16] pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion; or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in heaven, or what more lost in hell?"
  So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered: "Leader of those armies bright,

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[10] Briareos, with a hundred hands, and Typhon, with a hundred heads, attempted to overthrow the reign of Jupiter.

[11] The Leviathan is usually interpreted as a crocodile or whale; cf. *Job*, 41:1-8; *Psalms*, 74:14, 104:26; *Isaiah*, 27:1.

[12] a mountain in Sicily.

[13] a volcano in Sicily.

[14] This refers to the river Styx in the Greek lower world. Here it is used in a general sense for "infernal."

[15] thunderstruck.

[16] producing forgetfulness.

Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive; though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious height."
He scarce had ceased, when the superior fiend
Was moving toward the shore: his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist[17] views
At evening, from the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
His spear—to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral,[18] were but a wand—
He walked with, to support uneasy steps
Over the burning marl, not like those steps
On heaven's azure, and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire:
Nathless[19] he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea he stood, and called
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced,
Thick as autumnal leaves, that strew the brooks
In Vallombrosa,[20] where the Etrurian shades,
High over-arched, embower; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion[21] armed
Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,[22]
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot-wheels; so thick bestrewn,
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of hell resounded: "Princes, potentates,
Warriors, the flower of heaven, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits; or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of heaven?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf?
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n!"
They heard, and were abashed, and up they sprung
Upon the wing; as when men, wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to their general's voice they soon obeyed,
Innumerable. As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son,[23] in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, up called a pitchy cloud
Of locusts, warping on the eastern wind,
That o'er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad angels seen
Hovering on wing under the cope of hell,
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
Till, at a signal given, the uplifted spear
Of their great sultan waving to direct
Their course, in even balance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the plain:
A multitude like which the populous north
Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhine or the Danube, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the south and spread
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.[24]
Forthwith from every squadron and each band
The heads and leaders thither haste where stood

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[17] Galileo, the first user of the telescope. He made his observations in Florence or in the neighboring town of Fiesole or in Valdarno, the valley of the Arno, in which Florence is situated.

[18] a flagship.

[19] nevertheless.

[20] a valley near Florence; Etruria is the old name for Tuscany.

[21] a great hunter of classical myth who was transformed into a constellation, the most brilliant in the heavens.

[22] Though Busiris was really an earlier king, the reference is here undoubtedly to the story of Pharaoh who pursued the Israelites and was drowned in the Red Sea. Cf. *Exodus*, chap. 14.

[23] Moses.

[24] This refers to the invasion of the Roman Empire by the northern tribes during the third and fourth centuries. They extended their conquests as far as northern Africa.

Their great commander; godlike shapes and forms
Excelling human; princely dignities;
And powers that erst in heaven sat on thrones,
Though of their names in heavenly records now
Be no memorial; blotted out and rased
By their rebellion from the books of life.
Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
Got them new names; till, wandering o'er the earth,
Through God's high sufferance, for the trial of man,
By falsities and lies the greater part
Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
God their Creator, and the invisible
Glory of him that made them, to transform
Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
With gay religions, full of pomp and gold,
And devils to adore for deities:
Then were they known to men by various names,
And various idols through the heathen world.
  Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,
Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch,
At their great emperor's call, as next in worth,
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof.
  The chief were those who from the pit of hell,
Roaming to seek their prey on earth, durst fix
Their seats long after next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the cherubim; yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursèd things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First, Moloch,[25] horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshiped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon.[26] Nor content with such
Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon[27] he led by fraud to build
His temple right against the temple of God,
On that opprobrious hill; and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell.
Next, Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonáim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma clad with vines,
And Eleäle to the asphaltic pool;[28]
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove
Of Moloch homicide: lust hard by hate;
Till good Josiah drove them thence to hell.[29]
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baälim and Ashtaroth;[30] those male,
These feminine; for spirits, when they please,
Can either sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is their essence pure;
Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but, in what shape they choose,
Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
Can execute their aëry purposes,
And works of love or enmity fulfill.
For those the race of Israel oft forsook
Their living Strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial gods; for which their heads as low
Bowed down in battle, sunk before the spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth,[31] whom the Phenicians called
Astarté, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
To whose bright image nightly by the moon
Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs;
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her temple on the offensive mountain, built
By that uxorious king,[32] whose heart, though large,
Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
To idols foul. Thammuz[33] came next behind,

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[25] a fire god worshipped by the sacrifice of infants.

[26] In the whole of the passage following, Milton's use of place-names seems to be primarily for their poetic effect; they give no exact geographical limitations of the worship of the various gods.

[27] King of Israel about 960 B.C.

[28] the Dead Sea.

[29] Cf. *II Kings*, chap. 23.

[30] the sun and moon god, respectively.

[31] Ashtaroth.

[32] Solomon.

[33] a Phoenician god equivalent to the Greek Adonis.

Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis[34] from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded; the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat;
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw,[35] when, by the vision led,
His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off
In his own temple, on the grunsel[36] edge,
Where he fell flat, and shamed his worshipers;[37]
Dagon his name, sea-monster, upward man
And downward fish; yet had his temple high
Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
And Accaron and Gazar's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat
Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also 'gainst the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king;[38]
Ahaz his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown,
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train,
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests, to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms[39]
Rather than human. Nor did Israel 'scape
The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb;[40] and the rebel king
Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox—[41]
Jehovah, who in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equaled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself; to him no temple stood,
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons,[42] who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage: and when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom,[43] and that night
In Gibeah, when the hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.[44]
These were the prime in order and in might:
The rest were long to tell, though far renowned,
The Ionian gods—of Javan's issue[45] held
Gods, yet confessed later than heaven and earth,
Their boasted parents: Titan, heaven's first-born
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn; he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reigned: these first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land:[46] or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost isles.[47]
All these and more came flocking, but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy, to have found their chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue; but he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised

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[34] Reference is to the red mud brought down yearly from the mountains of northern Palestine in the Adonis River.

[35] Cf. *Ezekiel*, 8:14. [36] threshold. [37] Cf. *I Samuel*, 5:4.

[38] Cf. *II Kings*, chap. 5.

[39] Osiris was worshipped in the form of a bull, Isis of a cow, Horus (their son) of a hawk.

[40] Cf. *Exodus*, chap. 32.

[41] The king was Jeroboam, who rebelled against Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and established the northern kingdom of Israel. For his idolatry in these two northern cities, see *I Kings*, 12:28ff.

[42] Cf. *I Samuel*, 2:12ff.

[43] one of the two wicked cities of the plain destroyed because of their sins. Cf. *Genesis*, 19:1ff.

[44] Cf. *Judges*, chap. 19. [45] one of the sons of Japheth.

[46] The gods just mentioned are all well-known Greek deities. [47] the British Isles.

Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears.
Then straight commands that at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions be upreared
His mighty standard; that proud honor claimed
Azazel as his right, a cherub tall;
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
The imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor, streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden luster rich emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies, all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout, that tore hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colors waving; with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable; anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood[48]
Of flutes and soft recorders;[49] such as raised
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage,
Deliberate valor breathed, firm and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and 'suage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force, with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence, to soft pipes, that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil: and now
Advanced in view they stand; a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty chief
Had to impose: he through the armèd files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views, their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and hardening in his strength
Glories: for never since created man
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes:[50] though all the giant brood
Of Phlegra[51] with the heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son[52]
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damascus, or Morocco, or Trebizond,
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemagne with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread commander; he, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower; his form had yet not lost
All its original brightness; nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen,
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all the archangel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had entrenched; and care
Sat on his faded cheek; but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge; cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain;
Millions of spirits for his fault amerced[53]
Of heaven, and from eternal splendors flung
For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as when heavens' fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks, or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend

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[48] suitable for battle, because stern.

[49] flageolets.

[50] Cunningham's *Cosmographical Glasse* (1559): "Ther are also Pygmeans (men but a cubite in height) which riding on Goats and Rammes do kepe warre with Cranes." An old Greek tradition.

[51] The battle between the giants and the gods took place at Phlegra, in Macedonia.

[52] King Arthur. The references following are all to famous jousts of the heroes of French *chansons de geste* and Italian romance: Aspramont, near Nice, the scene of Charlemagne's repulse of Saracen invasion under the King of Carthage; Montalban, Rinaldo's castle in Pulci's and Boiardo's works; Biserta, Tunisian seaport, the meeting-place of the Saracens in Boiardo; Damascus, scene of the tournament between Christians and pagans in Ariosto; Trebizond, Byzantine city, captured by the Turks; Fontarabbia, near the site of the massacre related in *The Song of Roland*.

[53] punished.

From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he essayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth; at last
Words, interwove with sighs, found out their way.
“O myriads of immortal spirits! O powers
Matchless, but with the Almighty; and that strife
Was not inglorious, though the event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter! but what power of mind,
Forseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge, past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied heaven, shall fail to reascend
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of heaven,
If counsels different, or dangers shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in heaven, till then as one secure
Sat on this throne upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom; and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own;
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war, provoked; our better part remains,
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force, hath overcome but half his foe.
Space may produce new worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in heaven that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation, whom his choice regard
Should favor equal to the sons of heaven:
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption; thither, or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial spirits in bondage, nor the abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature; peace is despaired;
For who can think submission? War, then, war,
Open or understood, must be resolved.”
He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell; highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with graspèd arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven.
There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf, undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickax armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on:
Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
From heaven; for even in heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught, divine or holy, else enjoyed
In vision beatific; by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the center, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother earth
For treasures, better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire[54]
That riches grow in hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel,[55] and the works of Memphian kings,[56]
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength and art, are easily outdone
By spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they with incessant toil
And hands innumerable scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion dross;
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mold, and from the boiling cells,
By strange conveyance, filled each hollow nook,
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon, out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, where pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid

[54] wonder.

[55] For the building of the Tower of Babel, see *Genesis,* 11:1 ff.

[56] the Pyramids.

With golden architrave; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon,
Nor great Alcairo,[57] such magnificence
Equaled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height: and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces, o'er the smooth
And level pavement; from the archèd roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky. The hasty multitude
Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
And some the architect: his hand was known
In heaven by many a towered structure high
Where sceptered angels held their residence,
And sat as princes; whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his hierarchy, the orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece;[58] and in Ausonian[59] land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos, th' Ægean isle: thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
To have built in heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent
With his industrious crew to build in hell.
Meanwhile, the wingèd heralds, by command
Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council, forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium,[60] the high capital
Of Satan and his peers: their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest; they anon,
With hundreds and with thousands, trooping came,
Attended; all access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the soldan's[61] chair
Defied the best of paynim[62] chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the sun with Taurus rides,[63]
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state affairs; so thick the aëry crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,
Behold a wonder! They, but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless, like Pygmëan race
Beyond the Indian mount, or faëry elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while over head the moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
Wheels her pale course; they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions, like themselves,
The great seraphic lords and cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat;
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

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[57] Cairo.
[58] Vulcan.
[59] Italy.
[60] The word is derived from *pan*, "all," and *daimon*, "spirit."
[61] sultan's.
[62] pagan.
[63] The sun is in the sign of Taurus, the bull, from April 19 to May 20.

Book II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan—to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honored and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven. With what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

High on a throne of royal state, which far
Outshone the wealth of Ormus[1] and of Ind,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit raised
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,
His proud imaginations thus displayed:—
"Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!—
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigor, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate!—
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader—next, free choice,
With what besides in council or in fight
Hath been achieved of merit—yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior; but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction: for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence; none whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more! With this advantage, then,
To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,
More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us; and by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate. Who can advise may speak."
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,
Stood up—the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all: with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:—
"My sentence is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need; not now.
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
Heaven's fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of His tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O'er Heaven's high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean[2] sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe!
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,
That in our proper motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse.[3] Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear

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[1] Ormus, now Hormuz, an island in the Persian Gulf.

[2] like that of Tartarus, the Greek Hades.

[3] This echoes the belief, common in the Middle Ages, that angels were not subject to the law of gravitation but had a tendency to move upwards.

Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;
The event is feared! Should we again provoke
Our stronger, some worse way His wrath may find
To our destruction, if there be in Hell
Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
In this abhorrèd deep to utter woe;
Where pain of unextinguishable fire
Must exercise us without hope of end,
The vassals of His anger, when the scourge
Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus,
We should be quite abolished, and expire.
What fear we then? what doubt we to incense
His utmost ire? which, to the highth enraged,
Will either quite consume us, and reduce
To nothing this essential—happier far
Than miserable to have eternal being!—
Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
Our power sufficient to disturb His Heaven,
And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
Though inaccessible, His fatal throne:
Which, if not victory, is yet revenge."
He ended frowning, and his look denounced[4]
Desperate revenge, and battle dangerous
To less than gods. On the other side up rose
Belial, in act more graceful and humane.
A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed
For dignity composed, and high exploit.
But all was false and hollow; though his tongue
Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear
The better reason, to perplex and dash
Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were low:
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
Timorous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear,
And with persuasive accent thus began:—
"I should be much for open war, O peers,
As not behind in hate; if what was urged
Main reason to persuade immediate war,
Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
Ominous conjecture on the whole success
When he who most excels in fact of arms,
In what he counsels and in what excels
Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
And utter dissolution as the scope
Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
First, what revenge? The towers of heaven are filled
With armèd watch, that render all access
Impregnable; oft on the bordering deep
Encamp their legions; or, with obscure wing,
Scout far and wide into the realm of night,
Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
By force, and at our heels all hell should rise
With blackest insurrection, to confound
Heaven's purest light; yet our great enemy
All incorruptible, would on his throne
Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould
Incapable of stain, would soon expel
Her mischief and purge off the baser fire,
Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
Is flat despair: we must exasperate
The Almighty Victor to spend all His rage,
And that must end us, that must be our cure—
To be no more. Sad cure! for who would lose,
Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
Devoid of sense and motion. And who knows,
Let[5] this be good, whether our angry Foe
Can give it, or will ever? How He can
Is doubtful; that He never will is sure.
Will He, so wise, let loose at once His ire,
Belike[6] through impotence or unaware,
To give His enemies their wish, and end
Them in His anger whom His anger saves
To punish endless? 'Wherefore cease we, then?'
Say they who counsel war; 'we are decreed,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse?' Is this, then, worst—
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
What when we fled amain, pursued and strook
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The Deep to shelter us? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake? That sure was worse.
What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
And plunge us in the flames; or from above
Should intermitted vengeance arm again
His red right hand to plague us? What if all
Her stores were opened, and this firmament
Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall

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[4] threatened.

[5] The meaning is: "Even granted that death is to be desired, who knows whether God has the power or the willingness to destroy angelic substances?"

[6] perhaps.

One day upon our heads; while we perhaps,
Designing or exhorting glorious war,
Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
Of racking whirlwinds, or for ever sunk
Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,
There to converse with everlasting groans,
Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile
With Him, or who deceive His mind, whose eye
Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's highth
All these our motions vain sees and derides,
Not more almighty to resist our might
Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
Shall we, then, live thus vile—the race of Heaven
Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
By my advice; since fate inevitable
Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
Our strength is equal; nor the law unjust
That so ordains. This was at first resolved,
If we were wise, against so great a foe
Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
What yet they know must follow—to endure
Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
Our doom; which if we can sustain and bear,
Our Supreme Foe in time may much remit
His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
Not mind us not offending, satisfied
With what is punished; whence these raging fires
Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
Our purer essence then will overcome
Their noxious vapor; or, inured, not feel;
Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
In temper and in nature, will receive
Familiar the fierce heat; and, void of pain,
This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
Besides what hope the never-ending flight
Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
Worth waiting—since our present lot appears
For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
If we procure not to our selves more woe."
Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
Counselled ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:—
"Either to disenthrone the King of Heaven
We war, if war be best, or to regain
Our own right lost. Him to unthrone we then
May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yield
To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife.
The former, vain to hope, argues as vain
The latter; for what place can be for us
Within Heaven's bound, unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
And publish grace to all, on promise made
Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
Stand in his presence humble, and receive
Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
With warbled hymns, and to his Godhead sing
Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
Our envied sovran, and his altar breathes
Ambrosial odors and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings? This must be our task
In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome
Eternity so spent in worship paid
To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
By force impossible, by leave obtained
Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
Of splendid vassalage; but rather seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
We can create, and in what place soe'er
Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain
Through labor and endurance. This deep world
Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
Choose to reside, His glory unobscured,
And with the majesty of darkness round
Covers His throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!
As He our darkness, cannot we His light
Imitate when we please? This desert soil
Wants[7] not her hidden luster, gems and gold;
Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?
Our torments also may, in length of time,
Become our elements, these piercing fires

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[7] lacks.

As soft as now severe, our temper changed
Into their temper; which must needs remove
The sensible[8] of pain. All things invite
To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
Of order, how in safety best we may
Compose our present evils, with regard
Of what we are and where, dismissing quite
All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise."
He scarce had finished, when such murmur filled
The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
Seafaring men o'erwatched, whose bark by chance,
Or pinnace, anchors in a craggy bay
After the tempest: such applause was heard .
As Mammon ended, and his sentence[9] pleased,
Advising peace; for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell, so much the fear
Of thunder and the sword of Michaël
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise,
By policy and long process of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven.
Which when Beëlzebub perceived, than whom,
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care;
And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
Majestic, though in ruin; sage he stood.
With Atlantean[10] shoulders fit to bear
The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
Drew audience and attention still as night
Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:—
"Thrones and imperial powers, offspring of heaven,
Ethereal virtues! or these titles now
Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
Princes of hell, for so the popular vote
Inclines, here to continue and build up here
A growing empire; doubtless, while we dream,
And know not that the King of heaven hath doomed
This place our dungeon; not our safe retreat
Beyond his potent arm; to live exempt
From heaven's high jurisdiction, in new league
Banded against his throne, but to remain
In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,
Under the inevitable curb, reserved
His captive multitude: for he, be sure,
In height or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
By our revolt, but over hell extend
His empire, and with iron scepter rule
Us here, as with his golden those in heaven.
What[11] sit we then projecting peace and war?
War hath determined[12] us, and foiled with loss
Irreparable; terms of peace yet none
Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
To us enslaved but custody severe,
And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
Inflicted? and what peace can we return,
But to our power hostility and hate,
Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
In doing what we most in suffering feel?
Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
With dangerous expedition to invade
Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
Or ambush from the deep. What if we find
Some easier enterprise? There is a place
(If ancient and prophetic fame in heaven
Err not), another world, the happy seat
Of some new race, called Man, about this time
To be created like to us, though less
In power and excellence, but favored more
Of him who rules above; so was his will
Pronounced among the gods; and by an oath
That shook heaven's whole circumference confirmed.
Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
What creatures there inhabit, of what mold
Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
And where their weakness, how attempted best,
By force or subtlety. Though heaven be shut,
And heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
The utmost border of his kingdom, left
To their defense who hold it; here perhaps
Some advantageous act may be achieved
By sudden onset; either with hell-fire
To waste his whole creation, or possess
All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
The puny habitants; or, if not drive,
Seduce them to our party, that their God
May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
Abolish his own works. This would surpass
Common revenge, and interrupt his joy
In our confusion, and our joy upraise

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[8] sense.

[9] opinion.

[10] like those of Atlas, who upheld the world on his shoulders.

[11] why.

[12] made an end of

In his disturbance, when his darling sons,
Hurled headlong to partake with us, shall curse
Their frail original and faded bliss,
Faded so soon. Advise, if this be worth
Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
Hatching vain empires." Thus Beëlzebub
Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised
By Satan, and in part proposed: for whence
But from the author of all ill could spring
So deep a malice, to confound the race
Of mankind in one root, and earth with hell
To mingle and involve, done all to spite
The great Creator? But their spite still serves
His glory to augment. The bold design
Pleased highly those infernal states, and joy
Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
They vote: whereat his speech he thus renews:—
"Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
Synod of gods, and, like to what ye are,
Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
Nearer our ancient seat perhaps in view
Of those bright confines, whence, with neighboring arms,
And opportune excursion, we may chance
Re-enter heaven; or else in some mild zone
Dwell, not unvisited of heaven's fair light,
Secure; and at the brightening orient beam
Purge off this gloom; the soft delicious air,
To heal the scar of these corrosive fires,
Shall breathe her balm. But first, whom shall we send
In search of this new world? Whom shall we find
Sufficient? Who shall tempt with wandering feet
The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
And through the palpable obscure find out
His uncouth[13] way, or spread his aëry flight,
Upborne with indefatigable wings,
Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict senteries and stations thick
Of angels watching round? Here he had need
All circumspection, and we now no less
Choice in our suffrage; for, on whom we send,
The weight of all, and our last hope relies."
This said, he sat; and expectation held
His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
To second, or oppose, or undertake
The perilous attempt: but all sat mute,
Pondering the danger with deep thoughts; and each
In other's countenance read his own dismay,
Astonished: none among the choice and prime
Of those heaven-warring champions could be found
So hardy as to proffer or accept,
Alone, the dreadful voyage; till at last
Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
Above his fellows, with monarchal pride,
Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:—
"O progeny of heaven! empyreal thrones!
With reason hath deep silence and demur
Seized us, though undismayed. Long is the way
And hard, that out of hell leads up to light;
Our prison strong; this huge convex of fire,
Outrageous to devour, immures us round
Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
These passed, if any pass, the void profound
Of unessential[14] night receives him next,
Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
Threatens him plunged in that abortive gulf.
If thence he 'scape into whatever world
Or unknown region, what remains him less
Than unknown dangers and as hard escape?
But I should ill become this throne, O peers,
And this imperial sovereignty, adorned
With splendor, armed with power, if aught proposed
And judged of public moment, in the shape
Of difficulty or danger, could deter
Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
Refusing to accept as great a share
Of hazard as of honor, due alike
To him who reigns, and so much to him due
Of hazard more, as he above the rest
High honored sits? Go, therefore, mighty powers,
Terror of heaven, though fallen; intend[15] at home
(While here shall be our home) what best may ease
The present misery, and render hell
More tolerable; if there be cure or charm
To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
Of this ill mansion; intermit no watch
Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek
Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
None shall partake with me." Thus saying, rose
The monarch, and prevented all reply;
Prudent, lest from his resolution raised[16]

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[13] strange, unknown.

[14] having no real essence or being.

[15] consider.

[16] encouraged by his bravery.

Others among the chief might offer now
Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
And, so refused, might in opinion stand
His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
Their rising all at once was as the sound
Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
With awful reverence prone, and as a God
Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
Nor failed they to express how much they praised
That for the general safety he despised
His own: for neither do the Spirits damned
Lose all their virtue; lest bad men should boast
Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
  Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
Ended, rejoicing in their matchless Chief:
As, when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
Ascending, while the North-wind sleeps, o'erspread
Heaven's cheerful face, the louring element
Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow or shower,
If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
Firm concord holds; men only disagree
Of creatures rational, though under hope
Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
Among themselves, and levy cruel wars
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy:
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides,
That day and night for his destruction wait!
  The Stygian council thus dissolved; and forth
In order came the grand Infernal Peers:
Midst came their mighty Paramount,[17] and seemed
Alone the Antagonist of Heaven, nor less
Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,
And god-like imitated state: him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim inclosed
With bright emblazonry, and horrent[18] arms.
Then of their session ended they bid cry
With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
Put to their mouths the sounding alchymy,
By harald's voice explained;[19] the hollow Abyss
Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim. .
Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised
By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
Disband; and, wandering, each his several way
Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
The irksome hours, till his great Chief return.
Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,
Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;
Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
With rapid wheels, or fronted brigads form:
As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
Waged in the troubled sky,[20] and armies rush
To battle in the clouds; before such van
Prick forth the aerie knights, and couch their spears,
Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
From either end of heaven the welkin burns.
Others, with vast Typhœan[21] rage, more fell,
Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:—
As when Alcides,[22] from Œchalia crowned
With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
And Lichas from the top of Œta threw
Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
Retreated in a silent valley, sing
With notes angelical to many a harp
Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
Their song was partial; but the harmony
(What could it less when Spirits immortal sing?)
Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
(For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)

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[17] lord, chief.

[18] bristling.

[19] filled.

[20] This refers to the wide-spread belief in the phantom army. The belief in such armies, seen marching across the sky at night, forms the basis of many medieval traditions.

[21] characteristic of Typhon, one of the giants in Greek mythology.

[22] Hercules.

Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
Of good and evil much they argued then,
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame:
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—
Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd[23] breast
With stubborn patience as with triple steel.
Another part, in squadrons and gross bands,
On bold adventure to discover wide
That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
Might yield them easier habitation, bend
Four ways their flying march, along the banks
Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams—
Abhorrèd Styx,[24] the flood of deadly hate;
Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegeton,
Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets—
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
Beyond this flood a frozen continent
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
Burns frore, and cold performs the effect of fire.
Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
At certain revolutions all the damned
Are brought; and feel by turns the bitter change
Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
From beds of raging fire to starve in ice
Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
Periods of time,—thence hurried back to fire.
They ferry over this Lethean sound
Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
All in one moment, and so near the brink;
But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The ford, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus.[25] Thus roving on
In confused march forlorn, the adventrous bands,
With shuddering horror pale, and eyes aghast,
Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death—
A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, inutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimæras dire.
Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right hand coast, sometimes the left;
Now shaves with level wing the Deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by æquinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian[26] to the Cape,
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamantine rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat
On either side a formidable Shape.
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,

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[23] hardened.

[24] These rivers are to be found in the Hades of Greek mythology.

[25] punished for revealing the secrets of the gods by being made to stand eternally with his chin in the water, which would always retreat when he sought to satisfy his thirst.

[26] Indian Ocean.

But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous and vast—a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal; yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there; yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla,[27] bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore;
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance
With Lapland[28] witches, while the laboring moon
Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—
If shape it might be called that shape had none
Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
And shook a dreadful dart: what seemed his head
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
The monster moving onward came as fast
With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired[29]—
Admired, not feared (God and his Son except,
Created thing naught valued he nor shunned),
And with disdainful look thus first began:—
"Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
That dar'st, though grim and terrible, advance
Thy miscreated front athwart my way
To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
Retire: or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven."
To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:—
"Art thou that Traitor-Angel, art thou he,
Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then
Unbroken, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heaven's sons,
Conjured[30] against the Highest—for which both thou
And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
And reckon'st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
Hell-doomed, and breath'st defiance here and scorn,
Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
False fugitive; and to thy speed add wings,
Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before."
So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
Incensed with indignation, Satan stood
Unterrified, and like a comet burned,
That fires the length of Ophiuchus[31] huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend; and such a frown
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
With heaven's artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian,—then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air.
So frowned the mighty combatants that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe. And now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky Sorceress, that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key,
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.
"O father, what intends thy hand," she cried,
"Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father's head? And know'st for whom?
For Him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
Whate'er his wrath, which He calls justice, bids—
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!"
She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore: then these to her Satan returned:—
"So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee
What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,

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[27] a sea monster, represented as dwelling in the rock Scylla, opposite Charybdis, in the Straits of Messina.

[28] Lapland was long considered to be the home and meeting-place of witches.

[29] wondered.

[30] bound by oath.

[31] one of the northern constellations.

In this infernal vale first met, thou call'st
Me father, and that phantasm call'st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee."
To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:—
"Hast thou forgot me, then; and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul?—once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heaven's King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized
All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me *Sin*, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
Becam'st enamored, and such joy thou took'st
With me in secret that my womb conceived
A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose,
And fields were fought in Heaven: wherein remained
(For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
Clear victory; to our part loss and rout
Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
Into this Deep; and in the general fall
I also; at which time this powerful key
Into my hands was given, with charge to keep
These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
Alone but long I sat not, till my womb,
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed: but he my inbred enemy
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
Hell trembled at the hideous name, and sighed
From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,
Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
And, in embraces forcible and foul
Engendering with me, of that rape begot
These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
Surround me, as thou saw'st—hourly conceived
And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
To me: for, when they list, into the womb
That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
My bowels, their repast; then, bursting forth
Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
That rest or intermission none I find.
Before mine eyes in opposition sits
Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
And me, his parent, would full soon devour
For want of other prey, but that he knows
His end with mine involved, and knows that I
Should prove a bitter morsel, and his bane,
Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
But thou, O father, I forewarn thee, shun
His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,
Save He who reigns above, none can resist."
She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:
"Dear daughter—since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge
Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of—know
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the Heavenly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded Deep, and through the void immense
To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold
Should be—and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round—a place of bliss
In the purlieus of Heaven; and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know; and, this once known, shall soon return,

And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom[82] air, embalmed
With odors. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey."
He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible a ghastly smile, to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her Sire:—
"The key of this infernal Pit, by due
And by command of Heaven's all-powerful King,
I keep, by Him forbidden to unlock
These adamantine gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,
Fearless to be o'ermatched by living might.
But what owe I to His commands above,
Who hates me, and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born—
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamors compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? Thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease, where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end."
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,
Sad instrument of all our woe, she took;
And, toward the gate rolling her bestial train,
Forthwith the huge portcullis high up-drew,
Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
Of Erebus. She opened; but to shut
Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,
That with extended wings a bannered host,
Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
Cast forth redounding[83] smoke and ruddy flame.
Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary Deep—a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension; here length, breadth, and highth,
And time, and place, are lost; where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
Their embryon atoms: they around the flag
Of each his faction, in their several clans,
Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
Of Barca or Cyrene's torrid soil,[84]
Levied to side with warring winds, and poise
Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
He rules a moment: Chaos umpire sits,
And by decision more embroils the fray
By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
Chance governs all. Into this wild Abyss,
The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
Of neither Sea, nor Shore, nor Air, nor Fire,
But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create more worlds—
Into this wild Abyss the wary Fiend
Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
Pondering his voyage; for no narrow frith
He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
Great things with small) than when Bellona[85] storms
With all her battering engines, bent to rase
Some capital city; or less than if this frame
Of heaven were falling, and these elements
In mutiny had from her axle torn
The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans[86]
He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
Audacious; but, that seat soon failing, meets
A vast vacuity. All unawares,
Fluttering his pennons vain, plumb-down he drops

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[82] bending, yielding.

[83] rolling in billows.

[84] cities of northern Africa

[85] the goddess of war.

[86] wings.

Ten thousand fadom deep, and to this hour
Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
As many miles aloft. That fury stayed—
Quenched in a boggy Syrtis,[37] neither sea,
Nor good dry land—nigh foundered, on he fares,
Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
Half flying; behoves him now both oar and sail.
As when a gryphon through the wilderness
With wingèd course, o'er hill or moory dale,
Pursues the Arimaspian,[38] who by stealth
Had from his wakeful custody purloined
The guarded gold; so eagerly the Fiend
O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
At length a universal hubbub wild
Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
With loudest vehemence. Thither he plies
Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
Or Spirit of the nethermost Abyss
Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
Of *Chaos*, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful Deep! With him enthroned
Sat sable-vested *Night*, eldest of things,
The consort of his reign; and by them stood
Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name
Of Demogorgon; Rumor next, and Chance,
And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
And Discord with a thousand various mouths.
  To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus:—"Ye Powers
And Spirits of this nethermost Abyss,
Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
With purpose to explore or to disturb
The secrets of your realm; but, by constraint
Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek,
What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
Confine with Heaven; or, if some other place,
From your dominion won, the Ethereal King
Possesses lately, thither to arrive
I travel this profound. Direct my course:
Directed, no mean recompense it brings
To your behoof, if I that region lost,
All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
To her original darkness and your sway
(Which is my present journey), and once more
Erect the standard there of ancient Night.
Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!"
  Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
With faltering speech and visage incomposed,
Answered:—"I know thee, stranger, who thou art—
That mighty leading Angel, who of late
Made head against Heaven's King, though overthrown.
I saw and heard; for such a numerous host
Fled not in silence through the frighted Deep,
With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
Confusion worse confounded; and Heaven-gates
Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
Keep residence; if all I can will serve
That little which is left so to defend,
Encroached on still through our intestine broils
Weakening the scepter of old Night: first, Hell,
Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
Now lately Heaven and Earth, another world
Hung o'er my realm, linked in a golden chain
To that side Heaven from whence your legions fell:
If that way be your walk, you have not far;
So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
Havoc, and spoil, and ruin are my gain."
  He ceased; and Satan staid not to reply,
But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
With fresh alacrity and force renewed
Springs upward like a pyramid of fire
Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
Of fighting elements, on all sides round
Environed, wins his way; harder beset
And more endangered than when Argo passed
Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,[39]
Or when Ulysses on the larboard[40] shunned

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[37] sand banks off the north coast of Africa.

[38] A one-eyed people of Scythia, who fought with griffins (half eagle and half lion) for the gold in the mines those monsters guarded.

[39] This refers to the voyage of Jason in his ship, the *Argo*, for the Golden Fleece. He had to pass through the Symplegades, or "justling rocks," which alternately came together and separated.

[40] Ulysses had to pass between the rocks Scylla and Charybdis. For Scylla, see note 27, line 660.

Charybdis, and by the other Whirlpool steered.
So he with difficulty and labor hard
Moved on. With difficulty and labor he;
But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,
Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,
Following his track (such was the will of Heaven)
Paved after him a broad and beaten way
Over the dark Abyss, whose boiling gulf
Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
From Hell continued, reaching the utmost Orb[41]
Of this frail World; by which the Spirits perverse
With easy intercourse pass to and fro
To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
God and good Angels guard by special grace.
  But now at last the sacred influence
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
With tumult less and with less hostile din;
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round,
With opal towers and battlements adorned
Of living sapphire, once his native seat,
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,
This pendent World, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accurst, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

(1658-1665)

Samson Agonistes

From the Bible (*Judges,* chapters 13-16) Milton drew his material for his last masterpiece, *Samson the Wrestler.* From Greek tragedy he drew the form. The title page of the first edition prints Aristotle's definition of tragedy as a motto, and in his introduction Milton discusses the definition, interpreting his conception of *catharsis.* The function of the poet he had already described (in *The Reason of Church Government*) as: "Whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and reflexes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe." Tragedy, he says in *Samson's* preface, is medicinal to the mind, purging it of unhealthy personal passions. It is to be noted that Milton emphasizes in the poem Samson's spiritual pain, and that the concluding chorus announces the elevating effect of the catastrophe.

Samson Agonistes, following in the traditions of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, has often been compared with the noblest of Greek tragedies. (The student might read with profit Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound,* in *Vol. II,* before studying *Samson.*) Like Greek tragedy, and in accord with Aristotle's principles (cf. *below*): the play is concerned with a single action—the final deed of its hero, the time is in one unit, the setting is single, and the devices of messenger and chorus are employed. But the resemblance to Greek drama is here a matter of spirit as well as form. The very situation resembles that of the blind Oedipus, visited by friend and enemy, in *Oedipus at Colonus.* Samson, too, has the tragic error of the pride which has made him trust his own might too much. But for the Greek Fate, Milton substitutes the Puritan Providence.

The five unmarked divisions of the tragedy may be considered as falling in this order: Act I (lines 1-325), Samson's soliloquy and discourse with the chorus; Act II (lines 326-710) the Manoa episode; Act III (lines 711-1060) the Dalilah episode; Act IV (lines 1061-1440) the episode of Harapha and the officer; Act V (lines 1441-end).

It is impossible to avoid feeling that the subject of *Samson Agonistes* was very personal to Milton. The similarities of himself to Samson are many. Like Samson, he was living blind and alone among his enemies (the favorites of the Restoration) who were mocking and jeering at everything to which he had devoted his life and his talents. Like Samson, too, he had taken to wife a daughter of the enemy (his first wife, of Cavalier family). Like Samson, finally, he placed his trust in God to justify him against his enemies. From this point of view, the poem becomes testimony to Milton's unquenchable spirit and integrity. In the very midst of what must have seemed to him profane riot and indecency, instead of bending, like many others, to the times, he calmly wrote this great and final credo of a faith to which he was still true.

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[41] the outermost of the ten concentric spheres surrounding the earth.

On the artistic side, *Samson Agonistes* has been recognized as Milton's masterpiece. Unlike the vaster *Paradise Lost*, it is without flaws. Nowhere is Milton's verse more magnificent. The style has the quality of bronze: its light seems to come all from within. There are no decorations, no ornamentations: not a syllable could be spared. Bold and free, too, is the metre, changing with infinite subtlety as the meaning changes. The passages in which Samson speaks of his blindness are deeply moving, for we realize that in them alone, and at last, does Milton indicate what his own suffering must have been.

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY

Tragedy, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems: therefore said by Aristotle to be of power, by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions; that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so in physic things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humors. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, I Cor. xv. 33; and Paræus, commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book as a tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a Chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have labored not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honor Dionysius the elder was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Cæsar also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons: which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And though ancient Tragedy used no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle; in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from wha among us passes for best, thus much beforehand may be epistled: that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason, the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode, which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essentia to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allæostropha* Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and tha commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit which is nothing indeed but such economy, or disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, th three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavor to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is according to ancient rule, and best example, within th space of twenty-four hours

THE ARGUMENT

Samson, made captive, blind, and now in the prison a Gaza, there to labor as in a common workhouse, on festival day, in the general cessation from labor, come forth into the open air, to a place nigh, somewhat retired there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where h happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek t comfort him what they can; then by his old father Manoa, who endeavors the like, and withal tells him hi purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that thi feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanks giving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavor with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption; who in the meanwhile is visited by other persons; and lastly by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence. He at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him. The Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which discourse an Ebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterward more distinctly relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS

SAMSON
MANOA, *the father of Samson*
DALILA, *his wife*
HARAPHA of Gath
Public Officer
Messenger
Chorus of Danites

The Scene, before the Prison in Gaza.

SAMSON. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on;
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade;
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught. But here I feel amends,
The breath of heaven fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone,
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
Oh wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an angel, who at last in sight
Of both my parents all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate to God,
Designed for great exploits; if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze;
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labor of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke;
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction; what if all foretold
Had been fulfilled but through mine own default,
Whom have I to complain of but myself?
Who this high gift of strength committed to me,
In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
Under the seal of silence could not keep,
But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
O'ercome with importunity and tears.
O impotence of mind, in body strong!
But what is strength without a double share
Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know:
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries;
So many, and so huge, that each part
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased,
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me,
They creep, yet see, I dark in light exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,

Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
In power of others, never in my own;
Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day!
O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
"Let there be light, and light was over all";
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The Sun to me is dark
And silent as the Moon,
When she deserts the night
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as the eye confined?
So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
And not as feeling through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light;
As in the land of darkness yet in light,
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but O yet more miserable!
Myself, my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But made hereby obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life,
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes.
But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
The tread of many feet steering this way;
Perhaps my enemies who come to stare
At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
Their daily practice to afflict me more.
Chorus. This, this is he; softly a while,
Let us not break in upon him;
O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,
With languished head unpropt,
As one past hope, abandoned,
And by himself given over;
In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds
O'er-worn and soiled;
Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
That heroic, that renowned,
Irresistible Samson? whom unarmed
No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand;
Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid,
Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,
And weaponless himself,
Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass
Chalybean-tempered steel, and frock of mail
Adamantean proof;
But safest he who stood aloof,
When insupportably his foot advanced,
In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,
Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion ramp, old warriors turned
Their plated backs under his heel;
Or groveling soiled their crested helmets in th dust.
Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,
The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
A thousand foreskins[1] fell, the flower of Palestine
In Ramath-lechi famous to this day;
Then by main force pulled up, and on his shoulder bore
The gates of Azza,[2] post and massy bar
Up to the hill by Hebron, seat of giants old,
No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so;
Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.
Which shall I first bewail,
Thy bondage or lost sight,
Prison within prison
Inseparably dark?
Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
(Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
Imprisoned now indeed,
In real darkness of the body dwells,
Shut up from outward light
To incorporate with gloomy night;
For inward light alas
Puts forth no visual beam.
O mirror of our fickle state,
Since man on earth unparalleled!
The rarer thy example stands,
By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
Strongest of mortal men,
To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen
For him I reckon not in high estate
Whom long descent of birth
Or the sphere of fortune raises;
But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mat
Might have subdued the Earth,

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[1] uncircumcised Philistines. [2] the same as Gaza.
[3] Atlas, who supported the world on his shoulders.

Universally crowned with highest praises.
Sams. I hear the sound of words, their sense the air
Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.
Chor. He speaks, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,
The glory late of Israel, now the grief;
We come thy friends and neighbors not unknown
From Eshtaol and Zora's fruitful vale[4]
To visit or bewail thee, or if better,
Counsel or consolation we may bring,
Salve to thy sores, apt words have power to swage
The tumors of a troubled mind,
And are as balm to festered wounds.
Sams. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
Now of my own experience, not by talk,
How counterfeit a coin they are who "friends"
Bear in their superscription (of the most
I would be understood). In prosperous days
They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head
Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
How many evils have enclosed me round;
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
Blindness, for had I sight, confused with shame,
How could I once look up, or heave the head,
Who like a foolish pilot have shipwrecked
My vessel trusted to me from above,
Gloriously rigged; and for a word, a tear,
Fool, have divulged the secret gift of God
To a deceitful woman. Tell me friends,
Am I not sung and proverbed for a fool
In every street, do they not say, "How well
Are come upon him his deserts"? Yet why?
Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;
This with the other should, at least, have paired,
These two proportioned ill drove me transverse.
Chor. Tax not divine disposal, wisest men
Have erred, and by bad women been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not then so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;
Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.
Sams. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed,
The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
That what I motioned was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on; that by occasion hence
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely called;
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had; fond wish too late!)
Was in the vale of Sorec, Dalila,
That specious monster, my accomplished snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end; still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors. Of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who vanquished with a peal of words (O weakness!)
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.
Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke
The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness:
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.
Sams. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors and heads of tribes,
Who seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
Deliverance offered; I on the other side
Used no ambition to commend my deeds,
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer;
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords the Philistines with gathered powers
Entered Judea seeking me, who then
Safe to the rock of Etham was retired,
Not flying, but forecasting in what place
To set upon them, what advantage best;
Meanwhile the men of Judah to prevent
The harass of their land, beset me round;
I willingly on some conditions came
Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,
Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew
Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
They had by this possessed the towers of Gath,
And lorded over them whom now they serve;
But what more oft in nations grown corrupt,
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
And to despise, or envy, or suspect

[4] places on the sea-coast between Joppa and Gaza.

Whom God hath of his special favor raised
As their deliverer; if he aught begin,
How frequent to desert him, and at last
To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?
Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
How Succoth and the fort of Penuel
Their great deliverer contemned,
The matchless Gideon in pursuit
Of Madian and her vanquished kings:
And how ingrateful Ephraim
Had dealt with Jephtha, who by argument,
Not worse than by his shield and spear,
Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
Had not his prowess quelled their pride
In that sore battle when so many died
Without reprieve adjudged to death,
For what of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.[5]
Sams. Of such examples add me to the roll;
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,
But God's proposed deliverance not so.
Chor. Just are the ways of God,
And justifiable to men;
Unless there be who think not God at all:
If any be, they walk obscure;
For of such doctrine never was there school,
But the heart of the fool,
And no man therein doctor but himself.
Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
Then give the reins to wandering thought,
Regardless of his glory's diminution;
Till by their own perplexities involved
They ravel more, still less resolved,
But never find self-satisfying solution.
As if they would confine the interminable,
And tie him to his own prescript,
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whomso it pleases him by choice
From national obstriction, without taint
Of sin, or legal debt;
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,
Against his vow of strictest purity,
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.[6]
Down Reason then, at least vain reasoning down,
Though Reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.
But see here comes thy revered sire
With careful steps, locks white as down,
Old Manoa: advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.
Sams. Ay me, another inward grief awaked,
With mention of that name renews the assault.
Manoa. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age
Came lagging after; say if he be here.
Chor. As signal now in low dejected state,
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.
Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to angels' walked their streets,
None offering fight; who single combatant
Duelled their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length? O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and oh what not in man
Deceivable and vain! Nay what thing good
Prayed for, but often proves our woe, our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy:
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?
Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
Our earnest prayers, then given with solemn hand
As graces, draw a scorpion's tail behind?
For this did the angel twice descend? for this
Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant;
Select and sacred, glorious for a while,
The miracle of men: then in an hour
Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
Alas, methinks whom God hath chosen once
To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,
He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
Subject him to so foul indignities.

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[5] Cf. *Judges,* 8:4-9; 12:1-6.

[6] Under the Mosaic law Delilah is considered unclean because she is a heathen woman. She is held to be so in spite of reason, for she has never been unchaste. Samson, therefore, had no share in whatever stain she may have later acquired.

Be it but for honor's sake of former deeds.
  Sams. Appoint not heavenly disposition, father,
Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
But justly; I myself have brought them on,
Sole author I, sole cause: if aught seem vile,
As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned
The mystery of God given me under pledge
Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
A Canaanite, my faithless enemy.
This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
But warned by oft experience: did not she
Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
The secret wrested from me in her height
Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
To them who had corrupted her, my spies,
And rivals? In this other was there found
More faith? who also in her prime of love,
Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
Though offered only, by the scent conceived
Her spurious first-born; treason against me?
Thrice she assayed with flattering prayers and sighs,
And amorous reproaches to win from me
My capital secret, in what part my strength
Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know:
Thrice I deluded her, and turned to sport
Her importunity, each time perceiving
How openly, and with what impudence
She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse
Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
She sought to make me traitor to myself;
Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,
With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night
To storm me over-watched, and wearied out
At times when men seek most repose and rest,
I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,
Who with a grain of manhood well resolved
Might easily have shook off all her snares;
But foul effeminacy held me yoked
Her bond-slave; O indignity, O blot
To honor and religion! servile mind
Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen,
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base
As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.
  Man. I cannot praise thy marriage choices, son,
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure; our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee; which to have kept
Tacit, was in thy power; true; and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza; and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
Thee Samson bound and blind into their hands,
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.
  Sams. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honor, I this pomp have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high
Among the heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonor, obloquy, and oped the mouths
Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols;
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbor sleep, or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring
Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive, or linger, thus provoked,
But will arise and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.
  Man. With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words
I as a prophecy receive; for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer

To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not in the mean while here forgot
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom: well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge;
By pains and slaveries, worse than death inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.
Sams. Spare that proposal, father, spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here,
As I deserve, pay on my punishment;
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all, to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front! But I
God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least, and shamefully: a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their Abyss and horrid pains confined.[7]
Man. Be penitent, and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, son.
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids;
Or the execution leave to high disposal,
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;
Who ever more approves and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)
Him who imploring mercy sues for life,
Than who self-rigorous chooses death as due;
Which argues over-just, and self-displeased
For self-offence, more than for God offended.
Reject not then what offered means, who knows
But God hath set before us, to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed.
Sams. His pardon I implore; but as for life,
To what end should I seek it? When in strength
All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,
Full of divine instinct, after some proof
Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak, famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walked about admired of all and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then swollen with pride into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine who shore me
Like a tame wether, all my precious fleece,
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies.
Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou could'st repress, nor did the dancing ruby
Sparkling out-poured, the flavor, or the smell,
Or taste that cheers the heart of gods and men,
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.
Sams. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying
Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.
Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.
Sams. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe
Effeminately vanquished? by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonored, quelled,
To what can I be useful, wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object; these redundant locks
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,
Vain monument of strength; till length of years
And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
To a contemptible old age obscure.
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
Till vermin or the draff of servile food
Consume me, and oft-invocated death

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[7] This probably refers to Tantalus, who was punished for revealing the secrets of Zeus.

Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.
Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
Better at home lie bed-rid, not only idle,
Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn.
But God who caused a fountain at thy prayer
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay
After the brunt of battle, can as easy
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
And I persuade me so; why else this strength
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
His might continues in thee not for nought,
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.
Sams. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
Nor the other light of life continue long,
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:
So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
My hopes all flat; Nature within me seems
In all her functions weary of herself;
My race of glory run, and race of shame,
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.
Man. Believe not these suggestions which proceed
From anguish of the mind and humors black,
That mingle with thy fancy. I however
Must not omit a father's timely care
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
By ransom or how else: meanwhile be calm,
And healing words from these thy friends admit.
Sams. O that torment should not be confined
To the body's wounds and sores
With maladies innumerable
In heart, head, breast, and reins;
But must secret passage find
To the inmost mind,
There exercise all his fierce accidents,
And on her purest spirits prey,
As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
With answerable pains, but more intense,
Though void of corporal sense.
My griefs not only pain me
As a lingering disease,
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,
Nor less than wounds immedicable
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
To black mortification.
Thoughts my tormentors armed with deadly stings
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
Dire inflammation which no cooling herb
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,
Nor breath of vernal air from snowy Alp.
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er
To death's benumbing opium as my only cure.
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.
I was his nursling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds
Above the nerve of mortal arm
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies.
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless with the irreparable loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition, speedy death,
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise
In ancient and in modern books enrolled;
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude;
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of grief and anxious thought,
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above;
Secret refreshings that repair his strength,
And fainting spirits uphold.
God of our fathers, what is man!
That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temperest thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rulest
The angelic orders and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That wandering loose about
Grow up and perish, as the summer fly,
Heads without name, no more remembered,
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,

With gifts and graces eminently adorned
To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect;
Yet toward these thus dignified, thou oft
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favors past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.
Nor only dost degrade them, or remit
To life obscured, which were a fair dismission,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high,
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission,
Oft leavest them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcasses
To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captived,
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude old age;
Though not disordinate, yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,
Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,
For oft alike, both come to evil end.
So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mightier minister.
What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labors, for thou canst, to peaceful end.
But who is this? what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus,[8] bound for the isles
Of Javan or Gadire
With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,
Sails filled, and streamers waving,
Courted by all the winds that hold them play,
An amber scent of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
Some such Philistian matron she may seem,
And now at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila thy wife.
Sams. My wife, my traitress, let her not come near me.
Chor. Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fixed,
About to have spoke, but now, with head declined
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil;
But now again she makes address to speak.
Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew
In the perverse event than I foresaw)
My penance hath not slackened, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt
Hath led me on desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st, and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.
Sams. Out, out, hyæna; these are thy wonted arts.
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail;
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent, but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off
As I by thee, to ages an example.
Dal. Yet hear me Samson; not that I endeavor
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that on the other side if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First, granting, as I do, it was a weakness
In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults;

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[8] Ships of Tarshish, bound for the isles of Greece and for Cadiz, laden with silks and spices of the East.

Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for nought,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not.
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
Let weakness then with weakness come to parle,
So near related, or the same of kind,
Thine forgive mine that men may censure thine
The gentler, if severely thou exact not
More strength from me, than in thyself was found.
And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
Of fancy, feared lest one day thou would'st leave me
As her at Timna, sought by all means therefore
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
No better way I saw than by importuning
To learn thy secrets, get into my power
Thy key of strength and safety. Thou wilt say,
'Why then revealed?' I was assured by those
Who tempted me, that nothing was designed
Against thee but safe custody and hold:
That made for me; I knew that liberty
Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;
Here I should still enjoy thee day and night
Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
Fearless at home of partners in my love.
These reasons in love's law have passed for good,
Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
Be not unlike all others, not austere
As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,
In uncompassionate anger do not so.
Sams. How cunningly the sorceress displays
Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example,
I led the way—bitter reproach, but true,
I to myself was false ere thou to me,
Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,
Take to thy wicked deed; which when thou seest
Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
Confess it feigned; weakness is thy excuse,
And I believe it, weakness to resist
Philistian gold; if weakness may excuse,
What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore
With God or man will gain thee no remission.
But love constrained thee; call it furious rage
To satisfy thy lust: love seeks to have love;
My love how could'st thou hope, who took'st the way
To raise in me inexpiable hate,
Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?
In vain thou strivest to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.
Dal. Since thou determinest weakness for no plea
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented;
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,
That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, pressed how just it was,
How honorable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation: and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonorer of Dagon. What had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate;
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me and prevailed;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoining.
Sams. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end;
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy.
But had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation chose thee from among

My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well, unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing;
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why then
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?
Then, as since then, my country's foe professed?
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave
Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own,
Thou mine, not theirs. If aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations,
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear;
Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be:
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.
These false pretexts and varnished colors failing,
Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear?
  DAL. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.
  SAMS. For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath,
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.
  DAL. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain. Though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights
At home in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eyesight exposes daily men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favorable ear, that I may fetch thee
From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied,
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shall miss.
  SAMS. No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
Nor think me so unwary or accurst
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins, and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms
No more on me have power, their force is nulled,
So much of adder's wisdom I have learned
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honored, feared me, thou alone could hate me
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me;
How would'st thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, hence easily contemned, and scorned,
And last neglected! How would'st thou insult
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thraldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile!
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine whose doors my feet shall never enter.
  DAL. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.
  SAMS. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee, go with that;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives;
Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.
  DAL. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas, yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
But go with evil omen and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concernments I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame if not double-faced is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds,
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight.
My name perhaps among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,

With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath
I shall be named among the famousest
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock bands, my tomb
With odors visited and annual flowers.
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim,
Jael, who with inhospitable guile
Smote Sisera sleeping through the temples nailed.[9]
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy
The public marks of honor and reward
Conferred upon me, for the piety
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.
  Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.
  Sams. So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.
  Chor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt
And secret sting of amorous remorse.
  Sams. Love quarrels oft in pleasing concord end,
Not wedlock treachery endangering life.
  Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valor, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit
That woman's love can win or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit,
(Which way soever men refer it)
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven, though one should musing sit;
  If any of these or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymph,[10] worthless to thee compared,
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgment scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend
Or value what is best
In choice, but oftest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
  Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined, the contrary she proves, a thorn
Intestine, far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
Draws him awry, enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds which ruin ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?
  Favored of Heaven who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines!
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth;
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above.
  Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lour:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, nor dismayed.
  But had we best retire? I see a storm.
  Sams. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
  Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings,
  Sams. Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.
  Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? What wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way;
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.
  Sams. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.
  Chor. His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.
  Harapha. I come not Samson, to condole thy chance,

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[9] Cf. *Judges*, chaps. 4 and 5.

[10] the bridegroom's companion on the wedding day.

As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath,
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og or Anak and the Emims old[11]
That Kiriathaim held, thou knowest me now
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field:
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.
  Sams. The way to know were not to see, but taste.
  Har. Dost thou already single me; I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee; O that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;
I should have forced thee soon wish other arms,
Or left thy carcass where the ass lay thrown:
So had the glory of prowess been recovered
To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts, that honor
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.
  Sams. Boast not of what thou would'st have done, but do
What then thou would'st, thou seest it in thy hand.
  Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.
  Sams. Such usage as your honorable lords
Afford me assassinated and betrayed,
Who durst not with their whole united powers
In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
Nor in the house with chamber ambushes
Close-banded durst attack me, no not sleeping,
Till they had hired a woman with their gold
Breaking her marriage faith, to circumvent me.
Therefore without feigned shifts let be assigned
Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
And brigandine of brass, thy broad habergeon,
Vant-brace and greaves, and gauntlet, add thy spear
A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield,
I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
That in a little time while breath remains thee,
Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath to boast
Again in safety what thou would'st have done
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.
  Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
Their ornament and safety, had not spells
And black enchantments, some magician's art
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from Heaven
Feignedst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
Of chafed wild boars, or ruffled porcupines.
  Sams. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;
My trust is in the living God who gave me
At my nativity this strength, diffused
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,
The pledge of my unviolated vow.
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
Go to his temple, invocate his aid
With solemnest devotion, spread before him
How highly it concerns his glory now
To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
Which I to be the power of Israel's God
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,
With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.
  Har. Presume not on thy God, whate'er he be;
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
Quite from his people, and delivered up
Into thy enemies' hand, permitted them
To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee
Into the common prison, there to grind
Among the slaves and asses thy comrades,
As good for nothing else, no better service
With those thy boisterous locks, no worthy match
For valor to assail, nor by the sword
Of noble warrior, so to stain his honor,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.
  Sams. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon
Whose ear is ever open and his eye
Gracious to re-admit the suppliant;

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[11] These are all giants from Hebrew mythology.

In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine or whom I with Israel's sons adore.
  Har. Fair honor that thou dost thy god, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber.
  Sams. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?
  Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it, when they took thee
As a league-breaker and delivered bound
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.
  Sams. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe;
And in your city held my nuptial feast;
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who threatening cruel death constrained the bride
To wring from me and tell to them my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, wherever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed
Single rebellion and did hostile acts.
I was no private but a person raised
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me their deliverer sent would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.
  Har. With thee a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.
  Sams. Camest thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer, part not hence so slight informed;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.
  Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonors, and not render death?
  Sams. No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.
  Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.
  Sams. Go baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.
  Har. By Astaroth[12] ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries in irons loaden on thee.
  Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crestfallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.
  Sams. I dread him not, nor all his giant brood,
Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliah chief.
  Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.
  Sams. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;
If they intend advantage of my labors
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out, because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.
  Chor. Oh how comely it is and how reviving

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[12] Phoenician goddess of the moon.

To the spirits of just men long oppressed!
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honor truth;
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigor armed,
Their armories and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who surprised
Lose their defence distracted and amazed.
But patience is more oft the exercise
Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict,
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.
This idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Laboring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands,
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.
For I descry this way
Some other tending, in his hand
A scepter or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By this habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.
Off. Ebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.
Chor. His manacles remark him, there he sits.
Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say;
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,
With sacrifices, triumph, pomp, and games;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honor this great feast, and great assembly;
Rise therefore with all speed and come along,
Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.
Sams. Thou know'st I am an Ebrew, therefore tell them,
Our law forbids at their religious rites
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.
Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.
Sams. Have they not sword-players, and every sort
Of gymnic artists, wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,
But they must pick me out with shackles tired,
And over-labored at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels
On my refusal to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou camest, I will not come.
Off. Regard thyself, this will offend them highly.
Sams. Myself? my conscience, and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debased
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief
To shew them feats and play before their god,
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Joined with extreme contempt? I will not come.
Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay; is this thy resolution?
Sams. So take it with what speed thy message needs.
Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.
Sams. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.
Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strained
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message, more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.
Sams. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgressions, so requite
Favor renewed, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols;
A Nazarite in place abominable
Vaunting my strength in honor to their Dagon?
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
What act more execrably unclean, profane?
Chor. Yet with this strength thou servest the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.
Sams. Not in their idol-worship, but by labor
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.
Sams. Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds;
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? The Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely; venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind; which in his jealousy
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.
Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.
Sams. Be of good courage, I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonor
Our law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.
Chor. In time thou hast resolved, the man returns.
Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,
Our captive, at the public mill our drudge,
And darest thou at our sending and command
Dispute thy coming? Come without delay;
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,
Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.
Sams. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection;
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our law.
Off. I praise thy resolution, doff these links;
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favor, and perhaps to set thee free.
Sams. Brethren farewell, your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends; and how the sight
Of me as of a common enemy,
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not. Lords are lordiest in their wine;
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
No less the people on their holy-days
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable;
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonorable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our law, my nation, or myself,
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.
Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the heathen round;
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that spirit that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan
Be efficacious in thee now at need.
For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed,
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
With youthful steps? Much livelier than erewhile
He seems: supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?
Man. Peace with you brethren; my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new-parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came, the city rings
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now, was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.
Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee; say reverend sire, we thirst to hear.
Man. I have attempted one by one the lords
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears
To accept of ransom for my son their prisoner.
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most reverenced Dagon and his priests,
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim

Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale, a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed.
What noise or shout was that? It tore the sky.
  Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shewn.
  Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid
And numbered down; much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe, than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit; not wanting him, I shall want nothing.
  Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all;
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age.
Thou in old age carest how to nurse thy son
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.
  Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in his house, ennobled
With all those high exploits by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation armed the strength contained.
And I persuade me God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery, were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.
  Chor. Thy hopes are not ill-founded nor seem vain
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next participate.
  Man. I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!
Mercy of Heaven what hideous noise was that!
Horribly loud unlike the former shout.
  Chor. Noise call you it or universal groan
As if the whole inhabitation perished,
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.
  Man. Of ruin indeed methought I heard the noise,
Oh it continues, they have slain my son.
  Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them, that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.
  Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?
  Chor. Best keep together here, lest running thither
We unawares run into danger's mouth.
This evil on the Philistines is fallen,
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,
From other hands we need not much to fear.
What if his eye-sight (for to Israel's God
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?
  Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.
  Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?
  Man. He can I know, but doubt to think he will;
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.
  Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
An Ebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.
  Messenger. O whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold;
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason though disturbed, and scarce consulted
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concerned.
  Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry, yet what it was we hear not,
No preface needs, thou seest we long to know.
  Mess. It would burst forth but I recover breath
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.
  Man. Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.
  Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.
  Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest

The desolation of a hostile city.
  Mess. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.
  Man. Relate by whom.
  Mess.   By Samson.
  Man.   That still lessens
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.
  Mess. Ah, Manoa I refrain, too suddenly
To utter what will come at last too soon;
Lest evil tidings with too rude irruption
Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.
  Man. Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.
  Mess. Then take the worst in brief, Samson is dead.
  Man. The worst indeed, O all my hope's defeated
To free him hence! but Death who sets all free
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
What windy joy this day had I conceived
Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
Nipt with the lagging rear of winter's frost.
Yet ere I give the reins to grief, say first,
How died he? death to life is crown or shame.
All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he,
What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?
  Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
  Man. Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.
  Mess. By his own hands.
  Man.   Self-violence? What cause
Brought him so soon at variance with himself
Among his foes?
  Mess.   Inevitable cause
At once both to destroy and be destroyed;
The edifice where all were met to see him
Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.
  Man. O lastly over-strong against thyself!
A dreadful way thou look'st to thy revenge.
More than enough we know; but while things yet
Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
Relation more particular and distinct.
  Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city,
And as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
Through each high street. Little I had despatched
When all abroad was rumored that this day
Samson should be brought forth to shew the people
Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
Not to be absent at that spectacle.
The building was a spacious theater
Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
With seats where all the lords and each degree
Of sort, might sit in order to behold;
The other side was open, where the throng
On banks and scaffolds under sky might stand;
I among these aloof obscurely stood.
The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
When to their sports they turned. Immediately
Was Samson as a public servant brought,
In their state livery clad; before him pipes
And timbrels, on each side went armèd guards,
Both horsé and foot before him and behind
Archers, and slingers, cataphracts[18] and spears.
At sight of him the people with a shout
Rifted the air clamoring their god with praise,
Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
He patient but undaunted where they led him,
Came to the place, and what was set before him
Which without help of eye, might be assayed,
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
All with incredible, stupendious force,
None daring to appear antagonist.
At length for intermission sake they led him
Between the pillars; he his guide requested
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)
As over-tired to let him lean a while
With both his arms on those two massy pillars
That to the arched roof gave main support.
He unsuspicious led him; which when Samson
Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
And eyes fast fixed he stood, as one who prayed,
Or some great matter in his mind revolved.
At last with head erect thus cried aloud,
"Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
Not without wonder or delight beheld.
Now of my own accord such other trial
I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater;
As with amaze shall strike all who behold."
This uttered, straining all his nerves he bowed;
As with the force of winds and waters pent
When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars
With horrible convulsion to and fro
He tugged, he shook, till down they came and drew
The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder
Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,

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[18] a Greek term meaning "protected"—applied to cavalry when both horse and rider were heavily armed.

Their choice nobility and flower, not only
Of this but each Philistian city round
Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
Samson with these immixed, inevitably
Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
The vulgar only scaped, who stood without.
  Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
Living or dying thou hast fulfilled
The work for which thou wast foretold
To Israel, and now liest victorious
Among thy slain self-killed
Not willingly, but tangled in the fold,
Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoined
Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life had slain before.
  Semichor. While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread who dwells
In Silo his bright sanctuary,
Among them he a spirit of phrenzy sent,
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer;
They only set on sport and play
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.
  Semichor. But he though blind of sight,
Despised and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon came,
Assailant on the perchèd roosts,
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic fowl; but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So virtue, given for lost,
Depressed, and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird
In the Arabian woods embost,
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,
From out her ashy womb now teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most unactive deemed,
And though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular bird, ages of lives.
  Man. Come, come, no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause, Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroicly hath finished
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully revenged, hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor[14]
Through all Philistian bounds. To Israel
Honor hath left, and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,
To himself and father's house eternal fame;
And which is best and happiest yet, all this
With God not parted from him, as was feared,
But favoring and assisting to the end.
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
Let us go find the body where it lies
Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
The clotted gore. I with what speed the while
(Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
Will send for all my kindred, all my friends
To fetch him hence and solemnly attend
With silent obsequy and funeral train
Home to his father's house: there will I build him
A monument, and plant it round with shade
Of laurel ever green, and branching palm,
With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
And from his memory inflame their breasts
To matchless valor and adventures high;
The virgins also shall on feastful days
Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.
  Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt,
What the unsearchable dispose
Of highest wisdom brings about,
And ever best found in the close.
Oft he seems to hide his face,
But unexpectedly returns
And to his faithful champion hath in place
Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns
And all that band them to resist
His uncontrollable intent,
His servants he with new acquist
Of true experience from this great event
With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
And calm of mind all passion spent.

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[14] Crete, from which island the Philistines are supposed to have come.

From *Areopagitica*

"When I was preparing to pass over into Sicily and Greece," Milton tells us, "the melancholy intelligence which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be traveling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home." He returned to England in July 1639. "I calmly awaited the issue of the contest, which I trusted to the wise conduct of Providence, and to the courage of the people. . . . As long as the liberty of speech was no longer subject to control, all mouths began to be opened. . . . I saw that a way was opening for the establishment of real liberty; that the foundation was laying for the deliverance of man from the yoke of slavery and superstition. . . . When, therefore, I perceive that there were three species of liberty which are essential to the happiness of social life—religious, domestic, and civil; and as I had already written concerning the first [i.e. his pamphlets on religious issues: *Of Reformation, Of Prelatical Episcopacy, Animadversions, The Reason of Church Government, etc.*—1641-2], and the magistrates were strenuously active in obtaining the third, I determined to turn my attention to the second, or the domestic species. As this seemed to involve three material questions, the conditions of the conjugal tie, the education of the children, and the free publication of the thoughts, I made them objects of distinct consideration. I explained my sentiments, not only concerning the solemnization of the marriage, but the dissolution, if circumstances rendered it necessary [i.e. his four divorce tracts, 1643-5]. . . . I then discussed the principles of education [i.e. *Of Education,* 1644]. . . . Lastly, I wrote my *Areopagitica,* in order to deliver the press from the restraints with which it was encumbered; that the power of determining what was true and what was false, what ought to be published and what to be suppressed, might no longer be entrusted to a few illiterate and illiberal individuals, who refused their sanction to any work which contained views or sentiments at all above the level of the vulgar superstition."

This noble defense of the freedom of the press was published the same year as *Of Education,* 1644. Parliament had passed an act requiring all books to be licensed by an official censor. The Presbyterian party, now in control, was determined to bring Englishmen into conformity with its particular variety of Protestantism by ending political opposition. Milton was indignant to see Charles I's licensing act, which had been abolished in 1640, given life to protect political prerogative. He could not share the alarm of the Presbyterians over the variety of religious and political opinions being maintained in pamphlets. To him this free play of ideas was a sign of progress, a view he had already set forth in *The Reason of Church Government* (1641).

Addressed to Parliament in the hope of convincing its members that the licensing act must be repealed, the *Areopagitica* is Milton's greatest prose work, though it failed in bringing about the law's repeal. From it Mirabeau derived his arguments in his pamphlet on the freedom of the press (1788). It has been an inspiration to the world ever since its composition and a warning against renewed attempts to stifle the expression of ideas.

Stylistically a fine example of the classic oration, the *Areopagitica* derives its title from a speech addressed by Isocrates to the Athenian Court of the Areopagus. Milton argues that suppression of a free press has a bad history and belongs to a philosophy which Parliament has superseded, shows the value of a free use of books, proves the impossibility of making men good by restraint imposed from without, and ends with an attack on the law of licensing as annihilating the pursuit of truth. He has absolute faith in the ability of human beings to find their own intellectual salvation. Thus, the *Areopagitica* is the very voice of democracy speaking clearly and firmly through Milton's genius.

The best modern edition of *Areopagitica* is by Sir R. Jebb and A. W. Verity (1918).

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I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth, to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labors of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence,[1] the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. But lest I should be condemned of introducing licence, while I oppose licensing, I refuse not the pains to be so much historical, as will serve to show what hath been done by ancient and famous commonwealths against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licensing crept out of the Inquisition,[2] was caught up by our prelates, and hath caught some of our presbyters.[3] . . . Dionysius Alexandrinus was, about the year 240, a person of great name in the church for piety and learning, who had wont to avail himself much against heretics by being conversant in their books; until a certain presbyter laid it scrupulously to his conscience, how he durst venture himself among those defiling volumes. The worthy man, loth to give offence, fell into a new debate with himself what was to be thought; when suddenly a vision sent from God (it is his own epistle that so avers it) confirmed him in these words: "Read any books whatever come to thy hands, for thou art sufficient both to judge aright, and to examine each matter." To this revelation he assented the sooner, as he confesses, because it was answerable to that of the Apostle to the Thessalonians: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

And he might have added another remarkable saying of the same author: "To the pure, all things are pure"; not only meats and drinks, but all kind of knowledge whether of good or evil; the knowledge cannot defile, nor consequently the books, if the will and conscience be not defiled. For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substances; and yet God in that unapocryphal vision, said without exception, "Rise, Peter, kill and eat,"[4] leaving the choice to each man's discretion. Wholesome meats to a vitiated stomach differ little or nothing from unwholesome; and best books to a naughty mind are not unappliable to occasions of evil. Bad meats will scarce breed good nourishment in the healthiest concoction; but herein the difference is of bad books, that they to a discreet and judicious reader serve in many respects to discover, to confute, to forewarn, and to illustrate.

Whereof what better witness can ye expect I should produce, than one of your own now sitting in Parliament, the chief of learned men reputed in this land, Mr Selden;[5] whose volume of natural and national laws proves, not only by great authorities brought together, but by exquisite reasons and theorem almost mathematically demonstrative, that all opinions, yea errors, known, read, and collated, are of main service and assistance toward the speedy attainment of what is truest.

I conceive, therefore, that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man's body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man! Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanor of every grown man. And, therefore, when he himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer,[6] which was every man's daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man, rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser; there were but little work left for preaching, if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. Solomon informs us, that much reading is a weariness to the flesh; but neither he nor other inspired author tells us that such or such reading is unlawful, yet certainly had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful, than what was wearisome.

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[1] In addition to the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, Aristotle added a fifth, the ether.

[2] established in 1229.

[3] Presbyterian elders.

[4] Cf. *Acts*, 10:9-16.

[5] John Selden (1584-1654), parliamentarian.

[6] Cf. *Exodus*, 16:16-36.

As for the burning of those Ephesian books by St. Paul's converts; 'tis replied the books were magic, the Syriac so renders them. It was a private act, a voluntary act, and leaves us to a voluntary imitation: the men in remorse burnt those books which were their own; the magistrate by this example is not appointed; these men practised the books, another might perhaps have read them in some sort usefully.

Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche[7] as an incessant labor to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.

As, therefore, the state of man now is; what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world; we bring impurity much rather; that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue, therefore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure.

Since, therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. . . .

For if they fell upon one kind of strictness, unless their care were equal to regulate all other things of like aptness to corrupt the mind, that single endeavor they knew would be but a fond[8] labor; to shut and fortify one gate against corruption, and be necessitated to leave others round about wide open. If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must regulate all recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth, but what by their allowance shall be thought honest; for such Plato was provided of.[9] It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; these are shrewd books, with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them, shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads even to the ballatry, and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias,[10] and his Monte Mayors.[11]

Next, what more national corruption, for which England hears ill abroad, than household gluttony? Who shall be the rectors of our daily rioting? And what shall be done to inhibit the multitudes that frequent those houses where drunkenness is sold and harbored? Our garments also should be referred to the licensing of some more sober workmasters, to see them cut into a less wanton garb. Who shall regulate all the mixed conversation[12] of our youth, male and female together, as is the fashion of this country? Who shall still appoint what shall be discoursed, what presumed, and no further? Lastly, who shall forbid and separate all idle resort, all evil company? These things will be, and must be; but how they shall be least hurtful, how least enticing, herein consists the grave and governing wisdom of a state.

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[7] Cf. Apuleius's story of Cupid and Psyche in *The Golden Ass.*

[8] foolish.

[9] These are discussed in his *Republic.*

[10] Sidney's *Arcadia,* published 1590.

[11] Jorge de Montemayor (1520?-61), whose *Diana Enamorada* started the vogue of the prose pastoral romance.

To sequester out of the world into Atlantic and Utopian polities,[13] which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato's licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing, as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining, laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which Plato there mentions as the bonds and ligaments of the commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute; these they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness, for certain, are the bane of a commonwealth; but here the great art lies, to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work. If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years, were to be under pittance and prescription and compulsion, what were virtue but a name, what praise could be then due to well-doing, what gramercy[14] to be sober, just, or continent?

Many there be that complain of divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions.[15] We ourselves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force; God, therefore, left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that they rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? They are not skillful considerers of human things, who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universal thing as books are; and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left, ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point.

Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue: for the matter of them both is the same; remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who, though he commands us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a rigor contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books freely permitted are both to the trial of virtue, and the exercise of truth?

It would be better done, to learn that the law must needs be frivolous, which goes to restrain things, uncertainly and yet equally working to good and to evil. And were I the chooser, a dram of well doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person, more than the restraint of ten vicious. . . .

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on; but when he ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; he shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mold them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint. . . .

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[12] social intercourse.

[13] The reference is to Bacon's *New Atlantis* and More's *Utopia*, both of which give pictures of ideal commonwealths.

[14] thanks.

[15] puppet shows.

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye do then, should ye suppress all this flowery crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this city; should ye set an oligarchy of twenty engrossers over it, to bring a famine upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measured to us by their bushel? Believe it, Lords and Commons, they who counsel ye to such a suppressing, do as good as bid ye suppress yourselves; and I will soon show how.

If it be desired to know the immediate cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assigned a truer than your own mild and free and humane government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchased[16] us, liberty which is the nurse of all great wits; this is that which hath rarefied and enlightened our spirits like the influence of heaven; this is that which hath enfranchised, enlarged, and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now less capable, less knowing, less eagerly pursuing of the truth, unless ye first make yourselves, that made us so, less the lovers, less the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formal, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous; as they were from whom ye have freed us. That our hearts are now more capricious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own virtue propagated in us; ye cannot suppress that unless ye reinforce an abrogated and merciless law, that fathers may despatch at will their own children. And who shall then stick closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up arms for coat and conduct,[17] and his four nobles of Danegelt.[18] Although I dispraise not the defense of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

(1644)

From *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*

Having dealt with religious and domestic liberty (cf. Introduction to *Areopagitica, above*), Milton at first wrote nothing on the "species of civil liberty" because, as he says, "I saw that sufficient attention was paid to it by the magistrates; nor did I write anything on the prerogative of the crown, till the king, voted an enemy by the Parliament, and vanquished in the field, was summoned before the tribunal which condemned him to lose his head. But when, at length, some Presbyterian ministers, who had formerly been the most bitter enemies to Charles, became jealous of the growth of the Independents, and of their ascendency in the Parliament, most tumultuously clamored against the sentence, and did all in their power to prevent the execution, though they were not angry, so much on account of the act itself, as because it was not the act of their party; and when they dared to affirm, that the doctrine of the Protestants, and of all the reformed churches, was abhorrent to such an atrocious proceeding against kings; I thought that it became me to oppose such a glaring falsehood; and accordingly, without any immediate or personal application to Charles, I showed, in an abstract consideration of the question, what might lawfully be done against tyrants; . . . while I vehemently inveighed against the egregious ignorance or effrontery of men, who professed better things, and from whom better things might have been expected. That book did not make its appearance till after the death of Charles; and was written rather to reconcile the minds of the people to the event, than to discuss the legitimacy of that particular sentence which concerned the magistrates, and which was already executed."

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[16] procured.

[17] a tax for clothing and transportation of the army.

[18] money paid to buy peace with the Danes, here used by Milton to mean taxes in general.

Four years intervened between the writing of this important tract and the writing of the last of the divorce tracts (March 1645). During this time Milton published the first edition of his poems, composed six sonnets, translated eight Psalms, and was busy preparing his *History of Britain* and his treatise *Of Christian Doctrine*. He had sided with the Independents who triumphed in Parliament over the Presbyterians in 1647, and like them was staunchly republican. It became clear that Charles I was intractable, and compromise impossible. Before or during the King's trial in January 1649, Milton composed this bold work to reassure the public concerning the necessity of Charles' execution.

Typically, Milton does not even mention Charles' name. The discussion is obviously intended for all time and maintains the level of general political speculation. All men are free by nature, Milton argues, and submit to be governed of their own will. Hence, he reasons, a people has the right to depose a tyrant. When all other means fail they must resort to execution. Nor does Milton spare those Presbyterian ministers who, having inaugurated the revolution, were terrified at the inevitable logic of what they had begun.

A good modern edition of this work was made by W. T. Allison (1911).

. . . No man, who knows aught, can be so stupid to deny, that all men naturally were born free, being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were, by privilege above all the creatures, born to command, and not to obey: and that they lived so, till from the root of Adam's transgression falling among themselves to do wrong and violence, and foreseeing that such courses must needs tend to the destruction of them all, they agreed by common league to bind each other from mutual injury, and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance or opposition to such agreement. Hence came cities, towns, and commonwealths. And because no faith in all was found sufficiently binding, they saw it needful to ordain some authority that might restrain by force and punishment what was violated against peace and common right.

This authority and power of self-defence and preservation being originally and naturally in every one of them, and unitedly in them all; for ease, for order, and lest each man should be his own partial judge, they communicated and derived either to one, whom for the eminence of his wisdom and integrity they chose above the rest, or to more than one, whom they thought of equal deserving: the first was called a king; the other, magistrates: not to be their lords and masters, (though afterward those names in some places were given voluntarily to such as have been authors of inestimable good to the people,) but to be their deputies and commissioners, to execute, by virtue of their intrusted power, that justice, which else every man by the bond of nature and of covenant must have executed for himself, and for one another. And to him that shall consider well, why among free persons one man by civil right should bear authority and jurisdiction over another, no other end or reason can be imaginable.

These for a while governed well, and with much equity decided all things at their own arbitrement; till the temptation of such a power, left absolute in their hands, perverted them at length to injustice and partiality. Then did they, who now by trial had found the danger and inconveniences of committing arbitrary power to any, invent laws, either framed or consented to by all, that should confine and limit the authority of whom they chose to govern them: that so man, of whose failing they had proof, might no more rule over them, but law and reason, abstracted as much as might be from personal errors and frailities. While, as the magistrate was set above the people, so the law was set above the magistrate. When this would not serve, but that the law was either not executed, or misapplied, they were constrained from that time, the only remedy left them, to put conditions and take oaths from all kings and magistrates at their first instalment, to do impartial justice by law: who, upon those terms and no other, received allegiance from the people, that is to say, bond or covenant to obey them in execution of those laws, which they, the people, had themselves made or assented to. And this ofttimes with express warning, that if the king or magistrate proved unfaithful to his trust, the people would be disengaged. They added also counsellors and parliaments, not to be only at his beck, but, with him or without him, at set times, or at all times, when any danger threatened, to have care of the public safety. Therefore saith Claudius Sesell, a French statesman, "The parliament was set as a bridle to the king;" which I instance rather, not because our English lawyers have not said the same long before, but because that French monarchy is granted by all to be a far more absolute than ours. That this and the rest of what hath hitherto been spoken is most true, might be copiously made appear throughout all stories, heathen and Christian; even of those nations where kings and emperors have sought means to abolish all ancient memory of the people's right by their encroachments and usurpations. But I spare long insertions, appealing to the known constitutions of both the latest Christian Empires in Europe, the Greek and German, besides the French, Italian, Arragonian, English, and not least the Scottish histories: not forgetting this only by the way, that William the Norman, though a conqueror, and not unsworn at his coronation, was compelled a second time to take oath at St. Alban's ere the people would be brought to yield obedience.

It being thus manifest, that the power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred, and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be taken from them, without a violation of their natural birthright; and seeing that from hence Aristotle, and the best of political writers, have defined a king, "him who governs to the good and profit of his people, and not for his own ends;" it follows from necessary causes, that the titles of sovereign lord, natural lord, and the like, are either arrogancies or flatteries, not admitted by emperors and kings of best note, and disliked by the church both of Jews, Isa. xxvi. 13 and ancient Christians, as appears by Tertullian[1] and others. Although generally the people of Asia, and with them the Jews also, especially since the time they chose a king against the advice and counsel of God, are noted by wise authors much inclinable to slavery.

Secondly, that to say, as is usual, the king hath as good right to his crown and dignity as any man to his inheritance, is to make the subject no better than the king's slave, his chattel, or his possession that may be bought and sold: and doubtless, if hereditary title were sufficiently inquired, the best foundation of it would be found either but in courtesy or convenience. But suppose it to be of right hereditary, what can be more just and legal, if a subject for certain crimes be to forfeit by law from himself and posterity all his inheritance to the king, than that a king, for crimes proportional, should forfeit all his title and inheritance to the people? Unless the people must be thought created all for him, he not for them, and they all in one body inferior to him single; which were a kind of treason against the dignity of mankind to affirm.

Thirdly, it follows, that to say kings are accountable to none but God, is the overturning of all law and government. For if they may refuse to give account, then all covenants made with them at coronation, all oaths are in vain, and mere mockeries; all laws which they swear to keep, made to no purpose: for if the king fear not God, (as how many of them do not,) we hold then our lives and estates by the tenure of his mere grace and mercy, as from a god, not a mortal magistrate; a position that none but court-parasites or men besotted would maintain! Aristotle, therefore, whom we commonly allow for one of the best interpreters of nature and morality, writes in the fourth of his politics, chap. x. that "monarchy unaccountable is the worst sort of tyranny, and least of all to be endured by free-born men."

And surely no Christian prince, not drunk with high mind, and prouder then those pagan Cæsars that deified themselves,[2] would arrogate so unreasonably above human condition, or derogate so basely from a whole nation of men, his brethren, as if for him only subsisting, and to serve his glory, valuing them in comparison of his own brute will and pleasure no more than so many beasts, or vermin under his feet, not to be reasoned with, but to be trod on; among whom there might be found so many thousand men for wisdom, virtue, nobleness of mind, and all other respects but the fortune of his dignity, far above him. Yet some would persuade us that this absurd opinion was King David's, because in the 51st Psalm he cries out to God, "Against thee only have I sinned;" as if David had imagined, that to murder Uriah[3] and adulterate his wife had been no sin against his neighbor, whenas that law of Moses was to the king expressly, Deut. xvii., not to think so highly of himself above his brethren. David, therefore, by those words, could mean no other, than either that the depth of his guiltiness was known to God only, or to so few as had not the will or power to question him, or that the sin against God was greater beyond compare than against Uriah. Whatever his meaning were, any wise man will see, that the pathetical words of a psalm can be no certain decision to a point that hath abundantly more certain rules to go by.

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[1] one of the Church fathers (150-230).

[2] The Caesars, emperors of Rome, were worshipped as gods.

How much more rationally spake the heathen king Demophoön, in a tragedy of Euripides, than these interpreters would put upon king David! "I rule not my people by tyranny, as if they were barbarians; but am myself liable, if I do unjustly, to suffer justly." Not unlike was the speech of Trajan,[4] the worthy emperor, to one whom he made general of his prætorian forces: "Take this drawn sword," saith he, "to use for me if I reign well; if not, to use against me." Thus Dion relates. And not Trajan only, but Theodosius, the younger, a Christian emperor,[5] and one of the best, caused it to be enacted as a rule undeniable and fit to be acknowledged by all kings and emperors, that a prince is bound to the laws; that on the authority of law the authority of a prince depends, and to the laws ought submit. Which edict of his remains yet in the Code of Justinian, l.i. tit. 24,[6] as a sacred constitution to all the succeeding emperors. How then can any king in Europe maintain and write himself accountable to none but God, when emperors in their own imperial statutes have written and decreed themselves accountable to law? And indeed where such account is not feared, he that bids a man reign over him above law, may bid as well a savage beast.

It follows, lastly, that since the king or magistrate holds his authority of the people, both originally and naturally for their good, in the first place, and not his own, then may the people, as oft as they shall judge it for the best, either choose him or reject him, retain him or depose him, though no tyrant, merely by the liberty and right of free-born men to be governed as seems to them best. This, though it cannot but stand with plain reason, shall be made good also by Scripture: Deut. xvii. 14: "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations about me." These words confirm us that the right of choosing, yea of changing their own government, is by the grant of God himself in the people. And therefore when they desired a king, though then under another form of government, and though their changing displeased him, yet he that was himself their king, and rejected by them, would not be a hindrance to what they intended, further than by persuasion, but that they might do therein as they saw good, 1 Sam. viii., only be reserved to himself the nomination of who should reign over them. Neither did that exempt the king, as if he were to God only accountable, though by his especial command anointed. Therefore "David first made a covenant with the elders of Israel, and so was by them anointed king," 2 Sam. v. 3; 1 Chron. xi. And Jehoiada the priest, making a Jehoash king, made a covenant between him and the people, 2 Kings, xi. 17. Therefore when Rehoboam, at his coming to the crown, rejected those conditions which the Israelites brought him, hear what they answer him: "What portion have we in David, or inheritance in the son of Jesse? See to thine own house, David." And for the like conditions not performed, all Israel before that time deposed Samuel; not for his own default, but for the misgovernment of his sons. . . . (1647)

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[3] In order to obtain Uriah's wife for himself, David ordered Uriah to be put in the front line of battle where he would be killed.

[4] Emperor of Rome 98-117 A.D.

[5] Roman emperor 379-395.

[6] This refers to the *Institutes* of Justinian, emperor of the Eastern Empire 527-565.

John Bunyan

(1628-1688)

Milton and Bunyan were the only two great writers produced by Puritanism, and they arrived at their theology by very different paths. All the vast learning which was Milton's led him to his belief in a God who prefers "before all temples the upright heart and pure"; to that same fundamental faith Bunyan came with little more culture or knowledge of books than was provided him by his one great teacher, the Bible of 1611.

Born the son of a tinker at the quaint village of Elstow, Bunyan while still a boy served in the Republican army. His reading of certain Puritan tracts, soon after his marriage to a simple pious woman, plunged him into a period of mental anguish. Before birth, Puritanism taught, every man and woman is predestined to everlasting grace or everlasting damnation; and as Bunyan examined his life, innocent though we should find it, he was convinced that his lot was the dreadful latter. Driven almost to madness by spiritual torture, he was rescued from the depths by Mr. Gifford of the Baptist church at Bedford. Having found peace, Bunyan began himself to preach among obscure village folk in their houses, barns, and open meadows. The crowds he attracted caused him to be arrested under the new Restoration law which prohibited such meetings. He was imprisoned for twelve years, though allowed to read, write, and even preach to followers who visited him. Separation from his family was, as he put it, "pulling the flesh from my bones." But we cannot entirely regret his confinement since it was productive of his great works. It is debatable whether a man who so readily found an audience in preaching would have devoted much of his energies to writing had not prison made committing his message to paper almost necessary.

In prison he wrote *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), of which we print the opening third. This amazing autobiography, a forerunner of the modern psychological novel, reveals all the terror with which the average Puritan was faced when he examined his soul for signs of God's having granted or withheld His grace.

Released in 1672, Bunyan became pastor of a little church, and was three years later again thrown into prison for six months. This time he began his masterpiece, *Pilgrim's Progress* (published in two parts, 1678 and 1684). Probably no book besides the Bible of 1611, next to a copy of which it was usually to be found in English homes, was for three centuries so widely and often read in the English-speaking world. Perhaps the best explanation for the enormous popularity of this work has been offered by Johnson: "The most cultivated men cannot find anything to praise more highly, and the child knows nothing more amusing." It has been translated into more than a hundred languages. In its author's lifetime alone 100,000 copies were sold. It has been called the great Protestant allegory, showing without any complex theology, through the vivid adventures of its hero, the road to the Eternal City. The material for his simple story, like its language, Bunyan took from the Bible and from the folklore of the lowly. Quite apart from its allegorical intent, *Pilgrim's Progress* contains many realistic pictures of life among English country folk. The characters are such as every village knew from experience or fireside tale; their names—Faithful, Ignorance, Sincere, Mr. Money-love, Little-Faith, Lord Hate-good, Talkative, Mr. Fearing, Mr. Greatheart—make plain to the most unlettered the concepts at stake. Here, in short, we find the traditions of the medieval allegory cleansed of all artifice and elegance, and made the heritage of the people.

Because his was one of the two great voices of Puritanism, Bunyan's work is considered in this place, although the bulk of it was written during the Restoration. With the elegance of Restoration literature, Bunyan's thirty volumes have nothing in common. But the simple force and clarity of his prose, learned from the Bible of 1611, are not distant from the ideals of lucidity and directness which typify prose of the Restoration.

G. B. Harrison has made an excellent edition of *Pilgrim's Progress* (1928). Macaulay wrote an important essay on Bunyan, which inaugurated the acceptance of Bunyan as a literary "classic." The standard biography is by J. Brown (1885, revised by F. M. Harrison 1928). G. B. Harrison, *John Bunyan* (1928) is a useful short study.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners; or, A Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ, to His Poor Servant, John Bunyan

In this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if, in the first place, I do, in a few words, give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodness and bounty of God towards me, may be the more advanced and magnified before the sons of men.

For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest, and most despised of all the families in the land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to boast of noble blood, or of a high-born state, according to the flesh; though, all things considered, I magnify the heavenly Majesty, for that by this door he brought me into this world, to partake of the grace of life that is in Christ by the Gospel.

But yet, notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put into their hearts to put me to school, to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor men's children, though to my shame I confess, I did soon lose that little I learnt, even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work his gracious work of conversion upon my soul.

As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was, indeed, "according to the course of this world, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."[1] It was my delight to be "taken captive by the devil at his will,"[2] being filled with all unrighteousness; the which did also strongly work, and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals (especially considering my years, which were tender, being few), both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God.

Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me. The which, as I also have with soberness considered since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood he did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions. For often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid.

Also I should, at these years, be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the Day of Judgment, and that both night and day, and should tremble at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last among those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

These things, I say, when I was but a child, about nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that then, in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down, and afflicted in my mind therewith, yet I could not let go my sins. Yea, I was also then so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish, either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil; supposing they were only tormentors; that if it must needs be, that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, than be tormented myself.

A while after, these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them, as if they had never been. Wherefore with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins to my lust, and delighted in all transgression against the law of God: so that until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness.

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[1] *Ephesians*, 2:2-3.

[2] *II Timothy*, 2:26.

Yea, such prevalency had the lusts and fruits of the flesh in this poor soul of mine, that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented, I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but had also laid myself open even to the stroke of those laws which bring some to disgrace and open shame before the face of the world.

In these days the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me. I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should. So that when I have seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways."[3] I was now void of all good consideration, heaven and hell were both out of sight and mind; and as for saving and damning, they were least in my thoughts. O Lord, thou knowest my life, and my ways were not hid from thee.

Yet this I well remember, that though I could myself sin with the greatest delight and ease, and also take pleasure in the vileness of my companions; yet, even then, if I had at any time seen wicked things, by those who professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. As once above all the rest, when I was in my heighth of vanity, yet hearing one to swear that was reckoned for a religious man, it had so great a stroke upon my spirit, that it made my heart to ake.

But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet such as were mixed with mercy. For once I fell into a crick of the sea and hardly escaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat into Bedford river, but mercy yet preserved me alive. Besides, another time, being in the field with one of my companions, it chanced that an adder passed over the highway; so I having a stick in my hand, struck her over the back, and having stunned her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers; by which act, had not God been merciful unto me, I might, by my desperateness, have brought myself to mine end.

This also have I taken notice of with thanksgiving. When I was a soldier, I, with others, were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it; but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room; to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head with a musket bullet, and died.

Here, as I said, were judgments and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness; wherefore I sinned still, and grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of mine own salvation.

Presently after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be (not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both), yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven* and *The Practice of Piety*,[4] which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me; (but all this while I met with no conviction). She also would be often telling of me what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house, and amongst his neighbors; what a strict and holy life he lived in his days, both in word and deed.

Wherefore these books, with this relation, though they did not reach my heart, to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to religion: so that, because I knew no better, I fell in very eagerly with the religion of the times; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there should very devoutly both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life. But withal, I was so overrun with the spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things (both the high place, priest, clerk, vestments, service, and what else) belonging to the church; counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially, the priest and clerk most happy, and without doubt greatly blessed, because they were servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy temple to do his work therein.

This conceit grew so strong in little time upon my spirit, that had I but seen a priest (though never so sordid and debauched in his life), I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him. Yea, I thought, for the love I did bear unto them (supposing they were the ministers of God) I could have lain down at their feet and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

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[3] *Job,* 21:14.

[4] pietistic books of the period.

After I had been thus for some considerable time, another thought came in my mind; and that was, whether we were of the Israelites or no? For finding in the Scriptures that they were once the peculiar people of God, thought I, if I were once of this race, my soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this question, but could not tell how I should. At last I asked my father of it, who told me, no, we were not. Wherefore, then I fell in my spirit as to the hopes of that and so remained.

But all this while, I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin. I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ. Nay, I never thought of him, nor whether there was such an one, or not. "Thus man while blind doth wander, but wearieth himself with vanity, for he knoweth not the way to the city of God."[5]

But one day, amongst all the sermons our parson made, his subject was to treat of the sabbath-day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labor, sports, or otherwise. Now I was, notwithstanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially, that was the day that I did solace myself therewith. Wherefore I fell in my conscience under his sermon, thinking and believing that he made that sermon on purpose to show me my evil-doing. And at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember. But then I was, for the present, greatly loaden therewith, and so went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my spirit.

This, for that instant, did benumb the sinews of my best delights, and did imbitter my former pleasures to me. But behold, it lasted not; for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to its old course. But oh! how glad was I, that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might sin again without control! Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon out of my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming I returned with great delight.

But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game at Cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, "Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell?" At this I was put to an exceeding maze. Wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had, with the eyes of my understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if he did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other my ungodly practices.

I had no sooner thus conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, (for the former hint did set my sins again before my face) that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing upon this also. And while I was thinking of it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin. For, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow them. I can but be damned, and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as be damned for a few.

Thus I stood in the midst of my play, before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing. But I say, I having made this conclusion, I returned desperately to my sport again; and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so possess my soul, that I was persuaded I could never attain to other comfort than what I should get in sin; for heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think. Wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was yet to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it. And I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicates, lest I should die before I had my desire; for that I feared greatly. In these things, I protest before God I lie not, neither do I feign this sort of speech. These were really, strongly, and with all my heart, my desires. The good Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions!

And I am very confident that this temptation of the devil is more usual amongst poor creatures than many are aware of, even to overrun their spirits with a scurfy and seared frame of heart, and benumbing of conscience; which frame he stilly and slyly supplieth with such despair, that though not much guilt attendeth souls, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that there is no hopes for them; for they have loved sins, therefore after them they will go.[6]

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[5] *Ecclesiastes,* 10:15.

[6] *Jeremiah,* 2:25, 18:12.

Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a month, or more. But one day, as I was standing at a neighbor's shop-window, and there cursing and swearing, and playing the madman, after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house, and heard me; who, though she was a very loose and ungodly wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, that I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing, that ever she heard in all her life; and that I, by thus doing, was able to spoil all the youth in the whole town, if they came but in my company.

At this reproof I was silenced, and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven. Wherefore, while I stood there, and hanging down my head, I wished with all my heart that I might be a little child again, that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it could never be.

But, how it came to pass I know not, I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it. And whereas before I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority; now I could, without it, speak better, and with more pleasantness, than ever I could before. All this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and plays.

But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man that made profession of religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matters of religion; wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading; but especially with the historical part thereof. For, as for Paul's Epistles, and suchlike Scriptures, I could not away with them, being as yet but ignorant, either of the corruptions of my nature or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England.

Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbors did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners. And indeed so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope. And, truly, as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful. Well, this, I say, continued about a twelvemonth or more.

But, I say, my neighbors were amazed at this my great conversion, from prodigious profaneness to something like a moral life. And truly, so they well might; for this my conversion was as great, as for Tom of Bethlem to become a sober man. Now therefore they began to praise, to commend, and to speak well of me, both to my face, and behind my back. Now I was, as they said, become godly; now I was become a right honest man. But oh! when I understood that these were their words and opinions of me, it pleased me mighty well. For though, as yet, I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and indeed I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by men; and thus I continued for about a twelvemonth, or more.

Now you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing,[7] but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered. Wherefore, I should go to the steeple house and look on it, though I durst not ring. But I thought this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself, and would look on still. But quickly after, I began to think, how if one of the bells should fall? Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the temple, from side to side, thinking there I might stand sure. But then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple-door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for if a bell should then fall I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding.

So after this I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go further than the steeple-door;

[7] bell-ringing.

but then it came into my head, how if the steeple itself should fall? And this thought, It may fall for ought I know, when I stood and looked on, did continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple-door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.

Another thing was my dancing. I was a full year before I could quite leave that. But all this while, when I thought I kept this or that commandment, or did, by word or deed anything that I thought was good, I had great peace in my conscience; and should think with myself, God cannot choose but be now pleased with me; yea, to relate it in mine own way, I thought no man in England could please God better than I.

But poor wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ, and going about to establish my own righteousness; and had perished therein, had not God in mercy showed me more of my state by nature.

But upon a day, the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling, and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk talker also myself, in the matters of religion. But I may say, "I heard, but I understood not;" for they were far above, out of my reach. Their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature. They talked how God had visited their souls with his love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted and supported against the temptations of the devil. Moreover they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their unbelief; and did contemn, slight and abhor their own righteousness, as filthy and insufficient to do them any good.

And methought they spake as if joy did make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me, as if they had found a new world; as if they were "people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned amongst their neighbors."[8]

At this I felt my own heart began to shake, and mistrust my condition to be naught; for I saw that in all my thoughts about religion and salvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind; neither knew I the comfort of the word and promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them; neither did I understand what Satan's temptations were, nor how they were to be withstood and resisted, &c.

Thus, therefore, when I had heard and considered what they said, I left them, and went about my employment again, but their talk and discourse went with me; also my heart would tarry with them, for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced that I wanted the true tokens of a truly godly man, and also because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed conditions of him that was such an one.

Therefore I should often make it my business to be going again and again into the company of these poor people; for I could not stay away; and the more I went amongst them the more I did question my condition; and as I still do remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel (especially considering what a blind, ignorant, sordid, and ungodly wretch but just before I was); the one was a very great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what by Scripture they asserted; and the other was a great bending in my mind, to continual meditating on them, and on all other good things which at any time I heard or read of.

But these things my mind was now so turned that it lay like a horse-leech at the vein, still crying out, *Give, give;*[9] yea, it was so fixed on eternity, and on the things about the kingdom of heaven, (that is, so far as I knew, though as yet, God knows, I knew but little); that neither pleasures, nor profits, nor persuasions, nor threats could loose it, or make it let go his hold. And though I may speak it with shame, yet it is in very deed a certain truth, it would then have been as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it again from earth to heaven.

One thing I may not omit. There was a young man in our town, to whom my heart was knit more than to any other, but he being a most wicked creature for cursing and swearing and whoring, I now shook him off and forsook his company; but about a quarter of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and asked him how he did; he, after his old swearing and mad way, answered, he was well. "But, Harry," said I, "Why do you swear and curse thus? What will become of you if you die in this condition?" He answered me in a great chafe, "What would the devil do for company, if it were not for such as I am?"

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[8] *Numbers,* 23:9.

[9] *Proverbs,* 30:16.

About this time I met with some Ranters'[10] books, that were put forth by some of our countrymen, which books were also highly in esteem by several old professors;[11] some of these I read, but was not able to make a judgment about them. Wherefore as I read in them, and thought upon them (feeling myself unable to judge), I should betake myself to hearty prayer in this manner: "O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error. Lord, leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine; if it be of God, let me not despise it; if it be of the devil, let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul in this matter only at thy foot; let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech thee." I had one religious intimate companion all this while, and that was the poor man that I spoke of before. But about this time, he also turned a most devilish Ranter, and gave himself up to all manner of filthiness, especially uncleanness. He would also deny that there was a God, angel, or spirit; and would laugh at all exhortations to sobriety. When I labored to rebuke his wickedness, he would laugh the more, and pretend that he had gone through all religions, and could never light on the right till now. He told me also, that in a little time I should see all professors turn to the ways of the Ranters. Wherefore, abominating these cursed principles, I left his company forthwith, and became to him as great a stranger, as I had been before a familiar.

Neither was this man only a temptation to me; but my calling lying in the country, I happened to light into several people's company, who, though strict in religion formerly, yet were also swept away by these Ranters. These would also talk with me of their ways, and condemn me as legal and dark; pretending that they only had attained to perfection, that could do what they would and not sin. Oh! These temptations were suitable to my flesh, I being but a young man, and my nature in its prime. But God, who had, as I hope, designed me for better things, kept me in the fear of his name, and did not suffer me to accept of such cursed principles. And blessed be God, who put it into my heart to cry to him to be kept and directed, still distrusting mine own wisdom; for I have since seen even the effect of that prayer, in his preserving me, not only from Ranting errors, but from those also that have sprung up since. The Bible was precious to me in those days.

And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the epistles of the Apostle St. Paul were sweet and pleasant to me; and indeed I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying out to God that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory.

And as I went on and read, I lighted on that passage, "To one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same spirit; and to another faith," &c.[12] And though, as I have since seen, that by this Scripture the Holy Ghost intends, in special things extraordinary, yet on me it then did fasten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that understanding and wisdom that other Christians had. On this word I mused, and could not tell what to do; especially this word [*faith*] put me to it, for I could not help it, but sometimes must question, whether I had any faith, or no. For I feared it shut me out of all the blessings that other good people had given them of God. But I was loth to conclude I had no faith; for if I do so, thought I, then I shall count myself a very cast-away indeed.

No, said I, with myself, though I am convinced that I am an ignorant sot, and that I want those blessed gifts of knowledge and understanding that other good people have; yet at a venture, I will conclude I am not altogether faithless, though I know not what faith is. For it was showed me, and that too (as I have seen since) by Satan, that those who conclude themselves in a faithless state, have neither rest nor quiet in their souls; and I was loth to fall quite into despair.

Wherefore by this suggestion, I was for a while made afraid to see my want of faith. But God would not suffer me thus to undo and destroy my soul, but did continually, against this my blind and sad conclusion, create still within me such suppositions, insomuch that I could not rest content, until I did now come to some certain knowledge, whether I had faith or no; this always running in my mind, "But how if you want faith indeed? But how can you tell you have faith?" And besides, I saw for certain, if I had it not, I was sure to perish for ever.

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[10] a sect which held that, faith alone being necessary to salvation, they might conduct themselves as they pleased.

[11] professing Christians.

[12] *I Corinthians,* 12:8.

So that though I endeavored at the first to look over the business of faith, yet in a little time, I better considering the matter, was willing to put myself upon the trial, whether I had faith or no. But alas, poor wretch, so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know how to begin and accomplish that rare and curious piece of art, which I never yet saw or considered.

Wherefore, while I was thus considering, and being put to my plunge about it (for you must know, that as yet I had in this matter broken my mind to no man, only did hear and consider), the tempter came in with this delusion, "that there was no way for me to know I had faith, but by trying to work some miracle"; urging those Scriptures that seem to look that way, for the enforcing and strengthening his temptation. Nay, one day, as I was betwixt Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me, to try if I had faith, by doing of some miracle; which miracle at that time was this, I must say to the puddles that were in the horse-pads, be dry; and to the dry places, be you the puddles. And truly, one time I was going to say so indeed; but just as I was about to speak, this thought came into my mind, "But go under yonder hedge and pray first, that God would make you able." But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, that if I prayed, and came again, and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no faith, but was a cast-away, and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer.

So I continued at a great loss; for I thought, if they only had faith, which could do so wonderful things, then I concluded, that, for the present, I neither had it, nor yet, for time to come, were ever like to have it. Thus I was tossed betwixt the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do.

About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, in a dream or vision, presented to me. I saw as if they were set on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds. Methought also, betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain; now, through this wall, my soul did greatly desire to pass; concluding, that if I could, I would go even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.

About this wall I thought myself to go again and again, still prying as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage, by which I might enter therein; but none could I find for some time. At the last, I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass. Now the passage being very straight and narrow, I made many offers to get in, but all in vain, even until I was well nigh quite beat out, by striving to get in. At last, with great striving, methought I at first did get in my head, and after that, by a sideling striving, my shoulders and my whole body. Then was I exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.

Now this mountain, and wall, &c., was thus made out to me: the mountain signified the church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of his merciful face on them that were therein; the wall, I thought, was the word, that did make separation between the Christians and the world; and the gap which was in this wall, I thought, was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father.[13] But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not but with great difficulty enter in thereat, it showed me, that none could enter into life, but those that were in downright earnest, and unless also they left this wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul, and sin.

This resemblance abode upon my spirit many days; all which time, I saw myself in a forlorn and sad condition, but yet was provoked to a vehement hunger and desire to be one of that number that did sit in the sunshine. Now also I should pray wherever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or field, and should also often, with lifting up of heart, sing that of the fifty-first Psalm, "O Lord, consider my distress"; for as yet I knew not where I was.

Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness; especially with such as these, "Whether I was elected? But how if the day of grace should now be past and gone?"

By these two temptations I was very much

[13] *John*, 14:6; *Matthew*, 7:14.

afflicted and disquieted; sometimes by one and sometimes by the other of them. And first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and though nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so offend and discourage me, that I was, especially at some times, as if the very strength of my body also had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This Scripture did also seem to me to trample upon all my desires: "It is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that showeth mercy."[14]

With this Scripture I could not tell what to do; for I evidently saw that unless the great God, of his infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily chosen me to be a vessel of mercy, though I should desire and long and labor until my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore, this would still stick with me, "How can you tell you are elected? And what if you should not? How then?"

O Lord, thought I, what if I should not, indeed? It may be you are not, said the tempter; it may be so, indeed, thought I. Why then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if, indeed, you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved: "For it is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth; but in God that showeth mercy."

By these things I was driven to my wits' end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations. (Indeed, I little thought that Satan had thus assaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence, thus to start the question;) for, that the elect only obtained eternal life, that I, without scruple, did heartily close withal; but that myself was one of them, there lay all the question.

Thus, therefore, for several days, I was greatly assaulted and perplexed, and was often, when I have been walking, ready to sink where I went, with faintness in my mind. But one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit. "Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in God, and were confounded?"

At which I was greatly enlightened, and encouraged in my soul; for thus, at that very instant, it was expounded to me, "Begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was ever any that trusted in the Lord, and was confounded." So, coming home, I presently went to my Bible, to see if I could find that saying, not doubting but to find it presently; for it was so fresh, and with such strength and comfort on my spirit, that I was as if it talked with me.

Well, I looked, but I found it not; only it abode upon me. Then I did ask first this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was, but they knew no such place. At this I wondered that such a sentence should so suddenly, and with such comfort and strength, seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it. For I doubted not but it was in holy Scripture.

Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place; but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha books, I found it in Ecclesiasticus.[15] This, at the first, did somewhat daunt me; but because by this time I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered that though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet, forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it. And I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me. That word doth still, at times, shine before my face.

After this, that other doubt did come with strength upon me, "But how if the day of grace should be past and gone? How if you have overstood the time of mercy?" Now, I remember that one day, as I was walking into the country, I was much in the thoughts of this, "But how if the day of grace be past?" And to aggravate my trouble, the tempter presented to my mind those good people of Bedford, and suggested thus unto me, that these being converted already, they were all that God would save in those parts; and that I came too late for these had got the blessing before I came.

Now was I in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might well be so. Wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my sad condition, counting myself far worse than a thousand fools, for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I have done; still crying out, Oh! that I had turned sooner! Oh! that I had turned seven years ago! It made me also angry with myself, to think that I should have no more wit, but to trifle away my time till my soul and heaven were lost.

But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was scarce able to take one step more, just about the same place where I received my other encouragement, these words broke in upon my mind, "Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled; and yet there is room."[16] These words, but especially them, "And yet there is room," were sweet words to me; for, truly, I thought that by them I saw that there was place enough in heaven for me; and, moreover, that when the Lord Jesus did speak these words, he then did think of me; and that he knowing the time would come that I should be afflicted with fear that there was no place left for me in his bosom, did before speak this word, and leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby against this vile temptation. This, I then verily believed.

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[14] *Romans*, 9:16.

[15] *John*, 14:6; *Matthew*, 7:14.

In the light and encouragement of this word, I went a pretty while; and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord Jesus should think on me so long ago, and that he should speak them words on purpose for my sake. For I did then think verily that he did on purpose speak them to encourage me withal.

But I was not without my temptations to go back again. Temptations, I say, both from Satan, mine own heart, and carnal acquaintance. But I thank God these were out-weighed by that sound sense of death and of the day of judgment, which abode, as it were, continually in my view. I should often also think on Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, "He had given him all the kingdoms of the earth."[17] Yet, thought I, if this great man had all his portion in this world, one hour in hell-fire would make him forget all. Which consideration was a great help to me.

I was almost made, about this time, to see something concerning the beasts that Moses counted clean and unclean. I thought those beasts were types of men; the clean, types of them that were the people of God; but the unclean, types of such as were the children of the wicked one. Now, I read that the clean beasts "chewed the cud"; that is, thought I, they show us, we must feed upon the word of God. They also "parted the hoof"; I thought that signified we must part, if we would be saved, with the ways of ungodly men. And also, in further reading about them I found, that though we did chew the cud as the hare, yet if we walked with claws like a dog, or if we did part the hoof like the swine, yet if we did not chew the cud as the sheep, we were still, for all that, but unclean:[18] for I thought the hare to be a type of those that talk of the word, yet walk in ways of sin; and that the swine was like him that parteth with his outward pollutions, but still wanteth the word of faith, without which there could be no way of salvation, let a man be never so devout. After this I found, by reading the word, that those that must be glorified with Christ in another world must be called by him here; called to the partaking of a share in his word and righteousness, and to the comforts and first-fruits of his Spirit, and to a peculiar interest in all those heavenly things which do indeed fore-fit the soul for that rest, and house of glory which is in heaven above.

Here, again, I was at a very great stand, not knowing what to do, fearing I was not called; "for," thought I, "if I be not called, what then can do me good? None but those who are effectually called, inherit the kingdom of heaven." But oh! how I now loved those words that spake of a Christian's calling! as when the Lord said to one, "Follow me"; and to another, "Come after me." "And oh," thought I, "that he would say so to me too, how gladly would I run after him!"

I cannot now express with what longings and breathings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all on a flame to be converted to Jesus Christ; and did also see all that day, such glory in a converted state, that I could not be contented without a share therein. Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what could I have given for it! Had I had a whole world, it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state.

How lovely now was every one in my eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women! they shone, they walked like people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them. Oh! I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage.[19] But that which made me sick, was that of Christ, in Mark, "He went up into a mountain, and called to him whom he would, and they came unto him."[20]

This Scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me, for he called whom he would. But oh! the glory that I saw in that condition did still so engage my heart that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call but I presently wished, "Would I had been born in their clothes; would I had been born Peter; would I had been born John; or, would I had been by and had heard him when he called them, how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also!" But, oh! I feared he would not call me.

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[16] *Luke*, 14:22.

[17] *Daniel*, 5:18.

[18] *Deuteronomy*, 14:6-8.

[19] *Psalms*, 16:6.

[20] *Mark*, 3:13.

And truly, the Lord let me go thus many months together and showed me nothing, either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that word came in upon me: "I will cleanse their blood, that I have not cleansed, for the Lord dwelleth in Zion."[21] These words I thought were sent to encourage me to wait still upon God, and signified unto me, that if I were not already, yet time might come, I might be in truth converted unto Christ.

About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition; which when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself also took occasion to talk with me, and was willing to be well persuaded of me, though I think but from little grounds. But he invited me to his house, where I should hear him confer with others, about the dealings of God with their souls, from all which I still received more conviction, and from that time began to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein; but now it began to be discovered unto me, and also to work at that rate for wickedness as it never did before. Now I evidently found, that lusts and corruptions would strongly put forth themselves within me, in wicked thoughts and desires, which I did not regard before; my desires also for heaven and life began to fail. I found also, that whereas before my soul was full of longings after God, now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that that was good; it began to be careless, both of my soul and heaven; it would now continually hang back, both to, and in every duty; and was as a clog on the leg of a bird, to hinder her from flying.

Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse; now am I farther from conversion than ever I was before. Wherefore I began to sink greatly in my soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my heart as laid me as low as hell. If now I should have burned at the stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me; alas, I could neither hear him, nor see him, nor feel him, nor savor any of his things. I was driven as with a tempest: my heart would be unclean: the Canaanites would dwell in the land.

Sometimes I would tell my condition to the people of God, which, when they heard, they would pity me, and would tell me of the promises. But they had as good have told me, that I must reach the sun with my finger as have bidden me receive or rely upon the promise; and as soon I should have done it, all my sense and feeling was against me; and I saw I had an heart that would sin, and that lay under a law that would condemn.

These things have often made me think of the child which the father brought to Christ, "who, while he was yet a coming to him, was thrown down by the devil,[22] and also so rent and torn by him, that he lay and wallowed foaming."[23]

Further, in these days, I should find my heart to shut itself up against the Lord, and against his holy word. I have found my unbelief to set, as it were, the shoulder to the door to keep him out, and that too even then, when I have with many a bitter sigh cried, "Good Lord, break it open; Lord, break these gates of brass, and cut these bars of iron asunder."[24] Yet that word would sometimes create in my heart a peaceable pause, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."[25]

But all this while as to the act of sinning, I never was more tender than now. My hinder parts were inward. I durst not take a pin or stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore and would smart at every touch; I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them. Oh, how gingerly did I then go in all I did or said! I found myself as on a miry bog that shook if I did but stir; and was as there left both of God and Christ, and the Spirit, and all good things.

But, I observe, though I was such a great sinner before conversion, yet God never much charged the guilt of the sins of my ignorance upon me; only he showed me I was lost if I had not Christ, because I had been a sinner. I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God; and this righteousness was nowhere to be found, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

But my original and inward pollution, that, that was my plague and my affliction; that I say, at a dreadful rate, always putting forth itself within me; that I had the guilt of, to amazement; by reason of that, I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad; and I thought I was so in God's eyes too. Sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart as water would bubble out of a fountain. I thought now that every one had a better heart than I had; and could have changed heart with any body. I thought none but the devil himself could equalize me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind. I fell, therefore, at the sight of my own vileness deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition that I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God; sure, I am given up to the devil, and to a reprobate mind. And thus I continued a long while, even for some years together.

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[21] *Joel*, 3:21.

[22] *Luke*, 9:42.

[23] *Mark*, 9:20.

[24] *Psalms*, 107:16.

[25] *Isaiah*, 45:5.

While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder; the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life, as if they should live here always; the other was, when I found professors much distressed and cast down, when they met with outward losses; as of husband, wife, child, &c. "Lord," thought I, "what ado is here about such little things as these! What seeking after carnal things by some, and what grief in others for the loss of them! If they so much labor after, and spend so many tears for the things of this present life, how am I to be bemoaned, pitied, and prayed for! My soul is dying, my soul is damning. Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it, ah! how rich should I esteem myself, though blessed with bread and water! I should count those but small afflictions, and should bear them as little burthens. A wounded spirit who can bear?"

And though I was thus troubled, and tossed, and afflicted, with the sight and sense and terror of my own wickedness, yet I was afraid to let this sense and sight go quite off my mind; for I found that unless guilt of conscience was taken off the right way, that is, by the blood of Christ, a man grew rather worse for the loss of his trouble of mind, than better. Wherefore, if my guilt lay hard upon me, then I should cry that the blood of Christ might take it off; and if it was going off without it (for the sense of sin would be sometimes as if it would die, and go quite away) then I would also strive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the punishment for sin in hell-fire upon my spirit; and should cry, "Lord, let it not go off my heart, but the right way, but by the blood of Christ, and by the application of thy mercy, through him, to my soul"; for that Scripture lay much upon me, "Without shedding of blood is no remission."[26] And that which made me the more afraid of this was, because I had seen some, who, though when they were under wounds of conscience, then they would cry and pray; yet, seeking rather present ease from their trouble than pardon for their sin, cared not how they lost their guilt so they got it out of their mind; now, having got it off the wrong way, it was not sanctified unto them; but they grew harder and blinder and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God the more, that it might not be so with me.

And now was I sorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate. I counted man as unconverted, the most doleful of all creatures. Thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition, I counted myself alone, and above the most of men unblessed.

Yea, I thought it impossible that ever I should attain to so much goodness of heart, as to thank God that he had made me a man. Man indeed is the most noble by creation of all creatures in the visible world; but by sin he had made himself the most ignoble. The beasts, birds, fishes, &c., I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature, they were not obnoxious to the wrath of God; they were not to go to hell-fire after death. I could therefore have rejoiced, had my condition been as any of theirs.

In this condition I went a great while; but when the comforting time was come, I heard one preach a sermon upon those words in the Song, "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair."[27] But at that time he made these two words, "my love," his chief and subject matter; from which, after he had a little opened the text, he observed these several conclusions: "1. That the church, and so every saved soul, is Christ's love, when loveless. 2. Christ's love without a cause. 3. Christ's love when hated of the world. 4. Christ's love when under temptation, and under desertion. 5. Christ's love, from first to last."

But I got nothing by what he said at present; only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said: "If it be so, that the saved soul is Christ's love when under temptation and desertion; then, poor tempted soul, when thou art assaulted and afflicted with temptations, and the hidings of God's face, yet think on these two words, 'my love,' still."

So as I was a going home, these words came again into my thoughts; and I well remember, as they came in, I said thus in my heart, "What shall I get by thinking on these two words?" This thought had no sooner passed through my heart, but these words began thus to kindle in my spirit: "Thou art my love, thou art my love," twenty times together; and still as they ran thus in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me look up. But being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, "But is it true? but is it true?" At which, that sentence fell in upon me, "He wist not that it was true which was done by the angel."[28]

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[26] *Hebrews*, 9:22.

[27] *Song of Solomon*, 4:1.

Then I began to give place to the word, which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, "Thou are my love, thou art my love, and nothing shall separate thee from my love." And with that Romans eight, thirty-nine, came into my mind. Now was my heart filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me; yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home. I thought I could have spoken of his love, and have told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me; wherefore I said in my soul, with much gladness, "Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any further, for surely I will not forget this forty years hence." But alas! within less than forty days I began to question all again; and by times, fell to my old courses again; which made me begin to question all still.

(1666)

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[28] *Acts,* 12:9.

THE RESTORATION

The Later Stuarts and the "Glorious" Revolution

The Renaissance impulse towards individual liberation, which had burst forth in a magnificent expansion of the human spirit and had awakened national consciousness in England under Elizabeth, had, by the course of events, led to a civil war. With the failure of the Commonwealth to arrange, as the Puritans had hoped, a society according to divine law, there followed a temporary exhaustion of public morale. Sick of the heavy responsibilities of democratic enterprise, and unable to digest more of the harshness of Puritan evaluations of this life and pessimism concerning the next, Englishmen submitted for twenty-eight years to the absolutism of the Stuarts, who were restored to the throne in 1660. John Dryden, once the author of a panegyric on Cromwell, fairly expressed the sentiments of his fellow countrymen when he welcomed back Charles II in another, *Astraea Redux*. As a matter of fact, English liberty was dormant rather than extinct during the Restoration. In 1688 England was to prove its unwillingness to sacrifice the gains of its earlier struggles.

The restoration of the court meant the momentary triumph of the upper classes over the lower, and of the Anglican Church over the Presbyterian and Independent. Charles himself seemed too good-natured to subscribe to that "divine right of kings" which had cost his father his head. With the emotional orgy of the Puritan conflict over, and the mystical hysteria of its enthusiasm enervated, Englishmen looked to the throne to establish moderation and order. Outwardly conforming to the Anglican Church, Charles left the government to his ministers. At once the Anglicans, now in power in Parliament, set about repressing all dissenters; a fifth of the English clergy, who refused to satisfy Parliamentary requirements, were driven from their parishes as Nonconformists. These men were among the most learned of their various faiths, leaders in London and in England generally; their expulsion resulted in their uniting, despite their differences, in a great party of Dissenters. Thus at once, early in the Restoration, religious divisions formed the basis of political divisions, and we find the origins of the Whig and Tory parties (cf. Introduction to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel, below*). Against one of the smaller groups among the Nonconformists, the Quakers, a special act was passed because of their refusal to bear arms or take oaths. Before the King's Declaration of Indulgence set them free, some twelve hundred Quakers had been imprisoned. In 1665 domestic difficulties were enhanced by a war with the Dutch, and by a plague which killed off one hundred thousand Londoners in six months; in 1666 a great fire in London destroyed fourteen hundred buildings.

In the meantime Charles II, who set the tone for his court, was deceiving Englishmen by his gay and pleasure-loving life. Samuel Pepys (cf. *below*), who kept a valuable diary of contemporary affairs, was convinced, like most of those who observed the King, that Charles "hates the very sight or thoughts of business." His exile in France had apparently improved the monarch's ease, gracious manners, courteous address, and witty discourse. He showed considerable interest in the scientific researches of the Royal Society, was devoted to naval architecture, and liked the arts. He seemed to be intent on nothing more than his own pleasures, bore himself with fashionable cynicism, and changed his mistresses frequently, creating new titles for his illegitimate sons. His other personal indulgences were varied with drinking and gambling, on the excuse that it was unthinkable that God "would make a man miserable only for taking a little pleasure out of the way." He openly professed the opinion that virtue, honor, and gratitude were shams invented by hypocrites for the deception of fools.

But behind all this seeming unconcern with political ambition, Charles was careful to garner all the prerogatives he could for the Crown. It was part of his astuteness to earn the reputation of a royal hedonist, particularly when acquiring it suited his personal tastes. He was clever, too, in that he yielded to public pressure on most issues—a piece of wisdom unshared by his successor; he did his best to retain the friendship of Parliament until he was strong enough to oppose it. All the while, he was making his own arrangements with France and building himself a standing army. A series of complicated intrigues, to which he sacrificed by his treachery many of his statesmen, brought him always nearer to his end of re-establishing a despotism. "There is not a person in the world," said Shaftesbury of him, "man or woman, that dares rely upon him or put any confidence in his word or friendship." Opposition to the Crown crystallized around the movement, led by Shaftesbury, to have Charles's illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, named as successor to the throne in place of the King's brother, James. The collapse of this plot brought Charles his opportunity. That he would have acted to the injury of English liberty had not death intervened at this point, is clear from his final deeds.

Charles died in 1685. His brother, the unpopular James II, succeeded him, and for the first time since Mary Tudor an English monarch avowed membership in the Roman Catholic Church. The Duke of Monmouth, supported by Nonconformists in the Whig party, raised a revolt against him which was put down very quickly (1685). James's bloody Chief-Justice Jeffreys, a man whose name has since become a byword for cruelty, caused 350 rebels to be hanged in his progress from Dorset to Somerset; 800 were sold into slavery over the sea, and an even greater number were whipped and thrown into prison. This was but the beginning on the part of the throne to terrorize the public into submission. James increased his standing army to twenty thousand men. Knowing himself disliked at home, he turned to France for aid. "Tell your master," he said to the French ambassador, "that without his protection I can do nothing. He has a right to be consulted, and it is my wish to consult him, about everything." This secret submission to the dangerous Louis XIV could bode no good to Englishmen. Uneasy at Louis's military ambitions, Protestants were further filled with misgivings because of his persecution of his Protestant subjects in

France. James's alliance with Louis seemed like a threat to Anglican and Nonconformist alike. Moreover, through his appointed judges, James established a precedent whereby he could set aside the penal laws. The sudden influx of monks into England did nothing to reassure the Protestants. When James forbade the preaching of sermons against his religion, Protestant intolerance took it as an evil presage and the King was greeted by renewed hostility from pulpits. His answer was to replace a number of high officials who refused to accept the Roman Catholic faith. Even his courtiers, who were loyal to the throne, could not support him in his attempts to override the decrees of Parliament. Failing to win over the Anglican Tories, he tried to make friends with the Nonconformists, but failed. The Catholic gentry themselves urged moderation upon him, but he seemed intent on alienating his subjects. He went so far as to oust the fellows of Oxford in an endeavor to convert that university from a training-school for Protestant clergymen into a seminary for his own faith. When he found both Houses of Parliament opposing him, he dismissed the Commons.

Feeling the Parliamentary system menaced, both Whigs and Tories in June 1688 signed a formal invitation to William of Orange, James's son-in-law, to intervene for the restoration of English liberty. The country, by demonstrations and bonfires, showed itself on the eve of a revolt, and the King's own army was sympathetic. James found himself completely without support from the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, the professions, the farmers, or the traders. His appointees had no legal status, and hardly one of his ministers could pretend to lawful authority. He made a final effort to bend the country to his will in vain. When he learned that the Dutch States-General had sanctioned William's coming to England, he tried a last-minute reversal of his policies by replacing dismissed officers and restoring franchises to towns, though he refused to summon a Parliament. But he was too late. On November 5, 1688, William landed with an army of thirteen thousand men amidst the joyful acclaim of English citizens. Everywhere nobles and commoners flocked to his standard, while the King's army, demoralized by desertion and disagreement, fell back. William entered London, and James fled to France. Parliament now met again and voted that James "having endeavored to subvert the constitution of this kingdom by breaking the original contract between King and People . . . and having withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, has abdicated the Government." A Parliamentary commission drew up a Declaration of Rights, reasserting the ancient liberties of Englishmen, denying the right of any king to supersede laws, demanding securities for the free worship of all Protestants, and binding the new monarch to maintain the Protestant religion and the laws of the land. William and Mary (daughter of James II) accepted the crown jointly as King and Queen of England, with the assurance that they acknowledged these rights of their subjects.

The Declaration of Rights became the Bill of Rights when Parliament convened in 1689. Thus was established the prerogative of the people, through their representatives, to depose a monarch, change the line of succession, or choose their own monarch. The theories of divine and hereditary right were ended; every English monarch since William and Mary has been such only by act of Parliament. The bloodless, or as it is often called, the "glorious" Revolution of 1688 had won and codified that democracy for which the Puritans had fought. And the English government today is a development of the principles fixed in 1688 when the people, as writers have often reminded them, chose their rulers of their own free will.

The Literature of the Restoration

The literary period beginning with the return of Charles II in 1660 and ending with the death of Dryden in 1700 has generally been called the Restoration, despite the fact that the Revolution of 1688 introduced a new political era. Results of the Glorious Revolution to the world of letters are to be seen clearly only during the ensuing century.

Literature during the Restoration was aristocratic, and particularly so in its most characteristic form, the drama (cf. Introduction to Congreve, *below*). The Court, having spent years of exile in France, returned with a taste for grandiose tragedy in the style of Corneille and for the comedy of manners as written by Molière. The most popular (if that word may be used for a limited audience which excluded most of the people) of Restoration tragedies were of the kind called "heroic"; in these stilted pieces rank, honor, love, and war formed the conflicts, which were bombastically treated. Dryden, who wrote a number (cf. *below*), produced the best of them in *The Conquest of Granada.* But the only truly fine tragedy of the period, *Venice Preserved* (1682), was written by Otway in a manner more Elizabethan than Restoration. In comedy the model was superior, and to the great plays of Molière (cf. *below*) many of the dramatists went for plots, dialogue, situations, and characters. Realistic as classical comedy tends to be, it achieved greater things in England than the heroic tragedy because it succeeded in remaining native in tone. The comedy of manners was introduced into Restoration drama by Etherege, developed by Wycherley, and raised to a perfect art by Congreve (cf. *below*); after him Vanbrugh and Farquhar continued the tradition into the next century. These men created a body of drama, gay, scintillating, cynical, heartless, and licentious—a perfect mirror of the social world of the Court and its hangers-on. As in France, considerable discussion took place about the unities of time, place, and action; but in practice English drama never became completely subservient to them, as the French had been. Of the older dramatists, Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher were revived, often in adaptations; their fellows, because of their romantic qualities, no longer suited the "correct" tastes of the time. (Pepys, the frank diarist, found *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "the most insipid ridiculous play" he ever had seen.) Jonsonian humors, because of their affinity to the classics, were highly favored, and were imitated for the purpose of lauding monarchy and attacking the Puritans.

Among the lesser poets, Sedley, Rochester, Denham, Waller, and Cowley were singing variations on the old Cavalier tunes. More typical of the times is the work of Samuel Butler (1612-1680), whose *Hudibras* (1663) had an enormous vogue and was often copied, because of its harsh attack on the Puritans. Taking his cue from *Don Quixote* and from the satires of the Frenchman, Paul Scarron (1610-1660), Butler employed the trappings of chivalric romance in order to satirize his Puritan hero. The poem was a great favorite of Charles's, however tedious most of its rough doggerel may seem to us. The Puritans were naturally the objects of execration by friends of the Court, and Butler had timed his work perfectly. The great success of *Hudibras* has often proved misleading to critics who have taken it as symptomatic of a complete revulsion on the part of the English people against the Commonwealth. It should be remembered that Restoration literature left unrepresented the great mass of Englishmen. *Hudibras* is indeed historically important for the light it throws on the nature of Restoration letters; but it was during the very decade of its success that the greatest of Puritan poems, *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes,* were first published, to be followed a few years later by the greatest of Puritan prose works, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. These too, let it be recalled, had their public.

For the Restoration reader, in fact, only one master was writing—John Dryden (cf. *below*). The student of letters who would discover the permanent values that were being created behind the external graces of the period, must concentrate on him. His genius was of such breadth that it may be truly said that he encompassed his times. No other period, since the dawn of the Renaissance in England, presents at first glance so much the appearance of containing but one great poet as does the Restoration, which has been often called "the Age of Dryden." He established both the poetic form (the heroic couplet) to be used by the majority of poets for a hundred years and the norm for a modern English prose style; he contributed the first significant body of literary criticism to our aesthetics; and, with the exception of the novel, he experimented successfully in every literary category which was to interest authors for a century. Dryden is pre-eminent in his age for the thought and care with which he tried to assimilate the great intellectual problems of his era, as a preparation for his own creations.

The seventeenth century is one of the crucial centuries of modern times. In it not only was the concept of democracy developed through the Puritan and Glorious revolutions, but rationalism in philosophy and the first great advances in natural science were realized. The seventeenth century, in short, despite its being, because of its religious controversies, one of the most intolerant on record, was all the while laying the foundations for tolerance, liberty, and scientific progress. Of the last-named, Francis Bacon had been, in the opening years, the herald. Although the first scientific academy was formed by Galileo's students at Florence in 1657, the beginnings of the English counterpart were much earlier. By 1645 a group of Bacon's followers were meeting regularly for the purpose of advancing science, and taking as their model the House of Solomon in Bacon's *New Atlantis* (cf. p. 359, *above*). In 1662 they were granted a charter by Charles II, and the great history of the Royal Society therewith begins. Robert Hooke (1635-1703), its first curator, presented his versatile experiments at each meeting; others discussed their own experiments; and often particular experiments were assigned to various members. The gentlemen of the society concerned themselves with chemical, physical, biological, and practical scientific problems. Here Boyle's law was tested, and the cellular structure of organic bodies was discovered. Expeditions were equipped for the testing of new theories, museums were established, and the findings of the society were given regular publication from the year 1665. In France similar meetings were being held by such mathematicians and philosophers as Descartes, Pascal, and Gassendi. Many new scientific instruments were beginning to find employment: the compound microscope, invented in Holland in 1590 by Jansen and popularized by Hooke in his *Micrographia* (1665); the telescope, first used for astronomical observation by Galileo, and vastly improved in 1668 by Newton's reflector; the thermometer, first proposed by the French physician, Jean Rey; the barometer, invented by Torricelli and Pascal (1647?); the pendulum clock, patented by Huygens in 1657. In the science of astronomy, which was second to none in overthrowing medievalism, the first great advances after Copernicus were made by the German, Johann Kepler (1571-1630), whose theories were summarized in his *Epitome of the Copernican Astronomy* (1621); Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) by his improved telescope was able to add abundantly to descriptive astronomy with his discoveries of the moon's valleys and mountains, the star clusters of the Milky Way, the satellites of Jupiter, and the rings of Saturn. Not less important was Galileo's demonstration of the experimental method in his investigation of the law of falling bodies. Incorporating Kepler's and Galileo's findings, Isaac Newton (1642-1727) formulated his famous law of universal gravitation; his *Principia* (1687), published one year before the Glorious Revolution, was not only the crowning synthesis of scientific research in his century but also the inspirer of much of the liberal thinking of the eighteenth century in philosophy and theology. We have but skimmed the surface of seventeenth-century scientific endeavor when we add, as also worthy of note: Descartes' invention of analytical geometry and formulation of a theory of numbers; Pascal's, Fermat's, and Huygens's work on calculus; Newton's and Leibnitz's development of infinitesimal calculus, which has proved indispensable for dynamic mechanics and engineering; Halley's study of planetary motion, comets, and the sun's corona; Stevinus's work on pulleys and hydrostatics; Galileo's, Mersenne's, Taylor's, and Gassendi's experiments in the physics of sound; Swammerdam's invention of the science of entomology; and Harvey's epochal *Anatomical Dissertation upon the Movement of the Heart* (1628), which was but the beginning of amazing progress in anatomy during the century. Literary historians generally omit any mention of these revolutionary developments in science, with little justification. For these inventions and discoveries were instrumental in remolding the very modes of European thinking, and hence of the living of every man and woman, and ultimately, therefore, of literature.

Indeed, in the seventeenth century speculative philosophy was undergoing profound changes. In the concluding years of the preceding century, the *Essays* of Montaigne had stimulated France and England with a view of society which was a complete repudiation of the medieval (cf. pp. 353-357, *above*). A son of a father who was a pious Catholic and of a Jewish mother who had been converted to Protestantism, Montaigne held views of such urbanity as could have been acceptable to few Catholics, Protestants, or Jews of his time. Detached and tolerant of every kind of faith, he was vitally interested in the customs and beliefs of mankind all over the earth. What he had learned made Montaigne consider philosophy not, as the medievalists would have had it, the handmaid of theology, but rather a preparation for intelligent living in this life. The process of self-examination which he strongly advocated and practiced, did much to foster that atmosphere of intellectual humility and skepticism which has proved so vitalizing to modern philosophy and science.

The attack of Bacon on scholasticism we have already considered (pp. 358-359, *above*). An even more significant thinker was his late contemporary, René Descartes (1596-1650). Convinced that mathematics "is a more powerful instrument of knowledge than any other," Descartes, one of the world's greatest mathematicians, applied the mathematical method to his philosophical investigations. In his *Discourse on Method* (1637), he insisted that in building any system of knowledge it was essential to disavow all accepted authority; nothing must be held as true until it can be so proved. With this point of departure, he agreed to doubt everything at the outset, even his own existence; this left him with only one certainty, i.e. that he was thinking. In order to think, he argued, I must exist (his famous *Cogito, ergo sum*); and this first step of deductive logic is typical of his procedure in erecting a structure of knowledge. Thus he constructed his world on purely mechanical bases: space or extension became the ultimate reality, and motion the means of all change. From his mechanical explanation of the universe he exempted only God and the soul of man. The great importance of Descartes in philosophy is his substitution of reason for authority in the search for truth.

It remained for the Englishman, Thomas Hobbes (1586-1679), to institute, as Höffding says, "the best thought-out attempt of modern times to make our knowledge of natural science the foundations of all our knowledge of existence." As a young man he acted as secretary to Bacon; his travels on the Continent brought him the acquaintance of Descartes, Galileo, Gassendi, and Mersenne. He thus came in direct succession to leaders of the new philosophy. Like Descartes he followed the deductive method of geometry. But unlike Descartes he made no reservations in applying mechanical principles to mind as well as matter. "All that exists is body," he says; "all that occurs is motion." He is thus the first modern teacher of scientific materialism, and the founder of mechanical empiricism. All that we know, he believed, comes from the impact of bodily particles on the sense organs. He divided philosophy into three separate branches: physics, a study of bodies; psychology, a study of man as an individual; and politics, a study of man as part of a social group. Man, Hobbes found, is by nature self-seeking and egotistic, and his natural state is one of war. In order to end the anarchy of his natural state, man contracted to live under a government. Ethics and morality, consequently, as well as religion, are seen to be legitimately a concern of the state. From this position, Hobbes argued the necessity of an absolute monarchy without responsibility to the governed.

The book which most completely states his philosophy, *Leviathan* (1651), is one of the most important works in modern philosophy, being, as it is, the earliest of complete materialistic systems, and a pioneer in psychology and ethical naturalism. It is written in a firm, clear prose which some scholars think did much to shape that of Dryden, called the first modern English prose.

The effect of science was to make men more interested in the realities about them than in the creations of their fancies; the effect of the speculations of Montaigne, Descartes, and Hobbes was to establish a rational rather than an emotional approach to life. This concern with the real and the rational is evident to a notable degree for the first time in Restoration letters, and becomes the dominant tone of eighteenth-century literature. The interest in the realistic we have already noted in Restoration comedy, but it is to be seen as well in the tendency of Restoration literature in general to deal with current problems. With the exception of his lyrical works and some of his translations, all of Dryden's important poems have to do with matters of immediate import: *Astraea Redux,* with the restoration of Charles; *Annus Mirabilis,* with the events of 1665-6; *Absalom and Achitophel,* with the Monmouth conspiracy; *The Medal,* with the acquittal of Shaftesbury; *Mac Flecknoe,* with a rival poet; *Religio Laici,* with a defense of the Anglican Church against Deists and Catholics; and *The Hind and the Panther,* with a defense of the Catholic Church against the Anglicans. Such will be the nature, too, of the bulk of writings in the next century.

The emphasis on reason resulted, as it did in Hobbes's *Leviathan*, in the according of an inferior place to the imagination and to individual expression. The Restoration and the eighteenth century were preoccupied with discovering such standards as would satisfy common (as opposed to merely personal) sense. Hence the success of the reasonable, if uninspired, heroic couplet. Hence, too, the turning to the ancients and to France for models. The past in English literature offered too dizzying a variety for the seeker of order and rules. The literature of Greece and Rome, however, had been remarkable for restraint, clarity, and balance. The success with which the classics had withstood the ravages of time, moreover, proved the value of those qualities. In the comedies of Plautus and Terence, and in the satires of Horace, Juvenal, Persius, and Martial there had been, too, a lively concern with realism. The imitation of the ancients, therefore, was inevitable to such an age. In addition, Aristotle (cf. *below*), Longinus, and Horace (cf. *below*) had given thought to the problem of literary creation, and thus raised literary criticism to a position of importance. Above all, the golden age of Louis XIV had already proved in the tragedies of Corneille, in the comedies of Molière, and in the satires and literary criticism of Boileau (cf. *below*) and his confrères, what greatness might be achieved by following the lead of the ancients.

It was for these reasons, therefore, that with Dryden began a century of "neoclassicism" in England; only with the publication of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) is it safe to say that the period of imitation of the classics is over. But it cannot be too strongly stressed, since it is usually overlooked, that this neoclassicism was essentially a by-product of an age that was more markedly an age of reason with a strong interest in science and materialism. Only too often does one get the impression from literary histories that Englishmen on May 29, 1660, the day of Charles's return to London, awoke and decided: "Let's become classical, and imitate the French." The dependence on the classics was the result of a search for reasonable standards. And the classics, it should be remembered, were valued for their form rather than their content. The neoclassicists used classic garb for writing on contemporary *English* subjects. Even their translations of the classics were usually adaptations to give them modern significance.

For the social and political history of the age, the following will be found useful: A. Bryant, *The England of Charles II* (1934); G. N. Clark, *The Seventeenth Century*

(1929); K. Feiling, *A History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714* (1924); G. P. Gooch, *The History of English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century* (1912); C. E. Whiting, *Studies in English Puritanism from the Restoration to the Revolution, 1660-1688* (1931). For the intellectual background these are excellent: A. W. Benn, *A History of English Rationalism* (1906); E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (1925); R. F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns* (1936); B. Willey, *The Seventeenth Century Background* (1934). For literary criticism and history consult: R. M. Alden, *The Rise of Formal Satire in England* (1899); A. F. B. Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England* (1925); R. Garnett, *The Age of Dryden* (1897, 1907); B. Wendell, *The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature* (1904).

Samuel Pepys

(1633-1703)

Though he was born the son of a London tailor, Samuel Pepys advanced to a high place during the Restoration. Good connections enabled him to progress from post to post until, by the time of James II's accession to the throne, he was virtually Minister of the Navy. On the way he managed to collect a sizable fortune for himself and also to save the government money by introducing economies into the British navy. An able businessman, he sailed in triumph through difficulties with the House of Commons, where he served as Member for Harwich in 1679. In 1684 he was elected President of the Royal Society, which he had joined in its early days. But the fall in 1688 of his friend James II ended Pepys's career. He went into retirement and devoted himself to correspondence and his large library. In 1690 he published his *Memoirs Relating to the State of the Royal Navy.* He died on May 25, 1703, bequeathing his books to his *alma mater*, Magdalen College, Cambridge. On May 26, 1703, John Evelyn noted his friend's death in his formal diary, and wrote of Pepys as "a very worthy, industrious and curious person, none in England exceeding him in knowledge of the navy, in which he passed through all the most considerable offices. . . . He was universally beloved, hospitable, generous, learned in many things, skilled in music, a very great cherisher of learned men of whom he had the conversation. His library and a collection of other curiosities were the most considerable, the models of ships especially."

Such was the reputation of Pepys in his own day, and if he had been no more than such a man he would have found no place in literary history. But more than a century after his death, the Reverend John Smith discovered, among the books left to Magdalen College, six bound volumes of closely-written shorthand which he worked over from 1819 to 1822, and which gave the world a new Pepys, the man revealed in this secret diary.

Never intended for publication, the *Diary* gives us both a full picture of the first decade in Restoration London and a complete insight into the private life of its author. Pepys began it on January 1, 1660, in the conviction that he was on the eve of important events, and carried it through to May 31, 1669, when he stopped because of his failing eyesight. His last entry is significant: "And thus ends all that I doubt I shall ever be able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my Journal, I being not able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my eyes almost every time I take a pen in my hand; . . . and therefore resolve, from this time forward, to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must therefore be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know."

It is, indeed, the secrecy with which this diary was kept that makes it of such value for us. Determined that no one else should know its contents, he invented signs and introduced foreign words to complicate his shorthand. Thus he felt free to confide everything to his journal: the small talk he heard in his rounds of parish, tavern, and Court; his own quirks and vanities; his love for his French wife and his quarrels with her; his preferences in books, music, food, and clothes; his peccadilloes; and the daily passage of events. Pepys, however successful in worldly affairs, was on the whole a man of the most mediocre tastes. And that, curiously enough, is the explanation of his unique place in literature. In his confidence that he was recording only for his own eyes, he never retouches, heightens, or alters the plain facts of his experiences and reflections. In the Diary we find, in short, the amiabilities and shortcomings common to humanity—the average man in undress.

In an age making much of literary criticism, he records his opinions without apology: "Saw *Romeo and Juliet* the first time it was ever acted; but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard in my life." He makes no pretensions to greater bravery than he possesses: "While I was in Kirton's shop, a fellow came to offer kindness or force to my wife in the coach, but she refusing, he went away, after the coachman had struck him, and he the coachman. So I being called, went thither, and the fellow coming out again of a shop, I did give him a good cuff or two on the chops, and seeing him not oppose me, I did give him another." His complete honesty is disarming: "Saw a wedding in the church; . . . strange to see what delight we married people have to see these poor fools decoyed into our condition." "Waked in the morning, with my head in a sad taking through last night's drink." "We saw *Midsummer's Night's Dream*, which I . . . shall never see again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life." "My father and I discoursed seriously about my sister's coming to live with me, and yet I am much afraid of her ill nature." "I cannot forbear carrying my watch in my hand in the coach all this afternoon, and seeing what o'clock it is one hundred times." Nothing is too trivial for him to set down: "Waking this morning out of my sleep on a sudden, I did with my elbow hit my wife a great blow over her face and nose, which waked her with pain, at which I was sorry, and to sleep again." "Up, and with my wife to church, it being Whitsunday; my wife very fine in a new yellow bird's-eye hood, as the fashion is now." "After business dined at the Sheriff's . . . where to my heart's content I met with his wife, a most beautiful fat woman."

But it is not only for the complete exhibition of Pepys in all his whimsicality, egotism, self-importance, and kindliness, or for the entertaining accounts of his endless tiffs with "my poor wife," that his *Diary* is precious to us. Everything happening to his friends, to Londoners, and to the nation was full of interest to him. Great events, like the return of Charles, the Great Plague, and the Great Fire (cf. *below*) he recorded with the same zest with which he noted the curious minor happenings of the day. No other book gives to readers the same sense of living in the period. The *Diary* is an invaluable historical document.

The standard edition is that of H. B. Wheatley (nine volumes, 1893-6). R. C. Howarth has edited Pepys's *Letters and Second Diary* (1932). Excellent studies are J. R. Tanner's *Introduction to the Diary* (1925); A. Bryant's *Samuel Pepys* (two volumes, 1935-7); and R. L. Stevenson's essay in *Men and Books*.

From *The Diary*

Bringing in the King[1]

May 21, 1660.[2] By letters that came hither in my absence, I understand that the Parliament had ordered all persons to be secured, in order to a trial, that did sit as judges in the late King's death, and all the officers too attending the Court. News brought that the two Dukes are coming on board, which, by and by, they did, in a Dutch boat, the Duke of York in yellow trimmings, the Duke of Gloucester in gray and red. My Lord went in a boat to meet them, the captain, myself, and others, standing at the entering port. So soon as they were entered we shot the guns off round the fleet. After that they went to view the ship all over, and were most exceedingly pleased with it. They seem to be both very fine gentlemen. News is sent us that the King is on shore; so my Lord fired all his guns round twice, and all the fleet after him, which in the end fell into disorder, which seemed very handsome. The gun over against my cabin I fired myself to the King, which was the first time that he had been saluted by his own ships since this change; but holding my head too much over the gun, I had almost spoiled my right eye. Nothing in the world but going of guns almost all this day.

May 23, 1660. The Doctor and I waked very merry. In the morning came infinity of people on board from the King to go along with him. My Lord, Mr. Crew, and others, go on shore to meet the King as he comes off from shore, where Sir R. Stayner bringing His Majesty into the boat, I hear that His Majesty did with a great deal of affection kiss my Lord upon his first meeting. The King, with the two Dukes and Queen of Bohemia, Princess Royal, and Prince of Orange, came on board, where I in their coming in kissed the King's, Queen's, and Princess's hands, having done the other before. Infinite shooting off of the guns, and that in a disorder on purpose, which was better than if it had been otherwise. All day nothing but Lords and persons of honor on board, that we were exceeding full. Dined in a great deal of state, the Royal company by themselves in the coach, which was a blessed sight to see. After dinner the King and Duke altered the name of some of the ships, viz., the *Nazeby* into *Charles*; the *Richard*, *James;* the *Speaker*, *Mary;* the *Dunbar* (which was not in company with us), the *Henry; Winsly, Happy Return; Wakefield, Richmond; Lambert,* the *Henrietta*; *Cheriton,* the *Speedwell*; *Bradford,* the *Success.* This done, the Queen, Princess Royal, and Prince of Orange took leave of the King, and the Duke of York went on board the *London,* and the Duke of Gloucester, the *Swiftsure.* Which done, we weighed anchor, and with a fresh gale and most happy weather we set sail for England. All the afternoon the King walked here and there, up and down (quite contrary to what I thought him to have been), very active and stirring. Upon the quarter-deck he fell into discourse of his escape from Worcester, where it made me ready to weep to hear the stories that he told of his difficulties that he had passed through, as his traveling four days and three nights on foot, every step up to his knees in dirt, with nothing but a green coat and a pair of country breeches on, and a pair of country shoes that made him so sore all over his feet, that he could scarce stir. Yet he was forced to run away from a miller and other company, that took them for rogues. His sitting at table at one place, where the master of the house, that had not seen him in eight years, did know him, but kept it private; when at the same table there was one that had been of his own regiment at Worcester, could not know him, but made him drink the King's health, and said that the King was at least four fingers higher than he. At another place he was by some servants of the house made to drink, that they might know him not to be a Roundhead, which they swore he was. In another place at his inn, the master of the house, as the King was standing, with his hands upon the back of a chair by the fireside, kneeled down and kissed his hand, privately, saying, that he would not ask who he was, but bid God bless him whither he was going. Then the difficulty of getting a boat to get into France, where he was fain to plot with the master thereof to keep his design from the four men and a boy (which was all his ship's company), and so go to Fécamp in France. At Rouen he looked so poorly, that the people went into the rooms before he went away to see whether he had not stolen something or other. The King supped alone in the coach; after that I got a dish, and we four supped in my cabin, as at noon. So to my cabin again, where the company still was, and were talking more of the King's difficulties; as how he was fain to eat a piece of bread and cheese out of a poor boy's pocket; how, at a Catholic house he was fain to lie in the priest's hole a good while in the house for his privacy. Under sail all night, and most glorious weather.

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[1] Charles II, who is being restored to his throne after eleven years of exile.

[2] At the opening of this selection Pepys is aboard ship off the coast of Holland, waiting for the king and his court.

May 24, 1660. Up, and make myself as fine as I could, with the linning stockings on and wide canons that I bought the other day at Hague. Extraordinary press of noble company, and great mirth all the day. Walking upon the decks, where persons of honor all the afternoon, among others, Thomas Killigrew (a merry droll, but a gentleman of great esteem with the King), who told us many merry stories. After this discourse I was called to write a pass for my Lord Mandeville to take up horses to London, which I wrote in the King's name, and carried it to him to sign, which was the first and only one that ever he signed in the ship *Charles*. To bed, coming in sight of land a little before night.

May 25, 1660. By the morning we were come close to the land, and every body made ready to get on shore. The King and the two Dukes did eat their breakfast before they went, and there being set some ship's diet before them, only to show them the manner of the ship's diet, they eat of nothing else but peas and pork, and boiled beef. I spoke with the Duke of York about business, who called me Pepys by name, and upon my desire did promise me his future favor. Great expectation of the King's making some knights, but there was none. About noon (though the brigantine that Beale made was there ready to carry him) yet he would go in my Lord's barge with the two Dukes. Our Captain steered, and my Lord went along bare with him. I went, and Mr. Mansell, and one of the King's footmen, with a dog that the King loved, (which [dirtied] the boat, which made us laugh, and methink that a King and all that belong to him are but just as others are), in a boat by ourselves, and so got on shore when the King did, who was received by General Monk with all imaginable love and respect at his entrance upon the land of Dover. Infinite the crowd of people and the horsemen, citizens, and noblemen of all sorts. The Mayor of the town came and gave him his white staff, the badge of his place, which the King did give him again. The Mayor also presented him from the town a very rich Bible, which he took and said it was the thing that he loved above all things in the world. A canopy was provided for him to stand under, which he did, and talked awhile with General Monk and others, and so into a stately coach there set for him, and so away through the town towards Canterbury, without making any stay at Dover. The shouting and joy expressed by all is past imagination. My Lord returned late, and at his coming did give me order to cause the marke to be gilded, and a Crown and C. R. to be made at the head of the coach table, where the King today with his own hand did mark his height, which accordingly I caused the painter to do, and is not done as is to be seen

Coronation of Charles II

April 23, 1661. About 4 I rose and got to the Abbey,[3] where I followed Sir J. Denham, the Surveyor, with some company that he was leading in. And with much ado, by the favor of Mr. Cooper, his man, did get up into a great scaffold across the North end of the Abbey, where with a great deal of patience I sat from past 4 till 11 before the King came in. And a great pleasure it was to see the Abbey raised in the middle, all covered with red, and a throne (that is a chair) and footstool on the top of it; and all the officers of all kinds, so much as the very fiddlers, in red vests. At last comes in the Dean and Prebends of Westminster, with the Bishops (many of them in cloth of gold copes), and after them the Nobility, all in their Parliament robes, which was a most magnificent sight. Then the Duke, and the King with a scepter (carried by my Lord Sandwich) and sword and mond before him, and the crown too. The King in his robes, bareheaded, which was very fine. And after all had placed themselves, there was a sermon and the service; and then in the Quire at the high altar, the King passed through all the ceremonies of the Coronation, which to my great grief I and most in the Abbey could not see. The crown being put upon his head, a great shout begun, and he came forth to the throne, and there passed more ceremonies: as taking the oath, and having things read to him by the Bishop; and his lords (who put on their caps as soon as the King put on his crown) and bishops come, and kneeled before him. And three times the King at Arms went to the three open places on the scaffold, and proclaimed, that if anyone could show any reason why Charles Stuart should not be King of England, that now he should come and speak. And a General Pardon also was read by the Lord Chancellor, and medals flung up and down by my Lord Cornwallis, of silver, but I could not come by any. And the King came in with his crown on, and his scepter in his hand, under a canopy borne up by six silver staves, carried by Barons of the Cinque Ports,[4] and little bells at every end. After a long time, he got up to the farther end, and all set themselves down at their several tables; and that was also a brave sight: and the King's first course carried up by the Knights of the Bath. And many fine ceremonies there was of the Heralds leading up people before him, and bowing; and my Lord of Albermarle's going to the kitchen and eat a bit of the first dish that was to go to the King's table. But, above all, was these three Lords, Northumberland, and Suffolk, and the Duke of Ormond, coming before the courses on horseback, and staying so all dinner-time, and at last to bring up [Dymock] the King's Champion, all in armor on horseback, with his spear and target carried before him. And a Herald proclaims "That if any dare deny Charles Stuart to be lawful King of England, here was a Champion that would fight with him;" and with these words, the Champion flings down his gauntlet, and all this he do three times in his going up towards the King's table. At last when he is come, the King drinks to him, and then sends him the cup which is of gold, and he drinks it off, and then rides back again with the cup in his hand. I went from table to table to see the Bishops and all others at their dinner, and was infinitely pleased with it. At Mr. Bowyer's; a great deal of company, some I knew, others I did not. Here we stayed upon the leads and below till it was late, expecting to see the fire-works, but they were not performed tonight: only the City had a light like a glory round about it with bonfires. And after a little stay more I took my wife and Mrs. Frankleyn (who I proffered the civility of lying with my wife at Mrs. Hunt's tonight) to Axe-yard, in which at the further end there were three great bonfires, and a great many great gallants, men and women; and they laid hold of us, and would have us drink the King's health upon our knees, kneeling upon a faggot, which we all did, they drinking to us one after another. Which we thought a strange frolic; but these gallants continued thus a great while, and I wondered to see how the ladies did tipple. Thus did the day end with joy everywhere. Now, after all this, I can say that, besides the pleasure of the sight of these glorious things, I may now shut my eyes against any other objects, nor for the future trouble myself to see things of state and show, as being sure never to see the like again in this world.

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[3] Westminster Abbey, where the kings are always crowned.

The Great Fire of London

September 2 (*Lord's day*), *1666.* Some of our maids sitting up late last night to get things ready against our feast today, Jane called us up about three in the morning, to tell us of a great fire they saw in the City. So I rose and slipped on my night-gown,[5] and went to her window, and thought it to be on the back-side of Marke-lane at the farthest; but, being unused to such fires as followed, I thought it far enough off; and so went to bed again and to sleep. About seven rose again to dress myself, and there looked out at the window, and saw the fire not so much as it was and further off. By and by Jane comes and tells me that she hears that above 300 houses have been burned down tonight by the fire we saw, and that it is now burning down all Fish-street, by London Bridge. So I made myself ready presently, and walked to the Tower, and there got up upon one of the high places, Sir J. Robinson's little son going up with me; and there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge; which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So down, with my heart full of trouble, to the Lieutenant of the Tower, who tells me that it begun this morning in the King's baker's house in Pudding-lane, and that it hath burned St. Magnus's Church and most part of Fish-street already. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the Old Swan, already burned that way, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the Steele-yard, while I was here. Everybody endeavoring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them nto lighters that lay off; poor people staying in heir houses as long as till the very fire touched hem, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things, the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconys till they were, some of them burned, their wings, and fell down. Having stayed, and in an hour's time seen the fire rage every way, and nobody, to my sight, endeavoring to quench it, but to remove their goods, and leave all to the fire, and having seen it get as far as the Steele-yard, and the wind mighty high and driving it into the City; and every thing, after so long a drought, proving combustible, even the very stones of churches, and among other things he poor steeple by which pretty Mrs. —— lives, and whereof my old schoolfellow Elborough is parson, taken fire in the very top, and there burned till it fell down: I to White Hall (with a gentleman with me who desired to go off from the Tower, to see the fire, in my boat); to White Hall, and there up to the King's closet in the Chapel, where people come about me, and I did give them an account dismayed them all, and word was carried in to the King. So I was called for, and did tell the King and Duke of York what I saw, and that unless his Majesty did command houses to be pulled down nothing could stop the fire. They seemed much troubled, and the King commanded me to go to my Lord Mayor from him, and command him to spare no houses, but to pull down before the fire every way. At last met my Lord Mayor in Canning-street, like a man spent, with a handkerchief about his neck. To the King's message he cried, like a fainting woman, "Lord, what can I do? I am spent: people will not obey me. I have been pulling down houses; but the fire overtakes us faster than we can do it." People all almost distracted, and no manner of means used to quench the fire. The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter of burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames-street; and warehouses of oil, and wines, and brandy, and other things. And to see the churches all filling with goods by people who themselves should have been quietly there at this time. Met with the King and Duke of York in their barge, and with them to Queenhithe, and there called Sir Richard Browne to them. Their order was only to pull down houses apace, and so below bridge at the water-side; but little was or could be done, the fire coming upon them so fast. River full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water, and only I observed that hardly one lighter or boat in three that had the goods of a house in, but there was a pair of Virginals[6] in it. So near the fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire-drops. This is very true; so as houses were burned by these drops and flakes of fire, three or four, nay, five or six houses, one from another. When we could endure no more upon the water, we to a little ale-house on the Bankside, over against the Three Cranes, and there stayed till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow; and, as it grew darker, appeared more and more, and in corners and upon steeples, and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. Barbary and her husband away before us. We stayed till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long: it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruin. So home with a sad heart, and there find every body discoursing and lamenting the fire; and Poor Tom Hater come with some few of his goods saved out of his house, which is burned upon Fish-street Hill. I invited him to lie at my house, and did receive his goods, but was deceived in his lying there, the news coming every moment of the growth of the fire; so as we were forced to begin to pack up our own goods, and prepare for their removal; and did by moonshine (it being brave dry, and moonshine, and warm weather) carry much of my goods into the garden, and Mr. Hater and I did remove my money and iron chests into my cellar, as thinking that the safest place. And got my bags of gold into my office, ready to carry away, and my chief papers of accounts also there, and my tallies into a box by themselves.

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[4] the five English Channel ports, Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich. Winchelsea and Rye were added later.

[5] dressing gown.

September 3, 1666. About four o'clock in the morning, my Lady Batten sent me a cart to carry away all my money, and plate, and best things, to Sir W. Rider's at Bednall-greene. Which I did, riding myself in my nightgown in the cart; and, Lord! to see how the streets and the highways are crowded with people running and riding, and getting of carts at any rate to fetch away things. The Duke of York come this day by the office, and spoke to us, and did ride with his guard up and down the City to keep all quiet (he being now General, and having the care of all). At night lay down a little upon a quilt of W. Hewer's in the office, all my own things being packed up or gone; and after me my poor wife did the like, we having fed upon the remains of yesterday's dinner, having no fire nor dishes, nor any opportunity of dressing any thing.

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[6] a small, rectangular spinet without legs, usually spoken of in the plural as a pair of virginals.

September 4, 1666. Up by break of day to get away the remainder of my things. Sir W. Batten not knowing how to remove his wine, did dig a pit in the garden, and laid it in there; and I took the opportunity of laying all the papers of my office that I could not otherwise dispose of. And in the evening Sir W. Pen and I did dig another, and put our wine in it; and I my Parmazan cheese, as well as my wine and some other things. Only now and then walking into the garden, and saw how horridly the sky looks, all on a fire in the night, was enough to put us out of our wits; and, indeed, it was extremely dreadful, for it looks just as if it was at us, and the whole heaven on fire. I after supper walked in the dark town to Tower-street, and there saw it all on fire, at the Trinity House on that side, and the Dolphin Tavern on this side, which was very near us; and the fire with extraordinary vehemence. Now begins the practice of blowing up of houses in Tower-street, those next the Tower, which at first did frighten people more than any thing; but it stopped the fire where it was done, it bringing down the houses to the ground in the same places they stood, and then it was easy to quench what little fire was in it, though it kindled nothing almost. Paul's is burned, and all Cheap-side. I wrote to my father this night, but the post-house being burned, the letter could not go.

September 5, 1666. About two in the morning my wife calls me up and tells me of new cries of fire, it being come to Barking Church, which is the bottom of our lane. I up, and finding it so, resolved presently to take her away, and did, and took my gold, which was about £2350, W. Hewer, and Jane, down by Proundy's boat to Woolwich; but, Lord! what a sad sight it was by moonlight to see the whole City almost on fire, that you might see it plain at Woolwich, as if you were by it. There, when I come, I find the gates shut, but no guard kept at all, which troubled me, because of discourse now begun, that there is plot in it, and that the French had done it. I got the gates open, and to Mr. Shelden's, where I locked up my gold, and charged my wife and W. Hewer never to leave the room without one of them in it, night or day. So back again, by the way seeing my goods well in the lighters at Deptford, and watched well by people. Home, and whereas I expected to have seen our house on fire, it being now about seven o'clock, it was not. I up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw; everywhere great fires, oil-cellars, and brimstone, and other things burning. I became afraid to stay there long, and therefore down again as fast as I could, the fire being spread as far as I could see it; and to Sir W. Pen's, and there eat a piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday, but the remains of Sunday's dinner.

September 6, 1666. It was pretty to see how hard the women did work in the cannells, sweeping of water; but then they would scold for drink, and be as drunk as devils. I saw good butts of sugar broke open in the street, and people go and take handfuls out, and put into beer, and drink it. And now all being pretty well, I took boat, and over to Southwarke, and took boat on the other side the bridge, and so to Westminster, thinking to shift myself,[7] being all in dirt from top to bottom; but could not there find any place to buy a shirt or pair of gloves. A sad sight to see how the River looks; no houses nor church near it, to the Temple, where it stopped.

September 7, 1666. Up by five o'clock; and, blessed be God! find all well; and by water to Paul's Wharf. Walked thence, and saw all the town burned, and a miserable sight of Paul's church, with all the roofs fallen, and the body of the quire fallen into St. Fayth's; Paul's school also, Ludgate, and Fleet-street, my father's house, and the church, and a good part of the Temple the like. This day our Merchants first met at Gresham College, which, by proclamation, is to be their Exchange. Strange to hear what is bid for houses all up and down here; a friend of Sir W. Rider's having £150 for what he used to let for £40 per annum. Much dispute where the Custom-house shall be; thereby the growth of the City again to be foreseen. I home late to Sir W. Pen's, who did give me a bed; but without curtains or hanging, all being down. So here I went the first time into a naked bed, only my drawers on; and did sleep pretty well: but still both sleep and waking had a fear of fire in my heart, that I took little rest. People do all the world over cry out of the simplicity of my Lord Mayor in general, and more particularly in this business of the fire, laying it all upon him.

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[7] to change clothes.

Daniel Defoe

(1660-1731)

Like Bunyan, Defoe (born Daniel Foe) came from the ranks of common men. The son of a Presbyterian London butcher, Defoe spent some years in trade. In fact, his career as a writer, begun after his thirtieth year, would place him among the authors of the next period despite the date of his birth, were it not that the selection which we present makes an admirable piece of background for the Restoration.

His career was indeed a varied one, difficult to follow, and more difficult to understand. He was temperamentally the journalist, and once embarked upon writing as a profession, he turned out more than two hundred and fifty works. In addition there are more than one hundred and fifty other works of which he is the probable author. As if this were not sufficient activity for one lifetime, he was busy enough as a secret political agent to evoke the suspicion, quite justly it would seem, of his contemporaries. Although (on the face of some evidence) staunchly Puritan in belief and suffering imprisonment for his convictions, he served now the Whigs, now the Tories—spying on one party, then on the other, and often on both. His interest in his books apparently was confined to the income he could make from them. It is almost superfluous to add that the haste with which he published placed any artistic considerations quite outside his concern. In an age that made much of form, he was out of the current of elegance, and won no respect from his great fellow writers. Swift sneered at him as an illiterate scribbler.

In 1701 he wrote *The True-born Englishman*, a rugged poem castigating his countrymen for their prejudice against foreigners. The next year his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702) attacked the intolerance of the Established Church. Ironically Defoe suggested the severest persecution of Dissenters as the only way to save the English Church. The Tories, taking him literally, were at first delighted. When they realized they had been taken in, they had the tract publicly condemned and Defoe pilloried, fined, and imprisoned for his impudence.

When he was released and his business ruined through his disgrace, he entered the Whig service as pamphleteer and spy. Soon he began writing, almost in its entirety, a periodical, *The Review* (1704-13), an important predecessor of Steele's celebrated *Tatler*. His pen was feverishly busy on all kinds of subjects, while he sold political secrets to the opposing parties.

But he was a man of nearly sixty before he discovered his real talent—for fiction. Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor, had been cast upon an island off Chile, where he lived for five years. His adventures, published, inspired Defoe to try his hand at a similar account. In 1719 appeared the book that has made Defoe famous all over the world, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*. It was immediately a success. Upon it followed a series of journalistic narratives by Defoe, of which the best are *Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724). The secret of their hold upon the public was Defoe's marvelous knack for inventing circumstantial detail which gave his stories all the air of fact. The plainness of their style, moreover, added to their pretensions of being the unvarnished relation of actual happenings. Like the ghost-written "confessions" in our own yellow journals, Defoe's "autobiographies" of adventurers, prostitutes, and thieves were justified by their being published as "warnings" against deviation from the path of virtue. By the last page, the criminal usually had reformed.

Though he was a writer without any conscience for his craft, Defoe performed two services for English literature. In the first place, he prepared the way for the novel. His own romances lack nothing demanded of the novel but a plot; the incidents are strung together loosely. But his series of vivid portraits and his racy maintaining of interest in them strengthened public taste for books that followed the adventures of human beings through vicissitudes. Secondly, he made an important contribution—strange for a man who cared nothing for style!—to English prose. His very indifference to formal considerations (as also, perhaps, his haste in composition) resulted in what he himself called a "plain and homely style." The colloquial, racy quality of what he wrote did much to overcome false "elegance" in the ordinary prose of Englishmen and to establish the tone of that English prose which men use in daily intercourse.

A Journal of the Plague Year, often called Defoe's best work, is typical of the man. The book pretends to be a faithful record of "a citizen who continued all the while in London" during the terrible plague of 1665. And surely no eyewitness could have written a fuller or more detailed account "of the most remarkable occurrences, as well public as private which happened in London during the last great visitation." But the unalterable fact is that Defoe was a child of five in 1665, and all the statistics and particular references to persons and places which he produces as solemn history, could hardly have been garnered by any boy, no matter how precocious. Undoubtedly, Defoe must have heard many stories in his youth concerning that terrible year. However suspect, therefore, we are bound to hold the validity of every incident he relates, we are safe in assuming the general truth of the whole picture. But the bulk of the material must have been the product of his amazing imagination and ability to amass hundreds of striking details that lend verisimilitude to whatever he wrote.

It is not a matter of astonishment that there is not yet a complete edition of Defoe. The Oxford edition collected twenty volumes (1840-41), and sixteen volumes of the romances were edited by G. H. Maynadier (1903). Among the biographies are those by T. Wright (1931) and J. Sutherland (1937). Useful studies are W. P. Trent's *Defoe: How to Know Him* (1916); A. W. Secord's *Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe* (1924); and J. R. Moore's *Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies* (1939).

From *A Journal of the Plague Year*

Innumerable dismal stories we heard every day on this very account. Sometimes a man or woman dropped down dead in the very markets; for many people that had the plague upon them knew nothing of it till the inward gangrene had affected their vitals, and they died in a few moments. This caused that many died frequently in that manner in the street suddenly, without any warning; others, perhaps, had time to go to the next bulk or stall, or to any door or porch, and just sit down and die, as I have said before.

These objects were so frequent in the streets that when the plague came to be very raging on one side, there was scarce any passing by the streets but that several dead bodies would be lying here and there upon the ground. On the other hand, it is observable that, though at first the people would stop as they went along, and call to the neighbors to come out on such an occasion, yet afterwards no notice was taken of them; but that, if at any time we found a corpse lying, go across the way and not come near it; or, if in a narrow lane or passage, go back again, and seek some other way to go on the business we were upon; and in those cases the corpse was always left till the officers had notice to come and take them away, or till night, when the bearers attending the dead-cart would take them up and carry them away. Nor did those undaunted creatures who performed these offices fail to search their pockets, and sometimes strip off their clothes, if they were well dressed, as sometimes they were, and carry off what they could get.

But to return to the markets. The butchers took that care, that, if any person died in the market, they had the officers always at hand to take them up upon handbarrows, and carry them to the next churchyard; and this was so frequent that such were not entered in the weekly bill, "found dead in the streets or fields," as is the case now, but they went into the general articles of the great distemper.

But now the fury of the distemper increased to such a degree that even the markets were but very thinly furnished with provisions, or frequented with buyers, compared to what they were before; and the Lord Mayor caused the country people who brought provisions to be stopped in the streets leading into the town, and to sit down there with their goods, where they sold what they brought, and went immediately away; and this encouraged the country people greatly to do so, for they sold their provisions at the very entrances into the town, and even in the fields; as, particularly in the fields beyond Whitechapel, in Spital-fields. Note, those streets, now called Spital-fields, were then, indeed, open fields; also, in St. George's Fields, in Southwark; in Bunhill Fields, and in a great field, called Wood's Close, near Islington; thither the lord mayor, aldermen, and magistrates, sent their officers and servants to buy for their families, themselves keeping within doors as much as possible, and the like did many other people; and after this method was taken, the country people came with great cheerfulness, and brought provisions of all sorts and very seldom got any harm; which I suppose added also to that report of their being miraculously preserved.

As for my little family, having thus, as I have said, laid in a store of bread, butter, cheese, and beer, I took my friend and physician's advice, and locked myself up, and my family, and resolved to suffer the hardship of living a few months without flesh-meat rather than to purchase it at the hazard of our lives.

But though I confined my family, I could not prevail upon my unsatisfied curiosity to stay within entirely myself, and, though I generally came frighted and terrified home, yet I could not restrain, only that, indeed, I did not do it so frequently as at first.

I had some little obligations, indeed, upon me to go to my brother's house, which was in Coleman Street Parish, and which he had left to my care; and I went at first every day, but afterwards only once or twice a week.

In these walks I had many dismal scenes before my eyes, as, particularly, of persons falling dead in the streets, terrible shrieks and screechings of women, who in their agonies would throw open their chamber windows, and cry out in a dismal, surprising manner. It is impossible to describe the variety of postures in which the passions of the poor people would express themselves.

Passing through Token-House Yard in Lothbury, of a sudden a casement violently opened just over my head, and a woman gave three frightful screeches, and then cried, "Oh! death, death, death!" in a most inimitable tone, and which struck me with horror, and a chillness in my very blood. There was nobody to be seen in the whole street, neither did any other window open, for people had no curiosity now in any case, nor could anybody help one another; so I went on to pass into Bell Alley.

Just in Bell Alley, on the right hand of the passage, there was a more terrible cry than that, though it was not so directed out at the window. But the whole family was in a terrible fright, and I could hear women and children run screaming about the rooms like distracted, when a garret window opened, and somebody from a window on the other side the alley called and asked, "What is the matter?" Upon which from the first window it was answered, "O Lord, my old master has hanged himself!" The other asked again, "Is he quite dead?" and the first answered, "Ay, ay, quite dead; quite dead and cold!" This person was a merchant and a deputy alderman, and very rich. I care not to mention his name, though I knew his name too; but that would be an hardship to the family, which is now flourishing again.

But this is but one. It is scarce credible what dreadful cases happened in particular families every day,—people, in the rage of the distemper, or in the torment of their swellings, which was indeed intolerable, running out of their own government, raving and distracted, and oftentimes laying violent hands upon themselves, throwing themselves out at their windows, shooting themselves, etc.; mothers murdering their own children in their lunacy; some dying of mere grief as a passion, some of mere fright and surprise without any infection at all; others frighted into idiotism and foolish distractions, some into despair and lunacy, others into melancholy madness.

The pain of the swelling was in particular very violent, and to some intolerable. The physicians and surgeons may be said to have tortured many poor creatures even to death. The swellings in some grew hard, and they applied violent drawing plasters, or poultices, to break them; and, if these did not do, they cut and scarified them in a terrible manner. In some, those swellings were made hard, partly by the force of the distemper, and partly by their being too violently drawn, and were so hard that no instrument could cut them; and then they burned them with caustics, so that many died raving mad with the torment, and some in the very operation. In these distresses, some, for want of help to hold them down in their beds or to look to them, laid hands upon themselves as above; some broke out into the streets, perhaps naked, and would run directly down to the river, if they were not stopped by the watchmen or other officers, and plunge themselves into the water wherever they found it.

It often pierced my very soul to hear the groans and cries of those who were thus tormented. But of the two, this was counted the most promising particular in the whole infection: for if these swellings could be brought to a head, and to break and run, or, as the surgeons call it, to "digest," the patient generally recovered; whereas those who, like the gentlewoman's daughter, were struck with death at the beginning, and had the tokens come out upon them, often went about indifferently easy till a little before they died, and some till the moment they dropped down, as in apoplexies and epilepsies is often the case. Such would be taken suddenly very sick, and would run to a bench or bulk, or any convenient place that offered itself, or to their own houses, if possible, as I mentioned before, and there sit down, grow faint, and die. This kind of dying was much the same as it was with those who die of common mortifications, who die swooning, and, as it were, go away in a dream. Such as died thus had very little notice of their being infected at all till the gangrene was spread through their whole body; nor could physicians themselves know certainly how it was with them till they opened their breasts, or other parts of their body, and saw the tokens.

We had at this time a great many frightful stories told us of nurses and watchmen who looked after the dying people, that is to say, hired nurses, who attended infected people, using them barbarously, starving them, smothering them, or by other wicked means hastening their end, that is to say, murdering of them: and watchmen being set to guard houses that were shut up, when there has been but one person left, and perhaps that one lying sick, that they have broke in and murdered that body, and immediately thrown them out into the dead-cart; and so they have gone scarce cold to the grave.

I cannot say but that some such murders were committed, and I think two were sent to prison for it, but died before they could be tried; and I have heard that three others, at several times, were executed for murders of that kind. But I must say I believe nothing of its being so common a crime as some have since been pleased to say; nor did it seem to be so rational, where the people were brought so low as not to be able to help themselves; for such seldom recovered, and there was no temptation to commit a murder, at least not equal to the fact, where they were sure persons would die in so short a time, and could not live.

That there were a great many robberies and wicked practices committed even in this dreadful time, I do not deny. The power of avarice was so strong in some that they would run any hazard to steal and to plunder; and, particularly in houses where all the families or inhabitants have been dead and carried out, they would break in at all hazards, and, without regard to the danger of infection, take even the clothes off the dead bodies, and the bedclothes from others where they lay dead.

This, I suppose, must be the case of a family in Houndsditch, where a man and his daughter, the rest of the family being, as I suppose, carried away before by the dead-cart, were found stark naked, one in one chamber and one in another, lying dead on the floor, and the clothes of the beds, from whence 'tis supposed they were rolled off by thieves, stolen, and carried quite away.

It is indeed to be observed that the women were, in all this calamity, the most rash, fearless, and desperate creatures; and, as there were vast numbers that went about as nurses to tend those that were sick, they committed a great many petty thieveries in the houses where they were employed; and some of them were publicly whipped for it, when perhaps they ought rather to have been hanged for examples, for numbers of houses were robbed on these occasions; till at length the parish officers were sent to recommend nurses to the sick, and always took an account who it was they sent, so as that they might call them to account if the house had been abused where they were placed.

But these robberies extended chiefly to wearing-clothes, linen, and what rings or money they could come at, when the person died who was under their care, but not to a general plunder of the houses; and I could give you an account of one of these nurses, who several years after, being on her deathbed, confessed with the utmost horror the robberies she had committed at the time of her being a nurse, and by which she had enriched herself to a great degree. But as for murders, I do not find that there was ever any proofs of the fact in the manner as it has been reported, except as above.

They did tell me, indeed, of a nurse in one place that laid a wet cloth upon the face of a dying patient whom she tended, and so put an end to his life, who was just expiring before; and another that smothered a young woman she was looking to, when she was in a fainting fit, and would have come to herself; some that killed them by giving them one thing, some another, and some starved them by giving them nothing at all. But these stories had two marks of suspicion that always attended them, which caused me always to slight them, and to look on them as mere stories that people continually frighted one another with. First—that wherever it was that we heard it, they always placed the scene at the farther end of the town, opposite or most remote from where you were to hear it. If you heard it in Whitechapel, it had happened at St. Giles's, or at Westminster, or Holborn, or that end of the town; if you heard of it at that end of the town, then it was done in Whitechapel, or the Minories, or about Cripplegate Parish; if you heard of it in the city, why, then, it happened in Southwark; and, if you heard of it in Southwark, then it was done in the city, and the like.

In the next place, of what part soever you heard the story, the particulars were always the same, especially that of laying a wet double clout on a dying man's face, and that of smothering a young gentlewoman: so that it was apparent, at least to my judgment, that there was more of tale than of truth in those things.

However, I cannot say, but it had some effect upon the people; and particularly, that, as I said before, they grew more cautious who they took into their houses, and whom they trusted their lives with, and had them always recommended, if they could; and where they could not find such, for they were not very plenty, they applied to the parish officers.

But here again, the misery of that time lay upon the poor, who, being infected, had neither food nor physic: neither physicians nor apothecary to assist them, nor nurse to attend them. Many of those died calling for help, and even for sustenance, out at their windows, in a most miserable and deplorable manner; but it must be added that when ever the cases of such persons or families were represented to my Lord Mayor, they always were relieved.

It is true that in some houses where the people were not very poor, yet, where they had sent perhaps their wives and children away, and if they had any servants, they had been dismissed; I say, it is true, that to save the expenses, many such as these shut themselves in, and, not having help, died alone.

A neighbor and acquaintance of mine, having some money owing to him from a shopkeeper in Whitecross Street or thereabouts, sent his apprentice, a youth about eighteen years of age, to endeavor to get the money. He came to the door, and finding it shut, knocked pretty hard, and, as he thought, heard somebody answer within, but was not sure; so he waited, and after some stay knocked again, and then a third time, when he heard somebody coming downstairs.

At length the man of the house came to the door; he had on his breeches, or drawers, and a yellow flannel waistcoat, no stockings, a pair of slipped-shoes, a white cap on his head, and, as the young man said, "death in his face."

When he opened the door, says he, "What do you disturb me thus for?" The boy, though a little surprised, replied, "I come from such a one; and my master sent me for the money, which he says you know of." "Very well, child," returns the living ghost; "call, as you go by, at Cripplegate Church, and bid them ring the bell"; and with these words shut the door again, and went up again, and died the same day, nay, perhaps the same hour. This the young man told me himself, and I have reason to believe it. This was while the plague was not come to a height. I think it was in June, towards the latter end of the month. It must be before the dead-carts came about, and while they used the ceremony of ringing the bell for the dead, which was over for certain, in that parish at least, before the month of July; for by the 25th of July there died five hundred and fifty and upwards in a week, and then they could no more bury in form rich or poor.

I have mentioned above, that notwithstanding this dreadful calamity, yet numbers of thieves were abroad upon all occasions where they had found any prey, and that these were generally women. It was one morning about eleven o'clock, I had walked out to my brother's house in Coleman Street Parish, as I often did, to see that all was safe.

My brother's house had a little court before it. and a brick wall and a gate in it, and, within that, several warehouses, where his goods of several sorts lay. It happened that in one of these warehouses were several packs of women's high-crowned hats, which came out of the country, and were, as I suppose, for exportation, whither I know not.

I was surprised that when I came near my brother's door, which was in a place they called Swan Alley, I met three or four women with high-crowned hats on their heads; and, as I remembered afterwards, one, if not more, had some hats likewise in their hands: but as I did not see them come out at my brother's door, and not knowing that my brother had any such goods in his warehouse, I did not offer to say anything to them, but went across the way to shun meeting them, as was usual to do at that time, for fear of the plague. But when I came nearer to the gate, I met another woman, with more hats, come out of the gate. "What business, mistress," said I, "have you had there?" "There are more people there," said she; "I have had no more business there than they." I was hasty to get to the gate then, and said no more to her; by which means she got away. But just as I came to the gate, I saw two more coming across the yard, to come out, with hats also on their heads and under their arms; at which I threw the gate to behind me, which, having a spring-lock, fastened itself; and turning to the women, "Forsooth," said I, "what are you doing here?" and seized upon the hats, and took them from them. One of them, who, I confess, did not look like a thief,—"Indeed," says she, "we are wrong; but we were told they were goods that had no owner: be pleased to take them again; and look yonder, there are more such customers as we." She cried, and looked pitifully; so I took the hats from her, and opened the gate, and bade them be gone, for I pitied the women indeed; but when I looked towards the warehouse, as she directed, there were six or seven more, all women, fitting themselves with hats, as unconcerned and quiet as if they had been at a hatter's shop buying for their money.

I was surprised, not at the sight of so many thieves only, but at the circumstances I was in; being now to thrust myself in among so many people, who for some weeks had been so shy of myself that if I met anybody in the street, I would cross the way from them.

They were equally surprised, though on another account. They all told me they were neighbors, that they had heard any one might take them, that they were nobody's goods, and the like. I talked big to them at first; went back to the gate and took out the key, so that they were all my prisoners; threatened to lock them all into the warehouse, and go and fetch my Lord Mayor's officers for them.

They begged heartily, protested they found the gate open, and the warehouse door open, and that it had no doubt been broken open by some who expected to find goods of greater value, which indeed was reasonable to believe, because the lock was broke, and a padlock that hung to the door on the outside also loose, and not abundance of the hats carried away.

At length I considered that this was not a time to be cruel and rigorous; and besides that, it would necessarily oblige me to go much about, to have several people come to me, and I go to several, whose circumstances of health I knew nothing of: and that, even at this time, the plague was so high as that there died four thousand a week; so that, in showing my resentment, or even in seeking justice for my brother's goods, I might lose my own life. So I contented myself with taking the names and places where some of them lived, who were really inhabitants in the neighborhood, and threatening that my brother should call them to an account for it when he returned to his habitation.

Then I talked a little upon another footing with them, and asked them how they could do such things as these in a time of such general calamity, and, as it were, in the face of God's most dreadful judgments, when the plague was at their very doors, and, it may be, in their very houses, and they did not know but that the dead-cart might stop at their doors in a few hours, to carry them to their graves.

I could not perceive that my discourse made much impression upon them all that while, till it happened that there came two men of the neighborhood, hearing of the disturbance, and knowing my brother, for they had been both dependents upon his family, and they came to my assistance. These being, as I said, neighbors, presently knew three of the women, and told me who they were, and where they lived; and it seems they had given me a true account of themselves before.

This brings these two men to a further remembrance. The name of one was John Hayward, who was at that time under-sexton of the parish of St.

Stephen, Coleman Street: by under-sexton was understood at that time gravedigger and bearer of the dead. This man carried, or assisted to carry, all the dead to their graves, which were buried in that large parish, and who were carried in form, and, after that form of burying was stopped, went with the dead-cart and the bell to fetch the dead bodies from the houses where they lay, and fetched many of them out of the chambers and houses; for the parish was, and is still, remarkable, particularly above all the parishes in London, for a great number of alleys and thoroughfares, very long, into which no carts could come, and where they were obliged to go and fetch the bodies a very long way, which alleys now remain to witness it; such as White's Alley, Cross Key Court, Swan Alley, Bell Alley, White Horse Alley, and many more. Here they went with a kind of handbarrow, and laid the dead bodies on it, and carried them out to the carts; which work he performed, and never had the distemper at all, but lived about twenty years after it, and was sexton of the parish to the time of his death. His wife at the same time was a nurse to infected people, and tended many that died in the parish, being for her honesty recommended by the parish officers; yet she never was infected, neither.

He never used any preservative against the infection other than holding garlic and rue in his mouth, and smoking tobacco. This I also had from his own mouth. And his wife's remedy was washing her head in vinegar, and sprinkling her head-clothes so with vinegar as to keep them always moist; and, if the smell of any of those she waited on was more than ordinarily offensive, she snuffed vinegar up her nose, and sprinkled vinegar upon her head-clothes, and held a handkerchief wetted with vinegar to her mouth.

It must be confessed that though the plague was chiefly among the poor, yet were the poor the most venturous and fearless of it, and went about their employment with a sort of brutal courage; I must call it so, for it was founded neither on religion or prudence. Scarce did they use any caution, but ran into any business which they could get employment in, though it was the most hazardous; such was that of tending the sick, watching houses shut up, carrying infected persons to the pest-house, and, which was still worse, carrying the dead away to their graves. (1722)

ARISTOTLE (384-322 B.C.)

Born at Stagira (for which reason he is sometimes called "the Stagirite") the son of a court physician, Aristotle, at the age of seventeen, began to study at Athens under Plato, and continued until the latter's death (347 B.C.). After visiting first in Asia Minor, then Lesbos, Aristotle was invited by Philip of Macedon to tutor (342-336 B.C.) young Alexander, later called the Great. From 335 B.C. till Alexander's death (323 B.C.) the Peripatetic School founded by Aristotle at Athens, the Lyceum, flourished under his direction. Many of the great philosopher's most important works were first delivered to the world as lectures during these years. Upon Alexander's death, Aristotle fled to Euboea, where he died the next year.

Although some of Aristotle's treatises have disappeared, the scope of the many extant is astounding. In eight fields he wrote with authority: logic (e.g. his *Organon*), metaphysics (e.g. his *Metaphysica*), ethics (e.g. his *Nicomachean Ethics*), aesthetics (e.g. his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*), biology (e.g. his *Historia Animalium*, etc.), psychology (e.g. his *Parva Naturalia*), physics (e.g. his *Physica Auscultatio*, *De Generatione*, etc.), and political philosophy (e.g. his *Politics*). We must agree with R. A. Scott-James when he says of Aristotle: "He knew everything that could be known to an ancient Greek. . . . His subject was the Greek world as he found it. His method was to analyse it reasonably, without passion and without prejudice. He had a genius for distinction and classification. He is perfectly detached. . . . He arrives at just generalizations by sheer clear-headedness and a humane good sense."

The first of European encyclopedists, Aristotle was also the first to classify learning into various departments, and to assign the method and content proper to each. Thus, when he examined poetry (i.e. literature in general) he enumerated the various kinds; and since the Greeks had particularly developed two of these kinds, the drama (tragedy and comedy) and the epic, he dealt particularly with those. "I propose," he announces at the beginning of *The Poetics*, "to treat of Poetry in itself and of its various kinds." Basing his analysis upon the great accomplishment of Homer and the Greek dramatists, he was able to discover certain fundamental aesthetic principles, many of them as true today as when they were written.

The language of *The Poetics* is so compressed that scholars have been unable to decide whether the work we have is as Aristotle actually wrote it or is merely a collection of lecture-notes taken down by one of his students. Certainly, though presenting a consistent theory, the various passages are less fluently connected than is usual with Aristotle's work. And, ever since the sixteenth century, commentators have been busy elucidating (or, just as often, obscuring) and elaborating on the theory of *The Poetics.*

During the Middle Ages, Aristotle's position as a philosopher was supreme, for his *Organon* had been used as a prop to the speculations of the schoolmen. *The Poetics,* however, was all this while neglected. At the dawn of the Renaissance, Petrarch, in overthrowing the traditions of scholasticism, impaired for a time Aristotle's reputation. It was not until 1536, when Greek and Latin editions of *The Poetics* were published, that Aristotle began to assume in Renaissance literature the high place he had occupied in medieval philosophy. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie* is already saturated with it. *The Poetics* became the Bible of literary criticism, and before they were through the Italian scholiasts of the sixteenth century had petrified Aristotle's first principles into narrow rules. Aristotle, for example, had nothing to say about "unity of place," and little to say about "unity of time"; it was the aesthetic point of "unity of action" which concerned him. But the Italian Castelvetro, in his *Poetica d'Aristotele* (1570), laid down as hard and fast the rule of the "three unities" that proved irksome to European drama for several centuries. By the time of the Restoration in England, the narrow views of Aristotle's commentators passed (as they still do among the uninformed) as those of the Greek master himself, and had such authority that Dryden had to warn his contemporaries: "It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedies from Sophocles and Euripides; and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind."

But to great men like Milton (cf. his motto to *Samson Agonistes*), *The Poetics* has been a source of inspiration. It is safe to say that no other book on literary theory has so well been able to weather the centuries. It must still be regarded as the basic work on the theory of tragedy.

S. H. Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (1895) and L. Cooper's *On the Art of Poetry* (1913) provide translations and excellent commentaries of *The Poetics.* M. T. Herrick's *The Poetics of Aristotle in England* (1930) is a valuable historical study.

From THE POETICS

(*Translated by Thomas Twining*)

ORIGIN OF POETRY

Poetry, in general, seems to have derived its origin from two causes, each of them natural.

To imitate is instinctive in man from his infancy. By this he is distinguished from other animals, that he is of all the most imitative, and through this instinct receives his earliest education. All men likewise naturally receive pleasure from imitation. This is evident from what we experience in viewing the works of imitative art; for in them we contemplate with pleasure, and with the more pleasure the more exactly they are imitated, such objects as, if real, we could not see without pain: as the figures of the meanest and most disgusting animals, dead bodies, and the like. And the reason of this is, that to learn is a natural pleasure, not confined to philosophers, but common to all men; with this difference only, that the multitude partake of it in a more transient and compendious manner. Hence the pleasure they receive from a picture: in viewing it they learn, they infer, they discover what every object is; that this, for instance, is such a particular man, &c. For if we suppose the object represented to be something which the spectator had never seen, his pleasure, in that case, will not arise from the imitation, but from the workmanship, the colors, or some such cause.

PROGRESS OF TRAGEDY

Both Tragedy, then, and Comedy, having originated in a rude and unpremeditated manner—the first from the dithyrambic hymns, the other from those Phallic songs which in many cities remain still in use—each advanced gradually towards perfection by such successive improvements as were most obvious.

Tragedy, after various changes, reposed at length in the completion of its proper form. Aeschylus[1] first added a second actor; he also abridged the chorus. and made the dialogue the principal part of tragedy. Sophocles[2] increased the number of actors to three, and added the decoration of painted scenery. It was also late before Tragedy threw aside the short and simple fable and ludicrous language of its satyric original, and attained its proper magnitude and dignity. The iambic measure was then first adopted; for originally the trochaic tetrameter was made use of, as better suited to the satyric and saltatorial genius of the poem at that time; but when the dialogue was formed, Nature itself pointed out the proper meter.

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[1] Greek dramatist (525-456 B.C.).

[2] Greek dramatist (496?-406 B.C.).

OBJECT OF COMEDY

Comedy, is an imitation of bad characters: bad, not with respect to every sort of vice, but to the ridiculous only, as being a species of turpitude or deformity, since it may be defined to be a fault of deformity of such a sort as is neither painful nor destructive. A ridiculous face, for example, is something ugly and distorted, but not so as to cause pain.

EPIC AND TRAGIC SPECIES COMPARED

Epic poetry agrees so far with Tragic as it is an imitation of great characters and actions by means of words; but in this it differs, that it makes use of only one kind of meter throughout, and that it is narrative. It also differs in length; for Tragedy endeavors, as far as possible, to confine its action within the limits of a single revolution of the sun, or nearly so; but the time of Epic action is indefinite.

DEFINITION OF TRAGEDY

Tragedy is an imitation of some action that is important, entire, and of a proper magnitude—by language, embellished and rendered pleasurable, but by different means in different parts—in the way, not of narration, but of action, effecting through pity and terror the purification of such passions.

By pleasurable language I mean a language that has the embellishments of rhythm, melody, and meter. And I add, by different means in different parts, because in some parts meter alone is employed, in others melody.

ITS CONSTITUENT PARTS

Now as Tragedy imitates by acting, the Decoration, in the first place, must be one of its parts: then the Music and the Diction; for these last include the means of tragic imitation. By diction, I mean the metrical composition. . . .

Again, Tragedy being an imitation of an action, and the persons employed in that action being necessarily characterized by their manners and their sentiments, since it is from these that actions themselves derive their character, it follows that there must also be Manners and Sentiments, as the two causes of actions, and consequently of the happiness or unhappiness of all men. The imitation of the action is the Fable: for by Fable I now mean the contexture of incidents, or the Plot. By Manners I mean whatever marks the characters of the persons. By Sentiments, whatever they say, whether proving anything or delivering a general sentiment, &c. . . .

But of all these parts the most important is the combination of incidents, or the Fable. Because Tragedy is an imitation, not of men, but of actions—of life, of happiness and unhappiness: for happiness consists in action, and the supreme good itself, the very end of life, is action of a certain kind—not quality. . . .

The Fable, then, is the principal part, the soul, as it were, of Tragedy; and the Manners are next in rank.

OF THE FABLE

Now we have defined Tragedy to be an imitation of an action that is complete and entire; and that has also a certain magnitude. . . . By entire, I mean that which has a beginning, a middle and an end. . . .

CATASTROPHE AND CHARACTER

Now since it is requisite to the perfection of a Tragedy that its plot should be of the complicated, not of the simple kind, and that it should imitate such actions as excite terror and pity, it follows evidently, in the first place, that the change from prosperity to adversity should not be represented as happening to a virtuous character; for this raises disgust, rather than terror or compassion. Neither should the contrary change from adversity to prosperity, be exhibited in a vicious character: this, of all plans, is the most opposite to the genius of Tragedy, having no one property that it ought to have; for it is neither gratifying in a moral view, nor affecting, nor terrible. Nor, again, should the fall of a very bad man from prosperous to adverse fortune be represented: because, though such a subject may be pleasing from its moral tendency, it will produce neither pity nor terror. For our pity is excited by misfortunes undeservedly suffered, and our terror by some resemblance between the sufferer and ourselves. . . .

Since Tragedy is an imitation of what is best, we should follow the example of skilful portrait-painters; who, while they express the peculiar lineaments, and produce a likeness, at the same time improve upon the original. . . .

HORACE (65 B.C.-8 B.C.)

Among the last works of Horace (cf. *above*, p. 377) is the *Ars Poetica*, or *Epistle to the Pisos*. It is of no importance to us to decide which of the Piso families had the honor of being addressed by the poet in this celebrated work. What is significant is that this treatise had a reputation and authority in Restoration and eighteenth-century England second to none.

Epigrammatic in style, *The Art of Poetry* is made up of masterful phrases which have become watchwords in literary criticism—e.g. *labor limae* (the labor of the file), *ut pictora poesis* (the poem like the picture), *dormitat Homerus* (Homer nods), *purpureus pannus* (the purple patch), *parturiunt montes nascetur ridiculus mus* (mountains labor to bring forth a silly mouse). Familiarly written, this work amiably discourses on various literary matters: unity of design, diction, the types of poetry, the purpose of poetry, the importance of common sense to poetic creation. Although based upon its Greek predecessor as upon the practice of Greek literature in general, Horace's treatise is not so much concerned (as was Aristotle's) with a central theory as with establishing working rules for poetry. Hence, the *Ars Poetica* served as a kind of measuring-rod for neoclassical poets and critics. Of all Horace's precepts, none was more pleasing to Restoration and eighteenth-century English taste than that the aim of poetry was *aut prodesse aut delectare* (to instruct or to please). The vogue of the didactic in English poetry from Dryden through Samuel Johnson owes much to that phrase.

Ben Jonson made a translation of the *Ars Poetica*. But it was the version made by the Earl of Roscommon (1633-1685) that had an enormous vogue throughout the eighteenth century (cf. Addison's *Ned Softly the Poet*, *below*).

A modern translation will be found in E. H. Blakeney's *Horace on the Art of Poetry* (1928).

THE ART OF POETRY

(*Translated by the Earl of Roscommon*)

If in a picture, Piso, you should see
A handsome woman with a fish's tail,
Or a man's head upon a horse's neck,
Or limbs of beasts of the most different kinds
Covered with feathers of all sorts of birds,
Would you not laugh and think the painter mad?
Trust me, that book is as ridiculous
Whose incoherent style, like sick men's dreams,
Varies all shapes and mixes all extremes.
Painters and poets have been still allowed
Their pencils and their fancies unconfined.
This privilege we freely give and take.
But nature and the common laws of sense
Forbid to reconcile antipathies
Or make a snake engender with a dove,
And hungry tigers court the tender lambs.
Some that at first have promised mighty things
Applaud themselves when a few florid lines
Shine through the insipid dullness of the rest.
Here they describe a temple or a wood,
Or streams that through delightful meadows run,
And there the rainbow or the rapid Rhine.
But they misplace them all and crowd them in,
And are as much to seek in other things,
As he that only can design a tree,
Would be to draw a shipwreck, or a storm;
When you begin with so much pomp and show,
Why is the end so little and so low?
Be what you will, so you be still the same.
Most poets fall into the grossest faults,
Deluded by a seeming excellence:
By striving to be short, they grow obscure,
And when they would write smoothly, they want strength,
Their spirits sink; while others, that affect
A lofty style, swell to a tympany;
Some timorous wretches start at every blast,
And, fearing tempest, dare not leave the shore;
Others in love with wild variety
Draw boars in waves, and dolphins in a wood.
Thus fear of erring, joined with want of skill,
Is a most certain way of erring still.
The meanest workman in the Aemilian square,
May grave the nails, or imitate the hair,
But cannot finish what he hath begun;
What is there more ridiculous than he?
For one or two good features in a face,
Where all the rest are scandalously ill,
Make it but more remarkably deformed.
Let poets match their subject to their strength,
And often try what weight they can support,
And what their shoulders are too weak to bear.
After a serious and judicious choice,
Method and eloquence will never fail;
As well the force as ornament of verse,
Consists in choosing a fit time for things,
And knowing when a muse should be indulged
In her full flight, and when she should be curbed.

Words must be chosen, and be placed with skill.
You gain your point, if your industrious art
Can make unusual words easy and plain;
But, if you write of things abstruse or new,
Some of your own inventing may be used—
So it be seldom and discreetly done—
But he that hopes to have new words allowed,
Must so derive them from the Grecian spring,
As they may seem to show without constraint.
Can an impartial reader discommend
In Varius,[1] or in Virgil, what he likes?
In Plautus[2] or Caecilius; why should I
Be envied for the little I invent,
When Ennius'[3] and Cato's[4] copious style
Have so enriched and so adorned our tongue?
Men ever had, and ever will have leave,
To coin new words well suited to the age:
Words are like leaves, some wither every year,
And every year a younger race succeeds.
Death is a tribute all things owe to fate;
The Lucrine mole, Caesar's stupendous work,
Protects our navies from the raging north;
And, since Cethegus drained the Pontine Lake,[5]
We plow and reap where former ages rowed.
See how the Tiber, whose licentious waves
So often overflowed the neighboring fields,
Now runs a smooth and inoffensive course,
Confined by our great emperor's command.
Yet this and they and all will be forgot.
Why then should words challenge eternity,
When greatest men, and greatest actions die?
Use may revive the obsoletest words,
And banish those that now are most in vogue:
Use is the judge, the law, and rule of speech.
Homer first taught the world in epic verse
To write of great commanders, and of kings.
Elegies were at first designed for grief,
Though now we use them to express our joy.
But to whose muse we owe that sort of verse
Is undecided by the men of skill.
Rage with iambics armed Archilocus:
Numbers for dialogue and action fit
And favorites of the dramatic muse,
Fierce, lofty, rapid, whose commanding sound
Awes the tumultuous noises of the pit,
And whose peculiar province is the stage.
Gods, heroes, conquerors, Olympic crowns,
Love's pleasing cares, and the free joys of wine,
Are proper subjects for the lyric song.
Why is he honored with a poet's name
Who neither knows, nor would observe a rule
And chooses to be ignorant and proud,
Rather than own his ignorance and learn?
Let every thing have its due place and time.
A comic subject loves an humble verse.
Thyestes[6] scorns a low and comic style,
Yet comedy sometimes may raise her voice,
And Chremes[7] be allowed to foam and rail.
Tragedians, too, lay by their state to grieve:
Peleus and Telephus,[8] exiled and poor,
Forget their swelling and gigantic words.
He that would have spectators share his grief
Must write not only well, but movingly
And raise men's passions to what height he will;
We weep and laugh, as we see others do.
He only makes me sad who shows the way
And first is sad himself; then, Telephus,
I feel the weight of your calamities,
And fancy all your miseries my own;
But if you act them ill, I sleep or laugh:
Your looks must needs alter, as your subject does,
From kind to fierce, from wanton to severe.
For nature forms and softens us within,
And writes our fortune's changes in our face.
Pleasure enchants, impetuous rage transports,
And grief dejects, and wrings the tortured soul,
And these are ill interpreted by speech.
But he whose words and fortunes disagree,
Absurd, unpitied, grows a public jest.
Observe the characters of those that speak,
Whether an honest servant, or a cheat,
Or one whose blood boils in his youthful veins,
Or a grave matron, or a busy nurse,
Extorting merchants, careful husbandmen,
Argives, or Thebans, Asians, or Greeks.
Follow report, or feign coherent things.
Describe Achilles[9] as Achilles was,
Impatient, rash, inexorable, proud,
Scorning all judges and all law but arms;
Medea must be all revenge and blood,

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[1] Varius, a contemporary of Horace, wrote tragedies, and edited Virgil's *Aeneid* after the poet's death.

[2] Plautus and Caecilius were writers of comedy a century before Horace's time.

[3] Ennius (239-169 B.C.), the father of Roman poetry.

[4] Cato the Censor (234-149 B.C.), orator and writer on agriculture.

[5] These works of engineering are not so definitely mentioned in the original.

[6] The tragic story of Thyestes, who was tricked into eating the bodies of his own sons at a banquet.

[7] A stock name for old men in Latin comedies.

[8] Both of these heroes were frequent subjects for ancient tragedy. Both wandered on long quests.

[9] The persons mentioned in the next list were all celebrated in Greek tragedy.

Ino all tears, Ixion all deceit;
Io must wander, and Orestes mourn.
If your bold muse dare tread unbeaten paths
And bring new characters upon the stage,
Be sure you keep them up to their first height.
New subjects are not easily explained,
And you had better choose a well-known theme
Than trust to an invention of your own;
For what originally others writ
May be so well disguised, and so improved,
That with some justice it may pass for yours.
But then you must not copy trivial things,
Nor word for word too faithfully translate,
Nor, as some servile imitators do,
Prescribe at first such strict, uneasy rules,
As they must ever slavishly observe
Or all the laws of decency renounce.
Begin not as the old poetaster did—
"Troy's famous war, and Priam's fate, I sing—"
In what will all this ostentation end?
The laboring mountain scarce brings forth a mouse.
How far is this from the Meonian[10] style?
"Muse, speak the man, who since the Siege of Troy,
So many towns, such change of manners saw."[11]
One with a flash begins, and ends in smoke,
The other out of smoke, brings glorious light,
And, without raising expectation high,
Surprises us with darling miracles,
The bloody Lestrygon's inhuman feasts,
With all the monsters of the land and sea;
How Scylla barked, and Polyphemus roared.[12]
He doth not trouble us with Leda's eggs,[13]
When he begins to write the Trojan war;
Nor writing the return of Diomed,[14]
Go back as far as Meleager's death.
Nothing is idle, each judicious line
Insensibly acquaints us with the plot;
He chooses only what he can improve,
And truth and fiction are so aptly mixed,
That all seems uniform and of a piece.
Now hear what every auditor expects;
If you intend that he should stay to hear
The epilogue, and see the curtain fall,
Mind how our tempers alter with our years,
And by those rules, from all your characters:
One that hath newly learned to speak and go
Loves childish plays, is soon provoked and pleased,
And changes every hour his wavering mind.
A youth that first casts off his tutor's yoke,
Loves horses, hounds, and sports, and exercise,
Prone to all vice, impatient of reproof,
Proud, careless, fond, inconstant, and profuse.
Gain and ambition rule our riper years,
And make us slaves to interest and power.
Old men are only walking hospitals,
Where all defects, and all diseases crowd
With restless pain, and more tormenting fear,
Lazy, morose, full of delays and hopes,
Oppressed with riches, which they dare not use;
Ill-natured censors of the present age,
And fond of all the follies of the past.
Thus all the treasures of our flowing years,
Our ebb of life for ever takes away.
Boys must not have the ambitious care of men,
Nor men the weak anxieties of age.
Some things are acted, others only told;
But what we hear moves less than what we see.
Spectators only have their eyes to trust,
But auditors must trust their ears and you;
Yet there are things improper for a scene,
Which men of judgment only will relate.
Medea must not draw her murdering knife,
And spill her children's blood upon the stage,
Nor Atreus there his horrid feast prepare,[15]
Cadmus's and Progne's metamorphosis
(She to a swallow turned, he to a snake)
And whatsoever contradicts my sense,
I hate to see, and never can believe.
Five acts are the just measure of a play;
Never presume to make a god appear
But for a business worthy of a god,
And in one scene no more than three should speak.
A chorus should supply what action wants,
And hath a generous and manly part—
Bridles wild rage, loves rigid honesty
And strict observance of impartial laws,
Sobriety, security, and peace,
And begs the gods to turn blind Fortune's wheel,
To raise the wretched and pull down the proud.
But nothing must be sung between the acts
But what some way conduces to the plot.
First the shrill sound of a small rural pipe,
Not loud like trumpets, nor adorned as now,
Was entertainment for the infant stage,
And pleased the thin and bashful audience
Of our well-meaning frugal ancestors.
But when our walls and limits were enlarged,
And men, grown wanton by prosperity,

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[10] Homeric.

[11] The opening lines of Homer's *Odyssey*.

[12] Characters and incidents in the *Odyssey*.

[13] from one of which was born Helen, who caused the Trojan war.

[14] There is really nothing in Homer about the return of Diomed.

[15] See note 6.

Studied new arts of luxury and ease,
The verse, the music, and the scenes improved;
For how should ignorance be judge of wit,
Or men of sense applaud the jests of fools?
Then came rich clothes and graceful action in,
Then instruments were taught more moving notes,
And eloquence with all our pomp and charms,
Foretold as useful and sententious truth
As those delivered by the Delphic god.[16]
The first tragedians found that serious style
Too grave for their uncultivated age,
And so brought wild and naked satyrs in
Whose motion, words, and shape were all a farce,
As oft as decency would give them leave,
Because the mad ungovernable rout,
Full of confusion and the fumes of wine,
Loved such variety and antic tricks.
But then they did not wrong themselves so much
To make a god, a hero, or a king,
Stripped of his golden crown and purple robe,
Descend to a mechanic[17] dialect,
Nor to avoid such meanness, soaring high,
With empty sound, and airy notions fly;
For tragedy should blush as much to stoop
To the low mimic follies of a farce,
As a grave matron would to dance with girls.
You must not think that a satyric style
Allows of scandalous and brutish words,
Or the confounding of your characters.
Begin with truth, then give invention scope,
And if your style be natural and smooth,
All men will try, and hope to write as well,
And—not without much pains—be undeceived.
So much good method and connection may
Improve the common, and the plainest things.
A satyr, that comes staring from the woods,
Must not at first speak like an orator;
But though his language should not be refined,
It must not be obscence and impudent;
The better sort abhors scurrility
And often censures what the rabble likes.
Unpolished verses pass with many men,
And Rome is too indulgent in that point;
But then, to write at a loose rambling rate,
In hope the world will wink at all our faults,
Is such a rash, ill-grounded confidence,
As men may pardon, but will never praise.
Consider well the Greek originals.
Read them by day, and think of them by night.
But Plautus was admired in former time:
With too much patience—not to call it worse—
His harsh, unequal verse was music then,
And rudeness had the privilege of wit.
When Thespis[18] first exposed the tragic muse,
Rude were the actors, and a cart the scene,
Where ghastly faces, stained with lees of wine,
Frightened the children, and amused the crowd.
This Aeschylus, with indignation, saw,
And built a stage, found out a decent dress,
Brought wizards in—a civiler disguise —
And taught men how to speak, and how to act.
Next comedy appeared with great applause,
Till her licentious and abusive tongue
Wakened the magistrates' coercive power,
And forced it to suppress her insolence.
Our writers have attempted every way,
And they deserve our praise, whose daring muse
Disdained to be beholden to the Greeks,
And found fit subjects for her verse at home;
Nor should we be less famous for our wit
Than for the force of our victorious arms;
But that the time and care that are required
To overlook, and file, and polish well
Fright poets from the necessary toil.
Democritus[19] was so in love with wit,
And some men's natural impulse to write,
That he despised the help of art and rules,
And thought none poets till their brains were cracked.
And this hath so intoxicated some,
That, to appear incorrigibly mad,
They cleanliness and company renounce.
For lunacy, beyond the cure of art,
With a long beard and ten long, dirty nails,
Pass current for Apollo's livery.[20]
O my unhappy stars! if in the spring
Some physic had not cured me of the spleen,
None would have writ with more success than I.
But I am satisfied to keep my sense,
And only serve to whet that wit in you
To which I willingly resign my claim.
Yet without writing, I may teach to write,
Tell what the duty of a poet is,
Wherein his wealth and ornament consist,
And how he may be formed, and how improved,
What fit, what not, what excellent or ill.
Sound judgment is the ground of writing well.
And when philosophy directs your choice
To proper subjects rightly understood,
Words from your pen will naturally flow.
He only gives the proper characters
Who knows the duty of all ranks of men,

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[16] Apollo.

[17] *i.e.*, the speech of workmen.

[18] The first recognized writer of Greek tragedy in the sixth century B.C.

[19] Greek philosopher of the 5th century B.C.

[20] the uniform of the followers of Apollo, god of poetry.

And what we owe to country, parents, friends,
How judges and how senators should act,
And what becomes a general to do.
Those are the likeliest copies which are drawn
By the original of human life.
Sometimes in rough and undigested plays
We meet with such a lucky character
As, being humored right and well pursued,
Succeeds much better than the shallow verse
And chiming trifles of more studious pens.
Greece had a genius, Greece had eloquence
For her ambition, and her end was fame.
Our Roman youth is bred another way
And taught no arts but those of usury;
And the glad father glories in his child
When he can subdivide a fraction.
Can souls, who by their parents from their birth,
Have been devoted thus to rust and gain,
Be capable of high and generous thoughts?
Can verses writ by such an author live?
But you, brave youth, wise Numa's[21] worthy heir,
Remember of what weight your judgment is
And never venture to commend a book
That has not passed all judges and all tests.
A poet should instruct or please or both.
Let all your precepts be succinct and clear,
That ready wits may comprehend them soon
And faithful memories retain them long.
For superfluities are soon forgot.
Never be so conceited of your parts
To think you may persuade us what you please,
Or venture to bring in a child alive
That cannibals have murdered and devoured.
Old age explodes all but morality,
Austerity offends aspiring youths,
But he that joins instructions with delight,
Profit with pleasure, carries all the votes.
These are the volumes that enrich the shops;
These pass with admiration through the world
And bring their author an eternal fame.
Be not too rigidly censorious.
A string may jar in the best master's hand,
And the most skillful archer miss his aim.
But in a poem elegantly writ,
I will not quarrel with a slight mistake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuse.
But he that hath been often told his fault
And still persists, is as impertinent
As a musician that will always play,
And yet is always out at the same note.
When such a positive abandoned fop,
Among his numerous absurdities,
Stumbles upon some tolerable line,
I fret to see them in such company
And wonder by what magic they came there.
But in long works, sleep will sometimes surprise
Homer himself had been observed to nod.
Poems, like pictures, are of different sorts,
Some better at a distance, others near,
Some love the dark, some choose the clearest light
And boldly challenge the most piercing eye.
Some please for once, some will forever please.
But, Piso, though your own experience,
Joined with your father's precepts, make you wise,
Remember this as an important truth:
A counsellor or pleader at the bar
May want Messalla's[22] powerful eloquence
Or be less read than deep Cascellius;
Yet this indifferent lawyer is esteemed.
But no authority of gods nor men
Allow of any mean in poetry.
As an ill consort and a coarse perfume
Disgrace the delicacy of a feast,
And might with more discretion have been spared,
So poetry whose end is to delight
Admits of no degrees, but must be still
Sublimely good or despicably ill.
In other things, men have some reason left,
And one that cannot dance, or fence, or run,
Despairing of success, forbears to try.
But all, without consideration, write,
Some thinking that the omnipotence of wealth
Can turn them into poets when they please.
But, Piso, you are of too quick a sight
Not to discern which way your talent lies
Or vainly struggle with your genius.
Yet if it ever be your fate to write,
Let your productions pass the strictest hands,
Mine and the father's, and not see the light
Till time and care have ripened every line.
What you keep by you, you may change and mend;
But words once spoke can never be recalled.
Orpheus,[23] inspired by more than human power,
Did not, as poets feign, tame savage beasts,
But men as lawless and as wild as they,
And first dissuaded from the rage and blood.
Thus when Amphion built the Theban wall,
They feigned the stones obeyed his magic lute.
Poets, the first instructors of mankind,
Brought all things to their proper native use.
Some they appropriated to the gods
And some to public, some to private ends.

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[21] the second king of Rome.

[22] Messalla was an important soldier and orator of Horace's day; Cascellius was a lawyer.

[23] Orpheus and Amphion were mythical musicians.

Promiscuous love by marriage was restrained,
Cities were built, and useful laws were made.
So ancient is the pedigree of verse,
And so divine a poet's function.
Then Homer's and Tyrtaeus' martial muse
Wakened the world and sounded loud alarms.
To verse we owe the sacred oracles
And our best precepts of morality.
Some have by verse obtained the love of kings
Who, with the muses, ease their wearied minds.
Then blush not, noble Piso, to protest
What gods inspire and kings delight to hear.
Some think that poets may be formed by art,
Others maintain that nature makes them so.
I neither see what art without a vein,
Nor wit without the help of art, can do.
But mutually they need each other's aid.
He that intends to gain the Olympic[24] prize
Must use himself to hunger, heat and cold,
Take leave of wine and the soft joys of love.
And no musician dares pretend to skill
Without a great expense of time and pains.
But every little busy scribbler now
Swells with the praises which he gives himself,
And, taking sanctuary in the crowd,
Brags of his impudence and scorns to mend.
A wealthy poet takes more pains to hire
A flattering audience than poor tradesmen do
To persuade customers to buy their goods.
Tis hard to find a man of great estate
That can distinguish flatterers from friends.
Never delude yourself, nor read your book
Before a bribed and fawning auditor.
For he'll commend and feign an ecstacy,
Grow pale to weep, do anything to please;
True friends appear less moved than counterfeit,
As men that truly grieve at funerals
Are not so loud as those that cry for hire.
Wise were the kings who never chose a friend
Till with full cups they had unmasked his soul
And seen the bottom of his deepest thoughts.
You cannot arm yourself with too much care
Against the smiles of a designing knave.
Quintillus, if his advice were asked,
Would freely tell you what you should correct,
Or, if you could not, bid you blot it out
And with more care supply the vacancy.
But if he found you fond and obstinate
And apter to defend than mend your faults,
With silence leave you to admire yourself
And without rival hug your darling book.
The prudent care of an impartial friend
Will give you notice of each idle line,
Show what sounds harsh and what wants ornament
Or where it is too lavishly bestowed,
Make you explain all that he finds obscure,
And with a strict enquiry mark your faults,
Nor for these trifles fear to lose your love.
Those things which now seem frivolous and slight
Will be of serious consequence to you
When they have made you once ridiculous.
A mad dog's foam, the infection of the plague,
And all the judgments of the angry gods
We are not all more heedfully to shun
Than poetasters in their raging fits,
Followed and pointed at by fools and boys,
But dreaded and proscribed by men of sense.
If in the raving of a frantic muse
And minding more his verses than his way,
Any of these should drop into a well,
Though he must burst his lungs to call for help,
No creature would assist or pity him,
But seek to think he fell on purpose in.
Hear how an old Sicilian poet died:
Empedocles, mad to be thought a god,
In a cold fit leaped into Ætna's flames.
Give poets leave to make themselves away.
Why should it be a greater sin to kill
Than to keep men alive against their will?
Nor was this chance, but a deliberate choice.
For if Empedocles were now revived,
He would be at his frolic once again
And his pretentions to divinity.
Tis hard to say, whether for sacrilege,
Or incest, or some more unheard of crime,
The rhyming fiend is sent into these men.
But they are most visibly possessed,
And, like a baited bear when he breaks loose,
Without distinction seize on all they meet.
None ever 'scaped that came within their reach
Sticking like leeches till they burst with blood.
Without remorse, insatiably they read,
And never leave till they have read men dead.

FINIS

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[24] Traditional athletic contests held by the Greeks at Olympia.

John Dryden

(1631-1700)

The greatest man of his time, Dryden is a kind of mirror of the age he did much to shape. All that was admirable in Restoration letters, and much that was not, can be found in his work. He was master of the literary scene, and his poetry and prose have had an enormous influence on the course of English literature. Yet one inevitably turns from Dryden, despite the high order of much of what he wrote, with the conviction that, as a poet at least, he never completely fulfilled himself. He had greater potentialities than his disciple, Pope; but few will deny that Pope is actually a better poet. A man who, like Dryden, had the social gift of lightly riding the waves over the changing undercurrents of his day was bound, no doubt, to suffer some limitation of his genius. But if English masters were to be rated by their *influence* on other writers, no man could be considered Dryden's peer. Milton's style has often been mimicked, but Milton cannot be said to have followers; Spenser has illumined the minds and quickened the perceptions of many later poets; Shakespeare has been inimitable; but Dryden's example fixed the horizons of English poetry for a hundred years.

The rash, superficially reading his career, have unjustly accused him of being a time-server. Born of a Puritan family of republican sympathies in Northamptonshire, Dryden studied at Westminster and at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his B.A. in 1654. His early poem, *Upon the Death of Lord Hastings* (1650), is full of the straining of the "metaphysical school," and is of no great worth. *A Poem upon the Death of his late Highness Oliver, Lord Protector of England* (1659) is a stiff elegy on Cromwell, full of praise for the Puritan leader. But when Charles II was restored, Dryden welcomed the monarch with the panegyric *Astraea Redux, a Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second* (1660), and followed it with another *To His Sacred Majesty, a Panegyric on His Coronation* (1661). In 1670 he was made Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal; his shift from Puritan to Royal allegiance was complete. A like change took place in his religious views. His poem, *Religio Laici* (1683), was written to defend the Anglican Church against Catholics and Presbyterians; but by 1687 he had, like many of the courtiers, been converted to Roman Catholicism, the religion of James II, and so wrote *The Hind and the Panther*, an allegorical poem defending the Catholic Church against the Anglican. Facile though it would be to call Dryden a turncoat in politics and religion, the truth seems to be that he acted throughout with integrity. The transitions in his opinions were the transitions undergone by many honest Englishmen. When Dryden was hailing Cromwell's memory, that memory was still dear to England. When Dryden greeted Charles II on his return, most Englishmen were equally enthusiastic. Great numbers of Charles's subjects returned with him to the Anglican Church, and numbers later took up the faith of James II after his succession.

It must also be remembered that Dryden earned his livelihood by his pen. Making the most of necessity, he won such general admiration as raised him to the position of literary dictator among the men of letters who frequented the coffeehouses and taverns of London. Following in the classical traditions of Ben Jonson, and writing in an age impressed by the rationalism of Descartes and Hobbes, he approached his art with forethought and care, and developed in both poetry and prose a style admirable for its clarity, pointedness, and energy. His gifts and learning were extensive, and he was not less remarkable for his command of feeling and humor than for the variety of his productions. Tragedies, comedies, operas, narrative verse, satires, commendatory verses, songs, translations, odes, epistles, prologues, epilogues, and critical prefaces—all came from his hand with equal facility.

With the addition of the novel, these were the types of literary composition which were destined to have a vogue among literary men for a century.

Some twenty years of his life were devoted to the writing of plays in which, for all his popularity, he was not at his best. Financial necessity urged him to turn them out rather than apply his energies to his great ambition, the composition of an epic. The first of his plays to be acted was a comedy, *The Wild Gallant* (1662-3). His other comedies include *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667), *Marriage à la Mode* (1672), *The Spanish Friar* (1679), and his best (for which Purcell wrote music), *Amphitryon* (1690). The first two are indebted to Molière (cf. *below*). Among his tragedies are: *The Indian Emperor* (1665), the two parts of *The Conquest of Granada* (1669-70), *Aurengzebe* (1675), *Don Sebastian* (1689), and his greatest (modeled on Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*), *All for Love or The World Well Lost* (1677). Besides a number of other dramas, he wrote *The State of Innocence* (1677), an opera-libretto on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and with D'Avenant made an absurd adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1667). T. S. Eliot's estimate of Dryden's dramatic work is sound: "First, I believe that it strengthened his command of his verse medium for other work, and enlarged his interests; then, because of its interest for his own time, and because of the importance of the theatre in his time, it helped to consolidate his influence upon his contemporaries and successors; it is an essential member of the body of his work, which must be taken as a whole; and lastly, . . . it gave him the knowledge and the opportunity for some of his best critical writing."

Indeed, the critical prefaces Dryden wrote for his plays are far more important to us than the dramas that occasioned them. Not only do these masterful essays inaugurate the tradition for a modern English prose style, but they also form the first considerable body of literary criticism in our literature. Here, as well as in the prefaces to his translations, Dryden discussed every sort of literary question: the technique of drama; the unities; the Aristotelian dicta on the tragic hero; poetical justice; the worth of particular authors; and the nature and history of satire, epic, and translation. One of the first of his pieces of critical prose, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), was published by itself (cf. *below*) early in Dryden's career. In France critics had been busy laying the theoretical groundwork for literary creation with their exegeses of Aristotle and Horace, and at the same time had helped the formation of a lucid style in French poetry and prose; emerging suddenly, as they did, to banish the confusion of medieval writings, they made possible, by their efforts, the great poetic achievement of the age of Louis XIV. In England the problem was not so simple. There had already been Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, the Elizabethan and Cavalier lyrists, Donne, Herrick, and Milton—who had contributed a magnificent and varied body of literature to their language without the guidance of classical rules. Dryden's sensitive literary taste assured him that these men had produced great things; but his reason urged upon him the soundness of classical models and precepts. The attempt to reconcile these two opposing attitudes toward literary creation is the history of Dryden's critical essays. It is a testimony to the scope of his mind that he was forever abandoning earlier critical opinions in favor of new ones, as he found his way toward a balanced, undogmatic understanding. Had his disciples possessed his breadth of view, the eighteenth century would not stand, as it now does, in most people's minds as a period when inspiration was constricted by narrow rules.

These essays served to clarify for Dryden what ought to be his own practice in poetry. Since the Elizabethan art had suffered its eclipse, he desired to find a poetic method that might serve to bring such a golden age to England as his fellow critics had brought to France. His compatriots were ready for standards and rules. Weary of revolution and individual assertion, they were anxious for that order and restraint which the new deification of Reason taught as best for society. In poetry Dryden found admirably suited for these ends the steady march of the heroic couplet. As he himself put it:

> And this unpolished rugged verse I chose
> As fittest for discourse, and nearest prose.

Clarity, precision, and force are the virtues to be found in his poems, rather than radiant imagination and subtle music. At no time, as Eliot has said, will Dryden "ever be anyone's favorite poet, or engross the adolescent mind for a season as the romantic poets can do." But what "Dryden did in fact was to reform the language, and devise a natural, conversational style of speech in verse. . . . I can think of no man in literature whose aims are so exactly fulfilled by his performance, and in the whole vineyard no laborer who more deserved his hire."

Dryden's chief poems are: *Annus Mirabilis* (1666), on the Dutch war, the plague, and the Great Fire of London, all occurring in one "wonderful year"; *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), an allegorical satire on the abortive attempt to place the Duke of Monmouth on the throne (cf. *below*); *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), a satire on literary rivals, particularly Shadwell (cf. *below*); *Religio Laici* (1683), a defense of the Anglican Church; *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), after his conversion, a defense of Roman Catholicism; a translation of Virgil (1697); his two best lyrics, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687) and (cf. *below*) *Alexander's Feast* (1697); and the *Fables* (1700). In addition, Dryden's poetic labors include translations and adaptations of Theocritus, Lucretius, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, Boccaccio, and Chaucer.

The standard edition of Dryden was made by Sir Walter Scott (1808) and re-edited by George Saintsbury (1882-93). A good one-volume edition of the poems was edited by G. R. Noyes (1908). W. P. Ker's edition of the critical essays (1900) is very important. The best biographies are by Sir W. Scott (1808) and G. Saintsbury (1881). Valuable studies are: M. Van Doren, *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920; 1932); T. S. Eliot, *John Dryden* (1932); and L. I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (1934).

From *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*

Dryden's critical speculations are among the finest in our literature. Ever searching for the fundamental laws and criteria of literary creation, Dryden often had occasion to expand and deepen his opinions. His growth has seemed to the superficial to be inconsistency. As his various volumes appeared, Dryden took the opportunity to discuss his artistic practice in a series of prefaces or dedications, which make plain how strong in him was the critical spirit.

This *Essay*, however, was issued by itself in 1668. Already Dryden could say of it in his dedication to Lord Buckhurst: "I confess I find many things in this discourse which I do not now approve; my judgment being a little altered since the writing of it; but whether for the better or the worse, I know not." In the next edition (1684) he changed the phrase to read: "my judgment being not a little altered." In 1692 he wrote concerning this work: "I was sailing in a vast ocean, without other help than the pole-star of the ancients, and the rules of the French stage among the moderns, . . . a very unfinished piece, I must confess, and which only can be excused by the little experience of the author, and the modesty of the title *An Essay*."

Such an apology seems hardly called for in view of the fact that the *Essay* is the first imposing piece of modern English literary criticism. Cast in the form of a Platonic dialogue, the *Essay* exhibits Dryden's prose in all its clarity and variety, and his judgment in all its sanity and balance. The subject is an old favorite of the Renaissance: the relative superiority of the Ancients and the Moderns. The persons of the dialogue are: Sir Robert Howard, his brother-in-law (Crites); Lord Buckhurst (Eugenius); Sir Charles Sedley (Lisideius); and Dryden himself (Neander). As he looked back upon the accomplishment of English literature in an attempt to discern in it some ordered tradition, Dryden was led by his respect for classical precept to a veneration of Jonson, the one notable classicist of the Elizabethan age. But Dryden was no narrow worshiper of classic rules. The man's breadth of taste is exhibited in his declaration: "Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets: Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare."

"There are so few who write well, in this age," said Crites, "that methinks any praises should be welcome. They neither rise to the dignity of the last age, nor to any of the ancients: and we may cry out of the writers of this time with more reason than Petronius[1] of his, *Pace vestra liceat dixisse, primi omnium eloquentiam perdidistis:* You have debauched the true old poetry so far, that Nature, which is the soul of it, is not in any of your writings!"

"If your quarrel," said Eugenius, "to those who now write be grounded only upon your reverence to antiquity, there is no man more ready to adore those great Greeks and Romans than I am; but, on the other side, I cannot think so contemptibly of the age in which I live, or so dishonorably of my own country, as not to judge we equal the ancients in most kinds of poesy and in some surpass them. Neither know I any reason why I may not be as zealous for the reputation of our age as we find the ancients themselves were in reference to those who lived before them. . . .

"But I see I am engaging in a wide dispute, where the arguments are not like to reach close on either side; for poesy is of so large an extent, and so many, both of the ancients and moderns, have done well in all kinds of it, that in citing one against the other we shall take up more time this evening than each man's occasions will allow him. Therefore I would ask Crites to what part of poesy, he would confine his arguments, and whether he would defend the general cause of the ancients against the moderns or oppose any age of the moderns against this of ours."

Crites, a little while considering upon this demand, told Eugenius that if he pleased he would limit their dispute to dramatic poesy; in which he thought it not difficult to prove either that the ancients were superior to the moderns or the last age to this of ours.

Eugenius was somewhat surprised when he heard Crites make choice of that subject. "For aught I see," said he, "I have undertaken a harder province than I imagined; for, though I never judged the plays of the Greek or Roman poets comparable to ours, yet, on the other side, those we now see acted come short of many which were written in the last age. But my comfort is, if we are overcome, it will be only by our own countrymen; and if we yield to them in this one part of poesy, we more surpass them in all the other; for in the epic or lyric way, it will be hard for them to show us one such amongst them as we have many now living, or who lately were. They can produce nothing so courtly writ, or which expresses so much the conversation of a gentleman, as Sir John Suckling;[2] nothing so even, sweet, and flowing as Mr. Waller;[3] nothing so majestic, so correct as Sir John Denham;[4] nothing so elevated, so copious, and full of spirit as Mr. Cowley.[5] As for the Italian, French, and Spanish plays, I can make it evident that those who now write surpass them; and that the drama is wholly ours."

All of them were thus far of Eugenius his opinion, that the sweetness of English verse was never understood or practiced by our fathers; even Crites himself did not much oppose it. And every one was willing to acknowledge how much our poesy is improved by the happiness of some writers yet living, who first taught us to mold our thoughts into easy and significant words, to retrench the superfluities of expression, and to make our rime so properly a part of the verse that it should never mislead the sense but itself be led and governed by it. . . .

"But to return whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama:—first, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's[6] are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's[7] works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *The Scornful Lady:* but because (generally speaking) Shakespeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman;* of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe."

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[1] Latin poet (d. 66 A.D.?).

[2] Cf. p. 390.

[3] Cf. p. 390.

[4] English poet (1615-1669).

[5] Cf. p. 393.

[6] Cf. p. 336.

[7] English dramatist (1579-1625), who frequently wrote in collaboration with Francis Beaumont (1584-1616).

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman,* Eugenius, earnestly regarding him; "I beseech you, Neander," said he, "gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him."

"I fear," replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.

"To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,[8] his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

> Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.[9]

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales[10] of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last king's[11] court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

"Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study: Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster*: for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Jonson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour.* Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humor, which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe; they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage, two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's. The reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies and pathos in their more serious plays which suits generally with all men's humors. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

"As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theater ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language and humor also in some measure we had before him, but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavoring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such a height. Humor was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people.[12] He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially. Perhaps, too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them; wherein, though he learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father, of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing. I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him: as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us."

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[8] puns.

[9] As cypresses are accustomed to rise above bending shrubs.

[10] John Hales, a seventeenth century critic.

[11] Charles I.

(1668)

Absalom and Achitophel

In 1678 London was seized with panic as a result of the allegations of Titus Oates, a man of nefarious character. He charged that the Catholics, in an attempt to bring back England to the Roman Church, had plotted to set fire to London, assassinate the king, and butcher the Protestants. The king's brother, the Duke of York, heir to the throne, was a Catholic, and naturally became associated in the public mind with the alleged plot. The correspondence of his secretary, Coleman, when seized, brought to light papers exchanged by Coleman with a French priest on the subject of the re-establishment of Catholicism in England through French assistance. In November Coleman was convicted of treason.

Public hysteria enabled Oates and his friends to involve by perjured evidence many innocent people. In Parliament a movement arose to exclude the Duke of York from the throne. On this issue two opposing political parties were formed: the Whigs, led by the Earl of Shaftesbury and the Duke of Buckingham, represented extreme Protestant sentiment; and the Tories, conservatives who more dreaded tampering with the traditions of royal succession than any postulated threat to England from Catholicism. From 1679 to 1682 the question of "Exclusion" became the central one in English political affairs.

As a substitute for the Duke of York the Whigs had chosen to succeed Charles II the latter's handsome illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, an engaging, popular, but weak-willed favorite of his father. Charles, for all his affection for his son, refused to consider him as an heir and would not consent to legitimize him. Undiscouraged, the Whigs sent Monmouth on a tour through West England to arouse public favor in his behalf. In May 1679, the first Exclusion Bill was defeated in Parliament. A second attempt passed the Commons in 1680 but was defeated in the Lords. When the Commons passed a third Exclusion Bill in 1681, Charles dissolved Parliament. This sudden move on the king's part cost the Whigs their prestige.

Riding on the wave of public reaction toward the Tories, the government in July 1681 arrested Shaftesbury on the charge of high treason and sent him to the Tower. In November the indictment was thrown out by a London grand jury. A few days before the trial there had appeared anonymously a poem called *Absalom and Achitophel,* which soon ran into new editions.

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[12] artificial characters.

Its authorship was not long concealed, for only Dryden could have written such a work. The analogy of the political situation to the story which Dryden took from the Bible (*II Samuel,* xiv-xviii) was not original with him, but in style, artistry, and finish the satire was something entirely new for English poetry. The dexterous manipulation of narrative, allegory, and characterization proved that the poet's heroic tragedies and comedies of "humors" had been a valuable training for the writing of *Absalom.* The portrait of Absalom (i.e. Monmouth) is gracious and picturesque, that of Achitophel (i.e. Shaftesbury) is powerful but without personal animus. That of Zimri (i.e. the Duke of Buckingham) is a masterful picture of a dilettante; here Dryden was moved by more subjective considerations, for the Duke of Buckingham had attacked him in his play *The Rehearsal,* and the occasion was too auspicious for Dryden to attempt resisting his desire for revenge.

Both praise and blame were apportioned in the poem with so much dignity and wit that the satire caused a sensation. Although it failed of its immediate purpose, it was greeted with many answers almost at once (cf. *Mac Flecknoe, below*). For the poet himself it served the function of opening to him a kind of poetry in which he has never been excelled. At last he had found his true bent in satire, where style and meter perfectly express his strong sharp mind.

A POEM

Si propius stes
Te capiet magis.
HOR. *Ars Poet.,* 361.[1]

PART I

In pious times, ere priestcraft did begin,
Before polygamy was made a sin;
When man on many multiplied his kind,
Ere one to one was cursedly confin'd;
When nature prompted, and no law denied
Promiscuous use of concubine and bride;
Then Israel's monarch[2] after Heaven's own heart,
His vigorous warmth did variously impart
To wives and slaves; and, wide as his command,
Scatter'd his Maker's image thro' the land.
Michal, of royal blood, the crown did wear,
A soil ungrateful to the tiller's care:
Not so the rest; for several mothers[3] bore
To godlike David several sons before.
But since like slaves his bed they did ascend,
No true succession could their seed attend.
Of all this numerous progeny was none
So beautiful, so brave, as Absalon:[4]
Whether, inspir'd by some diviner lust,
His father got him with a greater gust;
Or that his conscious destiny made way,
By manly beauty, to imperial sway.
Early in foreign fields[5] he won renown,
With kings and states allied to Israel's crown:
In peace the thoughts of war he could remove,
And seem'd as he were only born for love.
Whate'er he did, was done with so much ease,
In him alone 'twas natural to please:
His motions all accompanied with grace;
And paradise was open'd in his face.
With secret joy indulgent David view'd
His youthful image in his son renew'd:
To all his wishes nothing he denied;
And made the charming Annabel his bride.
What faults he had, (for who from faults is free?)
His father could not, or he would not see.
Some warm excesses which the law forbore,
Were construed youth that purg'd by boiling o'er,
And Amnon's murder, by a specious name,
Was call'd a just revenge for injur'd fame.
Thus prais'd and lov'd the noble youth remain'd,
While David, undisturb'd, in Sion[6] reign'd.
But life can never be sincerely blest;
Heav'n punishes the bad, and proves the best.

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[1] The closer you stand, the more it pleases you (Horace, *The Art of Poetry,* line 361).

[2] King David, representing Charles II of England.

[3] the various mistresses of Charles II.

[4] Absalon, a variant of Absalom, represents the Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of Charles II.

[5] Monmouth had commanded the English army against the Dutch and the Scotch.

[6] representing London.

The Jews,[7] a headstrong, moody, murm'ring race,
As ever tried th' extent and stretch of grace;
God's pamper'd people, whom, debauch'd with ease,
No king could govern, nor no God could please;
(Gods they had tried of every shape and size,
That god-smiths could produce, or priests devise:)
These Adam-wits,[8] too fortunately free,
Began to dream they wanted liberty;
And when no rule, no precedent was found,
Of men by laws less circumscrib'd and bound;
They led their wild desires to woods and caves,
And thought that all but savages were slaves.
They who, when Saul was dead, without a blow,
Made foolish Ishbosheth the crown forego;
Who banish'd David did from Hebron bring,
And with a general shout proclaim'd him king:
Those very Jews, who, at their very best,
Their humor[9] more than loyalty express'd,
Now wonder'd why so long they had obey'd
An idol monarch, which their hands had made;
Thought they might ruin him they could create,
Or melt him to that golden calf, a State.
But these were random bolts; no form'd design,
Nor interest made the factious crowd to join:
The sober part of Israel, free from stain,
Well knew the value of a peaceful reign;
And, looking backward with a wise affright,
Saw seams of wounds, dishonest to the sight:
In contemplation of whose ugly scars
They curs'd the memory of civil wars.[10]
The moderate sort of men, thus qualified,
Inclin'd the balance to the better side;
And David's mildness manag'd it so well,
The bad found no occasion to rebel.
But when to sin our bias'd nature leans,
The careful Devil is still at hand with means;
And providently pimps for ill desires.
The Good Old Cause reviv'd, a plot requires:
Plots, true or false, are necessary things,
To raise up commonwealths, and ruin kings.
  Th' inhabitants of old Jerusalem
Were Jebusites;[11] the town so call'd from them;
And theirs the native right——
But when the chosen people[12] grew more strong,
The rightful cause at length became the wrong;
And every loss the men of Jebus bore,
They still were thought God's enemies the more.
Thus worn and weaken'd, well or ill content,
Submit they must to David's government:
Impoverish'd and depriv'd of all command,
Their taxes doubled as they lost their land;
And, what was harder yet to flesh and blood,
Their gods disgrac'd, and burnt like common wood.
This set the heathen priesthood in a flame;
For priests of all religions are the same:
Of whatsoe'er descent their godhead be,
Stock, stone, or other homely pedigree,
In his defence his servants are as bold,
As if he had been born of beaten gold.
The Jewish rabbins,[13] tho' their enemies,
In this conclude them honest men and wise:
For 'twas their duty, all the learned think,
T' espouse his cause, by whom they eat and drink.
From hence began that Plot,[14] the nation's curse,
Bad in itself, but represented worse;
Raise'd in extremes, and in extremes decried;
With oaths affirm'd, with dying vows denied;
Not weigh'd or winnow'd by the multitude;
But swallow'd in the mass, unchew'd and crude.
Some truth there was, but dash'd and brew'd with lies,
To please the fools, and puzzle all the wise.
Succeeding times did equal folly call,
Believing nothing, or believing all.
Th' Egyptian[15] rites the Jebusites embrac'd;
Where gods were recommended by their taste.[16]
Such sav'ry deities must needs be good,
As serv'd at once for worship and for food.
By force they could not introduce these gods,
For ten to one in former days was odds;
So fraud was us'd (the sacrificer's trade):
Fools are more hard to conquer than persuade.
Their busy teachers mingled with the Jews,
And rak'd for converts even the court and stews:
Which Hebrew priests the more unkindly took,
Because the fleece accompanies the flock.
Some thought they God's anointed meant to slay
By guns, invented since full many a day:
Our author swears it not; but who can know

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[7] representing the English people.

[8] people as foolish as Adam, who did not know how well off he was before his fall.

[9] Caprice.

[10] the English civil wars of the 1640's.

[11] Roman Catholics.

[12] Protestants.

[13] clergymen of the Church of England.

[14] the Popish Plot, 1677-79, in which the Catholics were represented as trying to overthrow the government.

[15] French.

[16] This refers to the Catholic doctrine of transsubstantiation.

How far the Devil and Jebusites may go?
This Plot, which fail'd for want of common sense,
Had yet a deep and dangerous consequence:
For, as when raging fevers boil the blood,
The standing lake soon floats into a flood,
And ev'ry hostile humor, which before
Slept quiet in its channels, bubbles o'er;
So several factions from this first ferment
Work up to foam, and threat the government.
Some by their friends, more by themselves thought wise,
Oppos'd the pow'r to which they could not rise.
Some had in courts been great, and thrown from thence,
Like fiends were harden'd in impenitence.
Some, by their monarch's fatal mercy, grown
From pardon'd rebels kinsmen to the throne,
Were rais'd in pow'r and public office high;
Strong bands, if bands ungrateful men could tie.
  Of these the false Achitophel[17] was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In pow'r unpleas'd, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleas'd with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legg'd thing, a son,
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin or to rule the state;
To compass this the triple bond[18] he broke,
The pillars of the public safety shook,
And fitted Israel for a foreign yoke;
Then, seized with fear, yet still affecting fame,
Usurped a patriot's all-atoning name.
So easy still it proves in factious times
With public zeal to cancel private crimes.
How safe is treason and how sacred ill,
Where none can sin against the people's will,
Where crowds can wink and no offence be known,
Since in another's guilt they find their own!
Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abbethdin
With more discerning eyes or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress,
Swift of despatch and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown
With virtues only proper to the gown,
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle that oppressed the noble seed,
David for him his tuneful harp had strung
And Heaven had wanted one immortal song.
But wild ambition loves to slide, not stand,
And fortune's ice prefers to virtue's land.
Achitophel, grown weary to possess
A lawful fame and lazy happiness,
Disdained the golden fruit to gather free
And lent the crowd his arm to shake the tree.
Now, manifest of crimes contrived long since,
He stood at bold defiance with his prince,
Held up the buckler of the people's cause
Against the crown, and skulked behind the laws.
The wished occasion of the plot he takes;
Some circumstances finds, but more he makes;
By buzzing emissaries fills the ears
Of listening crowds with jealousies and fears
Of arbitrary counsels brought to light,
And proves the king himself a Jebusite.[19]
Weak arguments! which yet he knew full well
Were strong with people easy to rebel.
For governed by the moon, the giddy Jews
Tread the same track when she the prime renews;
And once in twenty years their scribes record,
By natural instinct they change their lord.
Achitophel still wants a chief, and none
Was found so fit as warlike Absalon.
Not that he wished his greatness to create,
For politicians neither love nor hate;
But, for he knew his title not allowed
Would keep him still depending on the crowd,
That kingly power, thus ebbing out, might be
Drawn to the dregs of a democracy.
Him he attempts with studied arts to please,
And sheds his venom in such words as these:

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[17] the Earl of Shaftesbury.

[18] the Triple Alliance of England, Holland and Sweden against France. This treaty was actually broken by Charles II.

[19] Charles II died a Roman Catholic.

"Auspicious prince, at whose nativity
Some royal planet rul'd the southern sky;
Thy longing country's darling and desire;
Their cloudy pillar and their guardian fire:
Their second Moses, whose extended wand
Divides the seas,[20] and shows the promis'd land;
Whose dawning day in every distant age
Has exercis'd the sacred prophets' rage:
The people's pray'r, the glad diviners' theme,
The young men's vision, and the old men's dream!
Thee, Savior, thee, the nation's vows confess,
And, never satisfied with seeing, bless:
Swift unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim,
And stammering babes are taught to lisp thy name.
How long wilt thou the general joy detain,
Starve and defraud the people of thy reign?
Content ingloriously to pass thy days
Like one of Virtue's fools that feeds on praise;
Till thy fresh glories, which now shine so bright,
Grow stale and tarnish with our daily sight.
Believe me, royal youth, thy fruit must be
Or gather'd ripe, or rot upon the tree.
Heav'n has to all allotted, soon or late,
Some lucky revolution of their fate;
Whose motions if we watch and guide with skill,
(For human good depends on human will,)
Our Fortune rolls as from a smooth descent,
And from the first impression takes the bent:
But, if unseiz'd, she glides away like wind,
And leaves repenting Folly far behind.
Now, now she meets you with a glorious prize,
And spreads her locks before her as she flies.
Had thus old David, from whose loins you spring,
Not dar'd, when Fortune call'd him, to be king,
At Gath an exile he might still remain,
And Heaven's anointing oil had been in vain.
Let his successful youth your hopes engage;
But shun th' example of declining age:
Behold him setting in his western skies,
The shadows lengthening as the vapors rise.
He is not now, as when on Jordan's sand
The joyful people throng'd to see him land,
Cov'ring the beach, and black'ning all the strand;
But, like the Prince of Angels, from his height
Comes tumbling downward with diminish'd light;
Betray'd by one poor Plot to public scorn,
(Our only blessing since his curst return;)
Those heaps of people which one sheaf did bind,
Blown off and scatter'd by a puff of wind.
What strength can he to your designs oppose,
Naked of friends, and round beset with foes?
If Pharaoh's[21] doubtful succor he should use,
A foreign aid would more incense the Jews:
Proud Egypt would dissembled friendship bring;
Foment the war, but not support the king:
Nor would the royal party e'er unite
With Pharaoh's arms t' assist the Jebusite;
Or if they should, their interest soon would break,
And with such odious aid make David weak.
All sorts of men by my successful arts,
Abhorring kings, estrange their alter'd hearts
From David's rule: and 'tis the general cry,
'Religion, commonwealth, and liberty.'
If you, as champion of the public good,
Add to their arms a chief of royal blood,
What may not Israel hope, and what applause
Might such a general gain by such a cause?
Not barren praise alone, that gaudy flow'r
Fair only to the sight, but solid pow'r;
And nobler is a limited command,
Giv'n by the love of all your native land,
Than a successive title, long and dark,
Drawn from the moldy rolls of Noah's ark."
What cannot praise effect in mighty minds,
When flattery soothes, and when ambition blinds!
Desire of pow'r, on earth a vicious weed,
Yet, sprung from high, is of celestial seed:
In God 'tis glory; and when men aspire,
'Tis but a spark too much of heavenly fire.
Th' ambitious youth, too covetous of fame,
Too full of angels' metal in his frame,
Unwarily was led from virtue's ways,
Made drunk with honor, and debauch'd with praise.
Half loth, and half consenting to the ill,
(For loyal blood within him struggled still,)
He thus replied: "And what pretense have I
To take up arms for public liberty?
My father governs with unquestion'd right;
The faith's defender, and mankind's delight;
Good, gracious, just, observant of the laws:
And Heav'n by wonders has espous'd his cause.
Whom has he wrong'd in all his peaceful reign?
Who sues for justice to his throne in vain?
What millions has he pardon'd of his foes,
Whom just revenge did to his wrath expose?
Mild, easy, humble, studious of our good;
Inclin'd to mercy, and averse from blood;
If mildness ill with stubborn Israel suit,
His crime is God's beloved attribute.
What could he gain, his people to betray,
Or change his right for arbitrary sway?
Let haughty Pharaoh curse with such a reign
His fruitful Nile, and yoke a servile train.

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[20] This refers to the parting of the Red Sea for Moses's following to cross.

[21] Louis XIV of France.

If David's rule Jerusalem displease,
The Dog Star heats their brains to this disease.
Why then should I, encouraging the bad,
Turn rebel and run popularly mad?
Were he a tyrant, who, by lawless might
Oppress'd the Jews, and rais'd the Jebusite,
Well might I mourn; but nature's holy bands
Would curb my spirits and restrain my hands:
The people might assert their liberty;
But what was right in them were crime in me.
His favor leaves me nothing to require,
Prevents my wishes, and outruns desire.
What more can I expect while David lives?
All but his kingly diadem he gives:
And that"—But there he paus'd; then sighing, said—
"Is justly destin'd for a worthier head.
For, when my father from his toils shall rest,
And late augment the number of the blest,
His lawful issue shall the throne ascend,
Or the collat'ral line, where that shall end.
His brother, tho' oppress'd with vulgar spite,
Yet dauntless, and secure of native right,
Of every royal virtue stands possess'd;
Still dear to all the bravest and the best.
His courage foes, his friends his truth proclaim;
His loyalty the king, the world his fame.
His mercy ev'n th' offending crowd will find;
For sure he comes of a forgiving kind.
Why should I then repine at Heaven's decree,
Which gives me no pretence to royalty?
Yet oh that fate, propitiously inclin'd,
Had rais'd my birth, or had debas'd my mind;
To my large soul not all her treasure lent,
And then betray'd it to a mean descent!
I find, I find my mounting spirits bold,
And David's part disdains my mother's mold.
Why am I scanted by a niggard birth?
My soul disclaims the kindred of her earth;
And, made for empire, whispers me within,
'Desire of greatness is a godlike sin.'"
  Him staggering so when hell's dire agent found,
While fainting Virtue scarce maintain'd her ground,
He pours fresh forces in, and thus replies:
  "Th' eternal God, supremely good and wise,
Imparts not these prodigious gifts in vain:
What wonders are reserv'd to bless your reign!
Against your will, your arguments have shown,
Such virtue's only giv'n to guide a throne.
Not that your father's mildness I contemn;
But manly force becomes the diadem.
'Tis true he grants the people all they crave;
And more, perhaps, than subjects ought to have:
For lavish grants suppose a monarch tame,
And more his goodness than his wit proclaim.
But when should people strive their bonds to break,
If not when kings are negligent or weak?
Let him give on till he can give no more,
The thrifty Sanhedrin[22] shall keep him poor;
And every shekel which he can receive,
Shall cost a limb of his prerogative.
To ply him with new plots shall be my care;
Or plunge him deep in some expensive war;
Which when his treasure can no more supply,
He must, with the remains of kingship, buy.
His faithful friends, our jealousies and fears
Call Jebusites, and Pharaoh's pensioners;
Whom when our fury from his aid has torn,
He shall be naked left to public scorn.
The next successor, whom I fear and hate,
My arts have made obnoxious to the State;
Turn'd all his virtues to his overthrow,
And gain'd our elders to pronounce a foe.
His right, for sums of necessary gold,
Shall first be pawn'd, and afterwards be sold;
Till time shall ever-wanting David draw,
To pass your doubtful title into law:
If not, the people have a right supreme
To make their kings; for kings are made for them.
All empire is no more than pow'r in trust,
Which, when resum'd, can be no longer just.
Succession, for the general good design'd,
In its own wrong a nation cannot bind;
If altering that the people can relieve,
Better one suffer than a nation grieve.
The Jews well know their pow'r: ere Saul they chose,
God was their king, and God they durst depose.
Urge now your piety, your filial name,
A father's right, and fear of future fame;
The public good, that universal call,
To which even Heav'n submitted, answers all.
Nor let his love enchant your generous mind;
'Tis Nature's trick to propagate her kind.
Our fond begetters, who would never die,
Love but themselves in their posterity.
Or let his kindness by th' effects be tried,
Or let him lay his vain pretence aside.
God said he lov'd your father; could he bring
A better proof than to anoint him king?
It surely show'd he lov'd the shepherd well,
Who gave so fair a flock as Israel.
Would David have you thought his darling son?
What means he then, to alienate the crown?

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[22] Parliament.

The name of godly he may blush to bear:
'Tis after God's own heart to cheat his heir.
He to his brother gives supreme command,
To you a legacy of barren land:
Perhaps th' old harp, on which he thrums his lays,
Or some dull Hebrew ballad in your praise.
Then the next heir, a prince severe and wise,
Already looks on you with jealous eyes;
Sees thro' the thin disguises of your arts,
And marks your progress in the people's hearts.
Tho' now his mighty soul its grief contains,
He meditates revenge who least complains;
And, like a lion, slumb'ring in the way,
Or sleep dissembling, while he waits his prey,
His fearless foes within his distance draws,
Constrains his roaring, and contracts his paws;
Till at the last, his time for fury found,
He shoots with sudden vengeance from the ground;
The prostrate vulgar passes o'er and spares,
But with a lordly rage his hunters tears.
Your case no tame expedients will afford:
Resolve on death, or conquest by the sword,
Which for no less a stake than life you draw;
And self-defence is nature's eldest law.
Leave the warm people no considering time;
For then rebellion may be thought a crime.
Prevail yourself of what occasion gives,
But try your title while your father lives;
And that your arms may have a fair pretence,
Proclaim you take them in the king's defence;
Whose sacred life each minute would expose
To plots, from seeming friends, and secret foes.
And who can sound the depth of David's soul?
Perhaps his fear his kindness may control.
He fears his brother, tho' he loves his son,
For plighted vows too late to be undone.
If so, by force he wishes to be gain'd;
Like women's lechery, to seem constrain'd.
Doubt not; but, when he most affects the frown,
Commit a pleasing rape upon the crown.
Secure his person to secure your cause:
They who possess the prince, possess the laws."
He said, and this advice above the rest,
With Absalom's mild nature suited best:
Unblam'd of life, (ambition set aside,)
Not stain'd with cruelty, nor puff'd with pride;
How happy had he been, if destiny
Had higher plac'd his birth, or not so high!
His kingly virtues might have claim'd a throne,
And bless'd all other countries but his own.
But charming greatness since so few refuse,
'Tis juster to lament him than accuse.
Strong were his hopes a rival to remove,
With blandishments to gain the public love;
To head the faction while their zeal was hot,
And popularly prosecute the Plot.
To further this, Achitophel unites
The malcontents of all the Israelites;
Whose differing parties he could wisely join,
For several ends, to serve the same design:
The best, (and of the princes some were such,)
Who thought the pow'r of monarchy too much;
Mistaken men, and patriots in their hearts;
Not wicked, but seduc'd by impious arts.
By these the springs of property were bent,
And wound so high, they crack'd the government.
The next for interest sought t' embroil the state,
To sell their duty at a dearer rate;
And make their Jewish markets of the throne,
Pretending public good, to serve their own.
Others thought kings an useless heavy load,
Who cost too much, and did too little good.
These were for laying honest David by,
On principles of pure good husbandry.
With them join'd all th' haranguers of the throng.
That thought to get preferment by the tongue.
Who follow next, a double danger bring,
Not only hating David, but the king:
The Solymæan[23] rout, well-vers'd of old
In godly faction, and in treason bold;
Cow'ring and quaking at a conqu'ror's sword;
But lofty to a lawful prince restor'd;
Saw with disdain an Ethnic plot begun,
And scorn'd by Jebusites to be outdone.
Hot Levites[24] headed these; who, pull'd before
From th' ark, which in the Judges' days they bore,
Resum'd their cant, and with a zealous cry
Pursued their old belov'd Theocracy,
Where Sanhedrin and priest enslav'd the nation.
And justified their spoils by inspiration:
For who so fit for reign as Aaron's race,
If once dominion they could found in grace?
These led the pack; tho' not of surest scent,
Yet deepest mouth'd against the government.
A numerous host of dreaming saints[25] succeed,
Of the true old enthusiastic breed:
'Gainst form and order they their pow'r employ,
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.
But far more numerous was the herd of such,
Who think too little, and who talk too much.
These, out of mere instinct, they knew not why,
Ador'd their fathers' God and property;

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[23] the London rabble.
[24] the Presbyterian clergy
[25] Puritans and other dissenters.

And, by the same blind benefit of fate,
The Devil and the Jebusite did hate:
Born to be sav'd, even in their own despite,
Because they could not help believing right.
Such were the tools; but a whole Hydra[26] more
Remains of sprouting heads too long to score.
Some of their chiefs were princes of the land;
In the first rank of these did Zimri[27] stand,
A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts and nothing long;
But in the course of one revolving moon
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ
With something new to wish or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes:
So over violent or over civil
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.
He laughed himself from Court; then sought relief
By forming parties, but could ne'er be chief:
For spite of him, the weight of business fell
On Absalom and wise Achitophel;
Thus wicked but in will, of means bereft,
He left not faction, but of that was left.
Titles and names 'twere tedious to rehearse
Of lords, below the dignity of verse.
Wits, warriors, Commonwealth's-men, were the best;
Kind husbands, and mere nobles, all the rest.
And therefore, in the name of dulness, be
The well-hung Balaam[28] and cold Caleb,[29] free;
And canting Nadab[30] let oblivion damn,
Who made new porridge for the paschal lamb.
Let friendship's holy band some names assure;
Some their own worth, and some let scorn secure
Nor shall the rascal rabble here have place,
Whom kings no titles gave, and God no grace:
Not bull-fac'd Jonas,[31] who could statutes draw
To mean rebellion, and make treason law.
But he, tho' bad, is follow'd by a worse,
The wretch who Heav'n's anointed dar'd to curse:
Shimei,[32] whose youth did early promise bring
Of zeal to God and hatred to his king,
Did wisely from expensive sins refrain,
And never broke the Sabbath, but for gain;
Nor ever was he known an oath to vent,
Or curse, unless against the government.
Thus heaping wealth, by the most ready way
Among the Jews, which was to cheat and pray,
The city, to reward his pious hate
Against his master, chose him magistrate.
His hand a vare[33] of justice did uphold;
His neck was loaded with a chain of gold.
During his office, treason was no crime;
The sons of Belial[34] had a glorious time;
For Shimei, tho' not prodigal of pelf,
Yet lov'd his wicked neighbor as himself.
When two or three were gather'd to declaim
Against the monarch of Jerusalem,
Shimei was always in the midst of them;
And if they curs'd the king when he was by,
Would rather curse than break good company.
If any durst his factious friends accuse,
He pack'd a jury of dissenting Jews;
Whose fellow-feeling in the godly cause
Would free the suff'ring saint from human laws.
For laws are only made to punish those
Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.
If any leisure time he had from pow'r,
(Because 't is sin to misimploy an hour,)
His bus'ness was, by writing, to persuade
That kings were useless, and a clog to trade;
And, that his noble style he might refine,
No Rechabite[35] more shunn'd the fumes of wine.
Chaste were his cellars, and his shrieval board
The grossness of a city feast abhorr'd:
His cooks, with long disuse, their trade forgot;
Cool was his kitchen, tho' his brains were hot.
Such frugal virtue malice may accuse,
But sure 'twas necessary to the Jews;
For towns once burnt such magistrates require
As dare not tempt God's providence by fire.
With spiritual food he fed his servants well,
But free from flesh that made the Jews rebel;
And Moses' laws he held in more account,
For forty days of fasting in the mount.

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[26] a mythical monster having many heads.
[27] the Duke of Buckingham.
[28] the Earl of Huntington.
[29] Lord Grey.
[30] Lord Howard of Escrick; he had been a dissenting minister.
[31] Sir William Jones, prosecutor in connection with the Popish Plot.
[32] Bethel, a Whig sheriff of London.
[33] staff of office.
[34] Cf. *Paradise Lost,* I, 500ff.
[35] total abstainer; cf. *Jeremiah,* 35:14.

To speak the rest, who better are forgot,
Would tire a well-breath'd witness of the Plot.
Yet, Corah,[86] thou shalt from oblivion pass:
Erect thyself, thou monumental brass,
High as the serpent of thy metal made,
While nations stand secure beneath thy shade.
What tho' his birth were base, yet comets rise
From earthy vapors, ere they shine in skies.
Prodigious actions may as well be done
By weaver's issue, as by prince's son.
This arch-attestor for the public good
By that one deed ennobles all his blood.
Who ever ask'd the witnesses' high race,
Whose oath with martyrdom did Stephen grace?
Ours was a Levite, and as times went then,
His tribe were God Almighty's gentlemen.
Sunk were his eyes, his voice was harsh and loud,
Sure signs he neither choleric was nor proud:
His long chin prov'd his wit; his saintlike grace,
A church vermilion,[87] and a Moses' face.
His memory, miraculously great,
Could plots, exceeding man's belief, repeat;
Which therefore cannot be accounted lies,
For human wit could never such devise.
Some future truths are mingled in his book;
But where the witness fail'd, the prophet spoke:
Some things like visionary flights appear;
The spirit caught him up, the Lord knows where;
And gave him his rabbinical degree,
Unknown to foreign university.
His judgment yet his mem'ry did excel;
Which piec'd his wondrous evidence so well,
And suited to the temper of the times,
Then groaning under Jebusitic crimes.
Let Israel's foes suspect his heav'nly call,
And rashly judge his writ apocryphal;
Our laws for such affronts have forfeits made:
He takes his life, who takes away his trade.
Were I myself in witness Corah's place,
The wretch who did me such a dire disgrace
Should whet my memory, tho' once forgot,
To make him an appendix of my plot.
His zeal to Heav'n made him his prince despise,
And load his person with indignities;
But zeal peculiar privilege affords,
Indulging latitude to deeds and words;
And Corah might for Agag's[88] murder call,
In terms as coarse as Samuel us'd to Saul.
What others in his evidence did join,
(The best that could be had for love or coin,)
In Corah's own predicament will fall;
For *witness* is a common name to all.
Surrounded thus with friends of every sort,
Deluded Absalom forsakes the court;
Impatient of high hopes, urg'd with renown,
And fir'd with near possession of a crown.
Th' admiring crowd are dazzled with surprise,
And on his goodly person feed their eyes.
His joy conceal'd, he sets himself to show,
On each side bowing popularly low;
His looks, his gestures, and his words he frames,
And with familiar ease repeats their names.
Thus form'd by nature, furnish'd out with arts,
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.
Then, with a kind compassionating look,
And sighs, bespeaking pity ere he spoke,
Few words he said; but easy those and fit,
More slow than Hybla-drops,[89] and far more sweet.
"I mourn, my countrymen, your lost estate:
Tho' far unable to prevent your fate:
Behold a banish'd man, for your dear cause
Expos'd a prey to arbitrary laws!
Yet oh! that I alone could be undone,
Cut off from empire, and no more a son!
Now all your liberties a spoil are made;
Egypt and Tyrus[40] intercept your trade,
And Jebusites your sacred rites invade.
My father, whom with reverence yet I name,
Charm'd into ease, is careless of his fame;
And, brib'd with petty sums of foreign gold,
Is grown in Bathsheba's[41] embraces old;
Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys;
And all his pow'r against himself employs.
He gives, and let him give, my right away;
But why should he his own and yours betray?
He, only he, can make the nation bleed,
And he alone from my revenge is freed.
Take then my tears," (with that he wip'd his eyes,)
" 'Tis all the aid my present pow'r supplies:
No court-informer can these arms accuse;
These arms may sons against their fathers use:
And 'tis my wish, the next successor's reign
May make no other Israelite complain."
Youth, beauty, graceful action seldom fail;
But common interest always will prevail;
And pity never ceases to be shown

---

[86] Titus Oates, chief witness in the Popish Plot case.

[87] high color of a churchman.

[88] mysterious murder of Edmond Godfrey, before whom Oates had made his deposition.

[89] Hybla, in Sicily, famous for its honey.

[40] France and Holland.

[41] the Duchess of Portsmouth.

To him who makes the people's wrongs his own.
The crowd, that still believe their kings oppress,
With lifted hands their young Messiah bless:
Who now begins his progress to ordain
With chariots, horsemen, and a num'rous train;
From east to west his glories he displays,
And, like the sun, the promis'd land surveys.
Fame runs before him as the morning star,
And shouts of joy salute him from afar:
Each house receives him as a guardian god,
And consecrates the place of his abode.
But hospitable treats did most commend
Wise Issachar,[42] his wealthy western friend.
This moving court, that caught the people's eyes,
And seem'd but pomp, did other ends disguise:
Achitophel had form'd it, with intent
To sound the depths, and fathom, where it went,
The people's hearts; distinguish friends from foes,
And try their strength, before they came to blows.
Yet all was color'd with a smooth pretense
Of specious love, and duty to their prince.
Religion, and redress of grievances,
Two names that always cheat and always please,
Are often urg'd; and good King David's life
Endanger'd by a brother and a wife.
Thus in a pageant show a plot is made,
And peace itself is war in masquerade.
O foolish Israel! never warn'd by ill!
Still the same bait, and circumvented still!
Did ever men forsake their present ease,
In midst of health imagine a disease;
Take pains contingent mischiefs to foresee,
Make heirs for monarchs, and for God decree?
What shall we think! Can people give away,
Both for themselves and sons, their native sway?
Then they are left defenseless to the sword
Of each unbounded, arbitrary lord:
And laws are vain, by which we right enjoy,
If kings unquestion'd can those laws destroy.
Yet if the crowd be judge of fit and just,
And kings are only officers in trust,
Then this resuming cov'nant was declar'd
When kings were made, or is for ever barr'd.
If those who gave the scepter could not tie
By their own deed their own posterity,
How then could Adam bind his future race?
How could his forfeit on mankind take place?
Or how could heavenly justice damn us all,
Who ne'er consented to our father's fall?
Then kings are slaves to those whom they command,
And tenants to their people's pleasure stand.
Add, that the pow'r for property allow'd
Is mischievously seated in the crowd;
For who can be secure of private right,
If sovereign sway may be dissolv'd by might?
Nor is the people's judgment always true:
The most may err as grossly as the few;
And faultless kings run down, by common cry,
For vice, oppression, and for tyranny.
What standard is there in a fickle rout,
Which, flowing to the mark, runs faster out?
Nor only crowds, but Sanhedrins may be
Infected with this public lunacy,
And share the madness of rebellious times,
To murder monarchs for imagin'd crimes.
If they may give and take whene'er they please,
Not kings alone, (the Godhead's images,)
But government itself at length must fall
To nature's state, where all have right to all.
Yet, grant our lords the people kings can make,
What prudent men a settled throne would shake?
For whatsoe'er their sufferings were before,
That change they covet makes them suffer more.
All other errors but disturb a state,
But innovation is the blow of fate.
If ancient fabrics nod, and threat to fall,
To patch the flaws, and buttress up the wall,
Thus far 'tis duty: but here fix the mark;
For all beyond it is to touch our ark.
To change foundations, cast the frame anew,
Is work for rebels, who base ends pursue,
At once divine and human laws control,
And mend the parts by ruin of the whole.
The tamp'ring world is subject to this curse,
To physic their disease into a worse.
  Now what relief can righteous David bring?
How fatal 'tis to be too good a king!
Friends he has few, so high the madness grows:
Who dare be such, must be the people's foes.
Yet some there were, ev'n in the worst of days;
Some let me name, and naming is to praise.
  In this short file Barzillai[43] first appears;
Barzillai, crown'd with honor and with years.
Long since, the rising rebels he withstood
In regions waste, beyond the Jordan's flood:
Unfortunately brave to buoy the state;
But sinking underneath his master's fate:
In exile with his godlike prince he mourn'd;
For him he suffer'd, and with him return'd.
The court he practis'd, not the courtier's art:
Large was his wealth, but larger was his heart,
Which well the noblest objects knew to choose,

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[42] a gentleman who had entertained Monmouth.

[43] the Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. He had accompanied Charles II into his exile.

The fighting warrior, and recording Muse.
His bed could once a fruitful issue boast;
Now more than half a father's name is lost.
His eldest hope,[44] with every grace adorn'd,
By me (so Heav'n will have it) always mourn'd,
And always honor'd, snatch'd in manhood's prime
B' unequal fates, and Providence's crime;
Yet not before the goal of honor won,
All parts fulfill'd of subject and of son:
Swift was the race, but short the time to run.
O narrow circle, but of pow'r divine,
Scanted in space, but perfect in thy line!
By sea, by land, thy matchless worth was known,
Arms thy delight, and war was all thy own:
Thy force, infus'd, the fainting Tyrians propp'd;
And haughty Pharaoh found his fortune stopp'd.
O ancient honor! O unconquer'd hand,
Whom foes unpunish'd never could withstand!
But Israel was unworthy of thy name;
Short is the date of all immoderate fame.
It looks as Heav'n our ruin had design'd,
And durst not trust thy fortune and thy mind.
Now, free from earth, thy disencumber'd soul
Mounts up, and leaves behind the clouds and starry pole;
From thence thy kindred legions mayst thou bring,
To aid the guardian angel of thy king.
Here stop, my Muse, here cease thy painful flight;
No pinions can pursue immortal height:
Tell good Barzillai thou canst sing no more,
And tell thy soul she should have fled before.
Or fled she with his life, and left this verse
To hang on her departed patron's hearse?
Now take thy steepy flight from heav'n and see
If thou canst find on earth another *he*:
Another *he* would be too hard to find;
See then whom thou canst see not far behind.
Zadoc[45] the priest, whom, shunning pow'r and place,
His lowly mind advanc'd to David's grace.
With him the Sagan[46] of Jerusalem,
Of hospitable soul, and noble stem;
Him of the western dome, whose weighty sense
Flows in fit words and heavenly eloquence.
The prophets' sons, by such example led,
To learning and to loyalty were bred:
For colleges on bounteous kings depend,
And never rebel was to arts a friend.
To these succeed the pillars of the laws;
Who best could plead, and best can judge a cause.
Next them a train of loyal peers ascend;
Sharp-judging Adriel,[47] the Muses' friend;
Himself a Muse—in Sanhedrin's debate
True to his prince, but not a slave of state:
Whom David's love with honors did adorn,
That from his disobedient son were torn.
Jotham[48] of piercing wit, and pregnant thought;
Endued by nature, and by learning taught
To move assemblies, who but only tried
The worse a while, then chose the better side:
Nor chose alone, but turn'd the balance too;
So much the weight of one brave man can do.
Hushai,[49] the friend of David in distress;
In public storms, of manly steadfastness:
By foreign treaties he inform'd his youth,
And join'd experience to his native truth.
His frugal care supplied the wanting throne;
Frugal for that, but bounteous of his own:
'Tis easy conduct when exchequers flow,
But hard the task to manage well the low;
For sovereign power is too depress'd or high,
When kings are forc'd to sell, or crowds to buy.
Indulge one labor more, my weary Muse,
For Amiel:[50] who can Amiel's praise refuse?
Of ancient race by birth, but nobler yet
In his own worth, and without title great:
The Sanhedrin long time as chief he rul'd,
Their reason guided, and their passion cool'd:
So dext'rous was he in the crown's defense,
So form'd to speak a loyal nation's sense,
That, as their band was Israel's tribes in small,
So fit was he to represent them all.
Now rasher charioteers the seat ascend,
Whose loose careers his steady skill commend:
They, like th' unequal ruler of the day,
Misguide the seasons, and mistake the way;
While he withdrawn at their mad labor smiles,
And safe enjoys the sabbath of his toils.
These were the chief, a small but faithful band
Of worthies, in the breach who dar'd to stand,
And tempt th' united fury of the land.
With grief they view'd such powerful engines bent,
To batter down the lawful government:
A numerous faction, with pretended frights,
In Sanhedrins to plume the regal rights;

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[44] Thomas, Earl of Ossory.

[45] Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury.

[46] The Bishop of London.

[47] The Earl of Mulgrave, afterwards Duke of Buckingham.

[48] The Marquis of Halifax.

[49] Viscount Hyde, later Earl of Rochester.

[50] Edward Seymour, once Speaker of the House of Commons.

The true successor from the court remov'd;
The Plot, by hireling witnesses, improv'd.
These ills they saw, and, as their duty bound,
They shew'd the king the danger of the wound;
That no concessions from the throne would please,
But lenitives fomented the disease;
That Absalom, ambitious of the crown,
Was made the lure to draw the people down;
That false Achitophel's pernicious hate
Had turned the Plot to ruin Church and State;
The council violent, the rabble worse;
That Shimei taught Jerusalem to curse.
With all these loads of injuries oppress'd,
And long revolving in his careful breast
Th' event of things, at last, his patience tir'd,
Thus from his royal throne, by Heav'n inspir'd,
The godlike David spoke: with awful fear
His train their Maker in their master hear.
"Thus long have I, by native mercy sway'd,
My wrongs dissembled, my revenge delay'd:
So willing to forgive th' offending age;
So much the father did the king assuage.
But now so far my clemency they slight,
Th' offenders question my forgiving right.
That one was made for many, they contend;
But 'tis to rule; for that's a monarch's end.
They call my tenderness of blood, my fear;
Tho' manly tempers can the longest bear.
Yet, since they will divert my native course,
'T is time to shew I am not good by force.
Those heap'd affronts that haughty subjects bring,
Are burthens for a camel, not a king.
Kings are the public pillars of the State,
Born to sustain and prop the nation's weight;
If my young Samson will pretend a call
To shake the column, let him share the fall:
But O that yet he would repent and live!
How easy 'tis for parents to forgive!
With how few tears a pardon might be won
From nature, pleading for a darling son!
Poor pitied youth, by my paternal care
Rais'd up to all the height his frame could bear!
Had God ordain'd his fate for empire born,
He would have giv'n his soul another turn:
Gull'd with a patriot's name, whose modern sense
Is one that would by law supplant his prince;
The people's brave,[61] the politician's tool;
Never was patriot yet, but was a fool.
Whence comes it that religion and the laws
Should more be Absalom's than David's cause?
His old instructor, ere he lost his place,
Was never thought indued with so much grace.
Good heav'ns, how faction can a patriot paint!
My rebel ever proves my people's saint.
Would *they* impose an heir upon the throne?
Let Sandhedrins be taught to give their own.
A king's at least a part of government,
And mine as requisite as their consent;
Without my leave a future king to choose,
Infers a right the present to depose.
True, they petition me t' approve their choice;
But Esau's hands suit ill with Jacob's voice.
My pious subjects for my safety pray;
Which to secure, they take my pow'r away.
From plots and treasons Heav'n preserve my years,
But save me most from my petitioners!
Unsatiate as the barren womb or grave;
God cannot grant so much as they can crave.
What then is left, but with a jealous eye
To guard the small remains of royalty?
The law shall still direct my peaceful sway,
And the same law teach rebels to obey:
Votes shall no more establish'd pow'r control—
Such votes as make a part exceed the whole:
No groundless clamors shall my friends remove,
Nor crowds have pow'r to punish ere they prove;
For gods and godlike kings their care express,
Still to defend their servants in distress.
Oh that my pow'r to saving were confin'd!
Why am I forc'd, like Heav'n, against my mind,
To make examples of another kind?
Must I at length the sword of justice draw?
Oh curst effects of necessary law!
How ill my fear they by my mercy scan!
Beware the fury of a patient man.
Law they require, let Law then show her face;
They could not be content to look on Grace,
Her hinder parts, but with a daring eye
To tempt the terror of her front and die.
By their own arts, 'tis righteously decreed,
Those dire artificers of death shall bleed.
Against themselves their witnesses will swear,
Till viper-like their mother Plot they tear;
And suck for nutriment that bloody gore,
Which was their principle of life before.
Their Belial with their Belzebub will fight;
Thus on my foes, my foes shall do me right.
Nor doubt th' event; for factious crowds engage,
In their first onset, all their brutal rage.
Then let 'em take an unresisted course;
Retire, and traverse, and delude their force;
But, when they stand all breathless, urge the fight,
And rise upon 'em with redoubled might;

---

[61] a hired assassin.

For lawful pow'r is still superior found;
When long driv'n back, at length it stands the ground."
He said. Th' Almighty, nodding, gave consent;
And peals of thunder shook the firmament.
Henceforth a series of new time began,
The mighty years in long procession ran:
Once more the godlike David was restor'd,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.
(1681)

Mac Flecknoe

Or a Satire upon the True-blue-protestant Poet T. S.[1]

Shaftesbury's acquittal (cf. *Absalom and Achitophel, above*) naturally brought great joy to the Whigs, and they commissioned George Bower to strike a medal in honor of their leader. Dryden seized the occasion once more, and wrote *The Medal, A Satire against Sedition,* published anonymously in March 1682. Though not equal poetically to *Absalom,* it was even more popular than its predecessor because of its biting satire.

Dryden must have expected attacks for his new work, and he had not long to wait. Among the many barbs aimed at him was *The Medal of John Bayes*, for a long time attributed by scholars, because of Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe*, to Thomas Shadwell. Recently, however, considerable doubt has been cast on Shadwell's responsibility for *The Medal of John Bayes*; and hence it has been necessary to revise our notion of *Mac Flecknoe* as intended for a counter-attack. Although Dryden's poem was published in 1682, it may very well have been written in 1678, before the fury over the alleged Catholic Plot had become a national issue, thus having no relation to the political agitation over Shaftesbury. Certainly the work does not concern itself anywhere with politics.

Thomas Shadwell (1642?-1692), whom Dryden pillories in this poem, and who was destined to succeed him as Laureate, had been on amicable terms with Dryden. Apparently they had quarreled, however, and become sufficiently hostile for Dryden to launch *Mac Flecknoe* against this rival versifier.

Flecknoe, whom Dryden makes the King of Nonsense in his poem, was an Irish priest who wrote wretched verse. Andrew Marvell had already ridiculed him in *Flecknoe, an English Priest at Rome.* Flecknoe died in 1678, shortly after which, it is now thought, Dryden wrote this devastating lampoon on Shadwell.

For personal satire *Mac Flecknoe* can be matched in English poetry only with a work which it inspired, Pope's *Dunciad.* Written in the form of a mock-heroic, it typically deals with a trifling theme in the grand manner. As M. Legouis puts it: "The blending, a special gift with Dryden, of a crushing force of mockery with the sovereign good-humor of a merry-giant, strong enough to conquer without strain and bitterness, remains the particular feature of this poem."

All human things are subject to decay,
And when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe[2] found, who, like Augustus, young
Was call'd to empire, and had govern'd long;
In prose and verse, was own'd, without dispute,
Thro' all the realms of *Nonsense*, absolute.
This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
And blest with issue of a large increase;
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the State;
And, pond'ring which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried: "'T is resolv'd; for nature pleads, that he

---

[1] Thomas Shadwell (1642?-1692), author of a number of poorly constructed plays which afford interesting pictures of London life among the lower classes.

[2] Flecknoe was a Roman Catholic priest, who died in 1678. He had at one time been entertained by King John of Portugal. To Dryden's contemporaries he was notorious as a bad poet.

Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Sh—— alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years:
Sh—— alone, of all my sons, is he
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
But Sh—— never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike thro', and make a lucid interval;
But Sh——'s genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems design'd for thoughtless majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch oaks that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley[3] were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology.
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare thy way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich drugget, came
To teach the nations in thy greater name.
My warbling lute, the lute I whilom strung,
When to King John of Portugal I sung,
Was but the prelude of that glorious day,
When thou on silver Thames didst cut thy way,
With well-tim'd oars before the royal barge,
Swell'd with the pride of thy celestial charge;
And big with hymn, commander of a host,
The like was ne'er in Epsom[4] blankets toss'd.
Methinks I see the new Arion[5] sail,
The lute still trembling underneath thy nail.
At thy well-sharpen'd thumb from shore to shore
The treble squeaks for fear, the basses roar;
Echoes from Pissing Alley Sh—— call,
And Sh—— they resound from Aston Hall.
About thy boat the little fishes throng,
As at the morning toast that floats along.
Sometimes, as prince of thy harmonious band,
Thou wield'st thy papers in thy threshing hand.
St. André's[6] feet ne'er kept more equal time,
Not ev'n the feet of thy own *Psyche's*[7] rhyme;
Tho' they in number as in sense excel:
So just, so like tautology, they fell,
That, pale with envy, Singleton[8] forswore
The lute and sword, which he in triumph bore,
And vow'd he ne'er would act Villerius[9] more."
Here stopp'd the good old sire, and wept for joy
In silent raptures of the hopeful boy.
All arguments, but most his plays, persuade,
That for anointed dulness he was made.
Close to the walls which fair Augusta bind,
(The fair Augusta much to fears inclin'd,)
An ancient fabric rais'd t' inform the sight,
There stood of yore, and Barbican it hight:[10]
A watchtower once; but now, so fate ordains,
Of all the pile an empty name remains.
From its old ruins brothel-houses rise,
Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys,
Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
And, undisturb'd by watch, in silence sleep.
Near these a Nursery[11] erects its head,
Where queens are form'd, and future heroes bred;
Where unfledg'd actors learn to laugh and cry,
Where infant punks their tender voices try,
And little Maximins[12] the gods defy.
Great Fletcher never treads in buskins[13] here,
Nor greater Jonson dares in socks[14] appear;
But gentle Simkin[15] just reception finds
Amidst this monument of vanish'd minds;
Pure clinches the suburbian Muse affords,
And Panton[16] waging harmless war with words.
Here Flecknoe, as a place to fame well known,
Ambitiously design'd his Sh——'s throne;
For ancient Dekker[17] prophesied long since,
That in this pile should reign a mighty prince,
Born for a scourge of wit, and flail of sense;
To whom true dulness should some *Psyches* owe,
But worlds of *Misers* from his pen should flow;
Humorists and hypocrites it should produce,
Whole Raymond families, and tribes of Bruce.[18]
Now Empress Fame had published the renown
Of Sh——'s coronation thro' the town.
Roused by report of Fame, the nations meet,
From near Bunhill, and distant Watling Street.
No Persian carpets spread th' imperial way,

---

[3] Thomas Heywood and James Shirley were dramatists at the beginning of the seventeenth century, both men of higher gifts than Dryden admits.

[4] a reference to Shadwell's Play, *Epsom Wells*.

[5] a Greek musician of the eighth century B.C., to whom Shadwell is likened because he publicly spoke of his ability as a musician.

[6] a French dancing-master.

[7] an opera by Shadwell.

[8] a contemporary singer.

[9] in Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes*.

[10] was called.

[11] a theater for the training of actors.

[12] a character in Dryden's *Tyrannic Love*.

[13] symbolic of tragedy.

[14] symbolic of comedy.

[15] a clown.

[16] a contemporary punster.

[17] Thomas Dekker (1570?-1637?), English dramatist.

[18] The plays and characters just mentioned are all by Shadwell.

But scattered limbs of mangled poets lay;
From dusty shops neglected authors come,
Martyrs of pies, and relics of the bum.[19]
Much Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby[20] there lay,
But loads of Sh—— almost choked the way.
Bilked[21] stationers for yeomen stood prepared,
And Herringman[22] was captain of the guard.
The hoary prince in majesty appeared,
High on a throne of his own labors reared.
At his right hand our young Ascanius[23] sate,
Rome's other hope, and pillar of the State.
His brows thick fogs, instead of glories, grace,
And lambent dulness played around his face.
As Hannibal[24] did to the altars come,
Sworn by his sire a mortal foe to Rome;
So Sh—— swore, nor should his vow be vain,
That he till death true dulness would maintain;
And, in his father's right, and realm's defense,
Ne'er to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense.
The king himself the sacred unction made,
As king by office, and as priest by trade.
In his sinister hand, instead of ball,
He placed a mighty mug of potent ale;
Love's Kingdom[25] to his right he did convey,
At once his scepter, and his rule of sway;
Whose righteous lore the prince had practiced young,
And from whose loins recorded *Psyche* sprung.
His temples, last, with poppies were o'erspread,
That nodding seemed to consecrate his head.
Just at that point of time, if fame not lie,
On his left hand twelve reverend owls did fly.
So Romulus,[26] 'tis sung, by Tiber's brook,
Presage of sway from twice six vultures took.
Th' admiring throng loud acclamations make,
And omens of his future empire take.
The sire then shook the honors of his head,
And from his brows damps of oblivion shed
Full on the filial dulness: long he stood,
Repelling from his breast the raging god;
At length burst out in this prophetic mood:
"Heavens bless my son, from Ireland let him reign
To far Barbadoes on the western main;
Of his dominion may no end be known,
And greater than his father's be his throne;
Beyond *Love's Kingdom* let him stretch his pen!"
He paused, and all the people cried, "Amen."
Then thus continued he: "My son, advance
Still in new impudence, new ignorance.
Success let others teach, learn thou from me
Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry.
Let *Virtuosos*[27] in five years be writ;
Yet not one thought accuse thy toil of wit.
Let gentle George[28] in triumph tread the stage,
Make Dorimant betray, and Loveit rage;
Let Cully, Cockwood, Fopling,[29] charm the pit,
And in their folly show the writer's wit.
Yet still thy fools shall stand in thy defense,
And justify their author's want of sense.
Let 'em be all by thy own model made
Of dulness, and desire no foreign aid;
That they to future ages may be known,
Not copies drawn, but issue of thy own.
Nay, let thy men of wit too be the same,
All full of thee, and differing but in name.
But let no alien S—dl—y[30] interpose,
To lard with wit thy hungry *Epsom* prose.
And when false flowers of rhetoric thou wouldst cull,
Trust nature, do not labor to be dull;
But write thy best, and top; and, in each line,
Sir Formal's[31] oratory will be thine:
Sir Formal, tho' unsought, attends thy quill,
And does thy northern dedications[32] fill.
Nor let false friends seduce thy mind to fame,
By arrogating Jonson's[33] hostile name.
Let father Flecknoe fire thy mind with praise,
And uncle Ogleby thy envy raise.
Thou art my blood, where Jonson has no part:
What share have we in nature, or in art?

---

[19] Leaves from their books were not only placed under pies by bakers but also used for toilet-paper.

[20] Ogleby had been a dancing-master and later a prolific translator.

[21] cheated booksellers, unable to sell Shadwell's books.

[22] Dryden's former publisher.

[23] Shadwell, as son of Flecknoe, is here compared to Ascanius, the son of Aeneas.

[24] the Carthaginian general (247-183 B.C.) who was compelled as a youth to swear eternal hatred for Rome.

[25] a play by Flecknoe.

[26] Romulus, the founder of Rome, is said to have learned the future location of the city from the flight of twelve vultures.

[27] a play by Shadwell on which he is said to have been engaged for five years.

[28] Sir George Etheregе (1635?-1691), comic dramatist.

[29] references to characters in Etherege's plays.

[30] Sir Charles Sedley (1635?-1691), a comic dramatist who had written a prologue to Shadwell's *Epsom Wells*.

[31] a character in Shadwell's *Virtuoso*.

[32] a reference to the frequent dedications of Shadwell's works to the Duke of Newcastle and his family.

[33] Shadwell had praised Jonson extravagantly.

Where did his wit on learning fix a brand,
And rail at arts he did not understand?
Where made he love in Prince Nicander's[34] vein,
Or swept the dust in *Psyche's* humble strain?
Where sold he bargains, 'whip-stitch, kiss my arse,'[35]
Promis'd a play and dwindled to a farce?
When did his Muse from Fletcher[36] scenes purloin,
As thou whole Eth'rege dost transfuse to thine?
But so transfused, as oil on water's flow,
His always floats above, thine sinks below.
This is thy province, this thy wondrous way,
New humors to invent for each new play:
This is that boasted bias of thy mind,
By which one way, to dulness, 'tis inclined;
Which makes thy writings lean on one side still,
And, in all changes, that way bends thy will.
Nor let thy mountain-belly make pretense
Of likeness; thine's a tympany[37] of sense.
A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ,
But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin[38] of wit.
Like mine, thy gentle numbers feebly creep;
Thy tragic Muse gives smiles, thy comic sleep,
With whate'er gall thou sett'st thyself to write,
Thy inoffensive satires never bite.
In thy felonious heart tho' venom lies,
It does but touch thy Irish pen, and dies.
Thy genius calls thee not to purchase fame
In keen iambics, but mild anagram.
Leave writing plays, and choose for thy command
Some peaceful province in acrostic land.
There thou may'st wings display and altars raise,
And torture one poor word ten thousand ways.
Or, if thou wouldst thy diff'rent talents suit,
Set thy own songs, and sing them to thy lute."
He said: but his last words were scarcely heard;
For Bruce and Longvil[39] had a trap prepared,
And down they sent the yet declaiming bard.
Sinking he left his drugget robe behind,
Borne upwards by a subterranean wind.
The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
With double portion of his father's art.

Alexander's Feast; or, The Power of Music

A Song in Honor of St. Cecilia's Day, 1697

A society had been formed in London for the presentation annually of a musical composition honoring St. Cecilia, patron saint of music. In 1687 and in 1697 Dryden contributed for the festival two of his finest lyrical works—*A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* and *Alexander's Feast.* In both, his poetic resource and his skill are evident, but it is the latter which is more famous.

It was written at a time when the poet was hard-pressed for money and in rapidly failing health. Its immediate success was therefore very gratifying to the aging author; he wrote of it: "I am glad to hear from all hands that my Ode is esteemed the best of all my poetry, by all the town; I thought so myself when I writ it; but, being old, I mistrusted my own judgment."

The conception for the poem Dryden found in Plutarch's life of Alexander. Though some modern critics have thought the musical values of this ode a little too facile, some of the best of our writers have called it one of the greatest of English lyrical poems.

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son[1]—
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound
(So should desert in arms be crowned);
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride—
Happy, happy, happy pair!

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[34] a character in Shadwell's *Psyche.*

[35] such phrases are found in Shadwell's *Virtuoso.*

[36] John Fletcher (1579-1625), English dramatist.

[37] inflation, conceit.

[38] small cask.

[39] In Shadwell's *Virtuoso* these characters cause Sir Formal Trifle to fall through a trap-door.

[1] Alexander, son of Philip of Macedon, is giving a feast in celebration of the conquest of Persia.

None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair!

Chorus

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above—
Such is the power of mighty love!
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode
When he to fair Olympia[2] pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound;
A present deity! they shout around;
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

Chorus

With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus[3] then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young.
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face.
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Chorus

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battles o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain!
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse
Soft pity to infuse.
He sung Darius[4] great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

Chorus

Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.

[2] the mother of Alexander.

[3] god of wine.

[4] King of Persia, whom Alexander has just defeated.

Softly sweet, in Lydian[5] measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War (he sung) is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think, it worth enjoying.
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee!
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So love was crowned, but music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Chorus

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again,
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head;
As awaked from the dead
And amazed he stares around.
"Revenge, revenge!" Timotheus cries,
"See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
Those are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain.
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew!
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!"
The princes applaud with a furious joy;
And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen,[6] fired another Troy!

Chorus

And the King seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia[7] came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down!

Grand Chorus

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down!

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[5] one of the "modes" in Greek music, thought of as especially voluptuous.

[6] Helen, who was carried away by Paris, and thus brought about the war with Troy.

[7] Saint Cecilia is credited with the invention of the organ.

Ah! How Sweet It Is to Love

For those dramas which he was composing throughout his career, Dryden wrote a number of charming lyrics. In his day English music, indeed, was having its last flowering in the person of the great Purcell. But it cannot be pretended that, from the literary standpoint, the light verses of his contemporaries had much merit. Dryden, appreciative of the melodies of the Elizabethan song-writers, was in this field, as in most other fields, superior to his fellow authors, and produced some delightful songs.

(From *Tyrannic Love*)

Ah, how sweet it is to love!
Ah, how gay is young Desire!
And what pleasing pains we prove
When we first approach Love's fire!
Pains of love be sweeter far
Than all other pleasures are.

Sighs which are from lovers blown
Do but gently heave the heart:
Ev'n the tears they shed alone
Cure, like trickling balm, their smart:
Lovers, when they lose their breath,
Bleed away in easy death.

Love and Time with reverence use,
Treat them like a parting friend;
Nor the golden gifts refuse,
Which in youth sincere they send:
For each year their price is more,
And they less simple than before.

Love, like spring-tides full and high,
Swells in every youthful vein;
But each tide does less supply,
Till they quite shrink in again:
If a flow in age appear,
'Tis but rain, and runs not clear.

Epigram on Milton

Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England[1] did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd,
The next in majesty, in both the last.

(1688)

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[1] Homer, Dante, and Milton.

JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN, called MOLIERE (1622-1673)

The family of Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, who called himself Molière, had been prosperous merchants of furniture. Molière's father, when the boy was fifteen, was able to purchase the post of "royal upholsterer," a title that must have equipped the Poquelins with much distinction among the bourgeoisie. At the age of nine young Jean was sent to a fashionable Jesuit college in Paris, the Collège de Clermont, where he is said to have been particularly proficient in Latin. Upon leaving school, he may have studied law, taken his degree, and even practiced a while—if some biographers are to be believed. Certainly his plays manifest a considerable knowledge of legal procedure.

Suddenly he developed a love for the stage and, discarding all his bright prospects, determined to join his lot with that of the Béjart family in forming a theatrical troupe. But the difficulty of finding a theatre, as well as Molière's unsuitability to the heavy tragic parts he enacted, brought the company to ruin. In 1645 Molière's father had to rescue him from debtor's prison.

With the rest of the company scattered, Molière and the Béjarts decided to try the provinces. For thirteen years they wandered from place to place, enduring all the hardships of so uncertain a life. But they were thirteen years of valuable apprenticeship for Molière as actor and playwright. Trying his hand at first on little farces, and then on longer works, he began to uncover his true bent—his genius for comedy. *L'Étourdi* (The Blunderer), the first of his authenticated plays, was performed at Lyons in 1655. By 1658 the troupe was ready to try its luck in Paris.

At the invitation of the Duke of Anjou the company gave a performance before the court, with the result that it was granted the use of the Petit Bourbon, a theatre adjoining the Louvre. Here on November 18, 1659, Molière presented his delicious *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (cf. *Ned Softly, below*), a timely satire on current affectation of elegance, that won the heart of Louis XIV and of Paris because of its effervescent spirit.

With *L'École des Maris* (The School for Husbands) Molière turned to express his liberal views on the more serious questions of the education and marriage of women (1661). His passion for truth and his fine sense of contrast were next exhibited in *L'École des Femmes* (The School for Wives), a strong study of incompatibility in marriage (1662).

But his courageous frankness, which prompted Molière to speak to his own disadvantage, rapidly made him many enemies. In May 1664, Louis XIV gave a festival at Versailles in honor of Mlle de la Vallière, and Molière was indiscreet enough to launch an attack on religious hypocrisy in one of his most powerful plays, *Le Tartuffe,* three acts of which were presented on that occasion. The play was at once forbidden any further performance. Undaunted, Molière attacked the same vice in *Don Juan* (1665); after it had played to a number of crowded houses, the censor intervened again.

The next year saw the performance of one of his greatest plays, *Le Misanthrope,* sometimes called "the French *Hamlet,*" which poses the problem of the individual against society. Other plays followed with unabated regularity, though the poet's health declined rapidly. His last years were spent in much unhappiness, because of difficulties with his young wife and the malice of his enemies. Finally on February 17, 1673, while playing the title role of his last play, *Le Malade Imaginaire* (The Imaginary Invalid) he suffered a hemorrhage, collapsed after the final curtain, and died a few hours later.

Even in death his troubles were not over. As an actor he had been automatically excommunicated by the church. Many people had believed his plays blasphemous, and two priests of his parish refused to attend him on his deathbed. By the time a third had consented, Molière was dead. The authorities refused to allow him to be buried in holy ground until a petition procured the necessary permission. At the burial of the greatest of modern comic geniuses only a handful of mourners was present.

Molière was a classicist not only in the structure of his plays and the pointedness of his verse, but also in the very quality of his thinking. The quintessence of classicism is its love of order, moderation, and good sense. The approach to life of the classicist has perhaps never been better expressed than in the words of Philinte in *The Misanthrope*:

La parfaite raison fuit toute extrémité,
Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobriété.

(The best logic avoids all extremes, and recommends that wisdom be tempered with sobriety.) The plain duty of every human being, as Molière saw it, was to make his life commensurate with reason, justice, and truth. Hence Molière's plays single out for satire those who live in defiance of those standards or in blindness to them. Such has been the general bent of classical comedy (e.g. the comedies of Ben Jonson). But Molière possessed a gift uncommon in satirists, and granted to few of his imitators—a deep humanity. Only too often the traditions of such comedy have made for brittle cleverness and mere flashing wit. The general heartlessness, for instance, of the English Restoration writers of comedy robs their work of final greatness. In Molière's plays, however, the source of laughter lies deep; one never feels that human nature has been distorted or abandoned for the sake of providing mirth. His quick sympathy for human beings enabled him to reveal in a phrase the characteristic weakness or folly of one man or the balance and integrity of another. In his hands comedy fulfilled its high function as a criticism of life.

The easy grace and sparkling wit of his lines were perhaps the greatest attraction to his imitators. Certainly English drama in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an epoch that made much of wit and elegance, bears eloquent testimony to his influence. Thomas Otway (1652-1685), author of the greatest of Restoration tragedies, *Venice Preserved* (1682), adapted from Molière the entire play of *The Cheats of Scapin* (1677) and parts of *The Soldier's Fortune* (1681). Sir George Etherege (1633?-1691?), prominent Restoration comic dramatist, was probably indebted to Molière's portrait of Mascarille for the hero of *The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676). Sir Charles Sedley (1639?-1701) based his *Mulberry Garden* (1668) on Molière's *School for Husbands.* William Wycherley (1641?-1715), with Congreve the best of Restoration writers of comedy, adapted *The Misanthrope* for his finest play, *The Plain Dealer* (1674?), and took a number of suggestions for his *Country Wife* (1676?) from *The School for Wives* and *The School for Husbands.* Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667) is an adaptation of Molière's *L'Etourdi*; his *Evening's Love* (1668) is influenced by *Le Dépit Amoureux*; his *Marriage à la Mode* is indebted to *Les Précieuses Ridicules*; his *Kind Keeper* bears resemblances to *Tartuffe.* Congreve's *The Double Dealer* (1694) was written with Molière in mind. Sir John Vanbrugh (1664?-1726) made a free translation of Molière's *Le Dépit Amoureux* in *The Mistake* (1705). George Farquhar (1677?-1707) wrote *Love and a Bottle* (1698) under the influence of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.* Henry Fielding (1707-1754) translated *Le Médecin Malgré Lui* into *The Mock-Doctor* (1732) and *L'Avare* into *The Miser* (1733), one of his best plays.

These, indeed, are merely examples of the debt of major English writers to Molière, and do not include the influence he exerted on lesser dramatists popular in their own day. The reader will readily observe from a reading of *The Misanthrope* how much the great French dramatist contributed to the general conception of English neoclassical comedy and its traditions which flowered in *The Way of the World* and *The School for Scandal.* In the latter play Sheridan seems to have patterned an entire scene after a similar episode in *The Misanthrope.*

In this play some critics have found autobiographical significance in the character of Alceste, for Molière himself suffered much through his infatuation for his frivolous young wife. The role, in fact, is often interpreted as a nearly tragic one by actors. But there can be little doubt that the author was aiming his satire, among other matters, at Alceste's inability to adapt himself to the dictates of reasonable conduct, and Molière is said to have acted the part as a comic one. But the essential humanity of the portrait will be the more obvious when the play is compared with Wycherley's adaptation of it, *The Plain Dealer.*

Among many good studies of Molière, that by Brander Matthews (1910) may be mentioned.

THE MISANTHROPE

(*First performed at Paris June 4, 1666*)

(*Translated by Bernard D. N. Grebanier*)

THE PERSONS

Alceste, *in love with Célimène*
Philinte, *friend of Alceste*
Oronte, *also in love with Célimène*
Célimène
Eliante, *Célimène's cousin*
Arsinoë, *Célimène's friend*
Acaste }
Clitandre } *Marquises*
Basque, *Célimène's servant*
An Officer
Dubois, *Alceste's servant*

Scene: *Célimène's home in Paris*

ACT ONE

Scene i. Philinte, Alceste

Phil. What's up? What's ailing you?

Al. [*seated*]. Go away, please!

Phil. But really—! Tell me what vagary. . . .

Al. Leave me alone, I tell you! Make yourself scarce!

Phil. Listen to a man, at least, without getting so excited.

Al. I want to get excited, and I refuse to listen.

Phil. I can't understand you in these sudden fits. Although we're friends, I'm among the first. . . .

Al. [*suddenly getting up*]. Me? Your friend? Erase me from your books! I've indeed professed myself your friend up till now. But after what I've just seen in you, I must inform you bluntly that I consider myself such no longer. I desire no room in a corrupted heart.

Phil. In your opinion I'm thoroughly damned?

Al. Damned? You should die from pure shame! There's no way of excusing such conduct—any decent man would be revolted. I see you heap cordiality upon a man, extend him the limit of affection, avowals, proffers, and expressions of sentiment—you overlay your attentions on him to the point of excess—and when I ask you who he is, you hardly know his name! Your devotion to him vanishes the minute your part, and you speak of him completely casually. Good grief! It's low, wicked, infamous! To abase one's self so, giving the lie to one's true feelings! Why, if I had been so unfortunate as to have done what you did, I'd have gone out and hanged myself out of sheer remorse.

Phil. I don't see at all that it's the kind of crime that calls for hanging. And I beg you to extend me mercy if I *don't* hang myself—unless you mind.

Al. A joke of questionable taste!

Phil. Well, frankly—what do you expect a man to do?

Al. I'd have people be sincere, and, like men of honor, not utter a word that doesn't come from the heart.

Phil. When a man comes over to embrace you joyfully, it's only fair to pay him back in his own coin,—return, as you can, his attentions, and give him back proffer for proffer, protestation for protestation.

Al. No. I can't stand this despicable fashion most of you stylish people affect. And I hate nothing so much as the contortions of all these marvelous coiners of avowals, these affable idle embracers, these ready discoursers of empty words who slay everybody with their civilities—and deal with the honest man in the same manner as with the fool. What use is there in the endearments of a fellow who swears his friendship, his faith, his eagerness, his esteem, his tenderness—who eulogizes on you grandly—when he hastens to do as much for the first fop he meets? No, no! No soul of the least dignity would desire so cheap an esteem! The most glorious thing has little value when we see it shared with the rest of the world. Esteem is based upon *some* preference, and to esteem the whole world is to esteem no one. Since you give in to the folly of the times,—by Heaven! you're not the friend for me. I reject the boundless good-nature that makes no discrimination of merit. *I* want to be preferred. To cut the matter clean: the friend of the entire human race is no friend for me.

Phil. But while one is of the world, one must accord to it those outward civilities that manners require.

Al. I say no. One should pitilessly castigate this shameful trading in pretended friendships. I desire a man to behave like one, and in every situation to show in his speech his true feelings—that it really be *himself* that speaks, and that he never hide his honest thoughts behind vain compliments.

Phil. There are many circumstances where candor would be absurd, and intolerable too. And sometimes—without reflecting on your austere code—it's just as well to hide one's feelings. Would it be sensible—or seemly—to tell thousands of people just what we think of them? Faced with a person one hates or dislikes, should one announce to him how one feels?

Al. Yes.

Phil. What! You'd go and tell old Emilia that at her age it ill becomes her to play the belle, and that her cosmetics are a scandal?

Al. Of course.

Phil. Or Dorilas that he affronts people, and that there's not an ear at court that's not weary of his tales of bravery or the splendor of his line?

Al. Emphatically.

Phil. You're fooling.

Al. I am not. On this point I'd spare no one. My eyes are too much hurt. At court or in town I see nothing but sources of vexation. I get into a black melancholy and a deep despair when I see what tricks men are up to. Everywhere nothing but vile flattery, injustice, egotism, treachery, and knavery. I can't stand it any longer. I'm furious. I intend to break with human kind.

Phil. This philosophical despair is too wild. I can't help smiling at the dark fits I find you in, and I seem to see in us brought up together, those two brothers of the *School For Husbands* who . . .

Al. Good Heavens! Spare us your weak comparisons!

Phil. No. Seriously, stop this rigamarole. Your care will never change the world. And, since bluntness has such an appeal for you, I'll tell you bluntly that wherever you go this humor of yours is a subject for sport, and that so much bile against the manners of the time makes you ridiculous to plenty of people.

Al. All the better, by Heaven, all the better! That's what I want. It's a happy sign, and I rejoice in it. All men are so hateful to me, that I'd be annoyed to be thought wise in their eyes.

Phil. You've a great grudge against human nature.

Al. Yes. In fact, I'm developing a terrible hate of it.

Phil. And all poor mortals, without exception, are to be wrapped in this distaste of yours? There must be some now alive . . .

Al. No. My feelings are general, and I hate all men. Some of them because they are wicked and mischievous; and the others for being receptive to the wicked and for not hating them belligerently—as all virtuous souls should hate wickedness. You get a picture of this easy tolerance in the excess of it granted the bold rascal against whom I've a law-suit. You can see the traitor right through his mask. Everybody knows what he is. His rolling eyes and his sugary tongue deceive only the stranger. Everybody knows that low-life, who ought to be blasted, has pushed himself up in the world by the dirtiest tricks, and that the resplendent place they've got him makes merit groan and virtue blush. Whatever shameful titles he's dubbed anywhere, no one stands up to defend his wretched honor. Call him a rogue, a cheat, a cursed scoundrel, everybody agrees—nobody contradicts you. For all that, his simperings are everywhere welcome. He is received, smiled upon—he gets in everywhere. And if, by intrigue, any job's to be got, he will get it over the heads of the deserving. I tell you, these are mortal wounds to me! To see what consideration viciousness gets! Sometimes I have a sudden urge to fly to a desert far from the approach of men.

Phil. Heavens! Let's get a little less upset about the manners of the time! And be a little more charitable to human nature! Let's not examine it with such severity, and see its faults somewhat gently. A supple virtue is needed for mixing with people. We may be to blame if we're *too* wise. The best logic avoids all extremes, and recommends that wisdom be tempered with sobriety. The stiffer austerity of an older age clashes too much with our times and its common practises. It demands too much perfection from mere mortals. It behooves us to bend to the time without stubbornness. It's the first of follies to insist on correcting the world. *I* note, like you, every day a hundred things which would be better done if done differently. But whatever I do note, nobody sees me in a rage about it, like you. Quietly, I take men as I find them. I discipline my mind to bear with what they do. And I believe that at court, as in town, my tranquility is as philosophical as your spleen.

Al. But this tranquility, sir—you who reason so beautifully—will nothing disturb your tranquility? And if it should happen by chance that a friend betrays you—if someone lays plots to get hold of your possessions—or if somebody tries to spread evil reports of you, would you stand by without getting into a rage?

Phil. Yes. I regard these faults you complain of as common to humanity. I am no more put out at seeing a man dishonest, unjust, egotistical, than at seeing a vulture seeking its prey, monkeys michievous, or wolves in a fury.

Al. I am to see myself betrayed, torn to shreds, robbed, without . . . Good grief! I don't want to talk any more about it! All this *logic* has nothing to do with the case.

Phil. Indeed you'd do well to keep mum. Damn your opponent a little less, and pay a little more attention to your law-suit.

Al. That I won't do! That's flat!

Phil. Then who's to manage your affairs?

Al. Whom do I need? I have reason, my just cause, equity.

Phil. Aren't you going to see any of the judges?

Al. No. Is there anything unjust or doubtful about my cause?

Phil. Of course not. But intrigue can be harmful, and . . .

Al. No. I'm determined not to take a step. I'm either right or wrong.

Phil. Don't trust to that.

Al. I won't give in an inch.

Phil. Your opponent is strong. He can, by his connections, persuade . . .

Al. No matter.

Phil. You will undo yourself.

Al. Very well then. We'll see what happens.

Phil. But . . .

Al. I shall at least have the pleasure of losing my case.

Phil. But really . . .

Al. I'll see in this trial whether or not men will have enough effrontery, enough wickedness, treachery and perverseness, to do me such an injustice before the whole world.

Phil. What a man!

Al. No matter what it cost, I could wish, for the beauty of the demonstration, to lose my case.

Phil. Alceste, if people heard you carrying on this way, they would laugh in earnest.

Al. So much the worse for those who would.

Phil. But this rectitude for which you stipulate in everybody, this complete righteousness in which you're entrenched,—do you find it in her you love? I, for one, am astonished that seeming at sword's point with the human race, you, despite everything that makes it odious to you, could find anyone to charm you. And what surprises me more, is the peculiar choice your affections have made. Sincere Eliante favors you, prudish Arsinoë regards you with tenderness, yet your heart is closed to them; while your being chained to Célimène merely amuses her,—Célimène, whose coquettish moods and biting wit seem to be so much at one with the time's fashion. How is it that, hating such behavior as you do, you can bear them in that girl? Do they cease to be failings in so sweet an object? Don't you see them, or do you condone them?

Al. No. The love I have for that young widow does not blind me to her faults. And I am the first, whatever passion she has inspired me with, to see them as well as to condemn them. But with all that, do what I can, I confess my weakness: she has the art of delighting me. In vain I note her failings, in vain I blame them; despite all, she makes me love her. And, doubtless, my deep love will purge her soul of the follies of the time.

Phil. If you can do that, you will be doing not a little. You believe, then, that she loves you?

Al. Yes, by Heaven! I wouldn't love her else.

Phil. But if her love for you is so potent, why are you so annoyed with your rivals?

Al. Because a heart, once given, demands all for itself. And I come here only to tell her what my feelings inspire on this very head.

Phil. As for me, it's her cousin Eliante, if I were to choose, who should have my sighs. Her heart, which esteems yours, is dependable and sincere; such a choice would have suited you better.

Al. True. My reason tells me so every day. But reason can't control love.

Phil. I have great fears for your passion; and your hopes might . . .

SCENE 2 ORONTE, ALCESTE, PHILINTE

Or. [*to* Alceste]. I've been told below that Eliante and Célimène have gone out to make some purchases. But since they said you were here, I've come up to tell you, in all sincerity, that I have conceived for you an incredible regard, and that this regard has long made me ardently desire to be your friend. Yes; my heart burns to acknowledge merit, and I am on fire to bind us two in friendship. I suppose that a warm friend of my rank is certainly not to be rejected. It is to you, by your leave, that these remarks are addressed.

During this speech, Alceste *seems to be in a reverie, and not to understand that it's to him* Oronte *is speaking.*

Al. To me, sir?

Or. To you. Do you find it offensive?

Al. Not at all. But I'm thoroughly surprised. I didn't expect the honor.

Or. The esteem I hold you in shouldn't surprise you. You can claim it from the entire world.

Al. Sir . . .

Or. The kingdom contains nothing superior to the tremendous worth people find in you.

AL. Sir . . .

OR. Yes, for my part, I hold you higher than anything most precious I see in it.

AL. Sir . . .

OR. May Heaven strike me, if I lie! And, to assure you right now of my feelings, permit me, sir, to embrace you with an open heart, and to beg a place in your affections. Shake on it, if you please. You promise me your friendship?

AL. Sir . . .

OR. What! you deny me?

AL. Sir, it's too much honor you wish to do me. But friendship requires a little more of the sacred. And it's surely a profanation of the word to use it on every occasion. With discretion and discrimination such a tie must be made. Before we bind ourselves, we ought to be better acquainted. We might have such characters as to make us repent of our bargain.

OR. By Heaven! Wisely spoken! I esteem you all the more for it! Let us, then, allow time to form such sweet ties. Nevertheless, I place myself entirely at your disposal. If it should be necessary at court to make some overture, everyone knows that I cut something of a figure with the king. To me he listens. In everything he does, he's most free with me. In brief, I'm yours in any matter. And, as you've such intelligence, I've come, to begin our charming connection, to show you a sonnet I recently composed, and to discover whether it's fit for the public.

AL. My dear sir, I am not qualified to judge. Forgive me.

OR. Why?

AL. I have the failing of being more plain-spoken than necessary.

OR. That's what I want! I should have grounds for complaint if, in exposing myself to you to learn the simple truth, you should deceive me or withhold anything.

AL. If that's what you like, sir, I'm willing.

OR. *Sonnet.* It's a sonnet . . . *Hope.* . . . It's to a lady who has flattered my passion with some hope. . . . They're not these grand, pompous verses, but little sweet ones, tender, languishing.

He looks at ALCESTE *during all these interruptions.*

AL. We'll see.

OR. *Hope.* . . . I don't know if the style will seem to you neat and facile enough, and if you'll be satisfied with the diction.

AL. We shall see, sir.

OR. Besides, you'll know that it only took me a quarter of an hour.

AL. Let's hear it, sir. The time involved has nothing to do with it.

OR. [*reads*].

"Hope, it's true, can soothe our pain,
And sadness a while it balks;
But, Phillis, what a sorry gain
When nothing behind it walks."

PHIL. I am already delighted with that little piece.

AL. [*softly*]. What! You have the nerve to find that delightful?

OR.

"Once you seemed complying,
But that you shouldn't have done;
Trouble you'd not be buying
To feed me hope alone."

PHIL. Ah! In what choice terms those thoughts are expressed!

AL. [*softly*]. There now! Vile jellyfish, you praise these dribblings?

OR.

"If I must be forever waiting,
Conclude my passion unabating—
And death shall be my fate.

Your care shall not prevent my end
Dear Phillis, to despair we tend
When we in hope must wait."

PHIL. The cadence is pretty, affectionate, admirable.

AL. [*softly*]. The devil with your cadences, Satan's henchman! May you have a cadence to break your nose!

PHIL. Never have I heard verses so well turned.

AL. Good grief!

OR. [*to Philinte*]. You flatter me. Perhaps you think . . .

PHIL. I'm not flattering in the least.

AL. [*softly*]. What else are you doing, liar?

OR. [*to Alceste*]. But you—you know our agreement. Tell me sincerely, I beseech . . .

AL. This matter, sir, is always a delicate one. We love to be flattered on our wit. But, one day I said to a certain person (whose name I withhold) on seeing verses of his composition, that a worthy man ought at all times to keep under control the temptation to write which seizes all of us,—that he hold the reins on the propensity to *exhibit* such pastimes,—and that being too hot to show our works exposes us to ridicule.

OR. Are you trying to tell me I am wrong in wishing . . .

AL. I don't say that. But I said to this man that dull writing is a bore,—that one needs only that weakness to be cried out upon—and that though in other respects he might have a hundred good qualities, a man is judged by his worst attributes.

Or. Do you find anything in my sonnet to object to?

Al. I don't say that. But to keep this man from writing, I recommended to his view how that thirst had confounded many excellent people.

Or. Do *I* write badly, or do I resemble them?

Al. I don't say that. But, in short, I said to this man: "What's the pressing need for rhyming? And who the devil drives you to print? If we can pardon the issuing of a bad book, it's only to those poor wretches who write for a living. Believe me, resist the temptation, keep from the public these works, and don't lose (however you may be asked to) the name of an honest man that you bear in court just to accept from the hand of a greedy printer the name of a ridiculous unhappy author." That's what I tried to make him understand.

Or. That's all very fine, and I believe I follow you. But can't I know what there is in my sonnet . . . ?

Al. Frankly, you'd better keep it in your desk. You've been copying bad models, and your expressions aren't at all natural. What's *"Sadness a while it balks"*? and what's *"Nothing behind it walks"*? What's *"Trouble you'd not be buying, to feed me hope alone"*? and what's *"Phillis, to despair we tend when we in hope must wait"*? This figurative style that people are so fond of, is beyond taste and truth. It's only a play of words, pure affectation; nature never speaks that way. The wretched taste of our day terrifies me. Our fathers, all uncultivated as they were, were much better off. And I like much less all that they admire these days than an old song I'm going to recite to you:

"If the King to me had handed
Paris, mighty town
On condition I be stranded
From my darling own,
To King Henry I would say:
'Take your Paris back, I pray!
My love I'd choose on any day, O!
My love I'd choose on any day!'"

The verse is not rich, the style is old. But don't you see how much better it is than all these packages of silliness good sense revolts against? And that in it honest passion speaks?

"If the King to me had handed
Paris, mighty town
On condition I be stranded
From my darling own,
To King Henry I would say:
'Take your Paris back, I pray!
My love I'd choose on any day, O!
My love I'd choose on any day!'"

There's what a really smitten heart would say. [*To Philinte, who smiles.*] Yes, Mister Smiler, in spite of your wonderful wits, I hold that song more dear than all the dazzling pomp of those false gems everyone is enraptured with today!

Or. And as for me, I maintain my verses are excellent.

Al. You must have *your* reasons for thinking them so. But you'll admit I may have *mine* which are quite independent of yours.

Or. It's enough for me that others admire them.

Al. Because they have the gift of pretending, which I have not.

Or. Do you imagine you've so great a share of intelligence?

Al. If I had praised your verses, I'd have had more.

Or. I'll do very well without your commendation.

Al. You'll have to do without it, if you don't mind.

Or. I'd like much to see how you would compose on the same subject, in your own style.

Al. I might, unhappily, compose something just as bad. But I'd be careful not to let anyone else see it.

Or. You speak to me very knowingly, and this smugness . . .

Al. Find someone else to encourage you. Not me.

Or. But, my little fellow, don't be so arrogant.

Al. My word, my big fellow, I'll do as I please!

Phil. [*coming between them*]. Wait! Gentlemen! You go too far! Stop this, please!

Or. Ah! I'm wrong, I admit. I'm leaving. Your servant, sir, sincerely.

Al. And I'm yours, sir, most humbly.

Scene 3. Philinte, Alceste

Phil. There, you see! By being too sincere, you've got a nasty mess on your hands. I saw at once that Oronte, in order to be flattered . . .

Al. Don't speak to me.

Phil. But . . .

Al. I'm through with society.

Phil. But that's too . . .

Al. Let me be . . .

Phil. If I . . .

Al. No more words . . .

Phil. But . . .

Al. I won't hear you.

Phil. But . . .

Al. You persist?

Phil. Men insult . . .

Al. By Heaven, it's too much! Don't follow me.

Phil. You're joking. I'm not leaving you.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene 1. Alceste, Célimène

Al. Madam, will you allow me to speak to you without embellishments? I'm entirely dissatisfied with your conduct, which is filling my heart with anger. I foresee that we'll have to break with each other. Yes, I should be deceiving you to put it otherwise: sooner or later we must break. If I were to promise a thousand times to the contrary, I should be powerless to prevent it.

Cél. It's to quarrel with me, then, I see, that you wished to take me home?

Al. I'm not quarreling. But your whim is to open your heart to the first comer. Too many admirers surround you, and I can't get used to that.

Cél. You blame me for having admirers? Can I help it if people find me agreeable? And if they manage pleasantly to see me, am I to drive them away with a stick?

Al. No, madam. You don't need a stick, but a heart less compliant, less tender to heed their vows. I'm aware that your charms go with you, wherever you go. But your compliance keeps near you those whom your eyes attract; and your proffered sweetness to those who surrender to you, accomplishes the work begun by your beauty on their hearts. The too encouraging hope you grant them fastens their assiduities on to you. Your pliancy, if less general, would drive off the crowd of so many suppliants. But at least tell me, madam, by what chance your Clitandre has the gift of pleasing you so well? On what grounds of merit and sublime virtue do you found the honor of your esteem for him? Is it by the long nail of his little finger that he has acquired it? Have you given yourself up, like the rest of the *beau monde*, to admiration for his amazing blonde wig? Are those big canions[1] he wears what make you love him? Has his collection of ribbons succeeded in charming you? Is it by the beauty of his vast German breeches that he has been able to win your heart while professing to be your slave? Or have his manner of smiling and his falsetto voice touched the spring of your affections?

Cél. How unfair of you to take offence at him! Don't you know why I tolerate him? That he has promised to interest friends in my law-suit?

Al. Lose your case, madam, courageously, and don't tolerate a rival I can't stand.

Cél. But you're getting to be jealous of everybody.

Al. Because everybody is in your good graces.

Cél. That's precisely what should calm your ruffled spirits, because my courtesy is extended to all. You'd have more reason for offense if you saw me entirely concerned with one person.

Al. But I whom you accuse of too much jealousy,—what have I more than they from you madam, I ask?

Cél. The happiness of knowing that you are loved.

Al. And why should my inflamed heart believe that?

Cél. I should imagine that having taken the trouble to tell you so, I have vowed enough to assure you.

Al. But who'll assure me that at the same time you won't say as much to others?

Cél. Truly a charming speech for a lover! You describe me as a very fine person! Well! To rid you of any similar worries, I take back everything I've said, and no one will be able to deceive you but yourself. Are you satisfied?

Al. Good Heaven! Why do I love you? Ah, if only I can rescue my heart from your hands, I shall thank Heaven for the rare fortune! I don't conceal it: I do all I can to break this terrible attachment of my heart. But my greatest efforts have been unavailing. It is for my sins that I must love you this way.

Cél. It's true that there's nothing quite like your love for me.

Al. Yes, I can prove it before the whole world. No one can comprehend my love. No one, madam, has loved as I love you.

Cél. Indeed, the method is entirely novel. You love people to quarrel with them. Only in vexing words does your passion express itself. Nobody ever saw so grumbling a lover.

Al. But it's for you to end his grumbling. Let's cut these bickerings, in God's name. Let's talk frankly, and see if we can stop . . .

Scene 2. Célimène, Alceste, Basque

Cél. What is it?

Bas. Acaste is downstairs.

Cél. Well, then! Have him come up.

Scene 3. Alceste, Célimène

Al. What! Can't I ever speak to you *tête-à-tête*? You're always ready to receive the world. Can't you for one minute suffer being not at home to people?

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[1] ornamental bottoms of legs of breeches.

Cél. Do you want me to get into trouble with him?

Al. I don't like that kind of considerateness.

Cél. He's a man who would never forgive me, if he thought his presence could annoy me.

Al. What's that to you, that you should trouble yourself. . . .

Cél. Good God! The good-will of men like him is important! They are the kind who, I don't know how, manage to be heard at court. In all discussions they are invited. They can do one much good or much harm. And whatever support one can get elsewhere, one can't afford to be on the outs with these loud-mouths.

Al. In other words, whatever people are, you find reasons to put up with the whole world, and the warnings of your common sense. . . .

Scene 4. Alceste, Célimène, Basque

Bas. Here's Clitandre too, madam.

Al. Exactly. [*He shows signs of going.*]

Cél. Where are you running to?

Al. I'm going.

Cél. Stay.

Al. Why should I?

Cél. Stay.

Al. I can't.

Cél. I wish you to.

Al. Impossible. These conversations bore me, and it's too much to ask me to bear them.

Cél. I wish it. I wish it.

Al. No, I can't do it.

Cél. Very well, then, go. Go away. Do as you please.

Scene 5. Eliante, Philinte, Acaste, Clitandre, Alceste, Célimène, Basque

El. [*to* Célimène]. The two marquises have come up with us. Have you been told?

Cél. [*to* Basque]. Yes. Chairs for everybody. [Basque *places chairs and goes out.*] [*To* Alceste.] Haven't you gone?

Al. No. But I want you to choose between them and me.

Cél. Be quiet.

Al. Today you will declare yourself.

Cél. You're mad.

Al. Not at all. You shall declare yourself.

Cél. So?

Al. You shall choose.

Cél. This is a jest, I suppose.

Al. No. But you shall choose. I've had too much patience.

Clit. My word! I've come from the Louvre where Cléonte,[2] madam, made a ridiculous spectacle of himself at the levée. Hasn't he found *one* friend to give him some charitable advice on his manners, and open his eyes?

Cél. True enough that he confounds himself plentifully in society. Everywhere his behavior attracts attention immediately. And when you see him after a short absence he's more full than ever of the absurd.

Ac. My word! If we're speaking of absurd people,—I've just suffered from one of the most fatiguing of them. Damon, the logician, who kept me out of my sedan-chair, believe me, a whole hour in the burning sun.

Cél. He's a strange chatterbox! Always finding a way of telling you nothing at great length! In his speech you find no sense, only a lot of noise.

El. [*to* Philinte]. Not a bad beginning. The conversation's taking an excellent turn against everyone not present.

Clit. Timante, too, madam, is a type!

Cél. He's a complete mystery from head to foot. When he passes you he throws you a bewildered look, and without any business is always busy. All he says is accompanied by grimaces. With his antics he wearies everyone. Endlessly he whispers to you, in the midst of another conversation, to tell a secret that turns out to be everybody's. Out of the merest trifle he makes a world's wonder; and even his "good-day" is whispered.

Ac. And Gerald, madam?

Cél. O that boring *raconteur*! Never does he come off his pedestal. In the gayest society he's always mixing, and he quotes nothing less than a duke, a prince or a princess. Rank is his obsession. And all his talk is of horses, equipages, and dogs. He *thou's* all the noblest, and, so far as he's concerned, the word *sir* is obsolete.

Clit. They say he's on good terms with Bélise.

Cél. Foolish woman! And what dull company *she* is! When she comes to see me, I'm martyred. I rack myself to discover what to say to her, and the sterility of her speech kills conversation every minute. Vainly you try to come to her aid with the worst platitudes to overcome her stupid silence. The weather, the rain the cold, the heat soon get exhausted when one is with her. Nevertheless her visits, insupportable though they are, drag on frightfully; and you may ask the time and yawn twenty times before she'll budge more than a log.

Ac. What's your opinion of Adraste?

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[2] The series of *portraits* (the English *character*) that follows is very much in the taste of the time. Cf. *The Ridiculous Precious Ladies* in our text.

Cél. Ah! What extreme conceit! A man swollen with self-love. His consciousness of his own worth makes him ever discontented with the court, against which he daily inveighs. They never give a post, a trust, or an office to anyone without his believing himself a victim of injustice.

Clit. But young Cléon, who is visited by the best people,—what do you say of him?

Cél. It's his cook who makes him popular. It's his table they like.

El. He takes care to serve the most delicious dishes.

Cél. Yes. But I'd prefer that he didn't include himself. His silly self makes a very bad dish and, to my taste, ruins all the dinners he gives.

Phil. They think well of his uncle Damis.

Cél. He's a friend of mine.

Phil. I think him an estimable man with good sense.

Cél. Yes. But I get vexed at his displays of wit. He's always so stiff, and you see him struggling in all he says for the *bon mot.* Since he's taken it into his head to be smart, nothing satisfies his taste, he's so hard to please. He has to find fault with everything written, and supposes no wit will praise anyone. It's being very learned to find flaws; only fools admire or are amused. He thinks his not approving any modern works makes him superior to other people. Even to ordinary conversation he takes exception—the topics are too mean for him to descend to. With folded arms, from the height of his intellect, he looks down in pity on everything you say.

Al. The devil take me,—his very portrait!

Clit. [*to* Célimène]. You're wonderful at depicting people.

Al. Fine! Go on, continue, my dear gallant friends! You spare nobody. Everyone has his turn. Nonetheless, let one of these victims show up, and we'll see you running to meet him, giving him your hand, and with a flattering kiss burdening him with assurances that you're his servant!

Clit. Why lecture us? If what's been said offends you, you must reproach the lady.

Al. No, by Heaven! It's you! Your ready smiles draw all these slanders from her wit. Her satirical gift is always being nourished by the vile incense of your flattery. She'd find less attraction in raillery if it were not so applauded. That's why we should blame the flatterers for the vices spread among mankind.

Phil. But why do you take so great an interest in these people—you who would also condemn the faults we charge them with?

Cél. Doesn't this gentleman *always* have to contradict? Do you expect him to agree with everyone else? Mustn't he everywhere demonstrate that spirit of contradiction the Heavens have gifted him with? Others' opinions never please him. He always takes the opposite view. He would deem himself too common if he were caught agreeing with anyone. The distinction of disagreeing is so pleasant in his eyes, that he frequently wars against himself. He combats his own true feelings as soon as he finds them in anyone else's mouth.

Al. The mockers are on your side, madam. You can hurl your satire against me.

Phil. But it's true enough that you flare up against everything that's said. By your own admission, you can't bear to hear either praise or blame.

Al. Because, by Heaven! men are never right! Detesting them is always apropos! I observe that they are, in all they do, either vain praisers or impudent libellers.

Cél. But. . . .

Al. No, madam, no—though I die for it—! You have amusements I can't tolerate. They're wrong to feed your heart's attachment to the very faults they blame you for!

Clit. As for me, I don't know. But I swear openly that I've always thought madam without blemish.

Ac. I see her full of grace and charm. I've never noticed any faults in her.

Al. They appear plainly enough to me. Far from hiding them, I have, as she well knows, taken pains to reproach her with them. The more we love someone, the less we should flatter her. True love shows itself by overlooking nothing. And were I a woman I would banish all those wicked lovers that I found submitting to all my opinions,—all whose kind readiness offers up incense to my follies.

El. Love, ordinarily, is hardly likely to follow those laws. One finds lovers always extolling their choice. Never does their passion see anything to blame; in the beloved everything is amiable. They count the flaws as perfections, and seek out pleasant names to call them. She who is pale is comparable to jasmine; she who is dark enough to terrify, is an adorable brunette; the slender one has line and litheness; the fat has a noble carriage; the untidy of few charms is dubbed a careless beauty; the giantess seems a goddess; the dwarf an abstract of Heaven's wonders; the proud has a heart worthy a crown; the tricky is witty; the silly is kind; the chatterbox a lively spirit; the silent is modest. Thus it is that the devoted lover loves even the faults of those he loves.

Al. And I, I maintain. . . .

Cél. Let us change the subject, and go for a turn or two in the gallery. What? You're not going, gentlemen?

Clit and Ac. Not at all, madam.

Al. The fear that they may leave worries you? Go when you like, gentlemen. But I warn you that *I* don't go till you have left.

Ac. As for me, as long as I'm on time for the King's retiring, I have nothing else to do.

Cél. [*to* Alceste]. You're still jesting, I suppose.

Al. No. Nothing of the kind. We shall see if it's me you wanted to get rid of.

Scene 6. Alceste, Célimène, Eliante, Acaste, Philinte, Clitandre, Basque

Bas. [*to* Alceste]. Sir, a man downstairs wants to talk to you on business that can't wait.

Al. Tell him I've no such pressing business.

Bas. He's wearing a jacket with large pleated skirts, with gold all over it.

Cél. [*to* Alceste]. Go and see what he wants, or else let him come up.

Scene 7. Alceste, Célimène, Eliante, Acaste, Philinte, Clitandre, *A Guard*

Al. [*going towards the Guard*]. Well, then what do you desire? Come in, sir.

The Guard. Sir, two words with you.

Al. You may speak out, sir.

The Guard. Their honors, the Marshals of France, whose commands I bear, summon you to appear before them immediately, sir.

Al. Who? Me, sir?

The Guard. You.

Al. And what for?

Phil. [*to* Alceste]. About that silly business of yours with Oronte.

Cél. [*to* Philinte]. What?

Phil. Oronte and he had some words over certain little verses he didn't approve of. They want to nip the affair in the bud.

Al. Well, *I'll* show no base compliance.

Phil. You'll have to obey orders. Come, get ready.

Al. What understanding can they bring us to? Will these gentlemen condemn me to find merit in the verses we quarrel over? I won't retract a jot of what I've said of them. I find them terrible.

Phil. But a little more gentleness. . . .

Al. I'll not yield an inch. The verses are execrable.

Phil. You might show a little more tractableness. Come on.

Al. I'm coming. But nothing will make me retract.

Phil. Let's go and see.

Al. Unless an express command from the King requires my liking the verses that cause all this trouble, by Heaven! I shall maintain that they are bad, and that a man ought to be hanged for composing them. [*To* Clitandre *and to* Acaste *who are laughing.*] Damn it, gentlemen, I didn't imagine I was so amusing!

Cél. Quickly! Go where you are wanted.

Al. I'm going, madam, and I'll be back here to resume our discussion.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

Scene 1. Clitandre, Acaste

Clit. Dear Marquis, you seem well contented. Everything delights and nothing disturbs you. But—man to man—do you believe (without bluffing) you have such great occasion for being joyful?

Ac. By God! I do not see, when I think of it, anything to be unhappy about. I'm well to do; I'm young and come from a house that with some reason may be called noble. And I believe, by the rank which my line confers upon me, that there are few positions I couldn't fill. As for courage, which above all should be dear, everyone knows—without vanity—that I lack none. The world has seen me carry off an affair of honor with vigor and dispatch. As for wit, I have it, without doubt. As for good taste, I can judge without effort, and I've a logical mind too. As for the new plays, which I adore, I'm to be found among the critics on the stage,—give my opinion,—applaud at all the fine passages that merit a *bravo*! I'm well groomed; I've a good carriage, fine face, and especially beautiful teeth, and an excellent figure. As for making a good appearance, I believe without deceiving myself, only the ill-advised will dispute that with me. I find myself esteemed as much as one could be, well loved by the fair sex; and I'm in with the king. I think that with all this, my dear Marquis, I *think* one might, anywhere, be contented with himself.

Clit. Yes. But finding conquests so easy to make elsewhere, why do you come here to sigh in vain?

Ac. I? By God! I have neither the figure nor the humor to put up with the coldness of any woman. It's for clumsy vulgar souls to burn constantly for cruel belles—to languish at their feet and suffer their harshness—to seek solace in sighs and tears—and to try by a long-drawn-out devotion to obtain what's denied their little merit. Men of my kidney, Marquis, are not made to love on credit, and do all the giving. Howsoever rare be the worth of belles, I think, thank God!, my own just as great. To have the honor of a heart like mine, it's not rational that it be had gratis. To weigh matters fairly—advances should come equally from both sides.

Clit. You think, then, Marquis, that you're on the right track in this house?

Ac. I've some grounds, Marquis, for thinking so.

Clit. Believe me—free yourself from this grave error. You flatter yourself, my dear fellow, and are blind.

Ac. It's true, I flatter myself and am indeed blind.

Clit. What makes you deem your happiness so perfect?

Ac. I flatter myself.

Clit. On what do you base your conjectures?

Ac. I'm blind.

Clit. Have you any positive proofs?

Ac. I'm fooling myself, I tell you.

Clit. Has Célimène made you any secret avowals of her feelings?

Ac. No. I'm all wrong.

Clit. Tell me, I beg.

Ac. I have only rebuffs.

Clit. Leave off the banter and tell me what hope she's given you.

Ac. I'm the wretched one and you the fortunate. She has the greatest aversion for me, and one of these days I must hang myself.

Clit. O stuff! Marquis, how about coming to some agreement about our love? Can't we settle on some principle? If one of us can show definite proof of having a greater share in Célimène's heart, the other will leave the place free to the supposed victor and deliver him from a pesky rival.

Ac. Ah, good God! How you delight me with such talk! By my faith, I accept. But—ssh!

Scene 2. Célimène, Acaste, Clitandre

Cél. Still here?

Clit. Love detains us.

Cél. I've just heard a carriage pull up below. Have you any idea who it can be?

Clit. No.

Scene 3. Célimène, Acaste, Clitandre, Basque

Bas. Arsinoë, madam, is coming up to see you.

Cél. What does the woman want me for?

Bas. Eliante is talking to her downstairs.

Cél. What's she thinking of? Who asked her to come?

Ac. She's known everywhere as a complete prude, and the intensity of her zeal. . . .

Cél. Yes, yes, plain pretence! Privately she's worldly enough, and her efforts are all centred in nabbing someone—without success. She can look only with envy on the professed lovers anyone else has. Her sorry merit, ignored by the world, is always frothing against the blindness of the times. She tries to hide with a false veil of prudishness the fact that her home's always frightfully deserted. To save the honor of her feeble charms she calls criminal that power they don't possess. Nevertheless, a lover would mightily please that lady; and even for Alceste she has a tender heart. Whatever regard he has for me is an insult to *her* attractions. She thinks me a thief. Her jealous spite, which she can barely disguise, breaks out against me everywhere, though covertly. In brief, I've never seen anything so stupid. She's impertinent to the highest degree and . . .

Scene 4. Arsinoë, Célimène, Clitandre, Acaste

Cél. Ah! What happy chance brings you here? Madam, without exaggerating, I was anxious about you.

Ars. I've come to give you some advice which I thought you need.

Cél. Ah, my God! How happy I am to see you!

Clitandre *and* Acaste *go out laughing*

Scene 5. Arsinoë, Célimène

Ars. Their departure couldn't have been more convenient.

Cél. Shall we be seated?

Ars. It's not necessary. Madam, friendship ought most to show itself in matters which most concern us. And since there's nothing of greater import than honor and seemliness, I come with advice that touches your honor, to witness the friendship I have for you. Yesterday I was among some people of particular virtue where the conversation turned upon you. And there your conduct and the wide notice it has occasioned, madam, had the misfortune not to be praised. This crowd of people you permit to visit you, your gallantry and the rumors it excites, found more censurers than there should have been, and more carping than I could have wished. You can easily guess whose part I took. I did all I could to defend you. I strongly defended your intentions, and wanted to be the monitor of your soul. But you know that there are things in life that can't be excused, however one may desire they should be. And I found myself obliged to agree that the atmosphere in which you live does you some wrong—that it tends to appear wicked in the eyes of the world—that there is no story so ill-natured as not to be manufactured everywhere about it—and that if you only so desired, your behavior might give less occasion for erring opinion. Not that I believe that, fundamentally, decency has been outraged. Heavens preserve me from such a thought! But the world's very ready to believe in the merest shadow of a crime. It's not enough to live decently for one's own sake. Madam, I know you to be too reasonable not to take in good part this profitable advice, and to attribute it to the inner urges of a zeal that binds me to your welfare.

Cél. Madam, I owe you much thanks. Such advice makes me your debtor. Far from taking it ill, I intend at once to return the favor by advice which, too, touches *your* honor. And as I see you proving yourself my friend by communicating to me the rumors spreading around about me, I wish to follow in turn so sweet an example by warning you of what's being said about you. In one place, the other day, where I was visiting, I found some people of *most* particular virtue who, speaking of the true duties of a good life, made the conversation turn on you, madam. There your prudery and your outbursts of zeal were quoted as not a very good model. That affectation of grave exterior, those eternal lectures of yours on wisdom and honor, your grimaces and ejaculations at any hint of indecency which innocence may express through an ambiguous word—that high self-esteem with which you preen yourself—those pitying eyes you cast on all—your frequent sermons and your bitter censures on inoffensive, innocent matters—all these, if I may speak frankly madam, were blamed by all present. What's the use, they said, of that modest mien and that mask of wisdom which give the lie to the rest of her? She prays very scrupulously, but she beats her help and never pays them. In every place of devotion, she displays much earnestness; but she uses cosmetics and wants to appear beautiful. She covers the nudities of her pictures, but loves the reality. As for me, I defended you against everyone, and vehemently assured them it was all libel. But their opinions were all against me, and their conclusion was that you'd do well to put yourself out less about the actions of others, and take a little more pains over your own—that one ought to examine one's self long enough before dreaming of accusing other folk—that one ought to add the weight of an exemplary life in the corrections one offers others—and that even so it would be better to leave it to those whom Heaven has entrusted with the task. Madam, I know you to be too reasonable not to take in good part this profitable advice, and to attribute it to the inner urges of a zeal that binds me to your welfare.

Ars. Whatever one might be assaulted with as a reward for giving advice, I certainly didn't expect this response, madam. I see by your bitterness that my honest counsel has wounded you to the heart.

Cél. On the contrary, madam. If people were wiser, this kind of mutual advice-giving would be common. Thus that real blindness that every one has regarding himself might be remedied. It rests entirely with you whether we are to continue with vying zeal this kindly office, and whether we are to exert ourselves to inform each other of whatever we hear—you of me, I of you.

Ars. Ah madam, of you I could hear nothing. It is in myself that there's so much found to reprehend.

Cél. Madam, it's possible, I suppose, to praise or blame anything. Everyone is right according to the measure of time or taste. There's a time for gallantry. There's one too for prudery—which a woman may take to out of policy when the zest of her younger years is gone. It serves to cover vexing deprivations. I do not say that some day I may not follow in your tracks. Old age brings all things. But it's not the time, madam, as everyone knows, to be a prude at twenty.

Ars. Assuredly you vaunt yourself on a trifling advantage. You're forever noisily telling the world your age. Whatever more years than you a person may have are not so very many that you should make so much of it. I don't know why your spirit is thus enfrenzied, madam, to goad me in this strange way.

Cél. And I, I don't know, madam, either, why everywhere you are so bitter against me. Must you lay the blame on me for your disappointments? Can I be the cause of all the attentions you don't receive? If my person inspires men with love, and if they persist every day in offering me vows that your heart may wish were denied me, I don't know what to do about it. It's not *my* fault. The field is clear for you. I don't prevent your having charms to attract them.

Ars. Alas! Do you imagine anyone would be upset about the number of lovers you're so vain of, and that it's not simple enough to judge the price paid these days to attract them? Do you think you make people believe, when they see what's going on, that only your worth attracts this crowd? That they burn with really an honest love for you? That it's your virtues they pay court to? Nobody's blinded by the shallow pretence. The world's no dupe. I see many who could inspire tender sentiments and who do not, nevertheless, attract any lovers. From that we can deduce that nobody acquires such affection without conspicuous advances. No one sighs for anybody's beauty alone. We must buy all the attentions we get. Don't boast, then, with such pomposity about the trifling significance of so feeble a victory. Modify a little your pride in your looks, as well as your condescension because of them towards other people. If we envied your conquests, I suppose we could manage like other people, be less discreet, and show you that we can have lovers whenever we wish them.

Cél. Have them, then, madam, and let's see. Delight us with the secret formula, and without . . .

Ars. Let's cut off, madam, such a discourse as this. It would drive your spirit and mine too far. I should already have taken my leave if my carriage had not kept me waiting.

Cél. You're welcome to stay as long as you please, madam. Let nothing hurry you. But without fatiguing you with my presence, I shall send you pleasanter company. And monsieur, whom chance sends so appropriately, will better fill my place in entertaining you.

Scene 6. Alceste, Célimène, Arsinoë

Cél. Alceste, I must go write a note which I cannot reasonably delay longer. Stay with this lady. She will have the goodness readily to excuse my incivility.

Scene 7. Alceste, Arsinoë

Ars. You see, she wants me to entertain you until my carriage arrives. And never could her care have offered me anything that would charm me more than this conversation. Truly, people of sublime worth entice everyone into affection and esteem for them. And your worth, doubtless, has secret powers to interest my heart in all your concerns. I wish that the court, with suitable attention, would render greater justice to your abilities. You have much to complain of. I am furious when I see nothing done for you ever.

Al. Me, madam? On what grounds could I lay claims to anything? What service have I done the State? What have I accomplished, I beg, so wonderful in itself, that I should complain at the court that I am neglected?

Ars. Not all whom the court distinguishes have always rendered distinguished service. Opportunity as well as power is necessary. And the merit you exhibit, in short, ought . . .

Al. My God! Omit the merit, for pity's sake. What would you have the court encumber itself with? It would have plenty to do, and its hands full, to try unearthing people's merit.

Ars. Extraordinary merit unearths itself. Yours in many places is made much of. And you ought to be told that yesterday, in two excellent homes, you were praised by people of high standing.

Al. Ah, madam, these days they praise everybody. The times treat all alike. All things are equally granted great merit. It's no honor to be praised. They stuff you with praises, throw praises at your head. Even my servant is put into the gazette.

Ars. As for me, I could wish that to set you off better, some post at the court might attract your desire. If you would give us the least sign that you're considering it, we might, to help you, set the machinery in motion. I have at hand people I could employ for you, to make your road easy going.

Al. And what would you have me do at court, madam? My temperament urges me to avoid it. Heaven, in giving me life, has not given me a spirit compatible with the court's atmosphere. I'm not conscious of possessing the necessary qualities to succeed there and to carry on my business. To be frank and sincere is my greatest gift. I don't know how to play up to men in talking to them. And he who hasn't the knack of concealing what he thinks, ought to keep short residence in that place. Outside the court, doubtless, one hasn't the importance and the honorable titles bestowed these days. But one hasn't, too, to make up for those advantages, the annoyance of playing the stupid fool. One doesn't have to suffer a thousand cruel rebuffs. One doesn't have to praise the verses of Mr. So-and-So, or to throw incense to Madam This-and-That, and to put up with the caprices of some clever Marquis.

Ars. Let us quit the subject of the court, since you desire. But my heart does pity you in your love. To open my thoughts on this to you—I could dearly wish your ardor better placed. You deserve, certainly, a happier fate. She who allures you is unworthy of you.

Al. But in saying this, do you remember, I beg, that this person is your friend, madam.

Ars. Yes. But my conscience is indeed too wounded longer to suffer the wrong done you. The position you're in affects me too deeply. I warn you; your love is betrayed.

Al. This shows me, madam, your tender concern. Such advice obligates a lover.

Ars. Yes, although my friend, she is—and I call her so—unworthy to possess the heart of a gallant man. Her heart has for you only a simulated sweetness.

Al. That may be, madam. No one can see into the heart. But your charity might well have been omitted in throwing such a thought to me.

Ars. If you don't wish to be disabused, it's easy enough to say no more to you.

Al. No. But on this subject, no matter what is said to one openly, doubts are still more vexing. I wish, myself, that people would tell me only what they can plainly prove.

Ars. Very well. Enough said. You're going to receive full information on this matter. Yes, I wish you to credit the testimony of your own eyes. Give me only your company to my home. There I will show you positive proof of the infidelity of your sweetheart. And if you can still feel for anyone else, we can perhaps offer you some consolation.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

Scene 1. Eliante, Philinte

Phil. No. There's never been a spirit so difficult to manage, nor a reconciliation harder to effect. In vain on all sides did they try to move him. Nobody could budge him from his stand. Never has a difference so odd, I think, occupied the minds of those gentlemen. "No, gentlemen," said he, "I don't retract a thing, and shall agree with you on everything but this. What's he angry about? What does he want me to say? Does it stain his glory that he doesn't know how to write? What's my opinion to him, that he takes it so much to heart? You can be an honest man and still write wretched verses. It's no point of honor at stake here. I believe him to be an honorable fellow in all matters—a man of rank, of merit, of courage—anything you please—but a very rotten author. I'll praise, if he likes, his ability in riding, fencing, and dancing. But as for his verses—he'll excuse me. Anyone who can't write better than that, shouldn't write at all—provided he's not condemned to do it on pain of death." In short, all the grace and agreement that they could with difficulty wring from him was to say, in what he thought was a gentler style: "Sir, I'm sorry to be so difficult. For your love, I could honestly wish to have found your sonnet much better." And then they made them end the affair with an embrace to settle quickly the whole case.

El. In his actions he is quite eccentric. But I must confess I think very highly of him. The sincerity he's so proud of, has something noble and heroic in it. It's a rare virtue these days. I could wish to see it more often in other people too.

Phil. For my part, the more I see him, the more amazed I am at this passion to which he's surrendered. With such a temperament as the Heavens gave him, I don't know how he can love at all. And I understand still less how your cousin could be the person to whom he inclines.

El. Which proves that love doesn't always make for sympathy of character. All these stories of delicate sympathies are given the lie by his example.

Phil. Do you believe, so far as you can see, his love to be returned?

El. A point not easy to settle. How can one judge whether she really loves him? She's not very sure of what her heart feels. She loves sometimes without realizing it, and at other times believes herself to be in love when she feels no such thing.

Phil. I think our friend will find more grief at the hands of your cousin than he imagines. If he had my heart, indeed, he'd place his affection elsewhere. It were a better choice to profit by the kindness your heart has for him, madam.

El. As for me, I don't deny it. I believe one ought in these matters be honest. I don't oppose his tender feelings. On the contrary, my heart feels a deep interest in them. If it were for me to decide the affair, I myself would unite him to her he loves. But if in such a choice as he's made, as does happen, his love should meet with an adverse destiny,—if she should give herself to another, I could resolve myself to receive his addresses. The rebuff he experienced elsewhere should make me feel no repugnance to him.

Phil. And I—I do not oppose, madam, this kindness your beauty holds for him. He himself can, if he wishes, inform you what I have taken pains to tell him on that head. But if by the marriage of these two, you were placed beyond receiving his love, all my feelings would try to win the great favor your soul bounteously now grants him,—happy if, when his heart is deprived of it, it could fall to my lot.

El. You are jesting, Philinte.

Phil. No, madam. I say this to you from my deepest heart. I await the time when I may offer you my love openly, and all my hopes attend that moment.

Scene 2. Alceste, Eliante, Philinte

Al. Ah! Grant me justice, madam, for an offense which has just triumphed over all my constancy.

El. What is it? What's wrong that can so disturb you?

Al. I've that wrong which I can't think of without dying. The destruction of all creation would not overwhelm me as does this happening. It's done. . . . My love . . . I can't speak.

El. Try to compose your mind a bit.

Al. O just Heavens! Can the odious vices of the basest people be joined to such graces?

El. But yet . . . What can have . . . ?

Al. Ah! All is ruined! I'm . . . I'm betrayed . . . I'm killed! . . . Célimène! . . . Could one have believed such a thing? Célimène has deceived me! She's completely faithless!

El. Have you just reason for thinking so?

Phil. Perhaps it's a suspicion lightly formed? And your jealous mind sometimes gives way to imaginings . . .

Al. Ah! Death! . . . Mind your own business, sir! [*To Eliante.*] I can be only positive of her treachery when I have in my pocket a letter in her own hand. Yes, madam! A letter written *to Oronte* has shown to my very eyes my disgrace and her dishonor! Oronte, whose attentions I thought she fled and whom I esteemed the least of my rivals!

Phil. A letter can be misleading in appearance. Sometimes it can be much less culpable than it looks.

Al. Sir, once more—let me alone, if you don't mind. Don't meddle in what doesn't concern you.

El. You ought to calm your rage. And the insult . . .

Al. Madam, it's to you that this matter appertains. It's to you that my heart has recourse today to free it of its dreadful sorrow. Avenge me on your ungrateful and perfidious relative who basely betrays so constant a love as mine. Avenge me for a deed that must strike you with horror.

El. I? Avenge you? How?

Al. By accepting my love. Take it, madam, instead of that traitress. In that way I can be revenged on her. I want to punish her by the sincere affection, the profound love, the respect, the serious devotion, and assiduous attention which my heart will offer to you as a burning sacrifice.

El. I feel for you, surely, in what you suffer, and do not undervalue the heart you offer me. But perhaps the injustice isn't so great as you think, and you will get over this desire for vengeance. When injury is done by one we hold dear, we make many plans we never carry out. In vain we find powerful reasons for breaking—a guilty loved one is soon innocent again. All the harm we wish her soon evaporates. Everybody knows what the wrath of a lover is like.

Al. No, no, madam, no! This offence is too mortal. There's no turning back. I break with her. Nothing can change my plan, and I should castigate myself if I ever esteemed her again. Here she is. My wrath redoubles at her approach. I'm going strongly to upbraid her with her wickedness, confound her thoroughly, and after that, bring you a heart freed from her deceiving wiles.

Scene 3. Célimène, Alceste

Al. [*aside*]. O Heaven! Can I master my anger?

Cél. [*aside*]. Whew! What's the trouble I see you in? What mean these deep sighs, and these dark looks you cast on me?

Al. That all the horrors a soul is capable of, are nothing to your disloyalty. That Destiny, devils, and wrathful Heaven never produced anything so wicked as you.

Cél. Those are certainly admirably tender speeches.

Al. Ah! Jest not! This is no time for laughter! Blush rather; you have cause enough. I've positive witness of your treachery. This is the kind of thing my troubled soul presaged. It was not for nothing that my spirit was alarmed. By those frequent suspicions which you found odious, I tracked down the misery my eyes now behold. Despite all your pains and your clever dissembling, my stars told me what it was I had to fear. But don't suppose I'll suffer the spite of finding myself outraged without being revenged. I know that one hasn't always control over one's passion—that love always wishes to be free—that force never compelled anyone to love—and that every heart is at liberty to name its own conqueror. Therefore could I have had no grounds for complaints if you had spoken to me without pretence. If you had rejected my vows from the very beginning, my heart could have had no right to do aught but accept its destiny. But to see my love encouraged by a false avowal—that is a treason, a perfidy which can't be too severely punished. I'm privileged to express my full resentment. Yes, yes! Expect the worst after such an outrage as you've done me. . . . I'm no longer my own master! I'm merely one piece of rage. Pierced by the mortal stroke with which you've murdered me, my senses are no longer governed by reason. I give way before the rush of righteous anger. I'm not responsible for what I may do.

Cél. Whence arises, I pray you tell me, such a fit? Have you lost your senses?

Al. Yes, yes! I've lost them. Ever since I first saw you. I've swallowed the poison that kills me, wretch that I am! And I thought I'd find *some* sincerity in the false loveliness which enchanted me!

Cél. Of what treachery can you complain?

Al. Ah! How double-faced! How well you know the art of pretending! But to end the business—I've the means right here. Throw your glances this way, and recognize your character. This letter which I've found suffices to confound you. Against this testimony nothing can be said.

Cél. So that's the thing that upsets you so?

Al. You don't blush at the sight of this writing?

Cél. What reason do I have to be blushing?

Al. What! You dare add boldness to deceit now? You deny the letter because it's unsigned?

Cél. Why should I deny a letter in my own hand?

Al. Can you even see it without utter shame of the crime against me which its contents accuse you of?

Cél. You're certainly an exceedingly extravagant man.

Al. What? You'd outface this convincing proof? What it's shown me of your tenderness for Oronte is not to enrage me or humiliate you?

Cél. Oronte? Who said the letter was for him?

Al. The people who placed it in my hands. But let's say it *was* for another. Has my heart less to complain of then, from yours? Will it make you actually less guilty towards me?

Cél. What if it's a woman to whom that letter was sent? How then can it have hurt you? What's guilty in it?

Al. Ah! The ruse is fine, the excuse admirable! I didn't expect, I must admit, this *coup*. It's entirely convinced me. Do you dare depend on such gross evasions? Do you believe people completely senseless? Let's see through what trick now, with what kind of air you'll carry off so potent a lie, and how you'll apply to a woman all the words of a letter showing so much passion? To cover up your lack of faith, reconcile what I'm going to read. . . .

Cél. I don't care to. Not I. I find you too delightful —using such arrogance, saying to my face what you've dared to say.

Al. No, no. Without anger, take the trouble to justify these expressions to me.

Cél. No. I certainly won't. In this business *anything* you care to think matters nothing to me.

Al. For pity's sake—show me—I'll be satisfied—that this letter could be explained as intended for a woman.

Cél. No. It's for Oronte. I want you to know it. I take all his attentions with great joy. I admire what he says. I esteem him for what he is. I agree to everything you please. Go ahead. Do what you like. Let nothing stop you. And don't carry on any more with me.

Al. Heavens! Could anything more cruel be invented? Was ever heart treated this way? What! It's with a just rage that I'm fired against her. It's I who come to complain. And it's me she fights with! My sorrow and suspicions are pushed to the limit. I'm allowed to think what I will. She glories in it. And none the less my heart is still so base as not to be able to break the bonds which fasten it, and not to arm itself with feeling contempt for the ungrateful object it's smitten with. Ah! you know well, perfidious creature, how to take advantage of my extreme weakness, and to manage for your own ends my fatally excessive love, born of your treacherous eyes. Defend yourself at least against the crime that overwhelms me, and stop being so guilty towards me. Make this letter innocent, if it can be done. My love offers you my own hands to help you. Make some effort to appear faithful, and I'll force myself to believe you to be such.

Cél. Go away. You're mad when you get these jealous fits. You don't deserve the love I bear you. I'd like to know what could constrain me to lower myself to the extent of lying on your account. Why, if my heart tended elsewhere, should I not say so honestly? What! Won't the gracious assurance of my feelings towards you be enough defence against your suspicions? After such a pledge, should they have any weight? Isn't it indecent to make me even hear them uttered? Since the heart must make a great effort when it has decided to confess its love,—since the honor of my sex, hostile to our feelings, strongly opposes such avowals—should a lover for whom this obstacle is overcome doubt the declaration of love without punishment? Is he not himself guilty in not making sure of what can be expressed only after so severe a struggle? Go, go away. Such suspicions merit my anger. You don't deserve to be loved. I'm stupid. I'm vexed at my folly in preserving any affection for you. I ought to fix my love elsewhere, and give you real cause for complaining.

Al. Ah, traitress! My weakness for you is incredible! You are certainly deceiving me with these sweet words. But it doesn't matter. I must obey my destiny. My soul is entirely at the mercy of your trust. I will see to the very end what your heart is really like, and whether it will have the baseness to betray me.

Cél. No, you don't love me as one should love.

Al. Ah! There's no love like my extreme love for you. In its passion to show itself to the world, it can go as far as to form wishes against you. Yes, I could wish that no one else found you lovable—that you were reduced to a less lucky existence—that Heaven, at your birth, had given you nothing—that you had neither rank, nor nobility, nor wealth, so I might nobly offer you my heart to atone for the injustice done you—that I might have the joy and the glory that day of seeing you owe everything to my care of you.

Cél. That's wishing me well in a strange fashion! Heaven preserve me from your having the means. . . . Here's Mr. Du Bois, amazingly dressed!

Scene 4. Du Bois, Célimène, Alceste

Al. What's this get-up mean? And that frightened air? What's the matter?

Du. Sir . .

Al. Well?

Du. What mysterious things . . .

Al. What?

Du. We're in for it, sir, in our affairs.

Al. What?

Du. May I speak out?

Al. Yes, speak! And quickly!

Du. Isn't anyone here who . . .

Al. Damn your pleasantry! Are you going to speak?

Du. Sir, we must beat it.

Al. What?

Du. We must go off without anyone's knowing.

Al. And why?

Du. I tell you we must leave this place.

Al. Why?

Du. You must go without taking any adieu.

Al. For what reason do you carry on like this?

Du. The reason, sir, is that you must pack your baggage.

Al. Ah! I'll certainly break your skull if you don't explain yourself, fool!

Du. Sir, a man in a black coat and blacker looks came right into the kitchen to leave us a paper so scribbled over that you'd have to be worse than the Devil to read it. It's about your lawsuit, I don't doubt. But the Devil himself couldn't make anything out of it.

Al. Well? What then? How's the paper mixed up with all this going away, of which you've just spoken, you rogue?

Du. It's to tell you, sir, that an hour later a man who often visits you came anxiously to see you. Finding you out, he quietly asked me, knowing with how much zeal I serve you, to tell you— Wait! What was his name?

Al. Forget his name, rogue, and tell me what he said to you.

Du. He's one of your friends anyway—that's flat. He told me that danger hastens you away from here, and that you run the chance of being arrested.

Al. Now! Didn't he try to be more definite with you?

Du. No. He asked me for ink and paper, and wrote you a note which may, I think, acquaint you with the nature of the mystery.

Al. Give it to me then.

Cél. What can this mean?

Al. I don't know. But I hope to clear it up. Will you have done, then, you impertinent devil?

Du. [*after having searched a long time*]. Gee! I left it on your table, sir.

Al. I don't know what keeps me from . . .

Cél. Don't get excited. Go and unravel so perplexing a matter.

Al. It seems that fate, however I try, has sworn to prevent my talking to you. But to triumph over it, permit me, madam, to see you again before the end of the day.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

Scene i. Alceste, Philinte

Al. I've made the resolution, I tell you.

Phil. But, whatever this blow may be, do you have to . . .

Al. No. You're wasting time and logic. Nothing can turn me from what I've said. Perversity rules our day. I want to withdraw from the haunts of men. What! All at once I have honor, probity, decency, and the laws joined against my opponent. The equity of my cause is everywhere known. My soul is calm in the certainty of the just outcome. In spite of all this—I find myself deceived. Justice is on my side and I lose the case! A traitor whose scandalous history is common knowledge, comes out triumphant through using blackest perjury! All honesty must yield to his treachery! He manages even as he is cutting my throat to be in the right! The weight of his artificial smiling overturns what is right and sets aside justice! He crowns his villainy with a decree of law against me! And not yet content with the wrong he's done me, he circulates among people an abominable book, the very reading of which would be damnable, a book deserving the worst punishment, and the rogue has the impudence to make me the author of it! Thereupon Oronte murmurs, wickedly trying to support the imposture! He, who holds the title of an honorable man at Court, and to whom I've done nothing but be sincere and frank! He comes, in spite of myself, with ardent insistence, to ask my opinion on some verses he's made; and because I respond honestly, wishing to betray neither him nor the truth, he helps throw on me an imaginary crime! Now he's become my greatest enemy! I'll never have his real forgiveness because I couldn't find his sonnet good! All men are made like that! Good grief! To such actions does the need for glory carry them! That's the good faith, the virtuous zeal, the justice, and the honor that can be found among them! Ah me! It's too much to have to suffer the ills they contrive for us! I will get out of this wood, this den of cut-throats! Since men live like wolves among their fellows,—you traitors, you'll never see me in your midst again in my life!

Phil. I find your plan much too rash. All this evil is not so great as you would make it. Whatever your adversary has dared to impute against you hasn't been credited enough to cause your arrest. His false accounts destroy themselves. His actions are likely to harm only himself.

Al. Him? The notoriety of such behavior *he* doesn't mind. He has a ticket of leave to be openly a scoundrel. Far from injuring his reputation, this matter will place him tomorrow in a better position than ever.

Phil. Just the same it is plain that nobody has given much attention to the report which his malice has spread against you. You have nothing to fear from that side. As for your lawsuit, of which you may really complain, it is easy for you to have it brought to trial again. Against the decree. . . .

Al. No. I'll stick to it. Whatever powerful wrong such a decree does me, I shall be careful not to have it broken. One may too readily see in it how right is violated; and I wish it to go down to posterity as a signal proof, a notable witness, of the wickedness of the men of our time. It may cost me twenty thousand francs. But for twenty thousand francs I shall have the right to rail against the baseness of human nature, and to nourish an eternal hatred of it.

Phil. But really . . .

Al. But really your concern for me is superfluous. What can you, sir, say to me on that subject? Will you have the nerve to condone to my face the sordidness of all that's going on?

Phil. No. I agree with anything you like. Everything is managed by cabal and interest merely. It's only deceit that carries matters off these days. Men ought to be made otherwise. But is their lack of integrity a reason for your withdrawing from their society? All these human failings give us the means of exercising our philosophy in the world. It's the finest use for virtue. If everything were garbed in probity, if all hearts were frank, just and manageable, most of our virtues would be sterile, since their very purpose is to teach us to bear injustice from others without impatience. So, too, a heart that's really virtuous. . . .

Al. Sir, I know you're one of the world's best talkers. You're overflowing with lovely reasons all the time. But you're wasting your time and your beautiful speeches. It's for my own good that reason urges me to retire. I haven't enough control over my tongue. I can't vouch for what I may say. On a thousand heads I'd be getting myself in hot water. Without any more wrangling, let me wait for Célimène. She must agree to the plan that brings me here. I'm going to see if her heart has any love for me. This very minute ought to decide that for me.

Phil. Let's go upstairs to Eliante to await her arrival.

Al. No. My spirit's agitated by too much care. You go and see her. Leave me, please, in this sombre little corner with my black melancholy.

Phil. Strange company to wait with! I'm going to get Eliante to come down.

Scene 2. Oronte, Célimène, Alceste

Or. Yes, it's for you to decide whether by such sweet ties, madam, you'll make me all yours. I need full assurance of your heart. On that point no lover likes uncertainty. If the ardor of my passion has been able to touch you, you oughtn't hesitate to let me see it. The proof I ask of you, in brief, is not to allow Alceste to lay claim to you,—to give him up, madam, for my love. Indeed, to banish him from your home from this day forth.

Cél. But why are you so furious with him? You from whom I've heard so much of his merit!

Or. No need, madam, of these explanations! What matters is that I know your feelings. Choose, if you don't mind, to hold one or the other of us. My decision awaits only yours.

Al. [*coming out of the corner where he had retired*]. Yes, the gentleman is right. Madam, you must choose. His demand accords with my own wish. Equal anxiety presses me, and the same errand brought me here. My love wishes certain proof of yours. Matters can't be dragged on any longer this way. This is the time to expose your feelings.

Or. I don't desire, sir, to interfere in your good fortune with any impertinent passion.

Al. I don't desire, sir, jealous or not jealous, to share her heart in any way with you.

Or. If your love seems preferable to mine. . . .

Al. If she has the least *penchant* for you. . . .

Or. I swear hereafter to make no pretensions to her.

Al. I give you my oath I'll never see her again.

Or. Madam, it's your turn to speak openly.

Al. Madam, you can tell us the truth without fear.

Or. You've only to tell us who has your affection.

Al. You've only to settle the matter, to choose between us two.

Or. What! You've difficulty in making such a choice?

Al. What! Your soul hesitates in uncertainty?

Cél. My God! How unreasonable is this urging! How little sense both of you show! I know whom to prefer. It's not my heart that now hesitates. It's not muddled to choose between you. Nothing could be done quicker than to let love choose. But, truthfully speaking, I'm too greatly embarrassed to announce to your faces such a confession. I don't believe one ought to express unkind words in front of people. A heart can give hint enough of its inclining without going to the extent of fomenting a dispute. It ought to be enough that gentler testimony instruct a lover of the ill-luck of his attentions.

Or. No, no. There's nothing to fear in a frank statement. I wish it, so far as I'm concerned.

Al. And I, I demand it. It's just such openness that above all I here dare demand. I don't claim to be wishing to see you mince matters. To keep the attentions of the whole world is your great study. But no more fooling, no more uncertainty now! You must talk out clearly on this subject, or else I take your unwillingness as itself a decree. I'll know, for my part, how to explain your silence, and shall consider as spoken all the worst I have imagined.

Or. I'm much obliged, sir, for this rage. I say to her here exactly what you do.

Cél. How you fatigue me with such a whim! Is what you ask at all fair? Don't I tell you what motive restrains me? I'm going to ask Eliante, who's coming in, to judge.

SCENE 3. ELIANTE, PHILINTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ORONTE, ALCESTE

Cél. I find myself persecuted here, cousin, by people whose pleasure in the torture seems concerted. They both, with the same heat, press me to announce what choice I've made between them, and, by a decree that I'm to hand down before their very faces, to forbid one of them to give me any more notice. Tell me if ever things were done so!

El. Don't go asking me about such a matter. You may be addressing the wrong person. I am all for people who speak their minds.

Or. Madam, it's in vain you defend yourself.

Al. All your evasions are here hardly seconded.

Or. You must, you must speak, and drop the quibbling.

Al. You've only to continue silent.

Or. I want only one word to end the question.

Al. And I, I understand you even if you don't speak.

SCENE 4. ACASTE, CLITANDRE, ARSINOË, PHILINTE, ELIANTE, ORONTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE

Ac. Madam, we come, we two, not without your leave we hope, to clear up a little matter with you.

Clit. Very lucky, gentlemen, to find you here. You also are concerned in this affair.

Ars. Madam, you'll be surprised to see me. But it's these gentlemen who have made me come. Both of them came to see me complaining of a deed I simply can't credit. I've too high an opinion of the goodness of your heart to believe you ever capable of such a crime. My eyes have denied their strongest testimony. Friendship, overlooking trifling disagreements, urged me to come to you in their company to hear you exonerated of this calumny.

Ac. Yes, madam, let us calmly see how you will manage to carry this off. This letter from you was written to Clitandre.

Clit. You wrote this tender letter to Acaste?

Ac. Gentlemen, these characters are not strange to you. I don't doubt her civility has taught you only too well to recognize her hand. But this is well worth the reading: *"You are a strange man to condemn my gaiety and reproach me with never being so happy as when I'm with you. Nothing could be more unjust. And if you don't come soon to ask my pardon for this insult, I'll never forgive you the rest of my life. Our big booby of a Viscount. . . ."* He ought to be here. *"Our big booby of a Viscount, with whom you begin your complaints, is a man who couldn't suit me. Since I've seen him spitting in a well to make ripples for three quarters of an hour, I've never had a good opinion of him. As for the little Marquis. . . ."* That's me, gentlemen, without vanity. *"As for the little Marquis, who held my hand so long yesterday, I think there's nothing so stupid as his whole person. He's one of those worthies who are only cloak and sword. As for the man with green ribbons. . . ."* Here's your turn, sir. *"As for the man with green ribbons, he diverts me sometimes with his rudeness and his surly moodiness. But there are hundreds of times when I find him the most annoying person in the world. As for the man with the waistcoat. . . ."* Your portion, now. *"As for the man with the waistcoat, who sets himself up as a wit, and wants to be an author despite everyone, I can't be bothered to listen to what he says. His prose bores me quite as much as his verse. Realize, then, that I don't always enjoy myself as much as you think; that I long for you more than I care to say, whatever entertainments I may be dragged to; and that there's no more wonderful relish to the pleasures we like, than the presence of those we love."*

Clit. Now here's me: *"Your Clitandre, of whom you speak, and who's so elegant, is the last man for whom I could entertain friendship. He's mad to be convinced I love him. And so are you to believe I*

don't love you. Be sensible. Change you notions for his. And come to see me as often as you can to help me bear the annoyance of being hounded by him."

Here's the model of a very beautiful character, madam. You know what to call it. Enough. We're going, both of us, to show people everywhere this wonderful picture of your heart. [*He goes out.*

Ac. I could say much to you. The subject is inviting. But I don't consider you worth my anger. I'll show you that little marquises can have hearts of nobler price to console themselves with. [*He goes out.*

Or. What! Is this the way I find myself torn to shreds after all you've written me? Your heart, dressed in the lovely semblance of affection, gives itself to the whole of mankind, each in his turn! Go to! I've been too much of a dupe, but I'm going to be so no longer. You do me a favor in letting me see through you. I'm the richer for a heart that thus you give back to me. My vengeance is your loss. [*to Alceste*] Sir, I'll make no further obstacle to your passion. You may conclude matters with madam as you wish. [*He goes out.*

Ars. Indeed, this is the blackest of the world's deeds. I'm so shocked I can't be silent. Has anyone seen behavior like yours? I don't meddle with other people's business, but this gentleman who fixed his happiness on you—a man like him, of dignity and honor, and who cherished you with idolatry, ought he . . . ?

Al. Leave me, madam, I beg you, to manage my own affairs in this matter. Do not exert yourself so needlessly. In vain my heart sees you here take up its defence. It can never pay you for your great zeal. It's not of you that I could think if I decided to avenge myself by another choice.

Ars. Hm! Do you suppose, sir, that I ever had such a thought, that I'm so eager to have you? You must be very vain if you could be flattered by such an idea! The leavings of madam are an article one would be foolish to prize. Undeceive yourself, for pity's sake, and don't be so arrogant. It isn't people like me you need. You'll do much better to play the lackey to her. I burn to see so perfect a match! [*She goes out.*

Al. Ah! I've been silent, despite what I've seen. I've let everyone speak ahead of me. Have I controlled myself long enough? May I now . . . ?

Cél. Yes. You may say anything. You have every right to complain and to reproach me with what you please. I was wrong, I confess. My overwhelmed heart won't try to give you any vain excuse. I'm indifferent to the anger of the others, but I admit my guilt towards you. Your resentment is unquestionably just. I know how guilty I must seem to you. Everything bespeaks my having betrayed you. You have every reason to hate me. Do it. I deserve it.

Al. Alas! Can I do so, traitress? Can I thus triumph over all my tenderness? Though I'm willing enough to hate you, can I make my heart ready to obey me? [*To* Eliante *and* Philinte.] You see what an unworthy tenderness can do. I call you both to witness my weakness. But, to tell you true, this is not all. You will see me carry it to the very end, to prove how wrongly men are called wise, and that in all hearts there's always something human. Yes, perfidious woman, I am glad to forget your misdeeds. I can find the excuse for your every deed in my heart, and can disguise what you've done under the name of weakness—a weakness into which the evil of the times has led your youth,—provided you'll agree to the plan I've formed of fleeing human society, and that to that desert where I'm resolved to live, you're ready to follow me at once. It's the only way that you'll be able to repair the evil of your letters, in anyone's opinion. Only thus can I allow myself to love you still, after this awful scandal which every decent mind must abhor.

Cél. I? Renounce the world before I'm old? Bury myself in your desert?

Al. If your love really answers to that of mine, what can the rest of the world matter to you? Aren't your desires satisfied with having me?

Cél. Solitude terrifies anyone at twenty. I don't believe my soul to be great enough, strong enough, for me to agree to such a plan. If the gift of my hand contents you, I may be persuaded to bind myself with such ties; and marriage . . .

Al. No. Right now my heart loathes you. This refusal alone settles more than all you've done. Since you're not desirous to find all you need in me, in the sweet ties of marriage, as I would find all in you, away with you! I reject you. This deep insult for ever frees me from your unworthy toils. [Célimène *goes out, and* Alceste *speaks to* Eliante.] Madam, a hundred virtues deck your beauty. I've never seen you anything but sincere. Since long I have set a high worth on you. Permit me to esteem you so forever. Suffer my heart, in its many troubles, not to aspire to the honor of your acceptance. I feel myself too unworthy of that, and begin to understand that Heaven did not intend me for marriage ties. It would be for you too low a homage to receive a heart refused by another unworthy of you. In short . . .

El. Listen to me. My hand is not at a loss where to place itself. Here's your friend who, without angering me, would accept it if I asked.

Phil. Ah! That honor, madam, is the end of my desire. To it I would sacrifice life and soul.

AL. May you both keep these feelings for one another forever, to taste true happiness! Deceived on every side, overwhelmed with injustice, I'm going to escape from this pit where vice always triumphs, and seek out some hidden spot on earth, where one is free to be honest. [*He goes out.*

PHIL. Come, madam, let us try every means of dissuading him from the plan he has decided upon.

THE END

William Congreve

(1670?-1729)

The theatres were ordered closed by the Commonwealth in 1642. But, as recent research has proved, it is erroneous to assume that there were no theatrical performances until the Restoration; there is enough evidence to show that plays were given despite Puritan authority. It is, therefore, equally untrue that no link connected Elizabethan with Restoration drama. An associate of Sir William D'Avenant, William Beeston (whom Dryden calls the "Chronicle of the Stage," and who was owner of the Salisbury Court playhouse in 1660), was the son of a man who had known Shakespeare. D'Avenant himself, a leading figure in Restoration theatrical enterprise, who did nothing to discourage the rumor that he was an illegitimate son of Shakespeare, had written plays before the closing of the theatres.

With the Restoration, however, English drama experienced something of a renascence. Charles II had not been long in England when acting companies were formed. Beeston opened his theatre; D'Avenant collected a troupe; and Killigrew found some of the former King's Men for his company. Taking a personal interest in the theatre, Charles limited the permitted number of companies to two, one under D'Avenant, the other under Killigrew. In 1682 these two amalgamated. Thus, Restoration drama was represented in first two theatres, and then only in one, whereas six London theatres had been operating successfully in the early years of the century. The reason for the decreased activity is plain: the theatre had become a resort for the aristocracy and for men who, like Pepys, sought preferment at court. The larger public did not frequent the playhouses.

Several physical changes are to be noted in the Restoration theatres: they were oblong in shape, were roofed in, and employed scenery and lighting on the stage. It is also worthy of remark that women, for the first time, replaced boys in the feminine roles. These modifications of Elizabethan practice had important bearings on the future of English drama. But the change in the character of the audience left an even more salient mark on Restoration drama. To satisfy the tastes of sophisticated courtiers, beaux, and belles, two types of drama in particular flourished during these years: the heroic tragedy and the comedy of manners —the former appealing to aristocratic interest in rank, the latter reproducing the loose conduct and brilliant conversations of the *salons.*

The heroic tragedy was, on one hand, an elaboration of the romantic plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. From Paris, on the other hand, came the preference for rhymed, rather than blank, verse, as well as the exaggerated sentiment and bombastic declamation. Dryden was the best, and one of the earliest, of the writers of heroic tragedy; and his *Indian Queen* (written in 1664 in collaboration with Sir Robert Howard) seems to have set the fashion. *The Indian Emperor* (1665), *Tyrannic Love* (1669), *The Conquest of Granada* (1670), and *Aurengzebe* (1675), all by him, are of this kind. "Alongside of Dryden," as Allardyce Nicoll well phrases it, "roared and ranted a number of other heroic dramatists"—Settle, Crowne, Boyle, Lee, and Otway. Their plays follow a fairly regular pattern; there are usually: a hero of enormous prowess and exalted ideals, a heroine of supreme beauty and faithfulness, various conflicts between love and honor, a martial background, and over-strained rhetoric in rhymed couplets. It is no misrepresentation to say that no really distinguished tragedy was written in this type. Buckingham ridiculed the whole school in his delightful burlesque, *The Rehearsal* (1671). The only truly great tragedies of the period are one by Dryden, *All for Love* (a play in blank verse on the Shakespearean model), and two by Otway: *The Orphan* (1680), a domestic tragedy, and *Venice Preserved* (1682), also much in the Elizabethan manner.

It was in the realm of comedy that Restoration drama achieved its real merit. The intellectual milieu which held the imagination of the Elizabethans suspect, fostered a respect for common sense, logic, and wit. Prose, therefore, suggested itself as a more satisfactory vehicle than verse in dramatic dialogue; and the new interest in prose inevitably led to a greater interest in comedy, where it was more suitable than verse, and more readily to be employed than in the pompous heroical plays. In the hands of Sir George Etherege (1633?-1691?), William Wycherley (1641?-1715), William Congreve (1670?-1729), Sir John Vanbrugh (1664?-1726), and George Farquhar (1677?-1707), to name only the best of the dramatists, English comedy is to be found at its most brilliant. Reflecting as they do the fashionable life of the day, these plays may often exceed our notions of decency and good taste; but the intellectual play and sparkle of their lines are admirable. Perhaps one reason for this excellence is that they had so good a model in Molière (cf. *above*).

Etherege's *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub* (1664), the earliest of these, was followed by his *She Would If She Could* (1668) and *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676). Artistically contrived, Etherege's plays, despite their frivolous immorality, are bright, and afford us many interesting glimpses into the ways of the Restoration aristocracy. It was in Etherege's style that Wycherley wrote his first three comedies: *Love in a Wood* (1671), *The Gentleman Dancing-Master* (1672), and *The Country Wife* (1676); the *dramatis personae* here are fools, fops, and gallants. The plots are all variations on the theme of amorous intrigue, and the lines are full of innuendo. It is as a craftsman that Wycherley is particularly praiseworthy; his plays are excellently constructed. His last and finest play, *The Plain Dealer* (1676), an adaptation of Molière's *The Misanthrope* (cf. *above*), shows a departure from his previous open, and often vulgar, high spirits; it is a masterful and biting piece of social satire in which Wycherley powerfully attacks the vices he had once found amusing. With Congreve Restoration comedy attains its most fluent grace. After him, in the tradition, came Vanbrugh, of whose many plays the most notable are *The Relapse* (1697) and *The Provoked Wife* (1697); and Farquhar, whose best-known comedies are *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and the *Beaux' Stratagem* (1707).

William Congreve, whom Voltaire was to credit with having raised "the glory of comedy to a greater height than any English writer before or since," was born near Leeds, the son of an army officer, and educated in Ireland at Kilkenny School, and later at Trinity College, Dublin. He entered the Inner Temple in London and spent a number of years in government service. His first literary effort was a rather immature novel of intrigue, *Incognita* (1691). Two years later, at the age of twenty-three, he won acclaim for his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor* (1693), a deft play indicating his careful study of Wycherley's manner. *The Double-Dealer* (1694), much subtler in its fine irony, found small favor with the public; to console him Dryden wrote Congreve a noble little poem which said in part:

> Heav'n that but once was prodigal before,
> To Shakespeare gave as much, she could not give *him* more.

The next year found him again popular with what many call his masterpiece, *Love for Love* (1695); that it is his best-constructed play and is entirely delightful, all agree. Thus far in his career Congreve showed his awareness of Molière's great comedies. His next effort was his only tragedy, *The Mourning Bride* (1697), written in blank verse that is often moving; but the plot is improbable, and Samuel Johnson's great praise for parts of this play seems extravagant.

In his last play, *The Way of the World* (1700), Congreve found his perfect voice. There is less action here than in his other plays, and from this point of view alone can *Love for Love* be held superior. In all other respects *The Way of the World* may justly be called not only Congreve's finest play, but the finest English comedy of manners as well. The characterization throughout is excellent, and the heroine, Millamant, who has often been compared with Shakespeare's Beatrice, is enchanting. More than anything else, however, it is the dazzling repartee and the rapid, exciting dialogue which have made this play admired by everyone. "No English writer," says M. Cazamian, "has better possessed the natural art of making witty people speak, of lending to the most idle of their remarks the piquant touch of the unexpected; but here nature is enhanced by the most artistic desire to give each word its proper value, by the sense of its connection with its fellows, and of the general harmony in which it plays its part."

But *The Way of the World* was not successful on the stage. Was that the reason Congreve thereafter wrote nothing of any consequence during his remaining twenty-nine years of life? Possibly, though many other explanations for his silence have been offered. Certainly one must not overlook the part played by a pamphlet issued by the Nonconformist clergyman, Jeremy Collier (1650-1726), *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage* (1698). Coming at a critical moment, this tract powerfully affected playwrights, actors, and audiences. Though many of Collier's arguments were absurd, his attack on the corrupt tendencies of Restoration drama was basically sound. Dryden, whom he particularly upbraided, acknowledged the justice of Collier's charges. Congreve, however, strongly resented Collier's polemics. Not so the public. The indifference of the audience to *The Way of the World* was partly due to Collier's demand for a revision of Restoration standards of morality. The atmosphere in which Congreve's peculiar genius could flourish had altered, and his career as a dramatist was virtually over.

A. Nicoll's *History of Restoration Drama, 1660-1700* (1923) is the most complete of modern surveys. Stimulating studies are: L. N. Chase, *The English Heroic Play* (1903); B. Dobrée, *Restoration Comedy* (1924); K. M. Lynch, *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy* (1926); D. H. Miles, *The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy* (1910); C. Palmer, *The Comedy of Manners* (1913); H. T. E. Perry, *The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama* (1925). Standard editions are: H. F. Brett-Smith's for Etherege (1927); M. Summers's for Wycherley (1924); M. Summers's (1923) or F. W. Bateson's (1930) for Congreve. For criticism and biography consult: B. Dobrée, *Essays in Biography, 1680-1726* (1925); W. Connely, *Brawny Wycherley* (1930); G. Meredith, *An Essay on Comedy* (1897); D. C. Taylor, *William Congreve* (1931).

The Way of the World

Characters

Fainall, *in love with Mrs. Marwood*
Mirabell, *in love with Mrs. Millamant*
Witwoud, } *Followers of Mrs. Millamant*
Petulant }
Sir Wilfull Witwoud, *Half-brother to Witwoud, and Nephew to Lady Wishfort*
Waitwell, *Servant to Mirabell*
Lady Wishfort, *Enemy to Mirabell, for having falsely pretended love to her*
Mrs. Millamant, *a fine lady, Niece to Lady Wishfort and loves Mirabell*
Mrs. Marwood, *Friend to Mr. Fainall, and likes Mirabell*
Mrs. Fainall, *Daughter to Lady Wishfort, and wife to Fainall, formerly friend to Mirabell*
Foible, *Woman to Lady Wishfort*
Mincing, *Woman to Mrs. Millamant*
Dancers, Footmen, *and* Attendants.

Scene—London.
The time equal to that of the presentation.

ACT I

A Chocolate-house.

Mirabell *and* Fainall (*rising from Cards*), Betty *waiting.*

Mira. You are a fortunate man, Mr. Fainall.

Fain. Have we done?

Mira. What you please. I'll play on to entertain you.

Fain. No, I'll give you your revenge another time, when you are not so indifferent; you are thinking of something else now, and play too negligently; the coldness of a losing gamester lessens the pleasure of the winner. I'd no more play with a man that slighted his ill fortune, than I'd make love to a woman who undervalued the loss of her reputation.

Mira. You have a taste extremely delicate, and are for refining on your pleasures.

Fain. Prithee, why so reserved? Something has put you out of humor.

Mira. Not at all: I happen to be grave today; and you are gay; that's all.

Fain. Confess, Millamant and you quarreled last night, after I left you; my fair cousin has some humors that would tempt the patience of a Stoic. What, some coxcomb came in, and was well received by her while you were by.

Mira. Witwoud and Petulant; and what was worse, her aunt, your wife's mother, my evil genius; or sum up all in her own name, my old Lady Wishfort came in——

Fain. O there it is then—she has a lasting passion for you, and with reason.—What, then my wife was there?

Mira. Yes, and Mrs. Marwood and three or four more, whom I never saw before; seeing me, they all put on their grave faces, whispered one another, then complained aloud of the vapors and after fell into a profound silence.

Fain. They had a mind to be rid of you.

Mira. For which reason I resolved not to stir. At last the good old lady broke through her painful taciturnity, with an invective against long visits. I would not have understood her, but Millamant joining in the argument, I rose and with a constrained smile told her I thought nothing was so easy as to know when a visit began to be troublesome; she reddened and I withdraw, without expecting her reply.

Fain. You were to blame to resent what she spoke only in compliance with her aunt.

Mira. She is more mistress of herself, than to be under the necessity of such a resignation.

Fain. What? though half her fortune depends upon her marrying with my lady's approbation?

Mira. I was then in such a humor, that I should have been better pleased if she had been less discreet.

Fain. Now I remember, I wonder not they were weary of you; last night was one of their cabal-nights; they have 'em three times a week, and meet by turns, at one another's apartments, where they come together like the coroner's inquest, to sit upon the murdered reputations of the week. You and I are excluded; and it was once proposed that all the male sex should be excepted; but somebody moved that to avoid scandal there might be one man of the community; upon which motion Witwoud and Petulant were enrolled members.

Mira. And who may have been the foundress of this sect? My Lady Wishfort, I warrant, who publishes her detestation of mankind; and full of the vigor of fifty-five, declares for a friend and ratafia;[1] and let posterity shift for itself, she'll breed no more.

Fain. The discovery of your sham addresses to her, to conceal your love to her niece, has provoked this separation: had you dissembled better, things might have continued in the state of nature.

Mira. I did as much as man could, with any reasonable conscience; I proceeded to the very last act of flattery with her, and was guilty of a song in her commendation. Nay, I got a friend to put her into a lampoon, and compliment her with the imputation of an affair with a young fellow, which I carried so far, that I told her the malicious town took notice that she was grown fat of a sudden; and when she lay in of a dropsy, persuaded her she was reported to be in labor. The devil's in't, if an old woman is to be flattered further, unless a man should endeavor downright personally to debauch her; and that my virtue forbade me. But for the discovery of this amour, I am indebted to your friend, or your wife's friend, Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. What should provoke her to be your enemy, unless she has made you advances, which you have slighted? Women do not easily forgive omissions of that nature.

Mira. She was always civil to me, 'till of late; I confess I am not one of those coxcombs who are apt to interpret a woman's good manners to her prejudice; and think that she who does not refuse 'em everything, can refuse 'em nothing.

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[1] a liqueur flavored with fruits.

Fain. You are a gallant man, Mirabell; and though you may have cruelty enough, not to satisfy a lady's longing; you have too much generosity, not to be tender of her honor. Yet you speak with an indifference which seems to be affected; and confesses you are conscious of a negligence.

Mira. You pursue the argument with a distrust that seems to be unaffected, and confesses you are conscious of a concern for which the lady is more indebted to you, than is your wife.

Fain. Fie, fie, friend, if you grow censorious I must leave you;—I'll look upon the gamesters in the next room.

Mira. Who are they?

Fain. Petulant and Witwoud.—Bring me some chocolate. [*Exit.*

Mira. Betty, what says your clock?

Bet. Turned of the last canonical hour, sir. [*Exit.*

Mira. How pertinently the jade answers me! Ha! almost one o'clock! [*Looking on his watch*] O, y'are come— [*Enter* Footman.] Well, is the grand affair over? You have been something tedious.

Serv. Sir, there's such coupling at Pancras[2] that they stand behind one another, as 'twere in a country dance. Ours was the last couple to lead up; and no hopes appearing of dispatch, besides, the parson growing hoarse, we were afraid his lungs would have failed before it came to our turn; so we drove round to Duke's Place;[3] and there they were riveted in a trice.

Mira. So, so you are sure they are married.

Serv. Married and bedded, sir: I am witness.

Mira. Have you the certificate?

Serv. Here it is, sir.

Mira. Has the tailor brought Waitwell's clothes home, and the new liveries?

Serv. Yes, sir.

Mira. That's well. Do you go home again, d'ye hear, and adjourn the consummation 'till farther order; bid Waitwell shake his ears, and Dame Partlet rustle up her feathers, and meet me at one o'clock by Rosamond's Pond; that I may see her before she returns to her lady: and as you tender your ears be secret. [*Exit* Footman.

Enter Fainall *and* Betty.

Fain. Joy of your success, Mirabell; you look pleased.

Mira. Ay; I have been engaged in a matter of some sort of mirth, which is not yet ripe for discovery. I am glad this is not a cabal-night. I wonder, Fainall, that you who are married, and of consequence should be discreet, will suffer your wife to be of such a party.

Fain. Faith, I am not jealous. Besides, most who are engaged are women and relations; and for the men, they are of a kind too contemptible to give scandal.

Mira. I am of another opinion. The greater the coxcomb, always the more the scandal: for a woman who is not a fool, can have but one reason for associating with a man who is one.

Fain. Are you jealous as often as you see Witwoud entertained by Millamant?

Mira. Of her understanding I am, if not of her person.

Fain. You do her wrong; for to give her her due, she has wit.

Mira. She has beauty enough to make any man think so; and complaisance enough not to contradict him who shall tell her so.

Fain. For a passionate lover, methinks you are a man somewhat too discerning in the failings of your mistress.

Mira. And for a discerning man, somewhat too passionate a lover; for I like her with all her faults; nay, like her for her faults. Her follies are so natural, or so artful, that they become her; and those affectations which in another woman would be odious, serve but to make her more agreeable. I'll tell thee, Fainall, she once used me with that insolence, that in revenge I took her to pieces; sifted her, and separated her failings; I studied 'em, and got 'em by rote. The catalogue was so large, that I was not without hopes, one day or other, to hate her heartily: to which end I so used myself to think of 'em, that at length, contrary to my design and expectation, they gave me every hour less and less disturbance; 'till in a few days it became habitual to me, to remember 'em without being displeased. They are now grown as familiar to me as my own frailties; and in all probability in a little time longer I shall like 'em as well.

Fain. Marry her, marry her; be half as well acquainted with her charms, as you are with her defects, and my life on't, you are your own man again.

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[2] the Church of St. Pancras.

[3] St. James's Church, Duke's Place, Aldgate, notorious because of irregular marriages.

Mira. Say you so?

Fain. I, I, I have experience: I have a wife, and so forth.

Enter Messenger.

Mess. Is one Squire Witwoud here?

Bet. Yes; what's your business?

Mess. I have a letter for him, from his brother, Sir Wilfull, which I am charged to deliver into his own hands.

Bet. He's in the next room, friend—that way.

[*Exit* Messenger.

Mira. What, is the chief of that noble family in town, Sir Wilfull Witwoud?

Fain. He is expected to-day. Do you know him?

Mira. I have seen him, he promises to be an extraordinary person; I think you have the honor to be related to him.

Fain. Yes; he is half-brother to this Witwoud by a former wife, who was sister to my Lady Wishfort, my wife's mother. If you marry Millamant, you must call cousins too.

Mira. I had rather be his relation than his acquaintance.

Fain. He comes to town in order to equip himself for travel.

Mira. For travel! Why the man that I mean is above forty.

Fain. No matter for that; 'tis for the honor of England, that all Europe should know we have blockheads of all ages.

Mira. I wonder there is not an act of parliament to save the credit of the nation, and prohibit the exportation of fools.

Fain. By no means, 'tis better as 'tis; 'tis better to trade with a little loss, than to be quite eaten up, with being overstocked.

Mira. Pray, are the follies of this knight-errant, and those of the squire his brother, anything related?

Fain. Not at all; Witwoud grows by the knight, like a medlar grafted on a crab. One will melt in your mouth, and t'other set your teeth on edge; one is all pulp, and the other all core.

Mira. So one will be rotten before he be ripe, and the other will be rotten without ever being ripe at all.

Fain. Sir Wilfull is an odd mixture of bashfulness and obstinacy.—But when he's drunk, he's as loving as the monster in the "Tempest"; and much after the same manner. To give t'other his due, he has something of good nature, and does not always want wit.

Mira. Not always; but as often as his memory fails him, and his commonplace of comparisons. He is a fool with a good memory, and some few scraps of other folks' wit. He is one whose conversation can never be approved, yet it is now and then to be endured. He has indeed one good quality, he is not exceptious; for he so passionately affects the reputation of understanding raillery, that he will construe an affront into a jest; and call downright rudeness and ill language, satire and fire.

Fain. If you have a mind to finish his picture, you have an opportunity to do it at full length. Behold the original.

Enter Witwoud

Wit. Afford me your compassion, my dears; pity me, Fainall, Mirabell, pity me.

Mira. I do from my soul.

Fain. Why, what's the matter?

Wit. No letters for me, Betty?

Bet. Did not a messenger bring you one but now, sir?

Wit. Ay, but no other?

Bet. No, sir.

Wit. That's hard, that's very hard;—a messenger, a mule, a beast of burden, he has brought me a letter from the fool my brother, as heavy as a panegyric in a funeral sermon, or a copy of commendatory verses from one poet to another. And what's worse, 'tis as sure a forerunner of the author, as an epistle dedicatory.

Mira. A fool, and your brother, Witwoud!

Wit. Ay, ay, my half-brother. My half-brother he is, no nearer upon honor.

Mira. Then 'tis possible he may be but half a fool.

Wit. Good, good, Mirabell, *le drole*! Good, good, hang him, don't let's talk of him;—Fainall, how does your lady? Gad! I say anything in the world to get this fellow out of my head. I beg pardon that I should ask a man of pleasure, and the town, a question at once so foreign and domestic. But I talk like an old maid at a marriage, I don't know what I say: but she's the best woman in the world.

Fain. 'Tis well you don't know what you say, or else your commendation would go near to make me either vain or jealous.

Wit. No man in town lives well with a wife but Fainall. Your judgment, Mirabell?

Mira. You had better step and ask his wife, if you would be credibly informed.

Wit. Mirabell?

Mira. Ay.

Wit. My dear, I ask ten thousand pardons;—Gad I have forgot what I was going to say to you.

Mira. I thank you heartily, heartily.

Wit. No, but prithee excuse me,—my memory is such a memory.

Mira. Have a care of such apologies, Witwoud; —for I never knew a fool but he affected to complain, either of the spleen or his memory.

Fain. What have you done with Petulant?

Wit. He's reckoning his money,—my money it was—I have no luck to-day.

Fain. You may allow him to win of you at play; —for you are sure to be too hard for him at repartee: since you monopolize the wit that is between you, the fortune must be his of course.

Mira. I don't find that Petulant confesses the superiority of wit to be your talent, Witwoud.

Wit. Come, come, you are malicious now, and would breed debates—Petulant's my friend, and a very honest fellow, and a very pretty fellow, and has a smattering—faith and troth a pretty deal of an odd sort of a small wit: Nay, I'll do him justice. I'm his friend, I won't wrong him.—And if he had any judgment in the world,—he would not be altogether contemptible. Come, come, don't detract from the merits of my friend.

Fain. You don't take your friend to be overnicely bred.

Wit. No, no, hang him, the rogue has no manners at all, that I must own—no more breeding than a bum-baily, that I grant you.—'Tis pity; the fellow has fire and life.

Mira. What, courage?

Wit. Hum, faith I don't know as to that,—I can't say as to that.—Yes, faith, in a controversy he'll contradict anybody.

Mira. Though 'twere a man whom he feared, or a woman whom he loved.

Wit. Well, well, he does not always think before he speaks;—We have all our failings; you are too hard upon him, you are, faith. Let me excuse him, —I can defend most of his faults, except one or two; one he has, that's the truth on't, if he were my brother, I could not acquit him—that indeed I could wish were otherwise.

Mira. Ay marry, what's that, Witwoud?

Wit. O pardon me—expose the infirmities of my friend?—No, my dear, excuse me there.

Fain. What I warrant he's unsincere, or 'tis some such trifle.

Wit. No, no, what if he be? 'Tis no matter for that, his wit will excuse that: a wit should no more be sincere, than a woman constant; one argues a decay of parts, as t'other of beauty.

Mira. Maybe you think him too positive?

Wit. No, no, his being positive is an incentive to argument, and keeps up conversation.

Fain. Too illiterate.

Wit. That! that's his happiness—his want of learning gives him the more opportunities to shew his natural parts.

Mira. He wants words.

Wit. Ay; but I like him for that now; for his want of words gives me the pleasure very often to explain his meaning.

Fain. He's impudent.

Wit. No, that's not it.

Mira. Vain.

Wit. No.

Mira. What, he speaks unseasonable truths sometimes, because he has not wit enough to invent an evasion.

Wit. Truth! Ha, ha, ha! No, no, since you will have it,—I mean, he never speaks truth at all,—that's all. He will lie like a chambermaid, or a woman of quality's porter. Now that is a fault.

Enter Coachman

Coach. Is Master Petulant here, mistress?

Bet. Yes.

Coach. Three gentlewomen in a coach would speak with him.

Fain. O brave Petulant, three!

Bet. I'll tell him.

Coach. You must bring two dishes of chocolate and a glass of cinnamon-water.

[*Exeunt* Betty *and* Coachman.

Wit. That should be for two fasting strumpets, and a bawd troubled with wind. Now you may know what the three are.

Mira. You are very free with your friend's acquaintance.

Wit. Ay, ay, friendship without freedom is as dull as love without enjoyment or wine without toasting; but to tell you a secret, these are trulls whom he allows coach-hire, and something more by the week, to call on him once a day at public places.

Mira. How!

Wit. You shall see he won't go to 'em because there's no more company here to take notice of him —Why this is nothing to what he used to do;—before he found out this way, I have known him call for himself——

Fain. Call for himself? What dost thou mean?

Wit. Mean, why he would slip you out of this chocolate-house, just when you had been talking to him—as soon as your back was turned—whip he was gone;—then trip to his lodging, clap on a hood and scarf, and a mask, slap into a hackney-coach, and drive hither to the door again in a trice; where he would send in for himself, that I mean, call for himself, wait for himself, nay and what's more, not finding himself, sometimes leave a letter for himself.

Mira. I confess this is something extraordinary—I believe he waits for himself now, he is so long coming; O I ask his pardon.

Enter Petulant *and* Betty

Bet. Sir, the coach stays.

Pet. Well, well; I come.—'Sbud a man had as good be a professed midwife, as a professed whoremaster, at this rate; to be knocked up and raised at all hours, and in all places. Pox on 'em, I won't come—D'ye hear, tell 'em I won't come.—Let 'em snivel and cry their hearts out.

Fain. You are very cruel, Petulant.

Pet. All's one, let it pass—I have a humor to be cruel.

Mira. I hope they are not persons of condition that you use at this rate.

Pet. Condition, condition's a dried fig, if I am not in humor.—By this hand, if they were your—a—a—your what-dee-call-'ems themselves, they must wait or rub off, if I want appetite.

Mira. What-dee-call-'ems! What are they Witwoud?

Wit. Empresses, my dear—by your what-dee-call-'ems he means sultana queens.

Pet. Ay, Roxolana's.

Mira. Cry you mercy.

Fain. Witwoud says they are——

Pet. What does he say th'are?

Wit. I; fine ladies I say.

Pet. Pass on, Witwoud—Harkee, by this light his relations—two co-heiresses his cousins, and an old aunt, who loves catterwauling better than a conventicle.

Wit. Ha, ha, ha; I had a mind to see how the rogue would come off.—Ha, ha, ha; Gad, I can't be angry with him, if he had said they were my mother and my sisters.

Mira. No!

Wit. No; the rogue's wit and readiness of invention charm me, dear Petulant.

Pet. Enough, let 'em trundel. Anger helps complection, saves paint.

Fain. This continence is all dissembled; this is in order to have something to brag of the next time he makes court to Millamant, and swear he has abandoned the whole sex for her sake.

Mira. Have you not left off your impudent pretensions there yet? I shall cut your throat, sometime or other, Petulant, about that business.

Pet. Ay, ay, let that pass—there are other throats to be cut.—

Mira. Meaning mine, sir?

Pet. Not I—I mean nobody—I know nothing.—But there are uncles and nephews in the world—and they may be rivals—What then? All's one for that——

Mira. How! Harkee, Petulant, come hither—Explain, or I shall call your interpreter.

Pet. Explain; I know nothing.—Why you have an uncle, have you not, lately come to town, and lodges by my Lady Wishfort's?

Mira. True.

Pet. Why that's enough—you and he are not friends; and if he should marry and have a child, you may be disinherited, ha?

Mira. Where hast thou stumbled upon all this truth?

Pet. All's one for that; why then say I know something.

Mira. Come, thou art an honest fellow, Petulant, and shalt make love to my mistress, thou shalt, faith. What hast thou heard of my uncle?

Pet. I, nothing I. If throats are to be cut, let swords clash; snug's the word, I shrug and am silent.

Mira. O raillery, raillery. Come, I know thou art in the women's secrets.—What, you're a cabalist, I know you staid at Millamant's last night, after I went. Was there any mention made of my uncle or me? Tell me; if thou hadst but good nature equal to thy wit, Petulant, Tony Witwoud, who is now thy competitor in fame, would shew as dim by thee as a dead whiting's eye by a pearl of Orient; he would no more be seen by thee, than Mercury is by the sun: Come, I'm sure thou wo't tell me.

Pet. If I do, will you grant me common sense then, for the future?

Mira. Faith I'll do what I can for thee, and I'll pray that Heaven may grant it thee in the meantime.

Pet. Well, harkee. [*They talk apart.*

Fain. Petulant and you both will find Mirabell

Wit. Pshaw, pshaw, that she laughs at Petulant is plain. And for my part—but that it is almost a fashion to admire her, I should—harkee—to tell you a secret, but let it go no further—between friends, I shall never break my heart for her.

Fain. How!

Wit. She's handsome; but she's a sort of an uncertain woman.

Fain. I thought you had died for her.

Wit. Umh—no ——

Fain. She has wit.

Wit. 'Tis what she will hardly allow anybody else—Now, demme, I should hate that, if she were as handsome as Cleopatra. Mirabell is not so sure of her as he thinks for.

Fain. Why do you think so?

Wit. We stayed pretty late there last night; and heard something of an uncle to Mirabell, who is lately come to town,—and is between him and the best part of his estate; Mirabell and he are at some distance, as my Lady Wishfort has been told; and you know she hates Mirabell, worse than a Quaker hates a parrot,[4] or than a fishmonger hates a hard frost.[5] Whether this uncle has seen Mrs. Millamant or not, I cannot say; but there were items of such a treaty being in embryo; and if it should come to life, poor Mirabell would be in some sort unfortunately fobbed i'faith.

Fain. 'Tis impossible Millamant should harken to it.

Wit. Faith, my dear, I can't tell; she's a woman and a kind of a humorist.

Mira. And this is the sum of what you could collect last night.

Pet. The quintessence. Maybe Witwoud knows more, he stayed longer.—Besides they never mind him; they say anything before him.

Mira. I thought you had been the greatest favorite.

Pet. Ay, *tête à tête*; but not in public, because I make remarks.

Mira. You do?

Pet. Ay, ay, pox I'm malicious, man. Now he's soft, you know, they are not in awe of him—the fellow's well bred, he's what you call a—what-d'ye-call-'em. A fine gentleman, but he's silly withal.

Mira. I thank you, I know as much as my curiosity requires. Fainall, are you for the Mall?[6]

Fain. Ay, I'll take a turn before dinner.

Wit. Ay, we'll all walk in the Park, the ladies talked of being there.

Mira. I thought you were obliged to watch for your brother Sir Wilfull's arrival.

Wit. No, no, he comes to his aunt's, my Lady Wishfort; pox on him, I shall be troubled with him too; what shall I do with the fool?

Pet. Beg him for his estate; that I may beg you afterwards; and so have but one trouble with you both.

Wit. O rare Petulant; thou art as quick as fire in a frosty morning; thou shalt to the Mall with us; and we'll be very severe.

Pet. Enough, I'm in a humor to be severe.

Mira. Are you? Pray then walk by yourselves,—let not us be accessory to your putting the ladies out of countenance, with your senseless ribaldry; which you roar out aloud as often as they pass by you; and when you have made a handsome woman blush, then you think you have been severe.

Pet. What, what? Then let 'em either show their innocence by not understanding what they hear, or else show their discretion by not hearing what they would not be thought to understand.

Mira. But hast not thou then sense enough to know that thou ought'st to be most ashamed of thyself, when thou hast put another out of countenance?

Pet. Not I, by this hand—I always take blushing either for a sign of guilt, or ill breeding.

Mira. I confess you ought to think so. You are in the right, that you may plead the error of your judgment in defence of your practice.

Where modesty's ill manners, 'tis but fit
That impudence and malice pass for wit.

ACT II

St. James's Park.

Mrs. Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Mrs. Fain. Ay ay, dear Marwood, if we will be happy, we must find the means in ourselves, and among ourselves. Men are ever in extremes; either doting, or averse. While they are lovers, if they have fire and sense, their jealousies are insupportable: and when they cease to love (we ought to think at least) they loathe; they look upon us with horror and distaste; they meet us like the ghosts of what we were, and as from such, fly from us.

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[4] because he talks too much.

[5] because his business is so disagreeable when it is cold.

[6] a promenade in St. James's Park, the present Pall Mall.

Mrs. Mar. True, 'tis an unhappy circumstance of life, that love should ever die before us; and that the man so often should outlive the lover. But say what you will, 'tis better to be left, than never to have been loved. To pass our youth in dull indifference, to refuse the sweets of life because they once must leave us, is as preposterous as to wish to have been born old, because we one day must be old. For my part, my youth may wear and waste, but it shall never rust in my possession.

Mrs. Fain. Then it seems you dissemble an aversion to mankind, only in compliance to my mother's humor.

Mrs. Mar. Certainly. To be free; I have no taste of those insipid dry discourses, with which our sex of force must entertain themselves, apart from men. We may affect endearments to each other, profess eternal friendships, and seem to dote like lovers; but 'tis not in our natures long to persevere. Love will resume his empire in our breasts, and every heart, or soon or late, receive and readmit him as its lawful tyrant.

Mrs. Fain. Bless me, how have I been deceived! Why you profess a libertine.

Mrs. Mar. You see my friendship by my freedom. Come, be as sincere, acknowledge that your sentiments agree with mine.

Mrs. Fain. Never.

Mrs. Mar. You hate mankind?

Mrs. Fain. Heartily, inveterately.

Mrs. Mar. Your husband?

Mrs. Fain. Most transcendently; ay, though I say it, meritoriously.

Mrs. Mar. Give me your hand upon it.

Mrs. Fain. There.

Mrs. Mar. I join with you; what I have said has been to try you.

Mrs. Fain. Is it possible? Dost thou hate those vipers men?

Mrs. Mar. I have done hating 'em, and am now come to despise 'em; the next thing I have to do, is eternally to forget 'em.

Mrs. Fain. There spoke the spirit of an Amazon, a Penthesilea.[7]

Mrs. Mar. And yet I am thinking sometimes to carry my aversion further.

Mrs. Fain. How?

Mrs. Mar. Faith by marrying; if I could but find one that loved me very well, and would be thoroughly sensible of ill usage, I think I should do myself the violence of undergoing the ceremony.

Mrs. Fain. You would not make him a cuckold?

Mrs. Mar. No; but I'd make him believe I did, and that's as bad.

Mrs. Fain. Why had not you as good do it?

Mrs. Mar. O if he should ever discover it, he would then know the worst, and be out of his pain; but I would have him ever to continue upon the rack of fear and jealousy.

Mrs. Fain. Ingenious mischief! Would thou wert married to Mirabell.

Mrs. Mar. Would I were.

Mrs. Fain. You change color.

Mrs. Mar. Because I hate him.

Mrs. Fain. So do I; but I can hear him named. But what reason have you to hate him in particular?

Mrs. Mar. I never loved him; he is, and always was, insufferably proud.

Mrs. Fain. By the reason you give for your aversion, one would think it dissembled; for you have laid a fault to his charge of which his enemies must acquit him.

Mrs. Mar. O then it seems you are one of his favorable enemies. Methinks you look a little pale, and now you flush again.

Mrs. Fain. Do I? I think I am a little sick o' the sudden.

Mrs. Mar. What ails you?

Mrs. Fain. My husband. Don't you see him? He turned short upon me unawares, and has almost overcome me.

Enter **Fainall** *and* **Mirabell.**

Mrs. Mar. Ha, ha, ha; he comes opportunely for you.

Mrs. Fain. For you, for he has brought Mirabell with him.

Fain. My dear.

Mrs. Fain. My soul.

Fain. You don't look well to-day, child.

Mrs. Fain. D'ye think so?

Mira. He is the only man that does, madam.

Mrs. Fain. The only man that would tell me so at least; and the only man from whom I could hear it without mortification.

Fain. O my dear, I am satisfied of your tenderness; I know you cannot resent anything from me; especially what is an effect of my concern.

Mrs. Fain. Mr. Mirabell, my mother interrupted you in a pleasant relation last night: I would fain hear it out.

Mira. The persons concerned in that affair have yet a tolerable reputation.—I am afraid Mr. Fainall will be censorious.

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[7] Queen of the Amazons.

MRS. FAIN. He has a humor more prevailing than his curiosity, and will willingly dispense with the hearing of one scandalous story, to avoid giving an occasion to make another by being seen to walk with his wife. This way, Mr. Mirabell, and I dare promise you will oblige us both.

[*Exeunt* MRS. FAINALL *and* MIRABELL.

FAIN. Excellent creature! Well, sure if I should live to be rid of my wife, I should be a miserable man.

MRS. MAR. Ay!

FAIN. For having only that one hope, the accomplishment of it, of consequence must put an end to all my hope; and what a wretch is he who must survive his hopes! Nothing remains when that day comes, but to sit down and weep like Alexander when he wanted other worlds to conquer.

MRS. MAR. Will you not follow 'em?

FAIN. Faith, I think not.

MRS. MAR. Pray let us; I have a reason.

FAIN. You are not jealous?

MRS. MAR. Of whom?

FAIN. Of Mirabell.

MRS. MAR. If I am, is it inconsistent with my love to you that I am tender of your honor?

FAIN. You would intimate then, as if there were a fellow-feeling between my wife and him.

MRS. MAR. I think she does not hate him to that degree she would be thought.

FAIN. But he, I fear, is too insensible.

MRS. MAR. It may be you are deceived.

FAIN. It may be so. I do not now begin to apprehend it.

MRS. MAR. What?

FAIN. That I have been deceived, madam, and you are false.

MRS. MAR. That I am false! What mean you?

FAIN. To let you know I see through all your little arts—Come, you both love him; and both have equally dissembled your aversion. Your mutual jealousies of one another, have made you clash 'till you have both struck fire. I have seen the warm confession reddening on your cheeks and sparking from your eyes.

MRS. MAR. You do me wrong.

FAIN. I do not—'twas for my ease to oversee and wilfully neglect the gross advances made him by my wife; that by permitting her to be engaged, I might continue unsuspected in my pleasures; and take you oftener to my arms in full security. But could you think, because the nodding husband would not wake, that e'er the watchful lover slept?

MRS. MAR. And wherewithal can you reproach me?

FAIN. With infidelity, with loving another, with love of Mirabell.

MRS. MAR. 'Tis false. I challenge you to show an instance that can confirm your groundless accusations. I hate him.

FAIN. And wherefore do you hate him? He is insensible, and your resentment follows his neglect. An instance! The injuries you have done him are a proof: your interposing in his love. What cause had you to make discoveries of his pretended passion? To undeceive the credulous aunt, and be the officious obstacle of his match with Millamant?

MRS. MAR. My obligations to my lady urged me: I had professed a friendship to her; and could not see her easy nature so abused by that dissembler.

FAIN. What, was it conscience then? Professed a friendship! O the pious friendships of the female sex!

MRS. MAR. More tender, more sincere, and more enduring, than all the vain and empty vows of men, whether professing love to us, or mutual faith to one another.

FAIN. Ha, ha, ha; you are my wife's friend too.

MRS. MAR. Shame and ingratitude! Do you reproach me? You, you upbraid me! Have I been false to her, through strict fidelity to you, and sacrificed my friendship to keep my love inviolate? And have you the baseness to charge me with the guilt, unmindful of merit! To you it should be meritorious, that I have been vicious: And do you reflect that guilt upon me, which should lie buried in your own bosom?

FAIN. You misinterpret my reproof. I meant but to remind you of the slight account you once could make of strictest ties, when set in competition with your love to me.

MRS. MAR. 'Tis false, you urged it with deliberate malice—'twas spoke in scorn, and I never will forgive it.

FAIN. Your guilt, not your resentment, begets your rage. If yet you loved, you could forgive a jealousy: but you are stung to find you are discovered.

MRS. MAR. It shall be all discovered. You too shall be discovered; be sure you shall. I can but be exposed—if I do it myself I shall prevent your baseness.

FAIN. Why, what will you do?

MRS. MAR. Disclose it to your wife; own what has passed between us.

FAIN. Frenzy!

MRS. MAR. By all my wrongs I'll do't—I'll publish to the world the injuries you have done me, both in my fame and fortune: With both I trusted you, you bankrupt in honor, as indigent of wealth.

Fain. Your fame I have preserved. Your fortune has been bestowed as the prodigality of your love would have it, in pleasures which we both have shared. Yet, had not you been false, I had e'er this repaid it—'Tis true—had you permitted Mirabell with Millamant to have stolen their marriage, my lady had been incensed beyond all means of reconcilement: Millamant had forfeited the moiety of her fortune; which then would have descended to my wife;—and wherefore did I marry, but to make lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?

Mrs. Mar. Deceit and frivolous pretence.

Fain. Death, am I not married? What's pretence? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay, a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world. Will you yet be reconciled to truth and me?

Mrs. Mar. Impossible. Truth and you are inconsistent—I hate you, and shall for ever.

Fain. For loving you?

Mrs. Mar. I loathe the name of love after such usage; and next to the guilt with which you would asperse me, I scorn you most. Farewell.

Fain. Nay, we must not part thus.

Mrs. Mar. Let me go.

Fain. Come, I'm sorry.

Mrs. Mar. I care not—let me go—break my hands, do—I'd leave 'em to get loose.

Fain. I would not hurt you for the world. Have I no other hold to keep you here?

Mrs. Mar. Well, I have deserved it all.

Fain. You know I love you.

Mrs. Mar. Poor dissembling!—O that—Well, it is not yet——

Fain. What? What is it not? What is it not yet? It is not yet too late——

Mrs. Mar. No, it is not yet too late—I have that comfort.

Fain. It is, to love another.

Mr. Mar. But not to loathe, detest, abhor mankind, myself and the whole treacherous world.

Fain. Nay, this is extravagance.—Come, I ask your pardon—no tears—I was to blame, I could not love you and be easy in my doubts—pray forbear—I believe you; I'm convinced I've done you wrong; and any way, every way will make amends;—I'll hate my wife yet more, damn her, I'll part with her, rob her of all she's worth, and we'll retire somewhere, anywhere, to another world, I'll marry thee—be pacified.—'Sdeath they come, hide your face, your tears—you have a mask, wear it a moment. This way, this way, be persuaded. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Mirabell *and* Mrs. Fainall

Mrs. Fain. They are here yet.

Mira. They are turning into the other walk.

Mrs. Fain. While I only hated my husband, I could bear to see him; but since I have despised him, he's too offensive.

Mira. O you should hate with prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Yes, for I have loved with indiscretion.

Mira. You should have just so much disgust for your husband as may be sufficient to make you relish your lover.

Mrs. Fain. You have been the cause that I have loved without bounds, and would you set limits to that aversion, of which you have been the occasion? Why did you make me marry this man?

Mira. Why do we daily commit disagreeable and dangerous actions? To save that idol reputation. If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence, of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and a designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behavior have gained a reputation with the town, enough to make that woman stand excused, who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. When you are weary of him, you know your remedy.

Mrs. Fain. I ought to stand in some degree of credit with you, Mirabell.

Mira. In justice to you, I have made you privy to my whole design, and put it in your power to ruin or advance my fortune.

Mrs. Fain. Whom have you instructed to represent your pretended uncle?

Mira. Waitwell, my servant.

Mrs. Fain. He is an humble servant to Foible my mother's woman, and may win her to your interest.

Mira. Care is taken for that—she is won and worn by this time. They were married this morning.

Mrs. Fain. Who?

Mira. Waitwell and Foible. I would not tempt my servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your mother, in hopes to ruin me, should consent to marry my pretended uncle, he might, like Mosca in the "Fox,"[8] stand upon terms; so I made him sure before-hand.

Mrs. Fain. So, if my poor mother is caught in a contract, you will discover the imposture betimes; and release her by producing a certificate of her gallant's former marriage.

Mira. Yes, upon condition that she consent to my marriage with her niece, and surrender the moiety of her fortune in her possession.

Mrs. Fain. She talked last night of endeavoring at a match between Millamant and your uncle.

Mira. That was by Foible's direction, and my instruction, that she might seem to carry it more privately.

Mrs. Fain. Well, I have an opinion of your success; for I believe my lady will do anything to get an husband; and when she has this, which you have provided for her, I suppose she will submit to anything to get rid of him.

Mira. Yes, I think the good lady would marry anything that resembled a man, though 'twere no more than what a butler could pinch out of a napkin.

Mrs. Fain. Female frailty! We must all come to it, if we live to be old, and feel the craving of a false appetite when the true is decayed.

Mira. An old woman's appetite is depraved like that of a girl—'tis the green-sickness of a second childhood; and like the faint offer of a latter spring, serves but to usher in the fall; and withers in an affected bloom.

Mrs. Fain. Here's your mistress.

Enter Mrs. Millamant, Witwoud, *and* Mincing.

Mira. Here she comes i'faith full sail, with her fan spread and streamers out, and a shoal of fools for tenders—Ha, no, I cry her mercy.

Mrs. Fain. I see but one poor empty sculler; and he tows her woman after him.

Mira. You seem to be unattended, madam,—you used to have the *beaumond*[9] throng after you; and a flock of gay fine perukes hovering round you.

Wit. Like moths about a candle—I had like to have lost my comparison for want of breath.

Milla. O I have denied myself air to-day. I have walked as fast through the crowd ——

Wit. As a favorite just disgraced; and with as few followers.

Milla. Dear Mr. Witwoud, truce with your similitudes: for I am as sick of 'em ——

Wit. As a physician of a good air—I cannot help it, madam, though 'tis against myself.

Milla. Yet again! Mincing, stand between me and his wit.

Wit. Do, Mrs. Mincing, like a screen before a great fire. I confess I do blaze to-day, I am too bright.

Mrs. Fain. But, dear Millamant, why were you so long?

Milla. Long! Lord, have I not made violent haste? I have asked every living thing I met for you; I have enquired after you, as after a new fashion.

Wit. Madam, truce with your similitudes—No, you met her husband, and did not ask him for her.

Mira. By your leave, Witwoud, that were like enquiring after an old fashion, to ask a husband for his wife.

Wit. Hum, a hit, a hit, a palpable hit, I confess it.

Mrs. Fain. You were dressed before I came abroad.

Milla. Ay, that's true—O but then I had—Mincing, what had I? Why was I so long?

Minc. O mem, your laship stayed to peruse a packet of letters.

Milla. O ay, letters—I had letters—I am persecuted with letters—I hate letters—nobody knows how to write letters; and yet one has 'em, one does not know why—they serve one to pin up one's hair.

Wit. Is that the way? Pray, madam, do you pin up your hair with all your letters? I find I must keep copies.

Milla. Only with those in verse, Mr. Witwoud. I never pin up my hair with prose. I think I tried once, Mincing.

Minc. O mem, I shall never forget it.

Milla. Ay, poor Mincing tiffed and tiffed all the morning.

Minc. 'Till I had the cramp in my fingers, I'll vow, mem. And all to no purpose. But when your laship pins it up with poetry, it sits so pleasant the next day as anything, and is so pure and so crips.

Wit. Indeed, so crips?

Minc. You're such a critic, Mr. Witwoud.

Milla. Mirabell, did you take exceptions last

[8] a play by Ben Jonson.

[9] the fashionable world.

night? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't I'm angry—no, now I think on't I'm pleased—for I believe I gave you some pain.

Mira. Does that please you?

Milla. Infinitely; I love to give pain.

Mira. You would affect a cruelty which is not in your nature; your true vanity is in the power of pleasing.

Milla. O I ask your pardon for that—one's cruelty is one's power, and when one parts with one's cruelty, one parts with one's power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mira. Ay, ay, suffer your cruelty to ruin the object of your power, to destroy your lover—and then how vain, how lost a thing you'll be! Nay, 'tis true: you are no longer handsome when you've lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: For beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms—your glass is all a cheat. The ugly and the old, whom the looking-glass mortifies, yet after commendation can be flattered by it, and discover beauties in it: for that reflects our praises, rather than your face.

Milla. O the vanity of these men! Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the lover's gift—Lord, what is a lover, that it can give? Why one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; and then if one pleases one makes more.

Wit. Very pretty. Why you make no more of making of lovers, madam, than of making so many card-matches.

Milla. One no more owes one's beauty to a lover, than one's wit to an echo: they can but reflect what we look and say; vain empty things if we are silent or unseen, and want a being.

Mira. Yet, to those two vain empty things, you owe two the greatest pleasures of your life.

Milla. How so?

Mira. To your lover you owe the pleasure of hearing yourselves praised; and to an echo the pleasure of hearing yourselves talk.

Wit. But I know a lady that loves talking so incessantly, she won't give an echo fair play; she has that everlasting rotation of tongue, that an echo must wait 'till she dies, before it can catch her last words.

Milla. O fiction; Fainall, let us leave these men.

Mira. Draw off Witwoud. [*Aside to* Mrs. Fainall.]

Mrs. Fain. Immediately; I have a word or two for Mr. Witwoud.

[*Exeunt* Mrs. Fainall *and* Witwoud.

Mira. I would beg a little private audience too—you had the tyranny to deny me last night; though you knew I came to impart a secret to you that concerned my love.

Milla. You saw I was engaged.

Mira. Unkind. You had the leisure to entertain a herd of fools; things who visit you from their excessive idleness; bestowing on your easiness that time, which is the incumbrance of their lives. How can you find delight in such society? It is impossible they should admire you, they are not capable: or if they were, it should be to you as a mortification; for sure to please a fool is some degree of folly.

Milla. I please myself—besides, sometimes to converse with fools is for my health.

Mira. Your health! Is there a worse disease than the conversation of fools?

Milla. Yes, the vapors; fools are physic for it, next to *assa-fœtida.*

Mira. You are not in a course of fools?

Milla. Mirabell, if you persist in this offensive freedom, you'll displease me—I think I must resolve after all, not to have you—we shan't agree.

Mira. Not in our physic it may be.

Milla. And yet our distemper in all likelihood will be the same; for we shall be sick of one another. I shan't endure to be reprimanded, nor instructed; 'tis so dull to act always by advice, and so tedious to be told of one's faults—I can't bear it. Well, I won't have you, Mirabell—I'm resolved—I think—You may go—ha, ha, ha. What would you give, that you could help loving me?

Mira. I would give something that you did not know I could not help it.

Milla. Come, don't look grave then. Well, what do you say to me?

Mira. I say that a man may as soon make a friend by his wit, or a fortune by his honesty, as win a woman with plain-dealing and sincerity.

Milla. Sententious Mirabell! Prithee don't look with that violent and inflexible wise face, like Solomon at the dividing of the child[10] in an old tapestry hanging.

Mira. You are merry, madam, but I would persuade you for a moment to be serious.

Milla. What, with that face? No, if you keep your countenance, 'tis impossible I should hold mine. Well, after all, there is something very moving in a lovesick face. Ha, ha, ha—Well I won't laugh, don't be peevish—Heigho! Now I'll be melancholy, as melancholy as a watch-light. Well, Mirabell, if ever you will win me woo me now—Nay, if you are so tedious, fare you well;—I see they are walking away.

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[10] a Biblical subject frequent in tapestries; cf. *I Kings* 3:16-28.

Mira. Can you not find in the variety of your disposition one moment——

Milla. To hear you tell me Foible's married, and your plot like to speed.—No.

Mira. But how you came to know it——

Milla. Without the help of the devil, you can't imagine; unless she should tell me herself. Which of the two it may have been, I will leave you to consider; and when you have done thinking of that, think of me. [*Exit.*

Mira. I have something more—Gone—think of you! To think of a whirlwind, though 'twere in a whirlwind, were a case of more steady contemplation; a very tranquillity of mind and mansion. A fellow that lives in a windmill, has not a more whimsical dwelling than the heart of a man that is lodged in a woman. There is no point of the compass to which they cannot turn, and by which they are not turned; and by one as well as another; for motion not method is their occupation. To know this, and yet continue to be in love, is to be made wise from the dictates of reason, and yet persevere to play the fool by the force of instinct.—O here come my pair of turtles.—What, billing so sweetly! Is not Valentine's Day over with you yet?

Enter Waitwell, *and* Foible.

Mira. Sirrah, Waitwell, why sure you think you were married for your own recreation, and not for my conveniency.

Wait. Your pardon, sir. With submission, we have indeed been solacing in lawful delights; but still with an eye to business, sir. I have instructed her as well as I could. If she can take your directions as readily as my instructions, sir, your affairs are in a prosperous way.

Mira. Give you joy, Mrs. Foible.

Foib. O-las, sir, I'm so ashamed—I'm afraid my lady has been in a thousand inquietudes for me. But I protest, sir, I made as much haste as I could.

Wait. That she did indeed, sir. It was my fault that she did not make more.

Mira. That I believe.

Foib. But I told my lady as you instructed me, sir. That I had a prospect of seeing Sir Rowland your uncle; and that I would put her ladyship's picture in my pocket to show him; which I'll be sure to say has made him so enamored of her beauty, that he burns with impatience to lie at her ladyship's feet and worship the original.

Mira. Excellent Foible! Matrimony has made you eloquent in love.

Wait. I think she has profited, sir. I think so.

Foib. You have seen Madam Millamant, sir?

Mira. Yes.

Foib. I told her, sir, because I did not know that you might find an opportunity; she had so much company last night.

Mira. Your diligence will merit more—In the meantime——[*Gives money.*]

Foib. O dear sir, your humble servant.

Wait. Spouse.

Mira. Stand off, sir, not a penny.—Go on and prosper, Foible—the lease shall be made good and the farm stocked, if we succeed.

Foib. I don't question your generosity, sir: and you need not doubt of success. If you have no more commands, sir, I'll be gone; I'm sure my lady is at her toilet, and can't dress 'till I come.—O dear, I'm sure that [*looking out*] was Mrs. Marwood that went by in a mask; if she has seen me with you I'm sure she'll tell my lady. I'll make haste home and prevent her. Your servant, sir. B'w'y, Waitwell. [*Exit.*

Wait. Sir Rowland if you please. The jade's so pert upon her preferment she forgets herself.

Mira. Come, sir, will you endeavor to forget yourself—and transform into Sir Rowland?

Wait. Why, sir; it will be impossible I should remember myself—married, knighted and attended all in one day! 'Tis enough to make any man forget himself. The difficulty will be how to recover my acquaintance and familiarity with my former self; and fall from my transformation to a reformation into Waitwell. Nay, I shan't be quite the same Waitwell neither—for now I remember me, I'm married, and can't be my own man again.

Ay there's my grief; that's the sad change
of life;
To lose my title, and yet keep my wife.

ACT III

A Room in Lady Wishfort's *House.*

Lady Wishfort *at her toilet,* Peg *waiting.*

Lady. Merciful, no news of Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam.

Lady. I have no more patience—if I have not fretted myself 'till I am pale again, there's no veracity in me. Fetch me the red—the red, do you hear, sweetheart? An arrant ash color, as I'm a person. Look you how this wench stirs! Why dost thou not fetch me a little red? Didst thou not hear me, mopus?[11]

Peg. The red ratafia does your ladyship mean, or the cherry-brandy?

Lady. Ratafia, fool. No, fool. Not the ratafia, fool—grant me patience! I mean the Spanish paper, idiot, complexion, darling. Paint, paint, paint, dost thou understand that, changeling, dangling thy hands like bobbins before thee? Why dost thou not stir, puppet? thou wooden thing upon wires.

Peg. Lord, madam, your ladyship is so impatient—I cannot come at the paint, madam, Mrs. Foible has locked it up, and carried the key with her.

Lady. A pox take you both—fetch me the cherry-brandy then. [*Exit* Peg. I'm as pale and as faint, I look like Mrs. Qualmsick the curate's wife, that's always breeding—Wench, come, come wench, what art thou doing, sipping? tasting? Save thee, dost thou not know the bottle?

Enter Peg *with a bottle and china cup.*

Peg. Madam, I was looking for a cup.

Lady. A cup, save thee, and what a cup hast thou brought! Dost thou take me for a fairy, to drink out of an acorn? Why didst thou not bring thy thimble? Hast thou ne'er a brass thimble clinking in thy pocket with a bit of nutmeg? I warrant thee. Come, fill, fill.—So—again. See who that is.—[*One knocks.*] Set down the bottle first. Here, here, under the table—What, wouldst thou go with the bottle in thy hand like a tapster? As I'm a person, this wench has lived in an inn upon the road, before she came to me, like Maritornes[12] the Asturian in *Don Quixote.* No Foible yet?

Peg. No, madam, Mrs. Marwood.

Lady. O Marwood, let her come in. Come in, good Marwood.

Enter Mrs. Marwood.

Mrs. Mar. I'm surprised to find your ladyship in *dishabillé* at this time of day.

Lady. Foible's a lost thing; has been abroad since morning, and never heard of since.

Mrs. Mar. I saw her but now, as I came masked through the Park, in conference with Mirabell.

Lady. With Mirabell! You call my blood into my face, with mentioning that traitor. She durst not have the confidence. I sent her to negotiate an affair, in which if I'm detected I'm undone. If that wheedling villain has wrought upon Foible to detect me, I'm ruined. Oh my dear friend, I'm a wretch of wretches if I'm detected.

Mrs. Mar. O madam, you cannot suspect Mrs. Foible's integrity.

Lady. O, he carries poison in his tongue that would corrupt integrity itself. If she has given him an opportunity, she has as good as put her integrity into his hands. Ah, dear Marwood, what's integrity to an opportunity?—Hark! I hear her.—Dear friend, retire into my closet, that I may examine her with more freedom—You'll pardon me, dear friend, I can make bold with you—There are books over the chimney—Quarles[13] and Pryn,[14] and the *Short View of the Stage,*[15] with Bunyan's works[16] to entertain you.—Go, you thing, and send her in. [*To* Peg.] [*Exeunt* Mrs. Marwood *and* Peg

Enter Foible.

Lady. O Foible, where hast thou been? what hast thou been doing?

Foib. Madam, I have seen the party.

Lady. But what hast thou done?

Foib. Nay, 'tis your ladyship has done, and are to do; I have only promised. But a man so enamored—so transported. Well, if worshiping of pictures be a sin—poor Sir Rowland, I say.

Lady. The miniature has been counted like—But hast thou not betrayed me, Foible? Hast thou not detected me to that faithless Mirabell?—What hadst thou to do with him in the Park? Answer me, has he got nothing out of thee?

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[11] fool.

[12] the waitress in the inn, to whom Don Quixote made love.

[13] Francis Quarles (1592-1644), English poet.

[14] William Prynne (1600-1669), English Presbyterian writer.

[15] Jeremy Collier's attack on the immorality of the stage.

[16] Cf. p. 491.

Foib. So, the devil has been beforehand with me, what shall I say?—Alas, madam, could I help it, if I met that confident thing? Was I in fault? If you had heard how he used me, and all upon your ladyship's account, I'm sure you would not suspect my fidelity. Nay, if that had been the worst I could have borne: but he had a fling at your ladyship too; and then I could not hold: but i'faith I gave him his own.

Lady. Me? What did the filthy fellow say?

Foib. O madam; 'tis a shame to say what he said —with his taunts and his fleers, tossing up his nose. Humh (says he), what you are a hatching some plot (says he), you are so early abroad, or catering (says he), ferreting for some disbanded officer, I warrant—half pay is but thin subsistance (says he) —Well, what pension does your lady propose? Let me see (says he), what she must come down pretty deep now, she's superannuated (says he) and——

Lady. Ods my life, I'll have him, I'll have him murdered. I'll have him poisoned. Where does he eat? I'll marry a drawer to have him poisoned in his wine. I'll send for Robin[17] from Lockets—immediately.

Foib. Poison him? Poisoning's too good for him. Starve him, madam, starve him; marry Sir Rowland, and get him disinherited. O you would bless yourself, to hear what he said.

Lady. A villain, superannuated!

Foib. Humh (says he), I hear you are laying designs against me too (says he), and Mrs. Millamant is to marry my uncle (he does not suspect a word of your ladyship); but (says he) I'll fit you for that, I warrant you (says he), I'll hamper you for that (says he), you and your old frippery too (says he), I'll handle you——

Lady. Audacious villain! handle me, would he durst—Frippery? old frippery! Was there ever such a foul-mouthed fellow? I'll be married to-morrow, I'll be contracted to-night.

Foib. The sooner the better, madam.

Lady. Will Sir Rowland be here, say'st thou? when, Foible?

Foib. Incontinently, madam. No new sheriff's wife expects the return of her husband after knighthood, with that impatience in which Sir Rowland burns for the dear hour of kissing your ladyship's hand after dinner.

Lady. Frippery! superannuated frippery! I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags: a tatterdemallion—I hope to see him hung with tatters, like a Long-Lane pent-house,[18] or a gibbet-thief. A slander-mouthed railer: I warrant the spendthrift prodigal's in debt as much as the million lottery, or the whole court upon a birthday. I'll spoil his credit with his tailor. Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall.

Foib. He! I hope to see him lodge in Ludgate first, and angle into Black-Friars for brass farthings, with an old mitten.

Lady. Ay, dear Foible; thank thee for that, dear Foible. He has put me out of all patience. I shall never recompose my features to receive Sir Rowland with an economy of face. This wretch has fretted me that I am absolutely decayed. Look, Foible.

Foib. Your ladyship has frowned a little too rashly, indeed, madam. There are some cracks discernible in the white varnish.

Lady. Let me see the glass—Cracks, say'st thou? Why, I am arrantly fleaed—I look like an old peeled wall. Thou must repair me, Foible, before Sir Rowland comes; or I shall never keep up to my picture.

Foib. I warrant you, madam; a little art once made your picture like you; and now a little of the same art must make you like your picture. Your picture must sit for you, madam.

Lady. But art thou sure Sir Rowland will not fail to come? Or will he not fail when he does come? Will he be importunate, Foible, and push? For if he should not be importunate—I shall never break decorums—I shall die with confusion, if I am forced to advance—Oh, no, I can never advance—I shall swoon if he should expect advances. No, I hope Sir Rowland is better bred, than to put a lady to the necessity of breaking her forms. I won't be too coy neither.—I won't give him despair—but a little disdain is not amiss; a little scorn is alluring.

Foib. A little scorn becomes your ladyship.

Lady. Yes, but tenderness becomes me best—a sort of dyingness—You see that picture has a sort of a—Ha, Foible? A swimmingness in the eyes—Yes, I'll look so—my niece affects it; but she wants features. Is Sir Rowland handsome? Let my toilet be removed—I'll dress above. I'll receive Sir Rowland here. Is he handsome? Don't answer me. I won't know; I'll be surprised. I'll be taken by surprise.

Foib. By storm, madam. Sir Rowland's a brisk man.

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[17] Robin, the waiter at Locket's restaurant.

[18] Long Lane was filled with low buildings in which old clothes were sold.

Lady. Is he! O then he'll importune, if he's a brisk man. I shall save decorums if Sir Rowland importunes. I have a mortal terror at the apprehension of offending against decorums. O I'm glad he's a brisk man. Let my things be removed, good Foible. [*Exit.*

Enter Mrs. Fainall.

Mrs. Fain. O Foible, I have been in a fright, lest I should come too late. That devil, Marwood, saw you in the Park with Mirabell, and I'm afraid will discover it to my lady.

Foib. Discover what, madam?

Mrs. Fain. Nay, nay, put not on that strange face. I am privy to the whole design, and know that Waitwell, to whom thou wert this morning married, is to personate Mirabell's uncle, and as such, winning my lady, to involve her in those difficulties from which Mirabell only must release her, by his making his conditions to have my cousin and her fortune left to her own disposal.

Foib. O dear madam, I beg your pardon. It was not my confidence in your ladyship that was deficient; but I thought the former good correspondence between your ladyship and Mr. Mirabell, might have hindered his communicating this secret.

Mrs. Fain. Dear Foible, forget that.

Foib. O dear madam, Mr. Mirabell is such a sweet winning gentleman—But your ladyship is the pattern of generosity.—Sweet lady, to be so good! Mr. Mirabell cannot choose but be grateful. I find your ladyship has his heart still. Now, madam, I can safely tell your ladyship our success, Mrs. Marwood had told my lady; but I warrant I managed myself. I turned it all for the better. I told my lady that Mr. Mirabell railed at her. I laid horrid things to his charge, I'll vow; and my lady is so incensed, that she'll be contracted to Sir Rowland to-night, she says;—I warrant I worked her up, that he may have her for asking for, as they say of a Welsh maiden-head.

Mrs. Fain. O rare Foible!

Foib. Madam, I beg your ladyship to acquaint Mr. Mirabell of his success. I would be seen as little as possible to speak to him—besides, I believe Madam Marwood watches me.—She has a month's mind; but I know Mr. Mirabell can't abide her.—[*Calls.*] John—remove my lady's toilet. Madam, your servant. My lady is so impatient, I fear she'll come for me, if I stay.

Mrs. Fain. I'll go with you up the back stairs, lest I should meet her. [*Exeunt.*

Mrs. Marwood *alone.*

Mrs. Mar. Indeed, Mrs. Engine, is it thus with you? Are you become a go-between of this importance? Yes, I shall watch you. Why this wench is the *pass-par-toute*, a very master-key to everybody's strong box. My friend Fainall, have you carried it so swimmingly? I thought there was something in it; but it seems it's over with you. Your loathing is not from a want of appetite then, but from a surfeit. Else you could never be so cool to fall from a principal to be an assistant; to procure for him! A pattern of generosity that I confess. Well, Mr. Fainall, you have met with your match.—O man, man! Woman, woman! The devil's an ass: if I were a painter, I would draw him like an idiot, a driveler with a bib and bells. Man should have his head and horns, and woman the rest of him. Poor simple fiend! Madam Marwood has a month's mind, but he can't abide her—'Twere better for him you had not been his confessor in that affair; without you could have kept his counsel closer. I shall not prove another pattern of generosity—he has not obliged me to that with those excesses of himself; and now I'll have none of him. Here comes the good lady, panting ripe; with a heart full of hope, and a head full of care, like any chemist upon the day of projection.[19]

Enter Lady Wishfort.

Lady. O dear Marwood, what shall I say for this rude forgetfulness—but my dear friend is all goodness.

Mrs. Mar. No apologies, dear madam. I have been very well entertained.

Lady. As I'm a person I am in a very chaos to think I should so forget myself—but I have such an olio of affairs really I know not what to do.—[*Calls*]—Foible—I expect my nephew Sir Wilfull every moment too:—Why, Foible—He means to travel for improvement.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Sir Wilfull should rather think of marrying than traveling at his years. I hear he is turned of forty.

Lady. O he's in less danger of being spoiled by his travels—I am against my nephew's marrying too young. It will be time enough when he comes back, and has acquired discretion to choose for himself.

Mrs. Mar. Methinks Mrs. Millamant and he would make a very fit match. He may travel after-

[19] the completion of an experiment.

wards. 'Tis a thing very usual with young gentlemen.

LADY. I promise you I have thought on't—and since 'tis your judgment, I'll think on't again. I assure you I will; I value your judgment extremely. On my word I'll propose it.

Enter FOIBLE.

LADY. Come, come, Foible—I had forgot my nephew will be here before dinner—I must make haste.

FOIB. Mr. Witwoud and Mr. Petulant are come to dine with your ladyship.

LADY. O dear, I can't appear 'till I am dressed. Dear Marwood, shall I be free with you again, and beg you to entertain 'em? I'll make all imaginable haste. Dear friend, excuse me. [*Exit.*

Enter MRS. MILLAMANT *and* MINCING.

MILLA. Sure never anything was so unbred as that odious man.—Marwood, your servant.

MRS. MAR. You have a color, what's the matter?

MILLA. That horrid fellow Petulant has provoked me into a flame—I have broke my fan—Mincing, lend me yours;—Is not all the powder out of my hair?

MRS. MAR. No. What has he done?

MILLA. Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talked—Nay, he has said nothing neither; but he had contradicted everything that has been said. For my part, I thought Witwoud and he would have quarreled.

MINC. I vow, mem, I thought once they would have fit.

MILLA. Well, 'tis a lamentable thing I swear, that one has not the liberty of choosing one's acquaintance as one does one's clothes.

MRS. MAR. If we had that liberty, we should be as weary of one set of acquaintance, though never so good, as we are of one suit, though never so fine. A fool and a doily stuff would now and then find days of grace, and be worn for variety.

MILLA. I could consent to wear 'em, if they would wear alike; but fools never wear out—they are such *drap-de-berry*[20] things! Without one could give 'em to one's chambermaid after a day or two.

MRS. MAR. 'Twere better so indeed. Or what think you of the play-house? A fine gay glossy fool should be given there, like a new masking habit, after the masquerade is over, and we have done with the disguise. For a fool's visit is always a disguise; and never admitted by a woman of wit, but to blind her affair with a lover of sense. If you would but appear barefaced now, and own Mirabell; you might as easily put off Petulant and Witwoud, as your hood and scarf. And indeed 'tis time, for the town has found it: the secret is grown too big for the pretense: 'tis like Mrs. Primly's great belly; she may lace it down before, but it burnishes on her hips. Indeed, Millamant, you can no more conceal it, than my Lady Strammel can her face, that goodly face, which in defiance of her Rhenish-wine tea, will not be comprehended in a mask.

MILLA. I'll take my death, Marwood, you are more censorious than a decayed beauty, or a discarded toast; Mincing, tell the men they may come up. My aunt is not dressing here; their folly is less provoking than your malice. [*Exit* MINCING. The town has found it. What has it found? That Mirabell loves me is no more a secret, than it is a secret that you discovered it to my aunt, or than the reason why you discovered it is a secret.

MRS. MAR. You are nettled.

MILLA. You're mistaken. Ridiculous!

MRS. MAR. Indeed, my dear, you'll tear another fan, if you don't mitigate those violent airs.

MILLA. O silly! Ha, ha, ha. I could laugh immoderately. Poor Mirabell! His constancy to me has quite destroyed his complaisance for all the world beside. I swear, I never enjoined it him, to be so coy—If I had the vanity to think he would obey me, I would command him to show more gallantry —'tis hardly well bred to be so particular on one hand, and so insensible on the other. But I despair to prevail, and so let him follow his own way. Ha, ha, ha. Pardon me, dear creature, I must laugh, ha, ha, ha; though I grant you 'tis a little barbarous, ha, ha, ha.

MRS. MAR. What pity 'tis, so much for fine raillery, and delivered with so significant gesture, should be so unhappily directed to miscarry.

MILLA. Hæ! Dear creature, I ask your pardon—I swear I did not mind you.

MRS. MAR. Mr. Mirabell and you both may think it a thing impossible, when I shall tell him by telling you——

MILLA. O dear, what? for it is the same thing, if I hear it—ha, ha, ha.

MRS. MAR. That I detest him, hate him, madam.

MILLA. O madam, why so do I—and yet the creature loves me, ha, ha, ha. How can one forbear laughing to think of it—I am a Sybil if I am

[20] a coarse cloth.

take my death, I think you are handsomer—and within a year or two as young.—If you could but stay for me, I should overtake you—but that cannot be—Well, that thought makes me melancholic—now I'll be sad.

Mrs. Mar. Your merry note may be changed sooner than you think.

Milla. D'ye say so? Then I'm resolved I'll have a song to keep up my spirits.

Enter Mincing.

Minc. The gentlemen stay but to comb, madam; and will wait on you.

Milla. Desire Mrs. —— that is in the next room to sing the song I would have learnt yesterday. You shall hear it, madam—Not that there's any great matter in it—but 'tis agreeable to my humor.

SONG

I

Love's but the frailty of the mind,
When 'tis not with ambition joined;
A sickly flame, which if not fed expires;
And feeding, wastes in self-consuming fires.

II

'Tis not to wound a wanton boy
Or am'rous youth, that gives the joy;
But 'tis the glory to have pierced a swain,
For whom inferior beauties sighed in vain.

III

Then I alone the conquest prize,
When I insult a rival's eyes:
If there's delight in love, 'tis when I see
That heart which others bleed for, bleed for me.

Enter Petulant *and* Witwoud.

Milla. Is your animosity composed, gentlemen?

Wit. Raillery, raillery, madam, we have no animosity—we hit off a little wit now and then, but no animosity—The falling out of wits is like the falling out of lovers—We agree in the main,[21] like treble and base. Ha, Petulant!

Pet. Aye, in the main—but when I have a humor to contradict ——

Wit. Aye, when he has a humor to contradict, then I contradict too. What, I know my cue. Then we contradict one another like two battledores; for contradictions beget one another like Jews.

Pet. If he says black's black—if I have a humor to say 'tis blue—let that pass—all's one for that. If I have a humor to prove it, it must be granted.

Wit. Not positively must—but it may—it may.

Pet. Yes, it positively must, upon proof positive.

Wit. Aye, upon proof positive it must; but upon proof presumptive it only may. That's a logical distinction now, madam.

Mrs. Mar. I perceive your debates are of importance, and very learnedly handled.

Pet. Importance is one thing, and learning's another; but a debate's a debate, that I assert.

Wit. Petulant's an enemy to learning; he relies altogether on his parts.

Pet. No, I'm no enemy to learning; it hurts not me.

Mrs. Mar. That's a sign indeed it's no enemy to you.

Pet. No, no, it's no enemy to anybody, but them that have it.

Milla. Well, an illiterate man's my aversion, I wonder at the impudence of an illiterate man, to offer to make love.

Wit. That I confess I wonder at too.

Milla. Ah! to marry an ignorant! that can hardly read or write.

Pet. Why should a man be any further from being married though he can't read, than he is from being hanged? The ordinary's paid for setting the psalm, and the parish-priest for reading the ceremony. And for the rest which is to follow in both cases, a man may do it without book—so all's one for that.

Milla. D'ye hear the creature? Lord, here's company, I'll be gone. [*Exit*

Enter Sir Wilfull Witwoud *in a riding dress, and a* Footman.

Wit. In the name of Bartlemew and his fair,[22] what have we here?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis your brother, I fancy. Don't you know him?

Wit. Not I—Yes, I think it is he—I've almost forgot him; I have not seen him since the Revolution.[23]

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[21] the middle, or tenor part, with which the other two parts harmonize.

[22] the Fair of St. Bartholomew, held in Smithfield every August.

[23] the bloodless revolution of 1688.

Foot. Sir, my lady's dressing. Here's company; if you please to walk in, in the meantime.

Sir Wil. Dressing! What, it's but morning here I warrant with you in London; we should count it towards afternoon in our parts, down in Shropshire.—Why then belike my aunt han't dined yet —ha, friend?

Foot. Your aunt, sir?

Sir Wil. My aunt, sir, yes, my aunt, sir, and your lady, sir; your lady is my aunt, sir—Why, what! do'st thou not know me, friend? Why then send somebody hither that does. How long hast thou lived with thy lady, fellow, ha?

Foot. A week, sir; longer than anybody in the house, except my lady's woman.

Sir Wil. Why then belike thou dost not know thy lady, if thou see'st her, ha, friend?

Foot. Why truly, sir, I cannot safely swear to her face in a morning, before she is dressed. 'Tis like I may give a shrewd guess at her by this time.

Sir Wil. Well, prithee try what thou canst do; if thou canst not guess, inquire her out, do'st hear, fellow? And tell her, her nephew, Sir Wilfull Witwoud, is in the house.

Foot. I shall, sir.

Sir Wil. Hold ye, hear me friend; a word with you in your ear, prithee who are these gallants?

Foot. Really, sir, I can't tell; here come so many here, 'tis hard to know 'em all. [*Exit.*

Sir Wil. Oons this fellow knows less than a starling; I don't think a' knows his own name.

Mrs. Mar. Mr. Witwoud, your brother is not behind-hand in forgetfulness—I fancy he has forgot you too.

Wit. I hope so—the devil take him that remembers first, I say.

Sir Wil. Save you, gentlemen and lady.

Mrs. Mar. For shame, Mr. Witwoud; why won't you speak to him?—And you, sir.

Wit. Petulant, speak.

Pet. And you, sir.

Sir Wil. No offense, I hope. [*Salutes* Marwood.]

Mrs. Mar. No, sure, sir.

Wit. This is a vile dog, I see that already. No offense! Ha, ha, ha, to him; to him, Petulant, smoke him.

Pet. It seems as if you had come a journey, sir; hem, hem. [*Surveying him round.*]

Sir Wil. Very likely, sir, that it may seem so.

Pet. No offense, I hope, sir.

Wit. Smoke the boots, the boots; Petulant, the boots; ha, ha, ha.

Sir Wil. Maybe not, sir; thereafter as 'tis meant, sir.

Pet. Sir, I presume upon the information of your boots.

Sir Wil. Why, 'tis like you may, sir: if you are not satisfied with the information of my boots, sir, if you will step to the stable, you may inquire further of my horse, sir.

Pet. Your horse, sir! Your horse is an ass, sir!

Sir Wil. Do you speak by way of offense, sir?

Mrs. Mar. The gentleman's merry, that's all, sir.—S'life, we shall have a quarrel betwixt an horse and an ass, before they find one another out. You must not take anything amiss from your friends, sir. You are among your friends here, though it may be you don't know it.—If I am not mistaken, you are Sir Wilfull Witwoud.

Sir Wil. Right, lady; I am Sir Wilfull Witwoud, so I write myself; no offense to anybody, I hope; and nephew to the Lady Wishfort of this mansion.

Mrs. Mar. Don't you know this gentleman, sir?

Sir Wil. Hum! What, sure 'tis not—Yea, by'r lady, but 'tis—'Sheart, I know not whether 'tis or no—Yea, but 'tis, by the Rekin. Brother Antony! What, Tony, i'faith! What, do'st thou not know me? By'r Lady, nor I thee, thou art so becravated, and so beperriwigged—'Sheart, why do'st not speak? Art thou o'erjoyed?

Wit. Odso, brother, is it you? Your servant, brother.

Sir Wil. Your servant! Why yours, sir. Your servant again—'Sheart, and your friend and servant to that—And a—[*puff*] and a flap dragon for your service, sir: and a hare's foot, and a hare's scut for your service, sir: an you be so cold and so courtly.

Wit. No offense, I hope, brother.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, sir, but there is, and much offense.—A pox, is this your Inns o' Court breeding, not to know your friends and your relations, your elders, and your betters?

Wit. Why, brother Wilfull of Salop,[24] you may be as short as a Shrewsbury cake, if you please. But I tell you 'tis not modish to know relations in town. You think you're in the country, where great lubberly brothers slabber and kiss one another when they meet, like a call of sergeants—'Tis not the fashion here; 'tis not indeed, dear brother.

Sir Wil. The fashion's a fool; and you're a fop, dear brother. 'Sheart, I've suspected this—By'r Lady I conjectured you were a fop, since you began to change the style of your letters, and write in a scrap of paper gilt around the edges, no bigger than a subpœna. I might expect this when you left off Honored Brother; and hoping you are in good health, and so forth—to begin with a Rat me, knight, I'm so sick of a last night's debauch—Od's heart, and then tell a familiar tale of a cock and a bull, and a whore and a bottle, and so conclude—You could write news before you were out of your time, when you lived with honest Pumple-Nose, the attorney of Furnival's Inn—You could intreat to be remembered then to your friends around the Rekin. We could have Gazettes then, and Dawks's Letter, and the Weekly Bill, 'till of late days.

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[24] Shropshire.

Pet. 'Slife, Witwoud, were you ever an attorney's clerk? Of the family of the Furnivals. Ha, ha, ha!

Wit. Ay, ay, but that was but for a while. Not long, not long; pshaw, I was not in my own power then. An orphan, and this fellow was my guardian; ay, ay, I was glad to consent to that man to come to London. He had the disposal of me then. If I had not agreed to that, I might have been bound prentice to a felt-maker in Shrewsbury; this fellow would have bound me to a maker of felts.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, and better than to be bound to a maker of fops; where, I suppose, you have served your time; and now you may set up for yourself.

Mrs. Mar. You intend to travel, sir, as I'm informed.

Sir Wil. Belike I may, madam. I may chance to sail upon the salt seas, if my mind hold.

Pet. And the wind serve.

Sir Wil. Serve or not serve, I shan't ask license of you, sir; nor the weathercock, your companion. I direct my discourse to the lady, sir. 'Tis like my aunt may have told you, madam—Yes, I have settled my concerns, I may say now, and am minded to see foreign parts. If an how that the peace holds, whereby that is taxes abate.

Mrs. Mar. I thought you had designed for France at all adventures.

Sir Wil. I can't tell that; 'tis like I may, and 'tis like I may not. I am somewhat dainty in making a resolution,—because when I make it I keep it. I don't stand shill I, shall I, then; if I say't, I'll do't: But I have thoughts to tarry a small matter in town, to learn somewhat of your lingo first, before I cross the seas. I'd gladly have a spice of your French as they say, whereby to hold discourse in foreign countries.

Mrs. Mar. Here's an academy in town for that use.

Sir Wil. There is? 'Tis like there may.

Mrs. Mar. No doubt you will return very much improved.

Wit. Yes, refined like a Dutch skipper from a whale-fishing.

Enter Lady Wishfort *and* Fainall.

Lady. Nephew, you are welcome.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Fain. Sir Wilfull, your most faithful servant.

Sir Wil. Cousin Fainall, give me your hand.

Lady. Cousin Witwoud, your servant; Mr. Petulant, your servant—nephew, you are welcome again. Will you drink anything after your journey, nephew, before you eat? Dinner's almost ready.

Sir Wil. I'm very well I thank you, aunt—however, I thank you for your courteous offer. 'Sheart, I was afraid you would have been in the fashion too, and have remembered to have forgot your relations. Here's your Cousin Tony, belike, I mayn't call him brother for fear of offense.

Lady. O he's a railer, nephew—my cousin's a wit; and your great wits always rally their best friends to choose. When you have been abroad, nephew, you'll understand raillery better.

[Fain. *and* Mrs. Marwood *talk apart.*

Sir Wil. Why then let him hold his tongue in the meantime; and rail when that day comes.

Enter Mincing.

Minc. Mem, I come to acquaint your laship that dinner is impatient.

Sir Wil. Impatient? Why then belike it won't stay 'till I pull off my boots. Sweetheart, can you help me to a pair of slippers?—My man's with his horses, I warrant.

Lady. Fie, fie, nephew, you would not pull off your boots here—go down into the hall—dinner shall stay for you.—My nephew's a little unbred, you'll pardon him, madam—Gentlemen, will you walk? Marwood?

Mrs. Mar. I'll follow you, madam,—before Sir Wilfull is ready.

[*Exeunt all except* Mrs. Marwood *and* Fainall.

Fain. Why then Foible's a bawd, an errant, rank match-making bawd. And I, it seems, am a husband, a rank-husband; and my wife a very errant, rank-wife,—all in the way of the world. 'Sdeath, to be a cuckold by anticipation, a cuckold in embrio? Sure I was born with budding antlers like a young satyr, or a citizen's child. 'Sdeath, to be outwitted, to be out-jilted—out-matrimonied—If I had kept my speed like a stag, 'twere somewhat—but to crawl after, with my horns like a snail, and be outstripped by my wife—'tis scurvy wedlock.

Mrs. Mar. Then shake it off, you have often wished for an opportunity to part;—and now you have it. But first prevent their plot,—the half of Millamant's fortune is too considerable to be parted with, to a foe, to Mirabell.

Fain. Damn him, that had been mine, had you not made that fond discovery—that had been forfeited, had they been married. My wife had added luster to my horns, by that increase of fortune, I could have worn 'em tipped with gold, though my forehead had been furnished like a deputy-lieutenant's hall.

Mrs. Mar. They may prove a cap of maintenance to you still, if you can away with your wife. And she's no worse than when you had her—I dare swear she had given up her game, before she was married.

Fain. Hum! That may be——

Mrs. Mar. You married her to keep you; and if you can contrive to have her keep you better than you expected, why should you not keep her longer than you intended?

Fain. The means, the means.

Mrs. Mar. Discover to my lady your wife's conduct; threaten to part with her—my lady loves her, and will come to any composition to save her reputation. Take the opportunity of breaking it, just upon the discovery of this imposture. My lady will be enraged beyond bounds, and sacrifice niece, and fortune, and all at that conjuncture. And let me alone to keep her warm; if she should flag in her part, I will not fail to prompt her.

Fain. Faith, this has an appearance.

Mrs. Mar. I'm sorry I hinted to my lady to endeavor a match between Millamant and Sir Wilfull, that may be an obstacle.

Fain. O for that matter leave me to manage him; I'll disable him for that, he will drink like a Dane; after dinner, I'll set his hand in.

Mrs. Mar. Well, how do you stand affected towards your lady?

Fain. Why faith I'm thinking of it.—Let me see —I am married already; so that's over—My wife has played the jade with me—well, that's over too—I never loved her, or if I had, why that would have been over too by this time—Jealous of her I cannot be, for I am certain; so there's an end of jealousy. Weary of her, I am and shall be—No, there's no end of that; no, no, that were too much to hope. Thus far concerning my repose. Now for my reputation—As to my own, I married not for it; so that's out of the question—And as to my part in my wife's—why she had parted with hers before; so bringing none to me, she can take none from me; 'tis against all rule of play, that I should lose to one who has not wherewithal to stake.

Mrs. Mar. Besides, you forget, marriage is honorable.

Fain. Hum! Faith and that's well thought on; marriage is honorable, as you say; and if so, wherefore should cuckoldom be a discredit, being derived from so honorable a root?

Mrs. Mar. Nay, I know not; if the root be honorable, why not the branches?

Fain. So, so, why this point's clear.—Well, how do we proceed?

Mrs. Mar. I will contrive a letter which shall be delivered to my lady at the time when that rascal who is to act Sir Rowland is with her. It shall come as from an unknown hand—for the less I appear to know of the truth, the better I can play the incendiary. Besides, I would not have Foible provoked if I could help it,—because you know she knows some passages—nay, I expect all will come out—but let the mine be sprung first, and then I care not if I am discovered.

Fain. If the worst comes to the worst, I'll turn my wife out to grass—I have already a deed of settlement of the best part of her estate; which I wheedled out of her; and that you shall partake at least.

Mrs. Mar. I hope you are convinced that I hate Mirabell now: you'll be no more jealous?

Fain. Jealous, no,—by this kiss—let husbands be jealous; but let the lover still believe: or if he doubt, let it be only to endear his pleasure, and prepare the joy that follows, when he proves his mistress true. But let husbands' doubts convert to endless jealousy; or if they have belief, let it corrupt to superstition, and blind credulity. I am single, and will herd no more with 'em. True, I wear the badge, but I'll disown the order. And since I take my leave of 'em, I care not if I leave 'em a common motto to their common crest.

All husbands must, or pain, or shame, endure;
The wise too jealous are, fools too secure.

ACT IV

Same Scene.

LADY WISHFORT *and* FOIBLE.

LADY. Is Sir Rowland coming, say'st thou, Foible? and are things in order?

FOIB. Yes, madam. I have put wax-lights in the sconces; and placed the footmen in a row in the hall, in their best liveries, with the coachman and postilion to fill up the equipage.

LADY. Have you pulvilled the coachman and postilion, that they may not stink of the stable, when Sir Rowland comes by?

FOIB. Yes, madam.

LADY. And are the dancers and the music ready, that he may be entertained in all points with correspondence to his passion?

FOIB. All is ready, madam.

LADY. And—well—and how do I look, Foible?

FOIB. Most killing well, madam.

LADY. Well, and how shall I receive him? In what figure shall I give his heart the first impression? There is a great deal in the first impression. Shall I sit?—No, I won't sit—I'll walk—ay, I'll walk from the door upon his entrance; and then turn full upon him—No, that will be too sudden. I'll lie—ay, I'll lie down—I'll receive him in my little dressing-room, there's a couch—yes, yes, I'll give the first impression on a couch—I won't lie neither, but loll and lean upon one elbow; with one foot a little dangling off, jogging in a thoughtful way—yes—and then as soon as he appears, start, ay, start and be surprised, and rise to meet him in a pretty disorder—yes—O, nothing is more alluring than a levee from a couch in some confusion—it shows the foot to advantage, and furnishes with blushes, and re-composing airs beyond comparison. Hark! There's a coach.

FOIB. 'Tis he, madam.

LADY. O dear, has my nephew made his addresses to Millamant? I ordered him.

FOIB. Sir Wilfull is set in to drinking, madam, in the parlor.

LADY. Ods my life, I'll send him to her. Call her down, Foible; bring her hither. I'll send him as I go—When they are together, then come to me, Foible, that I may not be too long alone with Sir Rowland. [*Exit.*

Enter MRS. MILLAMANT *and* MRS. FAINALL.

FOIB. Madam, I stayed here, to tell your ladyship that Mr. Mirabell has waited this half-hour for an opportunity to talk with you. Though my lady's orders were to leave you and Sir Wilfull together. Shall I tell Mr. Mirabell that you are at leisure?

MILLA. No—What would the dear man have? I am thoughtful, and would amuse myself,—bid him come another time.

There never yet was woman made,
Nor shall, but to be cursed.

[*Repeating and walking about.*

That's hard!

MRS. FAIN. You are very fond of Sir John Suckling[25] today, Millamant, and the poets.

MILLA. He? Ay, and filthy verses—so I am.

FOIB. Sir Wilfull is coming, madam. Shall I send Mr. Mirabell away?

MILLA. Ay, if you please, Foible, send him away,—or send him hither,—just as you will, dear Foible.—I think I'll see him—Shall I? Ay, let the wretch come. [*Exit* FOIBLE.

Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train.[26]

[*Repeating.*

Dear Fainall, entertain Sir Wilfull—thou hast philosophy to undergo a fool, thou art married and hast patience—I would confer with my own thoughts.

MRS. FAIN. I am obliged to you, that you would make me your proxy in this affair; but I have business of my own.

Enter SIR WILFULL.

MRS. FAIN. O Sir Wilfull; you are come at the critical instant. There's your mistress up to the ears in love and contemplation, pursue your point, now or never.

SIR WIL. Yes; my aunt will have it so,—I would gladly have been encouraged with a bottle or two, because I'm somewhat wary at first, before I am acquainted—(*This while* MILLA. *walks about repeating to herself.*) But I hope, after a time, I shall break my mind—that is upon further acquaintance.—So for the present, cousin, I'll take my leave—if so be you'll be so kind to make my excuse, I'll return to my company——

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[25] cf. p. 390.

[26] a line from a poem by Edmund Waller.

Mrs. Fain. O fie, Sir Wilfull! What, you must not be daunted.

Sir Wil. Daunted, no, that's not it, it is not so much for that—for if so be that I set on't, I'll do't. But only for the present, 'tis sufficient 'til further acquaintance, that's all—your servant.

Mr. Fain. Nay, I'll swear you shall never lose so favorable an opportunity, if I can help it. I'll leave you together, and lock the door. [*Exit.*

Sir Wil. Nay, nay, cousin,—I have forgot my gloves.—What d'ye do? 'Sheart, a' has locked the door indeed, I think—Nay, Cousin Fainall open the door—Pshaw, what a vixen trick is this?—Nay, now a' has seen me too—cousin, I made bold to pass through as it were—I think this door's enchanted—

Milla. (*repeating*)
I prithee spare me, gentle boy,
Press me no more for that slight toy.

Sir Wil. Anon? Cousin, your servant.

Milla. That foolish trifle of a heart——
Sir Wilfull!

Sir Wil. Yes—your servant. No offense, I hope, cousin.

Milla. (*repeating*)
I swear it will not do its part,
Though thou dost thine, employ'st thy
power and art.
Natural, easy Suckling!

Sir Wil. Anon? Suckling? No such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.

Milla. Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic.

Sir Wil. Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin, in the meanwhile I must answer in plain English.

Milla. Have you any business with me, Sir Wilfull?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin.—Yes, I made bold to see, to come and know if that how you were disposed to fetch a walk this evening, if so be that I might not be troublesome, I would have sought a walk with you.

Milla. A walk? What then?

Sir Wil. Nay, nothing—only for the walk's sake, that's all——

Milla. I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion, I loathe the country and everything that relates to it.

Sir Wil. Indeed! Hah! Look ye, look ye, you do? Nay, 'tis like you may— Here are choice of pastimes here in town, as plays and the like, that must be confessed indeed——

Milla. *Ah l'etourdie!* I hate the town too.

Sir Wil. Dear heart, that's much—Hah! that you should hate 'em both! Hah! 'tis like you may; there are some can't relish the town, and others can't away with the country,—'tis like you may be one of those, cousin.

Milla. Ha, ha, ha. Yes, 'tis like I may.—You have nothing further to say to me?

Sir Wil. Not at present, cousin.—'Tis like when I have an opportunity to be more private, I may break my mind in some measure—I conjecture you partly guess—However, that's as time shall try,—but spare to speak and spare to speed, as they say.

Milla. If it is of no great importance, Sir Wilfull, you will oblige me to leave me: I have just now a little business——

Sir Wil. Enough, enough, cousin: yes, yes, all a case—when you're disposed, when you're disposed. Now's as well as another time; and another time as well as now. All's one for that.—Yes, yes, if your concerns call you, there's no haste; it will keep cold as they say—Cousin, your servant.—I think this door's locked.

Milla. You may go this way, sir.

Sir Wil. Your servant, then with your leave I'll return to my company.

Milla. Ay, ay; ha, ha, ha.
Like Phœbus sung the no less am'rous boy.[27]

Enter Mirabell.

Mira. Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy
Do you lock yourself up from me, to make my search more curious? Or is this pretty artifice contrived, to signify that here the chase must end, and my pursuit be crowned, for you can fly no further?

Milla. Vanity! No—I'll fly and be followed to the last moment, though I am upon the very verge of matrimony. I expect you should solicit me as much as if I were wavering at the grate of a monastery, with one foot over the threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay and afterwards.

Mira. What, after the last?

Milla. O, I should think I was poor and had nothing to bestow, if I were reduced to an inglorious ease, and freed from the agreeable fatigues of solicitation.

Mira. But do not you know, that when favors are conferred upon instant and tedious solicitation, that they diminish in their value, and that both the giver loses the grace, and the receiver lessens his pleasure?

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[27] a further line from Waller's poem.

MILLA. It may be in things of common application; but never sure in love. O, I hate a lover that can dare to think he draws a moment's air, independent on the bounty of his mistress. There is not so impudent a thing in nature, as the saucy look of an assured man, confident of success. The pedantic arrogance of a very husband has not so pragmatical an air. Ah! I'll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure.

MIRA. Would you have 'em both before marriage? Or will you be contented with the first now, and stay for the other 'till after grace?

MILLA. Ah, don't be impertinent—My dear liberty, shall I leave thee? My faithful solitude, my darling contemplation, must I bid you then adieu? Ay-h, adieu—my morning thoughts, agreeable wakings, indolent slumbers, all ye *douceurs*, ye *someils du matin,*[28] adieu—I can't do 't, 'tis more than impossible—Positively, Mirabell, I'll lie abed in a morning as long as I please.

MIR. Then I'll get up in a morning as early as I please.

MILLA. Ah! Idle creature, get up when you will—and d'ye hear. I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRA. Names!

MILLA. Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous cant, in which men and their wives are so fulsomely familiar—I shall never bear that—Good Mirabell, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my Lady Fadler and Sir Francis: nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers; and then never be seen there together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week, and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together, nor go to a play together, but let us be very strange and well bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while; and as well bred as if we were not married at all.

MIRA. Have you any more conditions to offer? Hitherto your demands are pretty reasonable.

MILLA. Trifles,—as liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please; to write and receive letters, without interrogatories or wry faces on your part; to wear what I please; and choose conversation with regard only to my own taste; to have no obligation upon me to converse with wits that I don't like, because they are your acquaintance; or to be intimate with fools because they may be your relations. Come to dinner when I please, dine in my dressing-room when I'm out of humor, without giving a reason. To have my closet inviolate; to be sole empress of my tea-table, which you must never presume to approach without first asking leave. And lastly, wherever I am, you shall always knock at the door before you come in. These articles subscribed, if I continue to endure you a little longer, I may by degrees dwindle into a wife.

MIRA. Your bill of fare is something advanced in this latter account. Well, have I liberty to offer conditions—that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?

MILLA. You have free leave, propose your utmost, speak and spare not.

MIRA. I thank you. *Imprimis*[29] then, I covenant that your acquaintance be general; that you admit no sworn confident, or intimate of your own sex; no she friend to screen her affairs under your countenance, and tempt you to make trial of a mutual secrecy. No decoy-duck to wheedle you a *fop—scrambling* to the play in a mask—then bring you home in a pretended fright, when you think you shall be found out—and rail at me for missing the play, and disappointing the frolic which you had to pick me up and prove my constancy.

MILLA. Detestable *imprimis*! I go to the play in a mask!

MIRA. *Item,* I article, that you continue to like your own face as long as I shall; and while it passes current with me, that you endeavor not to new coin it. To which end, together with all vizards for the day, I prohibit all masks for the night, made of oiled-skins and I know not what—hog's bones, hare's gall, pig water, and the marrow of a roasted cat. In short, I forbid all commerce with the gentlewoman in *what-d'ye-call-it* Court. *Item,* I shut my doors against all bauds with baskets, and pennyworths of *muslin, china, fans, atlases,* etc.—*Item,* when you shall be breeding——

MILLA. Ah, name it not.

MIRA. Which may be presumed, with a blessing on our endeavors——

MILLA. Odious endeavors!

MIRA. I denounce against all strait lacing, squeezing for a shape, 'till you mold my boy's head like a sugar-loaf; and instead of a man-child, make me father to a crooked-billet. Lastly, to the dominion of the *tea-table* I submit.—But with *proviso,* that you exceed not in your province; but restrain yourself to native and simple *tea-table* drinks, as *tea,*

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[28] sweetnesses, morning naps.

[29] First (in imitation of the beginning of a legal document).

chocolate, and *coffee.* As likewise to genuine and authorized *tea-table* talk—such as mending of fashions, spoiling reputations, railing at absent friends, and so forth—but that on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths, or toast fellows; for prevention of which, I banish all *foreign forces,* all auxiliaries to the *tea-table,* as *orange-brandy,* all *anniseed, cinnamon, citron* and *Barbado's waters,* together with *ratafia* and the most noble spirit of *clary.*—But for *cowslip-wine, poppy-water,* and all *dormitives,* those I allow.— These *provisos* admitted, in other things I may prove a tractable and complying husband.

Milla. O horrid *provisos*! filthy strong waters! I toast fellows, odious men! I hate your odious *provisos.*

Mira. Then we're agreed. Shall I kiss your hand upon the contract? and here comes one to be a witness to the sealing of the deed.

Enter Mrs. Fainall.

Milla. Fainall, what shall I do? Shall I have him? I think I must have him.

Mrs. Fain. Ay, ay, take him, take him, what should you do?

Milla. Well then—I'll take my death I'm in a horrid fright—Fainall, I shall never say it—Well—I think—I'll endure you.

Mrs. Fain. Fy, fy, have him, have him, and tell him so in plain terms: for I am sure you have a mind to him.

Milla. Are you? I think I have—and the horrid man looks as if he thought so too—Well, you ridiculous thing you, I'll have you—I won't be kissed, nor I won't be thanked—Here, kiss my hand though—so, hold your tongue now, don't say a word.

Mrs. Fain. Mirabell, there's a necessity for your obedience;—you have neither time to talk nor stay. My mother is coming; and in my conscience, if she should see you, would fall into fits, and maybe not recover time enough to return to Sir Rowland; who, as Foible tells me, is in a fair way to succeed. Therefore spare your ecstasies for another occasion, and slip down the back stairs, where Foible waits to consult you.

Milla. Ay, go, go. In the meantime I suppose you have said something to please me.

Mira. I am all obedience. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. Yonder Sir Wilfull's drunk; and so noisy that my mother has been forced to leave Sir Rowland to appease him; but he answers her only with singing and drinking—What they may have done by this time I know not; but Petulant and he were upon quarreling as I came by.

Milla. Well, if Mirabell should not make a good husband, I am a lost thing; for I find I love him violently.

Mrs. Fain. So it seems; for you mind not what's said to you.—If you doubt him, you had best take up with Sir Wilfull.

Milla. How can you name that superannuated lubber? foh!

Enter Witwoud *from drinking.*

Mrs. Fain. So, is the fray made up, that you have left 'em?

Wit. Left 'em? I could stay no longer—I have laughed like ten christenings—I am tipsy with laughing—if I had stayed any longer I should have burst,—I must have been let out and pieced in the sides like an unsized camlet—Yes, yes, the fray is composed; my lady came in like a *noli prosequi* and stopped the proceedings.

Milla. What was the dispute?

Wit. That's the jest; there was no dispute. They could neither of 'em speak for rage; and so fell a sputtering at one another like two roasting apples.

Enter Petulant *drunk.*

Wit. Now, Petulant? all's over, all's well? Gad, my head begins to whim it about—Why dost thou not speak? thou art both as drunk and as mute as a fish.

Pet. Look you, Mrs. Millamant—if you can love me, dear nymph—say it—and that's the conclusion—pass on, or pass off,—that's all.

Wit. Thou hast uttered volumes, folios, in less than *decimo sexto,*[80] my dear Lacedemonian. Sirrah, Petulant, thou art an epitomizer of words.

Pet. Witwoud—you are an annihilator of sense.

Wit. Thou art a retailer of phrases; and dost deal in remnants of remnants, like a maker of pincushions—thou art in truth (metaphorically speaking) a speaker of shorthand.

Pet. Thou art (without a figure) just one half of an ass, and Baldwin yonder, thy half-brother, is the rest—a gemini of asses split, would make just four of you.

Wit. Thou dost bite, my dear mustard-seed; kiss me for that.

Pet. Stand off—I'll kiss no more males,—I have kissed your *twin* yonder in a humor of reconciliation, 'till he [*hiccup*] rises upon my stomach like a radish.

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[80] a volume of very small size.

MILLA. Eh! filthy creature—what was the quarrel?

PET. There was no quarrel—there might have been a quarrel.

WIT. If there had been words enough between 'em to have expressed provocation, they had gone together by the ears like a pair of castanets.

PET. You were the quarrel.

MILLA. Me!

PET. If I have a humor to quarrel, I can make less matters conclude premises.—If you are not handsome, what then; if I have a humor to prove it?—If I shall have my reward, say so; if not, fight for your face the next time yourself—I'll go sleep.

WIT. Do, wrap thyself up like a woodlouse, and dream revenge—and hear me, if thou canst learn to write by to-morrow morning, pen me a challenge—I'll carry it for thee.

PET. Carry your mistress's monkey a spider,—go flea dogs, and read romances—I'll go to bed to my maid. [*Exit.*

MRS. FAIN. He's horridly drunk—how came you all in this pickle?

WIT. A plot, a plot, to get rid of the knight,—your husband's advice; but he sneaked off.

Enter SIR WILFULL *drunk, and* LADY WISHFORT.

LADY. Out upon't, out upon't, at years of discretion, and comport yourself at this rantipole rate.

SIR WIL. No offense, aunt.

LADY. Offense? As I'm a person, I'm ashamed of you—Fogh! how you stink of wine! D'ye think my niece will ever endure such a *borachio*! You're an absolute *borachio*.[81]

SIR WIL. *Borachio!*

LADY. At a time when you should commence an amor, and put your best foot foremost——

SIR WIL. 'Sheart, an you grudge me your liquor, make a bill—give me more drink, and take my purse. [*Sings.*

Prithee fill me the glass
'Till it laugh in my face,
With ale that is potent and mellow;
He that whines for a lass
Is an ignorant ass,
For a *bumper* has not its fellow.

But if you would have me marry my cousin, say the word, and I'll do't—Wilfull will do't, that's the word—Wilfull will do't, that's my crest—my motto I have forgot.

LADY. My nephew's a little overtaken, cousin—but 'tis with drinking your health—O' my word you are obliged to him——

SIR WIL. *In vino veritas,* aunt:—If I drunk your health today, cousin, I am a *borachio*. But if you have a mind to be married say the word, and send for the piper, Wilfull will do't. If not, dust it away, and let's have t'other round—Tony, 'odsheart, where's Tony—Tony's an honest fellow, but he spits after a bumper, and that's a fault. [*Sings.*

We'll drink and we'll never ha' done, boys,
Put the glass then around with the sun, boys,
Let Apollo's example invite us;
For he's drunk every night,
And that makes him so bright,
That he's able next morning to light us.

The sun's a good pimple, an honest soaker, he has a cellar at your Antipodes. If I travel, aunt, I touch at your Antipodes—your Antipodes are a good rascally sort of topsy-turvy fellows—if I had a bumper I'd stand upon my head and drink a health to 'em—a match or no match, cousin, with the hard name—aunt, Wilfull will do't. If she has her maidenhead let her look to't; if she has not, let her keep her own counsel in the meantime, and cry out at the nine months' end.

MILLA. Your pardon, madam, I can stay no longer—Sir Wilfull grows very powerful. Egh! how he smells! I shall be overcome if I stay. Come, cousin. [*Exit with* MRS. FAINALL.

LADY. Smells! he would poison a tallow-chandler and his family. Beastly creature, I know not what to do with him.—Travel, quoth a; ay travel, travel, get thee gone, get thee but far enough, to the Saracens, or the Tartars, or the Turks—for thou art not fit to live in a Christian commonwealth, thou beastly pagan.

SIR WIL. Turks, no; no Turks, aunt: your Turks are infidels, and believe not in the grape. Your Mahometan, your Mussulman is a dry stinkard—no offense, aunt. My map says that your Turk is not so honest a man as your Christian—I cannot find by the map that your mufti is orthodox—whereby it is a plain case, that orthodox is a hard word, aunt, and [*hiccup*] Greek for claret. [*Sings.*

To drink is a Christian diversion
Unknown to the Turk or the Persian:

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[81] a villain in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing.*

Let Mahometan fools
Live by heathenish rules,
And be damned over tea-cups and coffee.
But let British lads sing,
Crown a health to the king,
And a fig for your sultan and Sophy.

Ah, Tony!

[*Enter* Foible *who whispers* Lady Wishfort.

Lady. Sir Rowland impatient? Good lack! what shall I do with this beastly tumbril?—Go lie down and sleep, you sot—or as I'm a person, I'll have you bastinadoed[82] with broom-sticks. Call up the wenches with broom-sticks.

Sir Wil. Ahey? Wenches, where are the wenches?

Lady. Dear Cousin Witwould, get him away, and you will bind me to you inviolably. I have an affair of moment that invades me with some precipitation.—You will oblige me to all futurity.

Wit. Come, knight—pox on him, I don't know what to say to him—will you go to a cock-match?

Sir Wil. With a wench, Tony? Is she a shake-bag, sirrah? Let me bite your cheek for that.

Wit. Horrible! He has a breath like a bagpipe—Ay, ay, come, will you march, my Salopian?

Sir Wil. Lead on, little Tony—I'll follow thee, my Anthony, my Tantony. Sirrah, thou shalt be my Tantony, and I'll be thy pig.

—And a fig for your sultan and Sophy.

[*Exit with* Witwoud.

Lady. This will never do. It will never make a match—at least before he has been abroad.

Enter Waitwell *disguised as* Sir Rowland.

Lady. Dear Sir Rowland, I am confounded with confusion at the retrospection of my own rudeness,—I have more pardons to ask than the pope distributes in the year of jubilee. But I hope where there is likely to be so near an alliance, we may unbend the severity of decorum, and dispense with a little ceremony.

Wait. My impatience, madam, is the effect of my transport;—and 'till I have the possession of your adorable person, I am tantalized on the rack; and do but hang, madam, on the tenter of expectation.

Lady. You have excess of gallantry, Sir Rowland; and press things to a conclusion with a most prevailing vehemence.—But a day or two for decency of marriage——

Wait. For decency of funeral, madam. The delay will break my heart—or if that should fail, I shall be poisoned. My nephew will get an inkling of my designs, and poison me,—and I would willingly starve him before I die—I would gladly go out of the world with that satisfaction.—That would be some comfort to me, if I could but live so long as to be revenged on that unnatural viper.

Lady. Is he so unnatural, say you? Truly I would contribute much both to the saving of your life, and the accomplishment of your revenge—not that I respect myself; though he has been a perfidious wretch to me.

Wait. Perfidious to you!

Lady. O Sir Rowland, the hours that he has died away at my feet, the tears that he has shed, the oaths that he has sworn, the palpitations that he has felt, the trances and the tremblings, the ardors and the ecstasies, the kneelings, and the risings, the heart-heavings and the hand-grippings, the pangs and the pathetic regards of his protesting eyes! Oh, no memory can register.

Wait. What, my rival! Is the rebel my rival? a' dies.

Lady. No, don't kill him at once, Sir Rowland, starve him gradually inch by inch.

Wait. I'll do't. In three weeks he shall be barefoot; in a month out at knees with begging an alms,—he shall starve upward and upward, 'till he has nothing living but his head, and then go out in a stink like a candle's end upon a save-all.

Lady. Well, Sir Rowland, you have the way,—you are no novice in the labyrinth of love—you have the clue—But as I am a person, Sir Rowland, you must not attribute my yielding to any sinister appetite, or indigestion of widow-hood; nor impute my complacency to any lethargy of continence—I hope you do not think me prone to any iteration of nuptials——

Wait. Far be it from me——

Lady. If you do, I protest I must recede—or think that I have made a prostitution of decorums, but in the vehemence of compassion, and to save the life of a person of so much importance——

Wait. I esteem it so——

Lady. Or else you wrong my condescension——

Wait. I do not, I do not——

Lady. Indeed you do.

Wait. I do not, fair shrine of virtue.

Lady. If you think the least scruple of carnality was an ingredient——

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[82] beaten on the soles of the feet.

Wait. Dear madam, no. You are all camphor and frankincense, all chastity and odor.

Lady. Or that——

Enter Foible.

Foib. Madam, the dancers are ready, and there's one with a letter, who must deliver it into your own hands.

Lady. Sir Rowland, will you give me leave? Think favorably, judge candidly, and conclude you have found a person who would suffer racks in honor's cause, dear Sir Rowland, and will wait on you incessantly. [*Exit.*

Wait. Fie, fie!—What a slavery have I undergone; spouse, hast thou any cordial, I want spirits.

Foib. What a washy rogue art thou, to pant thus for a quarter of an hour's lying and swearing to a fine lady?

Wait. O, she is the antidote to desire. Spouse, thou wilt fare the worse for't—I shall have no appetite to iteration of nuptials this eight and forty hours—By this hand I'd rather be a chairman in the dog-days, than act Sir Rowland 'till this time to-morrow.

Enter Lady Wishfort *with a letter.*

Lady. Call in the dancers;—Sir Rowland, we'll sit, if you please, and see the entertainment. [*Dance.*

Now with your permission, Sir Rowland, I will peruse my letter—I would open it in your presence, because I would not make you uneasy. If it should make you uneasy I would burn it—speak if it does—but you may see, the superscription is like a woman's hand.

Foib. By heaven! Mrs. Marwood's, I know it,—my heart aches—get it from her—— [*To him.*]

Wait. A woman's hand? No, madam, that's no woman's hand, I see that already. That's somebody whose throat must be cut.

Lady. Nay, Sir Rowland, since you give me a proof of your passion by your jealousy, I promise you I'll make a return, by a frank communication—You shall see it—we'll open it together—look you here. [*Reads*] "Madam, though unknown to you," —Look you there, 'tis from nobody that I know—"I have that honor for your character, that I think myself obliged to let you know you are abused. He who pretends to be Sir Rowland is a cheat and a rascal—" Oh heavens! what's this?

Foib. Unfortunate, all's ruined.

Wait. How, how, let me see, let me see [*reading*], "A rascal and disguised, and suborned for that imposture,"—O villainy!O villainy!—"by the contrivance of——"

Lady. I shall faint, I shall die, oh!

Foib. Say 'tis your nephew's hand.—Quickly, his plot, swear, swear it. [*To him.*]

Wait. Here's a villain! Madam, don't you perceive it, don't you see it?

Lady. Too well, too well. I have seen too much.

Wait. I told you at first I knew the hand—A woman's hand? The rascal writes a sort of a large hand; your Roman hand—I saw there was a throat to be cut presently. If he were my son, as he is my nephew, I'd pistol him——

Foib. O treachery! But are you sure, Sir Rowland, it is his writing?

Wait. Sure? Am I here? do I live? do I love this pearl of India? I have twenty letters in my pocket from him, in the same character.

Lady. How!

Foib. O what luck it is, Sir Rowland, that you were present at this juncture! This was the business that brought Mr. Mirabell disguised to Madam Millamant this afternoon. I thought something was contriving, when he stole by me and would have hid his face.

Lady. How, how!—I heard the villain was in the house indeed; and now I remember, my niece went away abruptly, when Sir Wilfull was to have made his addresses.

Foib. Then, then, madam, Mr. Mirabell waited for her in her chamber; but I would not tell your ladyship to discompose you when you were to receive Sir Rowland.

Wait. Enough, his date is short.

Foib. No, good Sir Rowland, don't incur the law.

Wait. Law! I care not for law. I can but die, and 'tis in a good cause—my lady shall be satisfied of my truth and innocence, though it cost me my life.

Lady. No, dear Sir Rowland, don't fight, if you should be killed I must never show my face; or hanged—O consider my reputation, Sir Rowland—No, you shan't fight.—I'll go in and examine my niece; I'll make her confess. I conjure you, Sir Rowland, by all your love, not to fight.

Wait. I am charmed, madam, I obey. But some proof you must let me give you;—I'll go for a black box, which contains the writings of my whole estate, and deliver that into your hands.

Lady. Ay, dear Sir Rowland, that will be some comfort, bring the black box.

Wɪᴛ. And may I presume to bring a contract to be signed this night? May I hope so far?

Lᴀᴅʏ. Bring what you will; but come alive, pray come alive. O this is a happy discovery.

Wᴀɪᴛ. Dead or alive I'll come—and married we will be in spite of treachery; ay, and get an heir that shall defeat the last remaining glimpse of hope in my abandoned nephew. Come, my buxom widow:

E'er long you shall substantial proof receive
That I'm an arrant knight——

Fᴏɪʙ. Or arrant knave.

ACT V

Sᴄᴇɴᴇ I.—*Same as last scene.*

Lᴀᴅʏ Wɪsʜꜰᴏʀᴛ *and* Fᴏɪʙʟᴇ.

Lᴀᴅʏ. Out of my house, out of my house, thou viper, thou serpent, that I have fostered; thou bosom traitress, that I raised from nothing—begone, begone, begone, go, go,—that I took from washing of old gauze and weaving of dead hair, with a bleak blue nose, over a chafing-dish of starved embers, and dining behind a traverse rag, in a shop no bigger than a bird-cage,—go, go, starve again, do, do.

Fᴏɪʙ. Dear madam, I'll beg pardon on my knees.

Lᴀᴅʏ. Away, out, out, go set up for yourself again—do, drive a trade, do, with your threepenny-worth of small ware, flaunting upon a packthread, under a brandy-feller's bulk, or against a dead wall by a ballad-monger. Go, hang out an old frisoneer-gorget with a yard of yellow colberteen again; do; an old gnawed mask, two rows of pins and a child's fiddle; a glass necklace with the beads broken, and a quilted nightcap with one ear. Go, go, drive a trade.—These were your commodities, you treacherous trull, this was the merchandise you dealt in, when I took you into my house, placed you next myself, and made you governante of my whole family. You have forgot this, have you, now you have feathered your nest?

Fᴏɪʙ. No, no, dear madam. Do but hear me, have but a moment's patience—I'll confess all. Mr. Mirabell seduced me; I am not the first that he has wheedled with his dissembling tongue; your ladyship's own wisdom has been deluded by him, then how should I, a poor ignorant, defend myself? O madam, if you knew but what he promised me, and how he assured me your ladyship should come to no damage—or else the wealth of the Indies should not have bribed me to conspire against so good, so sweet, so kind a lady as you have been to me.

Lᴀᴅʏ. No damage? What, to betray me, to marry me to a cast-serving-man; to make me a receptacle, an hospital for a decayed pimp? No damage? O thou frontless impudence, more than a big-bellied actress.

Fᴏɪʙ. Pray do but hear me, madam, he could not marry your ladyship, madam—no indeed, his marriage was to have been void in law; for he was married to me first, to secure your ladyship. He could not have bedded your ladyship; for if he had consummated with your ladyship, he must have run the risk of the law, and been put upon his clergy[33]—Yes indeed, I inquired of the law in that case before I would meddle or make.[34]

Lᴀᴅʏ. What, then I have been your property, have I? I have been convenient to you it seems,—while you were catering for Mirabell; I have been broker for you? What, have you made a passive bawd of me?—This exceeds all precedent; I am brought to fine uses, to become a botcher of second-hand marriages between Abigails and Andrews.[35] I'll couple you. Yes, I'll baste you together, you and your Philander. I'll Duke's Place you, as I'm a person. Your turtle is in custody already: you shall coo in the same cage, if there be constable or warrant in the parish. [*Exit*

Fᴏɪʙ. O that ever I was born, O that I was ever married,—a bride, ay, I shall be a Bridewell-bride. Oh!

Enter Mʀs. Fᴀɪɴᴀʟʟ.

Mʀs. Fᴀɪɴ. Poor Foible, what's the matter?

Fᴏɪʙ. O madam, my lady's gone for a constable; I shall be had to a justice, and put to Bridewell to beat hemp; poor Waitwell's gone to prison already.

Mʀs. Fᴀɪɴ. Have a good heart, Foible, Mirabell's gone to give security for him. This is all Marwood's and my husband's doing.

Fᴏɪʙ. Yes, yes; I know it, madam; she was in my lady's closet, and overheard all that you said to me before dinner. She sent the letter to my lady; and that missing effect, Mr. Fainall laid this plot to arrest Waitwell, when he pretended to go for the papers; and in the meantime Mrs. Marwood declared all to my lady.

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[33] forced to plead the benefit of clergy, *i.e.*, the privilege of exemption from capital punishment because of ability to read and write.

[34] meddle with the affair.

[35] typical names for ladies' maids and valets.

Mrs. Fain. Was there no mention made of me in the letter?—My mother does not suspect my being in the confederacy? I fancy Marwood has not told her, though she has told my husband.

Foib. Yes, madam; but my lady did not see that part: we stifled the letter before she read so far. Has that mischievous devil told Mr. Fainall of your ladyship then?

Mrs. Fain. Ay, all's out, my affair with Mirabell, everything discovered. This is the last day of our living together, that's my comfort.

Foib. Indeed, madam, and so 'tis a comfort, if you knew all,—he has been even with your ladyship; which I could have told you long enough since, but I love to keep peace and quietness by my good will: I had rather bring friends together than set 'em at distance. But Mrs. Marwood and he are nearer related than ever their parents thought for.

Mrs. Fain. Say'st thou so, Foible? Canst thou prove this?

Foib. I can take my oath of it, madam, so can Mrs. Mincing; we have had many a fair word from Madam Marwood, to conceal something that passed in our chamber one evening when you were at Hyde Park;—and we were thought to have gone a walking: but we went up unawares,—though we were sworn to secrecy too; Madam Marwood took a book and swore us upon it: but it was a book of poems,—so long as it was not a Bible-oath, we may break it with a safe conscience.

Mrs. Fain. This discovery is the most opportune thing I could wish. Now Mincing?

Enter Mincing.

Minc. My lady would speak with Mrs. Foible, mem. Mr. Mirabell is with her; he has set your spouse at liberty, Mrs. Foible, and would have you hide yourself in my lady's closet, 'til my old lady's anger is abated. O, my old lady is in a perilous passion at something Mr. Fainall has said; he swears, and my old lady cries. There's a fearful hurricane I vow. He says, mem, how that he'll have my lady's fortune made over to him, or he'll be divorced.

Mrs. Fain. Does your lady or Mirabell know that?

Minc. Yes, mem, they have sent me to see if Sir Wilfull be sober, and to bring him to them. My lady is resolved to have him I think, rather than lose such a vast sum as six thousand pound. O, come, Mrs. Foible, I hear my old lady.

Mrs. Fain. Foible, you must tell Mincing that she must prepare to vouch when I call her.

Foib. Yes, yes, madam.

Minc. O yes, mem, I'll vouch anything for your ladyship's service, be what it will.

Scene II.

Another room in Lady Wishfort's *house.*

Mrs. Fainall, Lady Wishfort, Marwood.

Lady. O my dear friend, how can I enumerate the benefits that I have received from your goodness? To you I owe the timely discovery of the false vows of Mirabell; to you I owe the detection of the impostor Sir Rowland. And now you are become an intercessor with my son-in-law, to save the honor of my house, and compound for the frailties of my daughter. Well, friend, you are enough to reconcile me to the bad world, or else I would retire to deserts and solitudes; and feed harmless sheep by groves and purling streams. Dear Marwood, let us leave the world, and retire by ourselves and be shepherdesses.

Mrs. Mar. Let us first dispatch the affair in hand, madam. We shall have leisure to think of retirement afterwards. Here is one who is concerned in the treaty.

Lady. O daughter, daughter, is it possible thou shouldst be my child, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and as I may say, another me, and yet transgress the most minute particle of severe virtue? Is it possible you should lean aside to iniquity, who have been cast in the direct mold of virtue? I have not only been a mold but a pattern for you, and a model for you, after you were brought into the world.

Mrs. Fain. I don't understand your ladyship.

Lady. Not understand? Why, have you not been naught? Have you not been sophisticated? Not understand? Here I am ruined to compound for your caprices and your cuckoldoms. I must pawn my plate and my jewels, and ruin my niece, and all little enough——

Mrs. Fain. I am wronged and abused, and so are you. 'Tis a false accusation, as false as hell, as false as your friend there, ay, or your friend's friend, my false husband.

Mrs. Mar. My friend, Mrs. Fainall? Your husband my friend, what do you mean?

Mrs. Fain. I know what I mean, madam, and so do you; and so shall the world at a time convenient.

Mrs. Mar. I am sorry to see you so passionate, madam. More temper would look more like innocence. But I have done. I am sorry my zeal to serve your ladyship and family should admit of misconstruction, or make me liable to affronts. You will pardon me, madam, if I meddle no more with an affair in which I am not personally concerned.

Lady. O dear friend, I am so ashamed that you should meet with such returns—You ought to ask pardon on your knees, ungrateful creature; she deserves more from you, than all your life can accomplish—O don't leave me destitute in this perplexity;—no, stick to me, my good genius.

Mrs. Fain. I tell you, madam, you're abused—Stick to you? ay, like a leach, to suck your best blood—she'll drop off when she's full. Madam, you shan't pawn a bodkin, nor part with a brass counter, in composition for me. I defy 'em all. Let 'em prove their aspersions: I know my own innocence, and dare stand a trial. [*Exit.*

Lady. Why, if she should be innocent, if she should be wronged after all, ha? I don't know what to think,—and I promise you, her education has been unexceptionable—I may say it; for I chiefly made it my own care to initiate her very infancy in the rudiments of virtue, and to impress upon her tender years a young odium and aversion to the very sight of men,—ay, friend, she would ha' shrieked if she had but seen a man, 'till she was in her teens. As I'm a person 'tis true.—She was never suffered to play with a male-child, though but in coats; nay, her very babies were of the feminine gender,—O, she never looked a man in the face but her own father, or the chaplain, and him we made a shift to put upon her for a woman, by the help of his long garments, and his sleek face; 'till she was going in her fifteen.

Mrs. Mar. 'Twas much she should be deceived so long.

Lady. I warrant you, or she would never have borne to have been catechised by him; and have heard his long lectures against singing and dancing, and such debaucheries; and going to filthy plays; and profane music-meetings where the lewd trebles squeak nothing but bawdy, and the bases roar blasphemy. O, she would have swooned at the sight or name of an obscene playbook—and can I think after all this, that my daughter can be naught? What, a whore? And thought it excommunication to set her foot within the door of a play-house. O dear friend, I can't believe it, no, no; as she says, let him prove it, let him prove it.

Mrs. Mar. Prove it, madam? What, and have your name prostituted in a public court; yours and your daughter's reputation worried at the bar by a pack of bawling lawyers? To be ushered in with an *O yes* of scandal; and have your case opened by an old fumbling leacher in a quoif[36] like a man midwife, to bring your daughter's infamy to light; to be a theme for legal punsters, and quibblers by the statute; and become a jest against a rule of court, where there is no precedent for a jest in any record; not even in Doomsday Book: to discompose the gravity of the bench, and provoke naughty interrogatories in more naughty law Latin; while the good judge, tickled with the proceeding, simpers under a gray beard, and fidgets off and on his cushion as if he had swallowed cantharides,[37] or sat upon cow-itch.

Lady. O, 'tis very hard!

Mrs. Mar. And then to have my young revellers of the Temple[38] take notes, like prentices at a conventicle; and after talk it over again in Commons, or before drawers in an eating-house.

Lady. Worse and worse.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, this is nothing; if it would end here 'twere well. But it must after this be consigned by the shorthand writers to the public press; and from thence be transferred to the hands, nay, into the throats and lungs of hawkers, with voices more licentious than the loud flounder-man's: and this you must hear 'till you are stunned; nay, you must hear nothing else for some days.

Lady. O, 'tis insupportable. No, no, dear friend, make it up, make it up; ay, ay, I'll compound. I'll give up all, myself and my all, my niece and her all—anything, everything for composition.

Mrs. Mar. Nay, madam, I advise nothing, I only lay before you, as a friend, the inconveniences which perhaps you have overseen. Here comes Mr. Fainall, if he will be satisfied to huddle up all in silence, I shall be glad. You must think I would rather congratulate than condole with you.

Enter Fainall.

Lady. Ay, ay, I do not doubt it, dear Marwood: no, no, I do not doubt it.

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[36] the legal costume of the day included a hood.

[37] a medicine for blistering.

[38] the Inns of Court, where lawyers studied.

Fain. Well, madam; I have suffered myself to be overcome by the importunity of this lady your friend; and am content you shall enjoy your own proper estate during life; on condition you oblige yourself never to marry, under such penalty as I think convenient.

Lady. Never to marry?

Fain. No more Sir Rowlands,—the next imposture may not be so timely detected.

Mrs. Mar. That condition, I dare answer, my lady will consent to, without difficulty; she has already but too much experienced the perfidiousness of men. Besides, madam, when we retire to our pastoral solitude we shall bid adieu to all other thoughts.

Lady. Ay, that's true; but in case of necessity; as of health, or some such emergency——

Fain. O, if you are prescribed marriage, you shall be considered; I will only reserve to myself the power to choose for you. If your physic be wholesome, it matters not who is your apothecary. Next, my wife shall settle on me the remainder of her fortune, not made over already; and for her maintenance depend entirely on my discretion.

Lady. This is most inhumanly savage; exceeding the barbarity of a Muscovite[39] husband.

Fain. I learned it from his czarish majesty's retinue,[40] in a winter evening's conference over brandy and pepper, amongst other secrets of matrimony and policy, as they are at present practiced in the northern hemisphere. But this must be agreed unto, and that positively. Lastly, I will be endowed, in right of my wife, with that six thousand pound, which is the moiety of Mrs. Millamant's fortune in your possession; and which she has forfeited (as will appear by the last will and testament of your deceased husband, Sir Jonathan Wishfort) by her disobedience in contracting herself against your consent or knowledge; and by refusing the offered match with Sir Wilfull Witwould, which you, like a careful aunt, had provided for her.

Lady. My nephew was *non compos*; and could not make his addresses.

Fain. I come to make demands—I'll hear no objections.

Lady. You will grant me time to consider?

Fain. Yes, while the instrument is drawing, to which you must set your hand 'till more sufficient deeds can be perfected: which I will take care shall be done with all possible speed. In the meanwhile I will go for the said instrument, and 'till my return you may balance this matter in your own discretion. [*Exit.*

Lady. This insolence is beyond all precedent, all parallel; must I be subject to this merciless villain?

Mrs. Mar. 'Tis severe indeed, madam, that you should smart for your daughter's wantonness.

Lady. 'Twas against my consent that she married this barbarian, but she would have him, though her year was not out.—Ah! her first husband, my son Languish, would not have carried it thus. Well, that was my choice, this is hers; she is matched now with a witness—I shall be mad, dear friend, is there no comfort for me? Must I live to be confiscated at this rebel-rate?—Here come two more of my Egyptian plagues too.

Enter Millamant *and* Sir Wilfull.

Sir Wil. Aunt, your servant.

Lady. Out, caterpillar, call not me aunt; I know thee not.

Sir Wil. I confess I have been a little in disguise, as they say—'Sheart! and I'm sorry for't. What would you have? I hope I committed no offense, aunt—and if I did I am willing to make satisfaction; and what can a man say fairer? If I have broke anything I'll pay for't, an it cost a pound. And so let that content for what's past, and make no more words. For what's to come, to pleasure you I'm willing to marry my cousin. So pray let's all be friends, she and I are agreed upon the matter before a witness.

Lady. How's this, dear niece? Have I any comfort? Can this be true?

Milla. I am content to be a sacrifice to your repose, madam; and to convince you that I had no hand in the plot, as you were misinformed, I have laid my commands on Mirabell to come in person, and be at witness that I give my hand to this flower of knighthood; and for the contract that passed between Mirabell and me, I have obliged him to make a resignation of it in your ladyship's presence;—he is without, and waits your leave for admittance.

Lady. Well, I'll swear I am something revived at this testimony of your obedience; but I cannot admit that traitor,—I fear I cannot fortify myself to support his appearance. He is as terrible to me as a Gorgon; if I see him I fear I shall turn to stone, petrify incessantly.

Milla. If you disoblige him he may resent your refusal, and insist upon the contract still. Then 'tis the last time he will be offensive to you.

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[39] Russian.

[40] the Russian Czar, Peter I, had visited England three years before.

Lady. Are you sure it will be the last time?—If I were sure of that—shall I never see him again?

Milla. Sir Wilfull, you and he are to travel together, are you not?

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, the gentleman's a civil gentleman, aunt, let him come in; why, we are sworn brothers and fellow-travelers.—We are to be Pylades and Orestes, he and I—he is to be my interpreter in foreign parts. He has been over-seas once already; and with proviso that I marry my cousin, will cross 'em once again, only to bear me company.—'Sheart, I'll call him in,—an I sit on't once, he shall come in; and see who'll hinder him. [*Goes to the door and hems.*]

Mrs. Mar. This is precious fooling, if it would pass; but I'll know the bottom of it.

Lady. O dear Marwood, you are not going?

Mar. Not far, madam; I'll return immediately. [*Exit.*

Enter Mirabell.

Sir Wil. Look up, man, I'll stand by you, 'sbud, an she do frown, she can't kill you;—besides—harkee, she dare not frown desperately, because her face is none of her own; 'sheart, and she should her forehead would wrinkle like the coat of a cream-cheese; but mum for that, fellow-traveler.

Mira. If a deep sense of the many injuries I have offered to so good a lady, with a sincere remorse, and a hearty contrition, can but obtain the least glance of compassion, I am too happy—Ah, madam, there was a time—but let it be forgotten—I confess I have deservedly forfeited the high place I once held, of sighing at your feet; nay, kill me not, by turning from me in disdain—I come not to plead for favor; nay, not for pardon; I am a suppliant only for pity—I am going where I never shall behold you more——

Sir Wil. How, fellow-traveler!—You shall go by yourself then.

Mira. Let me be pitied first; and afterwards forgotten—I ask no more.

Sir Wil. By'r Lady, a very reasonable request, and will cost you nothing, aunt.—Come, come, forgive and forget, aunt, why you must an you are a Christian.

Mira. Consider, madam, in reality, you could not receive much prejudice; it was an innocent device; though I confess it had a face of guiltiness, it was at most an artifice which love contrived—and errors which love produces have ever been accounted venial. At least think it is punishment enough, that I have lost what in my heart I hold most dear, that to your cruel indignation I have offered up this beauty, and with her my peace and quiet; nay, all my hopes of future comforts.

Sir Wil. An he does not move me, would I may never be o' the quorum,—an it were not as good a deed as to drink, to give her to him again, I would I might never take shipping—Aunt, if you don't forgive quickly, I shall melt, I can tell you that. My contract went no farther than a little mouth-glue, and that's hardly dry;—one doleful sigh more from my fellow-traveler and 'tis dissolved.

Lady. Well, nephew, upon your account—Ah, he has a false insinuating tongue—Well, sir, I will stifle my just resentment at my nephew's request.—I will endeavor what I can to forget,—but on proviso that you resign the contract with my niece immediately.

Mira. It is in writing and with papers of concern; but I have sent my servant for it, and will deliver it to you, with all acknowledgments for your transcendent goodness.

Lady. Oh, he has witchcraft in his eyes and tongue;—when I did not see him I could have bribed a villain to his assassination; but his appearance rakes the embers which have so long lain smothered in my breast.—— [*Aside.*]

Enter Fainall *and* Mrs. Marwood.

Fain. Your date of deliberation, madam, is expired. Here is the instrument, are you prepared to sign?

Lady. If I were prepared, I am not empowered. My niece exerts a lawful claim, having matched herself by my direction to Sir Wilfull.

Fain. That sham is too gross to pass on me—though 'tis imposed on you, madam.

Milla. Sir, I have given my consent.

Mira. And, sir, I have resigned my pretentions.

Sir Wil. And, sir, I assert my right; and will maintain it in defiance of you, sir, and of your instrument. 'Sheart, an you talk of an instrument, sir, I have an old fox[41] by my thigh shall hack your instrument of ram vellum to shreds, sir. It shall not be sufficient for a mittimus[42] or a tailor's

[41] a reference to his sword.

[42] a legal document.

measure; therefore withdraw your instrument, sir, or by'r Lady I shall draw mine.

Lady. Hold, nephew, hold.

Milla. Good sir Wilfull, respite your valor.

Fain. Indeed? Are you provided of your guard, with your single beef-eater there? But I'm prepared for you; and insist upon my first proposal. You shall submit your own estate to my management, and absolutely make over my wife's to my sole use; as pursuant to the purport and tenure of this other covenant.—I suppose, madam, your consent is not requisite in this case nor, Mr. Mirabell, your resignation; nor, Sir Wilfull, your right—you may draw your fox if you please sir, and make a bear-garden flourish somewhere else: for here it will not avail. This, my Lady Wishfort, must be subscribed, or your darling daughter's turned adrift, like a leaky hulk to sink or swim, as she and the current of this lewd town can agree.

Lady. Is there no means, no remedy, to stop my ruin? Ungrateful wretch! dost thou not owe thy being, thy subsistence, to my daughter's fortune?

Fain. I'll answer you when I have the rest of it in my possession.

Mira. But that you would not accept of a remedy from my hands—I own I have not deserved you should owe any obligation to me; or else perhaps I could devise——

Lady. O what? what? to save me and my child from ruin, from want, I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come, to be delivered from this tyranny.

Mira. Ay, madam; but that is too late, my reward is intercepted. You have disposed of her, who only could have made me a compensation for all my services;—but be it as it may, I am resolved I'll serve you, you shall not be wronged in this savage manner.

Lady. How! Dear Mr. Mirabell, can you be so generous at last! But it is not possible. Harkee, I'll break my nephew's match, you shall have my niece yet, and all her fortune, if you can but save me from this imminent danger.

Mira. Will you? I take you at your word. I ask no more. I must have leave for two criminals to appear.

Lady. Ay, ay, anybody, anybody.

Mira. Foible is one, and a penitent.

Enter Mrs. Fainall, Foible *and* Mincing.

Mira. *and* Lady Wishfort *go to* Mrs. Fain. *and* Foible.

Mrs. Mar. O my shame! these corrupt things are brought hither to expose me. [*To* Fain.]

Fain. If it must all come out, why let 'em know it, 'tis but *the way of the world*. That shall not urge me to relinquish or abate one tittle of my terms, no, I will insist the more.

Foib. Yes indeed, madam, I'll take my Bible-oath of it.

Minc. And so will I, mem.

Lady. O Marwood, Marwood, art thou false? my friend deceive me? Hast thou been a wicked accomplice with that profligate man?

Mrs. Mar. Have you so much ingratitude and injustice, to give credit against your friend, to the aspersions of two such mercenary trulls?

Minc. Mercenary, mem? I scorn your words. 'Tis true we found you and Mr. Fainall in the blue garret; by the same token, you swore us to secrecy upon Messalinas's poems. Mercenary? No, if we would have been mercenary, we should have held our tongues; you would have bribed us sufficiently.

Fain. Go, you are an insignificant thing.—Well, what are you the better for this! Is this Mr. Mirabell's expedient? I'll be put off no longer—You, thing, that was a wife, shall smart for this. I will not leave thee wherewithal to hide thy shame: your body shall be naked as your reputation.

Mrs. Fain. I despise you, and defy your malice—you have aspersed me wrongfully—I have proved your falsehood—go you and your treacherous—I will not name it, but starve together—perish.

Fain. Not while you are worth a groat, indeed, my dear. Madam, I'll be fooled no longer.

Lady. Ah, Mr. Mirabell, this is small comfort, the detection of this affair.

Mira. O in good time—Your leave for the other offender and penitent to appear, madam.

Enter Waitwell *with a box of writings.*

Lady. O Sir Rowland—Well, rascal.

Wait. What your ladyship pleases.—I have brought the black box at last, madam.

Mira. Give it me. Madam, you remember your promise.

Lady. Ay, dear sir.

Mira. Where are the gentlemen?

Wait. At hand, sir, rubbing their eyes,—just risen from sleep.

Fain. S'death, what's this to me? I'll not wait your private concerns.

Enter Petulant *and* Witwoud.

Pet. How now? and what's the matter? who's hand's out?

Wit. Hey day! what, are you all got together, like players at the end of the last act?

Mira. You may remember, gentlemen, I once requested your hands as witnesses to a certain parchment.

Wit. Ay, I do, my hand I remember—Petulant set his mark.

Mira. You wrong him, his name is fairly written, as shall appear—You do not remember, gentlemen, anything of what that parchment contained? [*Undoing the box.*]

Wit. No.

Pet. Not I. I writ, I read nothing.

Mira. Very well, now you shall know—Madam, your promise.

Lady. Ay, ay, sir, upon my honor.

Mira. Mr. Fainall, it is now time that you should know that your lady, while she was at her own disposal, and before you had by your insinuations wheedled her out of a pretended settlement of the greatest part of her fortune——

Fain. Sir! pretended!

Mira. Yes, sir. I say that this lady while a widow, having it seems received some cautions respecting your inconstancy and tyranny of temper, which from her own partial opinion and fondness of you she could never have suspected—she did, I say, by the wholesome advice of friends and of sages learned in the laws of this land, deliver this same as her act and deed to me in trust, and to the uses within mentioned. You may read if you please—[*holding out the parchment*] though perhaps what is written on the back may serve your occasions.

Fain. Very likely, sir. What's here? Damnation! [*Reads*]: "A deed of conveyance of the whole estate real of Arabella Languish, widow, in trust to Edward Mirabell."—Confusion!

Mira. Even so, sir, 'tis *the way of the world*, sir: of the widows of the world. I suppose this deed may bear an elder date than what you have obtained from your lady.

Fain. Perfidious fiend! then thus I'll be revenged.—— [*Offers to run at* Mrs. Fain.]

Sir Wil. Hold, sir, now you may make your bear-garden flourish somewhere else, sir.

Fain. Mirabell, you shall hear of this, sir, be sure you shall.—Let me pass, oaf. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Fain. Madam, you seem to stifle your resentment: you had better give it vent.

Mrs. Mar. Yes, it shall have vent—and to your confusion, or I'll perish in the attempt. [*Exit.*

Lady. O daughter, daughter, 'tis plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence.

Mrs. Fain. Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice all is owing.

Lady. Well, Mr. Mirabell, you have kept your promise—and I must perform mine.—First I pardon for your sake Sir Rowland there and Foible—the next thing is to break the matter to my nephew—and how to do that——

Mira. For that, madam, give yourself no trouble,—let me have your consent—Sir Wilfull is my friend; he has had compassion upon lovers, and generously engaged a volunteer in this action, for our service; and now designs to prosecute his travels.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, aunt, I have no mind to marry. My cousin's a fine lady and the gentleman loves her, and she loves him, and they deserve one another; my resolution is to see foreign parts—I have set on't—and when I'm set on't, I must do it. And if these two gentlemen would travel too, I think they may be spared.

Pet. For my part, I say little—I think things are best off or on.

Wit. I gad, I understand nothing of the matter,—I'm in a maze yet, like a dog in a dancing-school.

Lady. Well, sir, take her, and with her all the joy I can give you.

Milla. Why does not the man take me? Would you have me give myself to you over again?

Mira. Ay, and over and over again.—[*Kisses her hand.*] I would have you as often as possibly I can. Well, Heaven grant I love you not too well, that's all my fear.

Sir Wil. 'Sheart, you'll have time enough to toy after you're married; or if you will toy now, let us have a dance in the meantime; that we who are not lovers may have some other employment, besides looking on.

Mira. With all my heart, dear Sir Wilfull. What shall we do for music?

Foib. O sir, some that were provided for Sir Rowland's entertainment are yet within call.

[*A dance.*

Lady. As I am a person I can hold out no longer;—I have wasted my spirits so today already, that I am ready to sink under the fatigue; and I cannot but have some fears upon me yet, that my son Fainall will pursue some desperate course.

Mira. Madam, disquiet not yourself on that account; to my knowledge his circumstances are such, he must of force comply. For my part, I will contribute all that in me lies to a reunion; in the meantime, madam [*to* MRS. FAIN.], let me before these witnesses restore to you this deed of trust; it may be a means, well managed, to make you live easily together.

From hence let those be warned, who mean to wed;
Lest mutual falsehood stain the bridal-bed:
For each deceiver to his cost may find,
That marriage frauds too oft are paid in kind.

[*Exeunt omnes*

THE AUGUSTANS

The Eighteenth Century

THE air of strangeness in which earlier epochs seem wrapped will be fairly dissipated for the modern student when he comes to the eighteenth century. The "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 had confounded forever the theory of the divine right of kings; and the complete ascendancy of the middle class, which the century witnessed, pushed forward issues related to the development of industry and commerce. Gradually the mystical questions which had agitated the seventeenth century were routed, as the notable advances in science began to be reflected in men's attitudes. The theology of the Puritans—the heated debates over Predestination and Free Will, and "election" and damnation (cf. Bunyan, *above*)—became as outmoded as witch-hunting. But their political and economic struggles for democracy now were at last justified, and were expressed in the growth to power of the Whig party.

Just as the Restoration had found much of its intellectual creed in the pages of Hobbes, the new century had its great apologist in the person of John Locke (1632-1704), a herald of democratic times. Hobbes's associations with the fortunes of royalty, of which he was a stout defender, are paralleled by Locke's allegiance to the new order. A student of chemistry and medicine, and a practicing physician, Locke had mastered the rational teachings of Descartes and Hobbes, knew the scientist Boyle, and was a Whig in politics. The collapse of the Whig party during the Restoration forced him into exile with its leaders, and he returned to England only after the Revolution of 1688. His two *Treatises of Government* (1690) were written in support of that revolution, to blast the theory of divine right and to defend democracy. The American founding fathers later saw in these tracts a justification for their War of Independence, and the philosophers of the French Revolution were inspired by them in their own writings.

His basic contribution was the *Essay Concerning the Human Understanding*, composed in exile, and published in 1690. It was the first extensive examination into the origins of ideas. Locke utterly destroyed the Platonic concept that at birth the human mind is equipped with certain fundamental ideas (i.e. the doctrine of *innate ideas*)—a concept that had proved very useful for the purposes of prejudice and intolerance. He counterposed the picture of the mind at birth as being like a blank tablet (*tabula rasa*) on which experience is to write. "Let us suppose," he says, "the mind to be . . . white paper, void of all characters, without any ideas; how comes it to be furnished? . . . Whence has it all the materials of reason and knowledge? To this I answer one word, from experience." From this it was easy to argue, as the

French philosophers did, that it was the conditions of society itself in which must be sought the roots of good and evil. A better society would make better men. Such was the speculation which prepared men's minds for the French Revolution. Some philosophers even argued, on these grounds, that a rational readjustment of social institutions could make men virtually perfect (cf. Godwin, *below*). This doctrine of the "perfectibility of mankind," which had a considerable vogue in the closing years of the century, was a sign of the times. For underlying nearly all eighteenth-century thinking, whether conservative or radical, is the conviction that men can be changed and improved. Hence, social criticism and satire are dominant in the work of all its leading writers.

Like the Restoration, which had been turning to rationalism as a guide for society, the eighteenth century felt the need for standards. From Dryden and his contemporaries the new century learned to give pre-eminence to the example of the ancients, because of the sane balance and symmetry of classical art and letters. Thus we find that the clear, uncomplicated sentence in prose and the heroic couplet in poetry, which Dryden had perfected for English use, continue throughout the century to be employed by the most eminent authors. But one fundamental change is to be noted after 1688. The Court is no longer the center of intellectual stimulation. Artists and writers no longer turn to royalty and its satellites for an audience, but to London, the hub of industry. Trade with the East, and with India in particular, is amassing great fortunes for the merchant class. As their leisure increases, men of the middle class take a new interest in the arts; and as this interest augments, the patronage system wanes. The poet Alexander Pope, for instance, actually makes a small fortune from the support accorded him by the general public (cf. *below*). And Samuel Johnson writes what has been called the "Declaration of Independence of Authors" in a letter to Lord Chesterfield (cf. *below*), in which he proudly disclaims indebtedness for the success of his *Dictionary* to anything but his own efforts. Taste and refinement become attributes not only of the aristocracy but of all such citizens as have the time and the income to cultivate them. In their architecture, the Georgian building which they choose for their dwelling shows that they have learned to combine elegance with gracious simplicity. The same feeling for easy symmetry and balance, inspired by their respect for the ancients, is reflected in the furniture designed by the Brothers Adam, Chippendale, Sheraton, and Hepplewhite. And they listen with admiration to the formal beauties and grandeurs of the popular composer, Händel.

The desire for perfect form which resulted in adaptations of Greek and Roman models has caused the eighteenth century to be called the "neoclassic" age. Its rational approach to social and literary problems has given it the title of the "Age of Reason." Both styles are descriptive and are not easily to be distinguished from each other since, as we have said, it was the authority allotted to Reason that led to a need for standards which, in turn, were inevitably those of the classics. Another name was preferred by the writers of Queen Anne's time, the "Augustan Age"; this designation the contemporaries of Addison, Steele, Swift, and Pope thought fitting for themselves out of the modest conviction that they were accomplishing for the glory of England what Virgil and Horace had accomplished, during the days of Augustus, for Rome.

But all these appellations would indicate that the political life of the century was calmer than history proves it to have been. The reign of Queen Anne (1702-1714), a woman whose lack of taste and judgment belie the age that has glorified her, found England involved in various European intrigues as a result of the success of the son of the deposed James II in winning the interest of France in his claims. The War of the Spanish Succession (or "Queen Anne's War," as we know it) was conducted with England and France as the mighty opposites in international conflict. The brilliant military campaign of the Earl of Marlborough, with its decisive victories of Blenheim and Ramillies, became the issue of a war almost as furious at home between the Whigs and the Tories. The conclusion of the war in the Peace of Utrecht (1714) marked a turning point in the affairs of England. Her alliances had wrenched her from that apartness from Continental politics which had till then been her history. The Treaty of Utrecht established the "balance of power" as a European principle of which England was thereafter to be the special guardian. The cultural effects of this policy have been enormous. Not only was England to come into more vital contact with the thought and art of Western Europe, but English philosophy and literature were to have a great vogue on the Continent. In France and Germany enthusiasm waxed so high as to have earned the description of "Anglomania." Men like Voltaire (cf. *below*), Montesquieu (cf. *below*), Rousseau (cf. Vol. II), and the Encyclopedists looked to London as to a new Athens; and in English eighteenth-century poetry Goethe and Schiller (cf. Vol. II) found nourishment for their dreams of an emancipated Germany. On the other hand, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Rousseau, the Encyclopedists, Goethe, and Schiller were in turn to be read with significant results in England, and to have great importance in advancing the Romantic revival of the nineteenth century.

In 1707 Scotland, after long efforts, had been united with England as the nation of Great Britain. The death of Queen Anne brought to the throne a new family, that of Hanover, whose claims had been supported by the Whigs. Both George I (1714-1727) and George II (1727-1760) were strangers to the country and its language, and made no effort to interest themselves in its government. For more than thirty years the Whig party ruled England without a rival, and thus furthered the interests of the middle class. The country, during the mid-century, participated in various wars, the most important of which were the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) through which Canada was won from France, and the campaigns of Clive in India (1756-1760).

George III (1760-1820), when he came to the throne, found himself at the head of a Britain with great European prestige and an empire in North America and India. Unfortunately for his country, George III was not disposed, like his predecessors, to allow his ministers to manage affairs, but insisted on taking a hand in them himself. He was the last king who made such an effort to recapture royal power. And his failure as a statesman is proverbial. "In ten years," the historian Green graphically puts the case, "he reduced government to a shadow, and turned the loyalty of his subjects at home into disaffection. In twenty he had forced the American colonies into revolt and independence, and brought England to what then seemed the brink of ruin." He was a man of small mind and mean talents, badly educated, petty and obstinate, and jealous of capability in any of his officials. The Tory party, which had

had little voice in the government for a long time, was ready to do his bidding. With the steady advance of the industrial order, accelerated by important mechanical inventions (like the spinning jenny, the flying shuttle, the water frame, the steam engine, etc.), the conservatism of the King and his Tory leaders naturally resulted in alteration of the modes of the earlier century. Toward the end of the century, radical thought, encouraged by the French *philosophes*, began to develop rapidly. In the pages of Tom Paine (cf. *below*) and Godwin are to be seen the reflections of extreme dissatisfaction with the established order. When the fall of the Bastille (1789) ushered in the French Revolution, English sentiment ran high in support of the democratic principles advanced across the Channel. And when, in 1793, the French National Assembly declared war on England, many liberal Englishmen hoped for French victory, until the excesses of the Revolution disillusioned them in their hopes for a new society.

Meanwhile, on the literary side, symptoms of revolt against classic precept and inspiration were to be glimpsed in the works of minor poets like Thomson, Collins, Gray, Cowper, Chatterton, and others (cf. Vol. II). But among the authors most read by the general public—Johnson, Burke, Sheridan, Boswell, etc.—the artistic faith of Addison's generation continued to hold sway until the end of the century.

The Age of Pope

From the time of the death of Dryden (1700) to the death of Pope (1744), neoclassicism achieved its greatest triumphs in England. The Greeks and the Romans were held the greatest of mentors for the good taste, the "correctness," the reasonableness, the awareness of society, and the wit which were preferred by the London "Augustan." The French masters of the period of Louis XIV were accorded high esteem as excellent examples of the wisdom of following these guides, and particular importance was placed upon the critical dicta of French writers like Boileau (cf. *below*) who had taken the care to formulate rules and practical suggestions for the use of the creator. Literary England was virtually London, for there the newly cultured class of businessmen lived and frequented the coffeehouses to exchange ideas and gossip.

Coffee had been introduced into England in 1652, and by Dryden's time the coffeehouses had assumed considerable importance in the social life of London. Dryden himself was fond of his role of monarch of the literary world at Will's Coffeehouse, where the younger wits listened to him with rapt attention. In Pope's time, a number of these meeting-places were flourishing, notably the Grecian, Lloyd's, Will's, White's, Button's, Child's, the Cocoa-Tree, Jonathan's, and St. James's. It was for their patrons that Addison and Steele designed their *Tatler* and *Spectator* (cf. *below*). Addison, in fact, expressly stated the purpose of the latter to be the bringing of "philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

With such an audience to write for, it naturally followed that the Augustans held the town to be the focus of all interest. Respect for cities, where men and culture meet, was, indeed, part of the heritage of the Renaissance. But the thriving of industry only accentuated it. To live in the country was the height of misfortune, in Augustan eyes, and country scenery and manners were deemed barbarous when not boring. The grandeur and exhilaration that the later Romantic poets have taught us to find in rugged nature were unknown to the Age of Pope. Addison, one of the most cultivated and refined of men, could say of his crossing the Alps only that it was "a very troublesome journey. You can't imagine how I am pleased with the sight of a plain." When the Augustans looked at nature, they liked to see it trimmed and tamed, as it was in the gardens at Versailles, by careful symmetry of design. For the sake of the classics, the "pastoral" did indeed survive, but only in the most unrealistic of guises. In the pastoral paintings which Boucher made for the French court—the dainty shepherdesses of milky skins and exquisite little hands, the well-groomed shepherds of gallant air, the fragile shepherd's crook, the toylike sheep, the neat little rocks, and the restrained presence of tree and bush—we can see the only kind of country the neoclassicist liked. When, therefore, the classic mold began to crack, it was when the shoots of an untamed nature began to thrust themselves through. In the poems of Thomson, Collins, and Gray, the manner is largely neoclassical; but a sympathy with nature as it really is distinguishes their work from that of the Augustans, and constitutes the first departure toward Romanticism.

The writers to be considered in this section of our work will, in consequence of their concern with good manners and taste, seem perhaps a little formal, deficient in the air of the inspired and the enthusiastic. Inspiration and enthusiasm are qualities we have learned to look for as a result of the marvelous flourishing of romantic poetry in the nineteenth century. But with the possible exception of this one "deficiency," the Augustans will seem closer to us today than the Romantics of the ensuing century. We have been through the fever and fret of the nineteenth century, and have had to reckon with some dreadful survivals of its anti-intellectualism in the setting up of Irrationality as a basic principle for the functioning of a State. We are thus likely to approach the "Age of Reason," with its respect for science and logic, with a new sympathy. Its concentration on the rational operation of society rather than on the private concerns of the individual, we are disposed to approve. If it, therefore, lacked the highest rapture in its poetry (as our age is said to lack it), the eighteenth century atones by its lively exercise of the critical faculty and its interest in the body politic. The artifice which the nineteenth century charged against it is largely a matter of exterior. Women did wear high headdresses, beauty-patches, and extravagantly shaped clothes; men did wear ruffles and were deft in the graces of a handkerchief; they did dance the saraband and the minuet, and made much of clever talk. But underneath all this was a great respect for good sense and reality. Their view of society, the classic view, has rarely been better stated than in the credo of a distinguished poet of our own day, the late William Butler Yeats: "In life courtesy and self-possession, and in the arts style, are the sensible impressions of the free mind, for both rise out of a deliberate shaping of all things, and from never being swept away, whatever the emotion, into confusion or dullness."

The age boasted one great poet, Alexander Pope (cf. *below*). Perhaps only such an age could have permitted such a man the full exercise of his genius. Physically handicapped, excluded because he was a Catholic from public offices such as provided sustenance for his gifted contemporaries, Pope nevertheless won recognition in his own lifetime as the first poet of his day. His ill-health had made him abnormally sensitive and vindictive, so that he nourished more annoyances than affections. But he had a brilliant wit, a sharp critical sense, and a deadly pen; with such gifts he could not have been born to a more appreciative public. His greatest admiration in English literature was for Dryden, in whose poetic path he followed. In his hands the heroic couplet achieved all the finish, elegance, wit, and pointedness which the form invited. As a technician in English verse he has never been excelled, and whether he was writing social satire, as in *The Rape of the Lock* (cf. *below*), the *Imitations of Horace*, and the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (cf. *below*), or didactic poetry, as in the *Essay on Criticism* (cf. *below*), the *Moral Essays*, and *The Essay on Man* (cf. *below*), or personal lampoon, as in *The Dunciad* (cf. *below*), his verse irradiates wit, color, and elegance.

Mention should be made of other poets the inclusion of whose work is not justified in a study such as this. John Gay (1685-1732), to whom belonged the strange distinction of never having quarreled with any of his literary contemporaries, will always be remembered for his delightful *Beggar's Opera* (1728), which satirized both Italian opera and the party in power; his *Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets* (1716) has been called the finest poem on London life, as his *Fables* (1727; 1738) have been praised as the best in English. Matthew Prior (1664-1721) spoke of himself as "only a poet by accident"; a friend of Gay, Swift, and Arbuthnot, he is best known for his slight occasional verse, among the best of *vers de société*. Because of its historical importance, *The Fable of the Bees* (1705; 1714), though of no great artistic worth, must be mentioned in any account of the period; its author, Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733), a Dutch physician living in London, undertook, as the subtitle *Private Vices, Public Benefits* indicates, to prove that the well-being of the community is dependent upon the expenditures of luxury, pride, and lust; the work was a sensation, was discussed everywhere as well as denounced from pulpits, and did much to influence the economic and ethical thinking of Adam Smith and Voltaire.

But the age was essentially one of great prose. The rational outlook of the times found the flexible style which Dryden had evolved much to its liking, and a good prose style was common even to insignificant writers. In the pages of Jonathan Swift (cf. *below*) eighteenth-century prose will be found at its most perfect and powerful. His simple, straightforward style is the triumph of an English prose that leaves nothing unsaid, nothing uncertain. Often called the world's outstanding satirist, he is the supreme example of the age's interest in social criticism. His *Gulliver's Travels* (cf. *below*) is the most biting indictment of humanity ever penned. And whether he attacked cultural matters (*The Battle of the Books; A Meditation upon a Broom-Stick*), the dissensions of the Christian churches (*The Tale of a Tub*), or astrology (*The Partridge Predictions*) he was sure to demolish the object of his satire. He fought valiantly, too, for the cause of the oppressed Irish in *The Drapier's Letters* and *A Modest Proposal* (cf. *below*). Tragically unhappy, a giant among Lilliputians, he had his tender side, revealed in his *Journal to Stella*.

No writers of the time, however, influenced their readers more widely than

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (cf. *below*). Having set themselves the task of improving the manners and ethics of Londoners, their *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the first great literary periodicals, nobly fulfilled their aims. Steele's quick sympathies and Addison's kindly wit were able to accomplish more than the fury of Swift. Men and women found themselves gently mocked for their foibles and irrationalities, and as they laughed they learned. They learned, too, to be interested in literary questions, and followed with interest the periodicals' papers on taste, wit, the drama, and poetry. The easy grace and ready wit of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* established them as models for the periodical essay, and they remain today among the finest essays in our literature.

The respect of the public for literary accomplishment was so great, in fact, that the leaders of the rival Whig and Tory parties vied with each other to procure the services of poets and pamphleteers. Until the reign of George I when the Whigs won uncontested supremacy, the chief labors of most writers, even of men like Swift and Addison, were devoted to party politics. The gradual disappearance of the patronage system gave place to the intermediate period of patronage of the political parties, which rewarded their poets and authors with offices in exchange for their services. A considerable portion of the works of even the best writers, being on matters of temporary importance, are therefore of little interest to us. But this party activity is also a symptom of the times, in its emphasis on matters of everyday, social significance. Luckily, the great men of the period were not stinting in their productivity, so that an appreciable mass of what they wrote does not share this transitory character. Besides, many of the best things in Addison, Steele, Pope, and Swift, although intended to have immediate point, are so universalized as to be forever of value. The arch satire of Pope's *Rape of the Lock* and the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* or of Addison's *Ned Softly* (cf. *below*) and *The Fine Lady's Diary* (cf. *below*) are timeless; and many miracles will have to come to pass before the honest man will fail to react to the truth in *Gulliver's Travels* and the recurrent horror of poverty in *A Modest Proposal.*

The Age of Johnson

The perfection which Pope had achieved within the limits of the heroic couplet could not easily be repeated. For the rest of the century poets without his gifts and wit tried to write with his elegance, and often ended in being only pompous. The particular failure of most eighteenth-century poetry is to be found in its curious affection for overlaying simple, concrete concepts with rather absurd would-be-elegant periphrases—the same kind of artifice which Molière had taken to task in *The Ridiculous Precious Ladies* (cf. *below*). Tendencies toward this mannerism are indeed to be found in Pope; in the opening of Canto II of *The Rape of the Lock* (cf. *below*) he prefers "ethereal plain" to *sky*, "purpled main" to *sea*, etc. But such expressions are somehow lifted into the realm of gaiety by the pervading wit of Pope's mind. His soberer successors, however, lacking wit or gaiety, sound often merely shallow when they try them; Thomson, Gray, and Collins, for example, though they were non-classical in various respects, are peculiarly subject to this vice. In Gray's romantic *The Bard* we find such phrases as "the orb of day" for *the sun*, "the golden flood" for sunlight; in Thomson's often romantic *The Seasons* we read of Winter's "rough domain," of "the cheerless empire of the sky," etc. Among these same poets is to be found another vexing habit, the use of abstractions which they imitated, unsuccessfully, from Milton in a desire to be grand. In Gray's *The Bard* there are many such: "Confusion on thy banners wait," "fanned by Conquest's crimson wing," "Thirst and Famine scowl," "Pleasure at the helm," etc.; in his *Elegy* we read that "Chill Penury repressed their noble rage," and that humble folk have never heaped "the shrine of Luxury and Pride," etc. In Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, the preacher's "failings leaned to Virtue's side," and England's merchant ships have "shouting Folly" hailing them from the shore, etc. These abstractions are annoying because they enable one to visualize nothing. We cannot see, in our mind's eye, the forms of Thirst, Famine, Penury, Virtue, or Folly. Yet the poets of Johnson's time were addicted to these hollow personifications, and the magazines of the period are filled with mediocre verse that strives vainly to be, through this device, sublime.

This avoidance of commonplace words and this use of abstractions are, of course, entirely consistent with the neoclassical unconcern with the *individual*. "The business of a poet," Samuel Johnson affirmed, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest." How he would have fitted his beloved Pope into such requirements is hard to say, for although Pope often does examine the species and remark the large appearances, he just as frequently particularizes. What chagrin would it have cost Johnson to know that the romantic poets of the next century were to consider it particularly their business to number the tulip's streaks and to describe the different shades of the verdure! His own indifference to such matters can be seen in his description of the Happy Valley in *Rasselas*: "The sides of the mountain were covered with trees, the banks of the brook were diversified with flowers." Here again one sees precisely nothing, for everything is generalized. And this was the practice of the neoclassic poets of his time. The result has been that although there were a number of interesting poets in Johnson's day, we can read none of them with the unalloyed delight with which we pore over Pope. Men like Goldsmith and Collins have certain qualities quite beyond Pope's poetic horizons, but we must take our pleasure in them admixed with the faults we have described.

The second half of the eighteenth century continues, therefore, to be important chiefly for its prose. About the person of Samuel Johnson were gathered the men who shared the Augustan standards of taste and wit. Johnson himself (cf. *below*) had enough eccentricities and a powerful enough personality to have made, in another age, a good romantic. But by intellectual preference he was the champion of neoclassical ideals. In his *Lives of the Poets* (cf. *below*), he meted out praise or blame according to the success or failure with which former and contemporary poets fulfilled those ideals. In one respect, however, his critical approach was forward-looking: his detestation of artificiality. His onslaught on the "pastoral" was made on the grounds of its unnaturalness, and he ridiculed mercilessly the straining of poetic diction wherever he found it. His own poetic satires, *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes,* modeled on Juvenal, are written in a manly, vigorous style and, like the satires of Dryden and Pope, are firmly aimed at contemporary society. In *The Rambler* (cf. *below*) and *The Idler* he continued the tradition of the periodical essay established by Addison and Steele; but there are more sobriety and steady sense in them than there is grace. The same rational view of life moved him to point out the vanity of a search for happiness in his satirical novel, *Rasselas* (cf. *below*). His largest undertaking was the compilation of his *Dictionary* (cf. *below*), which has had an important influence on the destiny of our language. The neoclassical need for standards and concern with "general properties" made inevitable the issuing of a work to standardize vocabulary and usage. But no man was fitter for the task than Johnson.

Johnson lives for us, however, less in his works than in the incomparable biography of James Boswell (cf. *below*). The sense of being day by day with Johnson, which this book affords us, has made him the most intimately known of English writers. *The Life of Samuel Johnson* sheds important light, too, on his friends—Goldsmith, Reynolds, Burke, and Garrick—and renders Boswell as familiar to us as the subject of his study.

Oliver Goldsmith (cf. *below*) by the simple expedient of being his charming self succeeded in achieving pre-eminence in four distinct literary fields. In *The Citizen of the World* (cf. *below*), influenced by Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (cf. *below*), he is the only worthy successor to Addison in the periodical essay. In *The Deserted Village* (cf. *below*) he achieves poetic excellence in a different species from the common satire in heroic couplets. In *The Vicar of Wakefield* he introduces a heart-warming air of humaneness and kindliness into the novel. These three works show Goldsmith as, on one hand, a neoclassicist in some aspects of style and subject, but, equally, a pre-romantic in others. Finally, his *She Stoops to Conquer* brings a much-needed note of gaiety and sparkle to the expiring English drama.

For expiring it was. The sentimental plays popularized by Steele (cf. *below*), in their attempt to modify the licentiousness of Restoration comedy, had blighted the comic spirit with intolerable dullness and silliness. The critical spirit of the age, moreover, had also proved uncongenial to tragedy. From the first decade of the century there was no great play produced until Goldsmith's healthy comedy restored, for a brief time, the English sense of humor to the stage. Following him, Sheridan (cf. *below*) wrote a brilliant series of comedies in the Restoration manner of scintillating dialogue and high spirits. In *The Rivals*, *The Critic, The Duenna,* and *The School for Scandal* (cf. *below*) we find the last great comedies that England was to know for another century.

The career of Edmund Burke (cf. *below*) illustrates the preoccupation of eighteenth-century England with politics. He brought to bear on his political career a splendid mind and a superlative gift for oratory. A stout defender of constitutional liberty, he fought in vain for the rights of the American colonists and against the injustices perpetrated upon the people of India. But at the first signs of the French Revolution his voice was raised in alarm against the chaos he was sure would ensue from a break with traditions. In the beginning, he was hooted down as a turncoat, but the acts of the Terror made the public later revalue him an unheeded prophet.

There were not wanting voices, however, to disagree with him. Tom Paine (cf. *below*), on rational grounds, advanced *The Rights of Man*, and in racy fashion propagated the republican principles for which he had taken arms in America. William Godwin (cf. *below*), through what he believed to be cold reasoning, drew a picture in his *Political Justice* of a perfect, and anarchistic, society which must of necessity evolve for a rational mankind. Godwin's absurdities, mixed with good social thinking, for the last decade of the century had great prestige among the younger poets. In the next century he was to inflame the imagination of one of our greatest lyrical poets, Shelley.

The eighteenth century saw the development of other phases of literary enterprise. David Hume (1711-1776), the great skeptic, made basic contributions to future philosophy by forwarding the completest empirical view of knowledge ever postulated by a philosopher. Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) wrote the compendious classic, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). Both men were excellent stylists. And the same general excellence of prose in the century is to be seen in the correspondence of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (cf. *below*), the Earl of Chesterfield (cf. *below*), and Horace Walpole (cf. *below*). The most significant development of the century, however, is that of the novel, which we now examine.

The Rise of the Novel

The novel has become, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the most popular of all literary forms. But its history before the eighteenth century is fragmentary. The episode of Trimalchio's dinner in the *Satyricon* of Petronius, a late Roman writer, has been pointed to as the prototype of the modern realistic novel. Romances of the ancient world, such as Longus's *Daphnis and Chloe*, Heliodorus's *Æthiopica*, and Apuleius's *Golden Ass* were significant contributions to the longer prose-narrative, as were the many Renaissance collections of tales (like Boccaccio's *Decameron*) to the shorter form. In England there were a number of romances, already referred to, during Elizabeth's time (Sidney's *Arcadia*, Lyly's *Euphues*, Greene's *Pandosto*, etc.), but the nearest approach to a novel-like work was Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*. It would, however, require considerable latitude of definition to call any of these, or the many like them, a novel.

Why did it take so long to evolve the novel in England? The answer that suggests itself is that there could be no future for that form while a workable prose style was lacking to the language. Modern prose was first perfected by Dryden, and it was a younger man of his generation, Defoe (cf. *above*), who made the most important advances toward the novel in the many tales of adventure and manufactured history which his fertile pen created. Defoe's prose narratives (*Robinson Crusoe, Moll Flanders, Roxana,* etc.) lack nothing required of the novel but a central plot; they present merely a series of loosely connected episodes, much in the manner of the so-called *picaresque romances* of Spain which related the adventures and intrigues of some rogue (*picaro*). But in point of characterization Defoe's stories are excellent, and in their air of realism they are actually in advance of the earliest novels.

The Character-writers of the seventeenth century (cf. p. 414, *above*) in developing the art of human portraiture were thus forwarding the preparation for the novel. In the same way the notable portraits sketched by Addison and Steele in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were of importance; Addison, indeed, made some attempt to round out the figure of Sir Roger de Coverley with a hint of a story in the series of papers in which that squire appears.

The first English novel was more or less of an accident. Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) had been living for years as a respectable printer, fond of the company of middle-aged spinsters, when, in planning a book of "model letters" for people of humble station, he hit upon the idea of giving some unity to the letters by connecting them with a story. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1741-42), his first book, appeared when he was over fifty, and to his astonishment took the world by storm. The genesis of the first English novel will explain why it took the epistolary form, which continued as a popular one for a long time. The plot of *Pamela* is very simple: Pamela, a good girl, is employed by Mr. B. as a maidservant. Attracted to her, Mr. B. pursues her all over the premises with dishonorable intentions. Although she continues to resist him, she finds it increasingly difficult because she has come to love him. At last, finding her virtue insuperable, Mr. B. marries her, and makes an ideal husband. The success of the book, despite its great length, is attributable, as much as anything else, to its falling in perfectly with the current taste for sentimentality. Though the marriage would be highly unsatisfactory to many modern readers, a twentieth-century revolution in moral standards was necessary before the "rewarded virtue" of Pamela could be open to question. For all its tediousness and tearfulness, *Pamela* has some surprising qualities for a pioneer book. Richardson was something of a psychologist, and depicted Pamela's inner struggles with considerable insight.

During 1747-8 Richardson issued the eight volumes of his next novel, *Clarissa Harlowe,* also written in letter form, though the correspondence is carried on by various characters. Here the plot is more complicated and dramatic. The heroine, unable to consent to a marriage with the man her family has chosen, appeals to her dissolute lover, Lovelace (whose name has since been proverbial for a *roué*), to help her. He runs off with her, and proceeds to attempt her undoing; she tries vainly to escape, and he has his will of her through the use of drugs. She dies from shame and a broken heart, while he, repentant, is slain by her kinsman in a duel. In this novel, Richardson probed the wounds of sensibility even further than in *Pamela,* and his audience was delighted. As the various parts appeared, ladies wrote to him begging him to spare poor Clarissa, and acknowledging the fascination of the wicked Lovelace. Though the modern reader would have small patience with the tiresome variations upon the theme of sentimentalism, Richardson's remarkable knowledge of women makes many of his pages still vital. Rousseau's novel, *The New Eloisa* (cf. Vol. II), was written in imitation of *Clarissa,* and Diderot was powerfully impressed by it. Indeed, as the discoverer of the novel of character, Richardson fathered a long line of novelists that includes Sterne, Jane Austen, Balzac, and George Sand.

Richardson's last novel, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1754), is inferior to the other two. He had little ability to portray the hearts of men, and his effort to draw the male counterpart of Clarissa failed to please even his own day.

The appearance of the first novel was also the occasion for the beginning of the career of the second novelist. Henry Fielding (1707-1754) came of an aristocratic family, labored in London's Grub Street, turned out some twenty farces, burlesques, and comedies (including a translation of Molière's *The Miser*), and had a gay time making the party in power smart under his irony, until Sir Robert Walpole's Licensing Act of 1737 put an end to his career as a dramatist. Then, after he had settled down to the law, *Pamela* was published. Singularly free from the modish affliction of sensibility, he was moved to hilarity by the absurdities of Richardson, and his nimble mind was soon at work on the idea of a brother to Pamela, Joseph Andrews, who might be portrayed as equally strong in defending *his* purity against the attacks of Lady Booby (the counterpart of Mr. B. in *Pamela*). But when *The History of Joseph Andrews* (1742) was finished, Fielding had given up, after the ninth chapter, his original intent of burlesquing Pamela; the central figure had ceased to be the virtuous Joseph and had become the unforgettable, quixotic Parson Adams, clever, simple, stalwart, and learned—the earliest great portrait in the English novel.

After writing the satirical *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743), a grim piece of irony on human knavery, Fielding produced the greatest novel of the eighteenth century, *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749). There are some critics who would say that it is still unsurpassed. With masterful skill Fielding manages to fill his canvas with a host of well-realized characters and a number of sub-plots. A wide variety of stirring incidents are presented within the framework of the separation of Tom from his beloved and his union with her at the end, while always in the background is the deftly contrived mystery as to Tom's parentage. Of particular interest is the vivid sense of everyday reality that we have as we move along with Tom through the English countryside, roads, taverns, and meet Londoners of all degree. The portraits of Tom, Squire Western, Allworthy, Partridge, and Sophia are done with gusto and humanity. Gibbon's prophecy has in part been fulfilled: "The romance of *Tom Jones*, that exquisite picture of human manners, will outlive the palace of the Escorial, and the imperial eagle of the house of Austria."

As a magistrate of the police court Fielding interested himself in fighting crime and in reforming the poor laws. His *Amelia* (1751) is weighted with propaganda against the evils of prison life and the tyranny of the police. The heroine was fashioned after his first wife, whom he loved deeply; her constancy and devotion save the hero from the ruin that might have been expected of his pleasure-loving nature. The pictures of sordid poverty in London slums are very realistic, and anticipate the work of Dickens.

Tobias Smollett (1721-1771), father of the nautical novel, served as a surgeon in the West Indies in his twenties, and married a Creole woman whom he dearly loved. Back in London, he produced his first novel, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), a coarse, brutal, picaresque work into which he crammed many of his experiences, racy and salty. *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) is in the same vein, and contains Smollett's finest portrait, that of the old tar, Commodore Trunnion. From 1756 to 1763 Smollett performed all kinds of hack-work incidental to editing *The Critical Review*, *The British Magazine*, and *The Briton*, and organized a kind of company of hacks to produce books of travel, geography, translations, etc. Among his employees was Oliver Goldsmith. During such leisure as he had, Smollett turned out other novels, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) and *Sir Launcelot Greaves* (1760), the latter in imitation of *Don Quixote*. His last novel, written while he was in very poor health, is the epistolary *Humphrey Clinker*, a wonderful record of contemporary English urban life, in which much of Smollett's coarseness has been softened. Although Smollett's novels are marred by a tendency toward caricature rather than portraiture (especially in his women) and by a certain air of brutality, they are admirable in their raciness, pictorial quality, and pointedness of style. Filled as they are with characters taken from low life, such as do not obtrude upon the pages of his contemporaries, they are fitting supplements to the powerful engravings of similar manners by the great eighteenth-century artist, Hogarth.

Unique among English novelists is Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768). Indeed, his two famous books are to be called novels chiefly because they fit no other classification. Sterne spent his childhood moving about Ireland with the regiment in which his father served as an underpaid subaltern. The uncertainty of such a life must have subjected him to little discipline, and the eccentricity of his make-up must have begun to flourish early. At Cambridge he met his lifelong friend, John Hall-Stevenson, to whom he was to write a series of self-revealing letters. Through the assistance of his uncle, Sterne became prebend of York, doubtless because it afforded a livelihood rather than because he had felt any call to the cloth. York, in his time, has been described as "that proud, provincial, gossiping, racing, gay, quarreling little cathedral world," and Sterne made the most of it, falling in love with others besides his wife, racing, shooting, participating in the social life, reading all kinds of quaint books, and leading the erratic existence congenial to his temper. In his sermons, he began to depart more and more from the sober style common to them, and to introduce all sorts of odd variations of thought and style. In his forty-sixth year the first two volumes of his inimitable *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759; 1761; 1762; 1765; 1767) appeared. Few books have made a greater stir.

Fielding was dead, Richardson had no more to say, and Smollett was busy with other matters. The public was hungry for a new novel, and what Sterne had to offer was definitely new. Sterne's mind was furnished with stores of quaint learning, and his influences are men like Rabelais and Burton. A stranger book than *Tristram Shandy* has never been written. "I begin," he admits, "writing the first sentence—and trusting to Almighty God for the second." And his peculiar divinity led him to strange places. Sterne follows wherever his fantastic imagination leads him. There is far more digression than plot in his book. "Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine;—they are the life, the soul, of reading!—take them out of this book, for instance," he tells us, "—you might as well take the book along with them;—one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it; restore them to the writer; he steps forth like a bridegroom,—bids All-hail; brings in variety, and forbids the appetite to fail." This is the heady spirit in which the nine volumes are written, as though their author were ever slightly but enchantingly inebriated. And the digressions in *Tristram Shandy* are bewildering in kind and number: some following naturally from the story, others being thrust in by the author on sheer impulse. Although the first volume opens with an attempt to recount the birth of its hero, the busy associations that spring up on every side find him unborn when the second volume closes; and Sterne reflects, with humorous chagrin, that if he succeeds in his intention of publishing two volumes a year, he will get further and further back into the time before Tristram can be born. Every kind of oddity is brought into his pages: startling punctuation, misleading asterisks, diagrams, a long curse in Latin. At one point, where a new character is introduced, he leaves a blank page for the reader to write in his own description.

Soon after the publication of the novel, Sterne came to London and was lionized everywhere. Reynolds made a remarkable portrait of him in which can be read both the sensitive soul and the satyr which made up Sterne. Mrs. Montague said of him pointedly, "He is as harmless as a child, but often a naughty boy, and a little apt to dirty his *frock*." And there is, indeed, a persistent note of deliberate indecency in Sterne; and Coleridge said of him with truth that he used "the best dispositions of our nature as the panders and condiments for the basest." Nonetheless, Sterne's merits as a great humorist are considerable: his dizzying fancifulness never flags, and he is a master of natural idiomatic dialogue. Out of the topsy-turvy world that he created emerge a number of wonderful portraits—Mr. Shandy, Trim, Obadiah, the Widow Wadman, Slop, and Uncle Toby. The last-named, probably patterned after Sterne's own father, has been well described by Walter Sichel as "A man human in every vein, simple, serious, an amusing grown-up child . . . loyal, brave, modest, affectionate, reverent . . . considerate for all."

Nothing would seem less in harmony with the moderation and clarity of the Augustans than the disorder which Sterne raised to a fine art. But in one respect, at least, he was perfectly the child of his times. There was a strong sentimental side to his nature, though he often mocked it, and *Tristram Shandy* has many a tearful page alternating with its merry lunacy. Having made a journey to France and Italy in search of health, Sterne published shortly before his death *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) in which, although his former variety of whimsicality is omnipresent, there is a heavy dose of sentimentality. This passage from it reveals not only the nature of such sections, but also the debased taste of the times in allowing to mere "sensibility" so high a virtue: "Dear sensibility! source inexhausted of all that's precious in our joys, or costly in our sorrows! thou chainest thy martyr down upon his bed of straw—and 'tis thou who lift'st him up to HEAVEN."

This taste for sensibility was further exploited in the novels of Henry Mackenzie (1745-1831), who, rationalist though he was, outdid Sterne in his lachrymose *The Man of Feeling* (1771) and *The Man of the World* (1773), where the author seems to go about with a handkerchief in hand, looking for things to weep over.

Fanny Burney (1752-1840), who became Mme D'Arblay, whose photographic *Diaries* give us valuable insight into the life of the court circles in which she moved, originated the novel of home life in *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782), and *Camilla* (1796). They are characterized by a flair for deft conversation, admirable caricature, and vivid pictures of contemporary well-to-do society, but are marred by false sentiment and sententiousness. She is important, however, as having prepared this kind of novel for the hands of Jane Austen.

The novels of Goldsmith and Godwin are discussed below.

For studies of the historical background of the eighteenth century, consult: J. Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne* (1883); W. Besant, *London in the Eighteenth Century* (1902); E. B. Chancellor, *The Eighteenth Century in London* (1920); M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century* (1923); H. J. Laski, *Political Thought in England from Locke to Bentham* (1920); W. E. H. Lecky, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878-90); P. Mantoux, *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century* (trans. 1928); A. S. Turberville, *English Men and Manners in the Eighteenth Century* (1926); and Sir L. Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (2 volumes, 1892).

For foreign influences on literature of the period see: A. F. B. Clark, *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England (1660-1830)* (1925); C. M. Goad, *Horace in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (1918); and R. H. Wollstein, *English Opinions of French Poetry, 1660-1750* (1923).

For literary history the following studies by Oliver Elton are admirable: *The Augustan Ages* (1899); *A Survey of English Literature, 1730-1780* (1928), and *1780-1830* (1912). Also valuable are: A. Dobson, *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* (three series, 1892, 1894, 1896); E. Gosse, *History of Eighteenth Century Literature* (1896); W. J. Graham, *The Beginnings of the English Literary Periodical* (1926); W. Minto, *The Literature of the Georgian Era* (1894); and T. Quayle, *Poetic Diction: A Study of Eighteenth Century Verse* (1924).

NICHOLAS BOILEAU DESPRÉAUX (1636-1711)

A Parisian, educated to the law, Boileau early deserted to the ranks of literary men. In time he became the leading poet of Louis XIV's golden age, not because his gifts were especially poetical but because they were precisely those most readily appreciated in his time. "Love reason," he counseled, "and see that your writing borrows from reason whatever brilliance or quality it possesses." He further observed: "Nothing is beautiful but the true; the true alone is worthy of love." In these two criteria Boileau summed up the intellectual faith of an era. By his authority *reason* and *good sense* became critical catch-phrases for neoclassical poets and critics. In 1674 appeared the works by which he is most remembered: *L'Art Poëtique;* his mock-heroic poem, *Le Lutrin,* on which Pope modeled *The Rape of the Lock* (cf. *below*); and his translation of Longinus. His satires had a considerable influence on English as well as on French poetry. Satire became one of the chief English neoclassical literary fashions, and Boileau's was the outstanding example among modern satirists. His particular contribution, besides the lessons in smoothness of his verse, was his practice of modernizing the satires of the Roman poets so that the old sting might have contemporary point. These "imitations" were to be much favored of the English poets, notably Dryden, Pope, and Johnson.

L'Art Poëtique is a poem in four sections: the first pays tribute to Reason, Good Sense, and the music of verse, and relates (somewhat inaccurately) their history in French poetry; the second and third parts discuss the various poetical forms, offer advice on the use of each, and give a historical survey of some; the last book is made up of a series of moral and artistic maxims for the guidance of poets. Boileau urges them to study themselves and their peculiar bent, advances the need of moderation, warns against soaring too high and descending too low, and, above all, insists that the ways of reason and good sense may best be learned from the ancients. *L'Art Poëtique* is thus a compendium of neoclassical ideals. Narrow though it seem today, it was not so for its own time. Boileau's affection for the classics was sincere, and his devotion to Homer, Pindar, and Longinus in particular was deep. As a poet his merits are chiefly intellectual; his lines, though not beautiful, are solid and sound. His poetic credo, the credo for a century of neoclassical poets, he expressed in the couplet:

Souvent j'habille en vers une maligne prose;
C'est par là que je vaux, si je vaux quelque chose.

(Often I dress a wicked piece of prose in verse; that's my particular worth, if I have any at all.) Boileau wrote *L'Art Poëtique* with Horace's *Art of Poetry* clearly in mind. Pope often composed with the example of Boileau before him: his *Essay on Criticism* owes much to the similar work of his French predecessor.

The analogy between Boileau and Pope has often been drawn. Both admired Horace, both were eminent satirists, both had a fine sense for the sculpture of their couplets, and both were unsparingly mordant in their attacks. Each is celebrated for a mock-heroic poem, and each was a sworn enemy to literary pretenders. But Pope was a greater poet. The color and music of his verse, in which he has rarely been matched, are entirely absent from the well-formed but cold lines of Boileau.

Among many interesting books, C. H. C. Wright's *French Classicism* (1920) is to be recommended.

From THE ART OF POETRY

(*Translated by Sir William Soame and John Dryden*)

[Where Boileau drew examples from French men of letters, Dryden substituted Englishmen. The footnotes indicate Boileau's original references.]

CANTO I

RASH author, 'tis a vain presumptuous crime
To undertake the sacred art of rime;
If at thy birth the stars that ruled thy sense
Shone not with a poetic influence,
In thy strait genius thou wilt still be bound,
Find Phoebus deaf, and Pegasus unsound.
You, then, that burn with a desire to try
The dangerous course of charming poetry,
Forbear in fruitless verse to lose your time,
Or take for genius the desire of rime;
Fear the allurements of a specious bait,
And well consider your own force and weight.
  Nature abounds in wits of every kind,
And for each author can a talent find:
One may in verse describe an amorous flame,
Another sharpen a short epigram;
Waller[1] a hero's mighty acts extol,
Spenser[2] sing Rosalind in pastoral[3]
But authors, that themselves too much esteem,
Lose their own genius, and mistake their theme:
Thus in times past Dubartas[4] vainly writ,
Alloying sacred truth with trifling wit;
Impertinently, and without delight,
Described the Israelites' triumphant flight;
And, following Moses o'er the sandy plain,
Perished with Pharaoh in the Arabian main.
  Whate'er you write of pleasant or sublime,
Always let sense accompany your rime;
Falsely they seem each other to oppose,—
Rime must be made with reason's laws to close;
And when to conquer her you bend your force,
The mind will triumph in the noble course
To reason's yoke she quickly will incline,
Which, far from hurting, renders her divine;
But if neglected, will as easily stray,
And master reason, which she should obey.
Love reason then; and let whate'er you write
Borrow from her its beauty, force, and light.
  Most writers mounted on a resty muse,
Extravagant and senseless objects choose;
They think they err, if in their verse they fall
On any thought that's plain or natural.
Fly this excess; and let Italians be
Vain authors of false glittering poetry.
All ought to aim at sense; but most in vain
Strive the hard pass and slippery path to gain;
You drown, if to the right or left you stray;
Reason to go has often but one way.
  Sometimes an author, fond of his own thought,
Pursues its object till it's overwrought:
If he describes a house, he shows the face,
And after walks you round from place to place;
Here is a vista, there the doors unfold,
Balconies here are balustered with gold;
Then counts the rounds and ovals in the halls,
"The festoons, friezes, and the astragals;"
Tired with his tedious pomp, away I run,
And skip o'er twenty pages, to be gone.
Of such descriptions the vain folly see,
And shun their barren superfluity.
All that is needless carefully avoid;
The mind once satisfied is quickly cloyed.
He cannot write who knows not to give o'er,
To mend one fault he makes a hundred more:
A verse was weak, you turn it much too strong,
And grow obscure for fear you should be long;
Some are not gaudy, but are flat and dry;
Not to be low, another soars too high.
  Would you of every one deserve the praise?
In writing vary your discourse and phrase;
A frozen style, that neither ebbs nor flows,
Instead of pleasing, makes us gape and doze.
Those tedious authors are esteemed by none
Who tire us, humming the same heavy tone.
Happy who in his verse can gently steer,
From grave to light; from pleasant to severe:
His works will be admired wherever found,

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[1] Boileau: Malherbe.
[2] Boileau: Racan.
[3] i.e. in the *Shepherd's Calendar*.
[4] Boileau: Faret.

And oft with buyers will be compassed round.
In all you write, be neither low nor vile;
The meanest theme may have a proper style.
  The dull burlesque appeared with impudence,
And pleased by novelty in spite of sense.
All, except trivial points, grew out of date;
Parnassus spoke the cant of Billingsgate;[5]
Boundless and mad, disordered rhyme was seen;
Disguised Apollo changed to Harlequin.
This plague, which first in country towns began,
Cities and kingdoms quickly over-ran;
The dullest scribblers some admirers found,
And the "Mock Tempest" was a while renowned.[6]
But this low stuff the town at last despised,
And scorned the folly that they once had prized;
Distinguished dull from natural and plain,
And left the villages to Flecknoe's reign.[7]
Let not so mean a style your muse debase,
But learn from Butler the buffooning grace;[8]
And let burlesque in ballads be employed,
Yet noisy bombast carefully avoid;
Nor think to raise, though on Pharsalia's plain,
"Millions of mourning mountains of the slain."
Nor with Dubartas bridle up the floods,
And periwig with wool the baldpate woods.
Choose a just style; be grave without constraint,
Great without pride, and lovely without paint:
Write what your reader may be pleased to hear,
And for the measure have a careful ear.
On easy numbers fix your happy choice;
Of jarring sounds avoid the odious noise:
The fullest verse, and the most labored sense,
Displease us, if the ear once take offence.
Our ancient verse, as homely as the times,
Was rude, unmeasured, only tagged with rhymes;
Number and cadence, that have since been shown,
To those unpolished writers were unknown.
Fairfax[9] was he, who, in that darker age,
By his just rules restrained poetic rage;
Spenser[10] did next in pastorals excel,
And taught the noble art of writing well;
To stricter rules the stanza did restrain,
And found for poetry a richer vein.
Then D'Avenant[11] came, who, with a new-found art,
Changed all, spoiled all, and had his way apart;
His haughty muse all others did despise,
And thought in triumph to bear off the prize,
'Till the sharp-sighted critics of the times,
In their Mock-Gondibert,[12] exposed his rhymes;
The laurels he pretended did refuse,
And dashed the hopes of his aspiring muse.
This headstrong writer falling from on high,
Made following authors take less liberty.
Waller came last,[13] but was the first whose art
Just weight and measure did to verse impart;
That of a well-placed word could teach the force,
And showed for poetry a nobler course;
His happy genius did our tongue refine,
And easy words with pleasing numbers join;
His verses to good method did apply,
And changed hard discord to soft harmony.
All owned his laws; which, long approved and tried,
To present authors now may be a guide.
Tread boldly in his steps, secure from fear,
And be, like him, in your expressions clear.
If in your verse you drag, and sense delay,
My patience tires, my fancy goes astray;
And from your vain discourse I turn my mind,
Nor search an author troublesome to find.
There is a kind of writer pleased with sound,
Whose fustian head with clouds is compassed round,
No reason can disperse them with its light:
Learn then to think ere you pretend to write.
As your idea's clear, or else obscure,
The expression follows perfect or impure:
What we conceive with ease we can express;
Words to the notions flow with readiness.
  Observe the language well in all you write,
And swerve not from it in your loftiest flight.
The smoothest verse, and the exactest sense,
Displease us, if ill English give offence:
A barbarous phrase no reader can approve;
Nor bombast, noise, or affectation love.
In short, without pure language, what you write
Can never yield us profit or delight.
Take time for thinking; never work in haste;
And value not yourself for writing fast.
A rapid poem, with such fury writ,
Shows want of judgment, not abounding wit.
More pleased we are to see a river lead
His gentle streams along a flowery mead,
Than from high banks to hear loud torrents roar,
With foamy waters on a muddy shore.
Gently make haste, of labor not afraid;
A hundred times consider what you've said:
Polish, repolish, every color lay,

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[5] Boileau: the language of the market-place.

[6] Boileau: D'Assonci. Dryden's reference is to Duffet's *Mock-Tempest.*

[7] Boileau: Scarron's *Typhon.*

[8] Boileau: Marot.

[9] Boileau: Villon.

[10] Boileau: Marot.

[11] Boileau: Ronsard.

[12] Boileau: Desportes and Bertaut. Dryden here refers to a satire on D'Avenant's epic *Gondibert.*

[13] Boileau: *At last Malherbe came.*

And sometimes add, but oftener take away.
'Tis not enough, when swarming faults are writ,
That here and there are scattered sparks of wit:
Each object must be fixed in the due place,
And differing parts have corresponding grace;
Till, by a curious art disposed, we find
One perfect whole, of all the pieces joined.
Keep to your subject close in all you say;
Nor for a sounding sentence ever stray.
The public censure for your writings fear,
And to yourself be critic most severe.
Fantastic wits their darling follies love;
But find you faithful friends that will reprove,
That on your works may look with careful eyes,
And of your faults be zealous enemies:
Lay by an author's pride and vanity,
And from a friend a flatterer descry,
Who seems to like, but means not what he says:
Embrace true counsel, but suspect false praise.
A sycophant will every thing admire;
Each verse, each sentence sets his soul on fire:
All is divine! there's not a word amiss!
He shakes with joy, and weeps with tenderness;
He overpowers you with his mighty praise.
Truth never moves in those impetuous ways;
A faithful friend is careful of your fame,
And freely will your heedless errors blame;
He cannot pardon a neglected line,
But verse to rule and order will confine;
Reprove of words the too-affected sound;—
Here the sense flags, and your expression's round,
Your fancy tires, and your discourse grows vain,
Your terms improper; make it just and plain.—
Thus 'tis a faithful friend will freedom use;
But authors, partial to their darling muse,
Think to protect it they have just pretence,
And at your friendly counsel take offence.—
Said you of this, that the expression's flat?
Your servant, sir, you must excuse me that,
He answers you.—This word has here no grace,
Pray leave it out;—that, sir's the properest place.—
This turn I like not;—'tis approved by all.
Thus, resolute not from one fault to fall,
If there's a syllable of which you doubt,
'Tis a sure reason not to blot it out.
Yet still he says you may his faults confute,
And over him your power is absolute.
But of his feigned humility take heed;
'Tis a bait laid to make you hear him read.
And when he leaves you happy in his muse,
Restless he runs some other to abuse,
And often finds; for in our scribbling times
No fool can want a sot to praise his rhymes.
The flattest work has ever in the court
Met with some zealous ass for its support;
And in all times a forward scribbling fop
Has found some greater fool to cry him up.

Canto II

SATIRE

Lucilius was the man, who, bravely bold,
To Roman vices did this mirror hold,
Protected humble goodness from reproach,
Showed worth on foot, and rascals in the coach.
Horace his pleasing wit to this did add,
And none uncensured could be fool or mad:
Unhappy was that wretch, whose name might be
Squared to the rules of their sharp poetry.
Persius obscure, but full of sense and wit,
Affected brevity in all he writ;
And Juvenal, learned as those times could be,
Too far did stretch his sharp hyperbole;
Though horrid truths through all his labors shine,
In what he writes there's something of divine,
Whether he blames the Caprean debauch,
Or of Sejanus' fall tells the approach,
Or that he makes the trembling senate come
To the stern tyrant to receive their doom;
Or Roman vice in coarsest habits shows,
And paints an empress reeking from the stews:
In all he writes appears a noble fire;
To follow such a master then desire.
Chaucer[14] alone, fixed on this solid base,
In his old style conserves a modern grace:
Too happy, if the freedom of his rhymes
Offended not the method of our times.
The Latin writers decency neglect;
But modern authors challenge our respect,
And at immodest writings take offence,
If clean expression cover not the sense.
I love sharp Satire, from obsceneness free;
Not impudence, that preaches modesty:
Our English,[15] who in malice never fail,
Hence in lampoons and libels[16] learn to rail;
Pleasant detraction, that by singing goes
From mouth to mouth, and as it marches grows:
Our freedom in our poetry we see,
That child of joy begot by liberty.
But, vain blasphemer, tremble when you choose
God for the subject of your impious muse:
At last, those jests which libertines invent,

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[14] Boileau: Régnier.
[15] Boileau: *the French*.
[16] Boileau: *Vaudeville* (satire).

Bring the lewd author to just punishment.
Even in a song there must be art and sense;
Yet sometimes we have seen that wine, or chance,
Have warmed cold brains, and given dull writers mettle,
And furnished out a scene for Mr Settle.
But for one lucky hit, that made thee please,
Let not thy folly grow to a disease,
Nor think thyself a wit; for in our age
If a warm fancy does some fop engage,
He neither eats nor sleeps till he has writ,
But plagues the world with his adulterate wit.
Nay, 'tis a wonder, if, in his dire rage,
He prints not his dull follies for the stage;
And in the front of all his senseless plays,
Makes David Logan[17] crown his head with bays.

Alexander Pope

(1688-1744)

The greatest of eighteenth-century English poets was born the son of a Roman Catholic who maintained a profitable business as a linen-draper. The public schools and great universities as well as the public offices of his country were closed to those of his religion; the boy's education was consequently left to the unsystematic instruction of private tutors and to what could be acquired from highly irregular attendance at Catholic schools. The impossibility of embarking on any career in the government or in some learned profession, left him the freer to indulge his passion for poetry. When still a youth Pope was already an insatiable reader.

Perhaps no great name was sustained by a man more handicapped physically. At the age of twelve he emerged from a serious illness an invalid. The mature Pope was a travesty of the adult male: four and one-half feet tall, humpbacked, and frequently ailing. His painful consciousness of his deformity made him sensitive, irritable, proud, and ever on the defensive. From the limitations imposed upon him by nature and the religious intolerance of his times, he found refuge in his beloved studies. In 1700 his family moved to Binfield near Windsor Forest, where he spent the happiest years of his life. "I took to reading by myself," he says, "for which I had a very great eagerness, especially for poetry: and in a few years I had dipped into a great number of English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets. This I did without any design, but that of pleasing myself: and got the languages, by hunting after the stories in the several poets I read; rather than read the books to get the languages." The threat of even heavier taxes on the Catholics in 1716 caused Pope's father to leave his house at Binfield, thus terminating years dear to the poet's memory.

In the meantime Pope's pen had been busy. By the age of fifteen he had written an epic poem, which he later saw fit to destroy. Some years before 1709, when they were published, he had also written the *Pastorals.* These, inspired by Virgil, were four rather stilted poems on the seasons, but composed so melodiously that he at once became known to the public. Two years later appeared his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), Pope's attempt at an "Art of Poetry," modeled on Horace and Boileau; an amazing feat for a youth in his early twenties, it shows that the poet had already found his manner. Here already can be seen his qualities—his wit, his gift for succinct expression, his varied reading, his polish, and his musicianship; here too is his chief weakness—his inability, when dealing with purely intellectual matters, to synthesize his ideas into a unity. (Cf. *below.*)

At Binfield, too, was composed the brilliant social satire, *The Rape of the Lock* (1712; 1714), one of the rarest gems of English poetry (cf. *below*). *Windsor Forest* (1713) followed, commemorating happy associations in its descriptions; by this time, however, the pastoral was concerned with so many other things besides natural scenes (cf. pp. 243, 247, and 250, *above*) that political, historical, and philosophical passages almost obscure the bucolic intent. This work pleased the Tories because of its praise for the Peace of Utrecht, but alienated, at the same time, Addison and his friends; it also was instrumental in winning Pope the friendship of Swift. Now, at the age of twenty-five, Pope was recognized by all sound literary critics as the first poet of his day.

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[17] Boileau: Nanteuil. Dryden refers to Loggan (*sic*), an English engraver.

But family finances required something more substantial than esteem. Without a sinecure or a patron, Pope was obliged to earn his livelihood through the exercise of his poetic genius. In this he proved eminently successful. Indeed, his career marks the end of literary men's subservience to patronage or government posts, and the beginning of their direct reliance on the reading public. When he announced, in 1713, his intention of translating Homer, the advance subscriptions came pouring in upon him. His reputation and the opportuneness of the enterprise in a classic age both insured success. From the six volumes of his *Iliad*, which appeared between 1715 and 1720, he reaped the handsome sum of £5,000; his *Odyssey* (1725-6) brought him nearly £4,000 more. For the first time in English history a writer had made a fortune out of his craft. This money, wisely invested, procured him security and leisure in which he could write what he desired. With some of it he bought the lease of a little estate at Twickenham, on the Thames, near London; here, honored and visited by friends who have immortalized it, he spent the rest of his days.

While occupied with Homer, he wrote, in 1717, the eloquent poem around the story of two of the world's most famous lovers, *Eloisa to Abelard* (cf. *below*), and issued an inadequate edition of Shakespeare (1725). The ten years given to the translation (it should be remarked that in the *Odyssey* he had the collaboration of Broome and Fenton) bore fruit in a Homer that was more of Pope's age than of ancient Greece. As ever, Pope was following in Dryden's footsteps. But not only Dryden had set the style for translating the ancients with his *Virgil*; many minor poets also had been busy with such labors. Pope, like them, and more than them, brought to the classics a polish and an elegance quite foreign to Homer but which, nevertheless, lend distinction to his verse. The flawless heroic couplet has not the power to communicate the simple majesty of the original; nor have the refined, artificial manners of the eighteenth century which somehow are omnipresent in Pope's translation anything in common with the heroic relationships of the Homeric characters. The behavior of noble heroes becomes transformed to the conduct of sophisticated gentlemen. Moreover, the success of these translations did much injury to later eighteenth-century poetry; the abstract terms, the epithets, the cold formality of language—intended by Pope to capture the dignity of a Greek with which he was none too familiar—became stereotyped into the ideal "poetic diction" by Pope's imitators, until Coleridge and Wordsworth broke through them with their *Lyrical Ballads*. These ten years devoted to Homer were educational, transitional years for Pope. He was to attain a direct diction perfect for his later satires. But it was his *Homer* which long remained the authority for a correct poetic style. Whatever their shortcomings, however, the poems which Pope substituted for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are noble in their own right. Certainly Homer has never been rendered more smoothly or racily.

With this task accomplished, Pope had adventured into every poetic type in which he could be pre-eminent. He now concentrated on the two species of poetry in which he has never been surpassed: the satiric and the didactic. As a companion-piece to Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* he produced *The Dunciad* (1728; 1729; 1743), a powerful mock-epic attacking literary charlatanry (cf. *below*). The *Essay on Man* (1732-34), a philosophic treatise in verse (cf. *below*), is as remarkable for its inconsistency as for the perfection of its rhetorical expression; it was translated into many foreign languages and had hosts of imitators. Designed as a section in a larger speculative poem, it is thus connected with his *Moral Essays* (1731-35), a collection of four ethical epistles on the manners of men and of women, on riches, and on the uses of riches. These are in turn allied to Pope's last and finest works, the *Imitations of Horace* (1733-39), a series of pointed satires on contemporary persons and manners, in which he achieved the perfection of his style; to these the interestingly autobiographical *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (cf. *below*) was written as a prologue.

Few readers of taste in his own time could have doubted that Pope had all the gifts and abilities which a great poet can have. Yet, during the very years in which his position was shared by no one else, there were forces working which were to culminate, in the nineteenth century, in an attitude toward poetry that set all his perfections at nought. And so richly inspired was the poetic utterance of this later romantic poetry that we, its heirs, have often been prone to deny to Pope the high place which is rightfully his. Accustomed as we are to the emotional power of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, we have often lost our perspective and demanded of all poetry qualities which are not always germane. Writing in an age of reason, Pope naturally exercised his genius on an intellectual, rather than an emotional, plane. We turn to him not for deep feelings, but for lucid ideas, for lively and realistic detail, for gay and inimitable wit. If we examine his poetic powers, we find none lacking save possibly that of divine inspiration—and *that* no man of his time looked for in a poem. In poetical facility and felicity he has no superior: he has complete mastery over delicate color and lovely music; no man has written with greater brilliance or wit than he. With the exception of Shakespeare, no poet is more commonly quoted or has given us a larger stock of perfect phrases. It cannot be denied that as a man he was often petty and vindictive. But when his physical disabilities are remembered, his great accomplishment will be deemed enough of a triumph over the odds with which he faced life. It is sufficient to add that if he made many enemies he had also such qualities as won him the regard and friendship of some of the best men of his time.

The standard edition of Pope is by Elwin and Courthope, ten volumes (1871-89), and contains a full life by W. J. Courthope. A new edition is now being prepared; of this the first volume, edited by N. Ault, has appeared (1936). Of the smaller editions, G. Sherburn's *The Best of Pope* is particularly to be recommended. G. Sherburn's *The Early Career of Alexander Pope* (1934) is very scholarly. Edith Sitwell's *Alexander Pope* (1930) is stimulating, though uncritical, in its admiration of the poet. Valuable studies are: "G. Paston," *Mr. Pope* (1909); R. K. Root, *The Poetical Career of Alexander Pope* (1938). Johnson's *Life* contains some of the soundest criticism ever written of the poet.

An Essay on Criticism

It would appear that the *Essay on Criticism*, although published in 1711, was written when Pope was scarcely twenty-one. From such a youth one would hardly have expected either profundity or great originality on a subject requiring years of literary experience. Nor does the poem make any pretensions it cannot fulfill. Glad to accept the classical precepts of Aristotle (cf. *above*), Horace (cf. *above*), and Boileau (cf. *above*), as well as those of other leading theorists ancient and modern (Longinus, Vida, Le Bossu, Rapin, and Dryden), Pope here enunciates with admirable pointedness neoclassical ideas on the relationship of nature to art. But he is no formalist: his treatment of classical doctrine is remarkable, in a day of many pedants, for its breadth and sanity. A profound admirer of Boileau, he follows the latter's *L'Art Poëtique* (cf. *above*) in making nature and reason the guides to poets of genius, and never implies that rules can insure merit in literary creation. Like Dryden and Addison he is content to allow for that "taste" which transcends mere precept, as a safe conduct through the perils of artistic endeavor. And like Horace he prefers to give an informal tone to his reflections on the art of poetry; hence he calls his work an "essay."

PART I

INTRODUCTION. That it is as great a fault to judge ill as to write ill, and a more dangerous one to the public. That a true taste is as rare to be found as a true genius. That most men are born with some taste, but spoiled by false education. The multitude of critics, and causes of them. That we are to study our own taste, and know the limits of it. Nature the best guide for judgment. Improved by art and rules, which are but methodized nature. Rules derived from the practice of the ancient poets. That therefore the ancients are necessary to be studied by a critic, particularly Homer and Virgil. Of licenses, and the use of them by the ancients. Reverence due to the ancients, and praise of them.

'Tis hard to say if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill;
But of the two less dang'rous is th' offence
To tire out patience than mislead our sense.
Some few in that, but numbers err in this;
Ten censure wrong for one who writes amiss;
A fool might once himself alone expose;
Now one in verse makes many more in prose.
'Tis with our judgments as our watches: none
Go just alike, yet each believe his own.
In poets as true genius is but rare,
True taste as seldom is the critic's share;
Both must alike from Heav'n derive their light,
These born to judge, as well as those to write.
Let such teach others who themselves excel,
And censure freely who have written well.
Authors are partial to their wit, 'tis true,
But are not critics to their judgment too?
Yet if we look more closely, we shall find
Most have the seeds of judgment in their mind:
Nature affords at least a glimm'ring light;
The lines, tho' touch'd but faintly, are drawn right.
But as the slightest sketch, if justly trac'd,
Is by ill-coloring but the more disgrac'd,
So by false learning is good sense defaced;
Some are bewildered in the maze of schools,
And some made coxcombs nature meant but fools.
In search of wit these lose their common sense,
And then turn critics in their own defense;
Each burns alike, who can, or cannot write,
Or with a rival's or an eunuch's spite.
All fools have still an itching to deride,
And fain would be upon the laughing side.
If Mævius[1] scribble in Apollo's spite,
There are who judge still worse than he can write.
Some have at first for wits, then poets passed,
Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last.
Some neither can for wits nor critics pass,
As heavy mules are neither horse nor ass.
Those half-learned witlings, numerous in our isle,
As half-formed insects on the banks of Nile;
Unfinished things, one knows not what to call,
Their generation's so equivocal:
To tell 'em, would a hundred tongues require,
Or one vain wit's, that might a hundred tire.
But you who seek to give and merit fame,
And justly bear a critic's noble name,
Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste, and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dulness meet.
Nature to all things fixed the limits fit,
And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit.
As on the land while here the ocean gains,
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
The memory's soft figures melt away.
One science only will one genius fit;
So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
But oft in those confined to single parts.
Like kings we lose the conquests gained before,
By vain ambition still to make them more;
Each might his several province well command,
Would all but stoop to what they understand.
First follow Nature, and your judgment frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchanged, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides:
In some fair body thus the informing soul
With spirits feeds, with vigor fills the whole,
Each motion guides, and every nerve sustains;
Itself unseen, but in the effects, remains.
Some, to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more, to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
Though meant each other's aid, like man and wife.
'T is more to guide than spur the Muse's steed;
Restrain his fury, than provoke his speed;
The wingèd courser, like a generous horse,
Shows most true mettle when you check his course.
Those rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,

---

[1] an inferior Roman poet mentioned by Horace (*Epode* x).

Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd:
Nature, like Liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same Laws, which first herself ordain'd.
Hear how learn'd Greece her useful rules indites,
When to repress, and when indulge our flights:
High on Parnassus'[2] top her sons she show'd
And pointed out those arduous paths they trod,
Held from afar, aloft, th' immortal prize,
And urg'd the rest by equal steps to rise.
Just precepts thus from great examples giv'n,
She drew from them what they deriv'd from Heav'n.
The gen'rous Critic fann'd the Poet's fire,
And taught the world with Reason to admire.
Then Criticism the Muse's handmaid prov'd,
To dress her charms, and make her more belov'd:
But following wits from that intention stray'd,
Who could not win the mistress, woo'd the maid;
Against the Poets their own arms they turn'd,
Sure to hate most the men from whom they learn'd.
So modern 'Pothecaries, taught the art
By Doctor's bills to play the Doctor's part,
Bold in the practice of mistaken rules,
Prescribe, apply, and call their masters fools.
Some on the leaves of ancient authors prey,
Nor time nor moths e'er spoil'd so much as they.
Some drily plain, without invention's aid,
Write dull receipts how poems may be made.
These leave the sense, their learning to display,
And those explain the meaning quite away.
You then whose judgment the right course would steer,
Know well each Ancient's proper character;
His Fable, Subject, scope in every page;
Religion, Country, genius of his Age:
Without all these at once before your eyes,
Cavil you may, but never criticize.
Be Homer's works your study and delight,
Read them by day, and meditate by night;
Thence form your judgment, thence your maxims bring,
And trace the Muses upward to their spring.
Still with itself compar'd, his text peruse;
And let your comment be the Mantuan Muse.[3]
When first young Maro[4] in his boundless mind
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd,
Perhaps he seem'd above the Critic's law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorn'd to draw:
But when t' examine every part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinc'd, amaz'd, he checks the bold design:
And rules as strict his labor'd work confine,
As if the Stagirite[5] o'erlook'd each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy nature is to copy them.
Some beauties yet no Precepts can declare,
For there's a happiness as well as care.
Music resembles Poetry, in each
Are nameless graces which no methods teach,
And which a master-hand alone can reach.
If, where the rules not far enough extend,
(Since rules were made but to promote their end)
Some lucky Licence answer to the full
Th' intent propos'd, that Licence is a rule.
Thus Pegasus,[6] a nearer way to take,
May boldly deviate from the common track;
From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art,
Which, without passing thro' the judgment, gains
The heart, and all its end at once attains.
In prospects thus, some objects please our eyes,
Which out of nature's common order rise,
The shapeless rock, or hanging precipice.
Great wits sometimes may gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true Critics dare not mend;
But tho' the Ancients thus their rules invade,
(As Kings dispense with laws themselves have made)
Moderns, beware! or if you must offend
Against the precept, ne'er transgress its End;
Let it be seldom, and compell'd by need;
And have, at least, their precedent to plead.
The Critic else proceeds without remorse,
Seizes your fame, and puts his laws in force.
I know there are, to whose presumptuous thoughts
Those freer beauties, ev'n in them, seem faults.
Some figures monstrous and mis-shap'd appear,
Consider'd singly, or beheld too near,
Which, but proportion'd to their light, or place,
Due distance reconciles to form and grace.
A prudent chief not always must display
His pow'rs, in equal ranks, and fair array,
But with th' occasion and the place comply,
Conceal his force, may seem sometimes to fly.
Those oft are stratagems which errors seem,
Nor is it Homer nods, but we that dream.
Still green with bays each ancient Altar stands.
Above the reach of sacrilegious hands;

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[2] the mountain sacred to the Muses.
[3] Virgil.
[4] Virgil.
[5] Aristotle.
[6] the winged horse of the Muses.

Secure from Flames, from Envy's fiercer rage,
Destructive War, and all-involving Age.
See from each clime the learn'd their incense bring!
Hear, in all tongues consenting Pæans ring!
In praise so just let ev'ry voice be join'd,
And fill the gen'ral chorus of mankind.
Hail, Bards triumphant! born in happier days;
Immortal heirs of universal praise!
Whose honors with increase of ages grow,
As streams roll down, enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn your mighty names shall sound,
And worlds applaud that must not yet be found!
O may some spark of your celestial fire,
The last, the meanest of your sons inspire,
(That on weak wings, from far, pursues your flights;
Glows while he reads, but trembles as he writes)
To teach vain Wits a science little known,
T' admire superior sense, and doubt their own!

PART II

Causes hindering a true judgment. 1. Pride. 2. Imperfect learning. 3. Judging by parts, and not by the whole. Critics in wit, language, versification only. 4. Being too hard to please, or too apt to admire. 5. Partiality—too much love to a sect—to the ancients or moderns. 6. Prejudice or prevention. 7. Singularity. 8. Inconstancy. 9. Party spirit. 10. Envy. Against envy, and in praise of good-nature. When severity is chiefly to be used by critics.

Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools.
Whatever Nature has in worth deny'd,
She gives in large recruits of needless Pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind:
Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defense,
And fills up all the mighty Void of sense.
If once right reason drives that cloud away,
Truth breaks upon us with resistless day.
Trust not yourself; but your defects to know,
Make use of ev'ry friend—and ev'ry foe.
A *little learning* is a dang'rous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:[7]
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
The eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But, those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labors of the lengthened way,
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!
  A perfect judge will read each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ:
Survey the whole, nor seek slight faults to find
Where nature moves, and rapture warms the mind;
Nor lose, for that malignant dull delight,
The generous pleasure to be charmed with wit.
But in such lays as neither ebb, nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly low,
That shunning faults, one quiet tenor keep;
We cannot blame indeed, but we may sleep.
In wit, as nature, what affects our hearts
Is not the exactness of peculiar parts;
'T is not a lip, or eye, we beauty call,
But the joint force and full result of all.
Thus when we view some well-proportioned dome,
(The world's just wonder, and e'en thine, O Rome!)[8]
No single parts unequally surprise,
All comes united to the admiring eyes;
No monstrous height, or breadth, or length appear;
The whole at once is bold, and regular.
  Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be.
In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due;
As men of breeding, sometimes men of wit,
T' avoid great errors, must the less commit:
Neglect the rules each verbal critic lays,
For not to know some trifles, is a praise.
Most critics, fond of some subservient art,
Still make the whole depend upon a part:
They talk of principles, but notions prize,
And all to one loved folly sacrifice.
  Once on a time La Mancha's knight,[9] they say,
A certain bard encount'ring on the way,
Discours'd in terms as just, with looks as sage,

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[7] the reputed birthplace of the Muses.

[8] This refers to the Cathedral of Saint Peter in Rome.

[9] Don Quixote.

As e'er could Dennis,[10] of the Grecian stage;
Concluding all were desperate sots and fools
Who durst depart from Aristotle's rules.
Our author, happy in a judge so nice,
Produced his play, and begg'd the knight's advice;
Made him observe the subject and the plot,
The manners, passions, unities — what not?
All which exact to rule were brought about,
Were but a combat in the lists left out.
"What! leave the combat out?" exclaims the knight;
"Yes, or we must renounce the Stagirite."
"Not so, by Heaven!" he answers in a rage,
"Knights, squires, and steeds must enter on the stage."
"So vast a throng the stage can ne'er contain."
"Then build a new, or act it in a plain."
  Thus critics of less judgment than caprice,
Curious, not knowing, not exact, but nice,
Form short ideas, and offend in arts
(As most in manners) by a love to parts.
  Some to conceit alone their taste confine,
And glittering thoughts struck out at every line;
Pleased with a work where nothing's just or fit;
One glaring chaos and wild heap of wit.
Poets like painters, thus unskilled to trace
The naked nature and the living grace,
With gold and jewels cover every part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.
True wit is nature to advantage dressed,
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed;
Something, whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind
As shades more sweetly recommend the light,
So modest plainness sets off sprightly wit.
For works may have more wit than does 'em good,
As bodies perish thro' excess of blood.
  Others for language all their care express
And value books, as women, men for dress:
Their praise is still,— the style is excellent:
The sense, they humbly take upon content.
Words are like leaves; and where they most abound,
Much fruit of sense beneath is rarely found;
False eloquence, like the prismatic glass,
Its gaudy colors spreads on every place;
The face of nature we no more survey,
All glares alike, without distinction gay:
But true expression, like the unchanging sun,
Clears and improves whate'er it shines upon,
It gilds all objects, but it alters none.
Expression is the dress of thought, and still
Appears more decent, as more suitable;
A vile conceit in pompous words expressed,
Is like a clown in regal purple dressed:
For different styles with different subjects sort,
As several garbs with country, town, and court.
Some by old words to fame have made pretense,
Ancients in phrase, mere moderns in their sense;
Such labored nothings, in so strange a style,
Amaze the unlearned, and make the learnèd smile.
Unlucky, as Fungoso[11] in the play,
These sparks with awkward vanity display
What the fine gentleman wore yesterday;
And but so mimic ancient wits at best
As apes our grandsires, in their doublets dressed.
In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
Alike fantastic, if too new, or old:
Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.
  But most by numbers judge a poet's song;
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or wrong:
In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join;
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes,
With sure returns of still expected rhymes;
Where'er you find "the cooling western breeze,"
In the next line, it "whispers through the trees";
If crystal streams "with pleasing murmurs creep."
The reader's threatened (not in vain) with "sleep":
Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine[12] ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.
Leave such to tune their own dull rhymes, and know

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[10] John Dennis (1657-1734), a critic who had written on Aristotle.

[11] a character in Ben Jonson's *Everyman Out of His Humor*, who tries unsuccessfully to keep up with court fashions.

[12] a poetic line of six feet, of which line 357 is an example.

What's roundly smooth or languishly slow;
And praise the easy vigor of a line,
Where Denham's[13] strength, and Waller's[14] sweetness join.
True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.
'T is not enough no harshness gives offense,
The sound must seem an echo to the sense:
Soft is the strain when Zephyr[15] gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore.
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar:
When Ajax[16] strives some rock's vast weight to throw
The line too labors, and the words move slow;
Not so, when swift Camilla[17] scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.
Hear how Timotheus'[18] varied lays surprise,
And bid alternate passions fall and rise!
While, at each change, the son of Libyan Jove[19]
Now burns with glory, and then melts with love;
Now his fierce eyes with sparkling fury glow,
Now sighs steal out, and tears begin to flow:
Persians and Greeks like turns of nature found,
And the world's victor stood subdued by sound!
The power of music all our hearts allow,
And what Timotheus was, is Dryden now.
  Avoid extremes; and shun the fault of such,
Who still are pleased too little or too much.
At every trifle scorn to take offense,
That always shows great pride or little sense;
Those heads, as stomachs, are not sure the best,
Which nauseate all, and nothing can digest.
Yet let not each gay turn thy rapture move;
For fools admire, but men of sense approve:
As things seem large which we through mists descry,
Dulness is ever apt to magnify.
  Some foreign writers, some our own despise;
The ancients only, or the moderns prize.
Thus wit, like faith, by each man is applied
To one small sect, and all are damned beside.
Meanly they seek the blessing to confine,
And force that sun but on a part to shine,
Which not alone the southern wit sublimes,
But ripens spirits in cold northern climes;
Which from the first has shone on ages past,
Enlights the present, and shall warm, the last;
Tho' each may feel increases and decays,
And see now clearer and now darker days.
Regard not then if Wit be old or new,
But blame the false, and value still the true.
  Some ne'er advance a Judgment of their own,
But catch the spreading notion of the Town;
They reason and conclude by precedent,
And own stale nonsense which they ne'er invent.
Some judge of authors' names, not works, and then
Nor praise nor blame the writings, but the men.
Of all this servile herd, the worst is he
That in proud dulness joins with Quality,
A constant Critic at the great man's board,
To fetch and carry nonsense for my Lord.
What woful stuff this madrigal would be,
In some starv'd hackney sonneteer, or me?
But let a Lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens! how the style refines!
Before his sacred name flies ev'ry fault,
And each exalted stanza teems with thought!
  The Vulgar thus through Imitation err;
As oft the Learn'd by being singular;
So much they scorn the crowd, that if the throng
By chance go right, they purposely go wrong:
So Schismatics the plain believers quit,
And are but damn'd for having too much wit.
Some praise at morning what they blame at night;
But always thinks the last opinion right.
A Muse by these is like a mistress us'd,
This hour she's idoliz'd, the next abus'd;
While their weak heads, like towns unfortified,
'Twixt sense and nonsense daily change their side.
Ask them the cause; they're wiser still, they say;
And still to-morrow's wiser than to-day.
We think our fathers fools, so wise we grow;
Our wiser sons, no doubt, will think us so.
Once School-divines this zealous isle o'er-spread;
Who knew most Sentences,[20] was deepest read:
Faith, Gospel, all, seem'd made to be disputed,
And none had sense enough to be confuted;
Scotists and Thomists,[21] now, in peace remain,

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[13] Sir John Denham (1615-1659), a minor poet.

[14] Cf. p. 390.

[15] the west wind.

[16] Ajax, one of the heroes in the *Iliad*, was noted for his great size and strength.

[17] Camilla, the swift-footed woman warrior, appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*, vii, 808ff.

[18] Cf. Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, p. 554.

[19] Alexander the Great was reputed to be a son of Jove.

[20] a reference to the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard, a twelfth century schoolman.

[21] followers of the thirteenth century schoolmen, Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas.

Amidst their kindred cobwebs in Duck-lane.[22]
If Faith itself has diff'rent dresses worn,
What wonder modes in Wit should take their turn?
Oft, leaving what is natural and fit,
The current folly proves the ready wit;
And authors think their reputation safe,
Which lives as long as fools are pleas'd to laugh.
Some valuing those of their own side or mind,
Still make themselves the measure of mankind:
Fondly we think we honor merit then,
When we but praise ourselves in other men.
Parties in Wit attend on those of State,
And public faction doubles private hate.
Pride, Malice, Folly, against Dryden rose,
In various shapes of Parsons, Critics, Beaus;
But sense surviv'd when merry jests were past;
For rising merit will buoy up at last.
Might he return, and bless once more our eyes,
New Blackmores and new Milbourns[23] must arise:
Nay, should great Homer lift his awful head,
Zoilus[24] again would start up from the dead.
Envy will merit, as its shade, pursue;
But like a shadow, proves the substance true:
For envy'd Wit; like Sol eclips'd, makes known
Th' opposing body's grossness, not its own.
When first that sun too pow'rful beams displays,
It draws up vapors which obscure its rays;
But ev'n those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories and augment the day.
Be thou the first true merit to befriend;
His praise is lost, who stays 'till all commend.
Short is the date, alas! of modern rhymes,
And 'tis but just to let them live betimes.
No longer now that golden age appears,
When Patriarch-wits surviv'd a thousand years:
Now length of Fame (our second life) is lost,
And bare threescores is all ev'n that can boast;
Our sons their fathers' failing language see,
And such as Chaucer is, shall Dryden be.
So when the faithful pencil has designed
Some bright idea of the master's mind,
Where a new word leaps out at his command,
And ready nature waits upon his hand;
When the ripe colors soften and unite,
And sweetly melt into just shade and light;
When mellow years their full perfection give,
And each bold figure just begins to live,
The treacherous colors the fair art betray,
And all the bright creation fades away!
Unhappy wit, like most mistaken things,
Atones not for that envy which it brings.
In youth alone its empty praise we boast,
But soon the short-lived vanity is lost:
Like some fair flower the early spring supplies,
That gaily blooms, but even in blooming dies.
What is this wit, which must our cares employ?
The owner's wife, that other men enjoy;
Then most our trouble still when most admired,
And still the more we give, the more required;
Whose fame with pains we guard, but lose with ease,
Sure some to vex, but never all to please;
'T is what the vicious fear, the virtuous shun,
By fools 't is hated, and by knaves undone!
If wit so much from ignorance undergo,
Ah, let not learning too commence its foe!
Of old, those met rewards who could excel,
And such were praised who but endeavored well:
Though triumphs were to generals only due,
Crowns were reserved to grace the soldiers too.
Now, they who reach Parnassus' lofty crown,
Employ their pains to spurn some others down:
And while self-love each jealous writer rules,
Contending wits become the sport of fools:
But still the worst with most regret commend,
For each ill author is as bad a friend.
To what base ends, and by what abject ways,
Are mortals urged through sacred lust of praise.
Ah, ne'er so dire a thirst of glory boast,
Nor in the critic let the man be lost.
Good-nature and good-sense must ever join;
To err is human, to forgive, divine.
But if in noble minds some dregs remain
Not yet purged off, of spleen and sour disdain;
Discharge that rage on more provoking crimes,
Nor fear a dearth in these flagitious times.
No pardon vile, obscenity should find,
Though wit and art conspire to move your mind;
But dulness with obscenity must prove
As shameful sure as impotence in love.
In the fat age of pleasure, wealth, and ease,
Sprung the rank weed, and thrived with large increase:
When love was all an easy Monarch's[25] care;
Seldom at council, never in a war:
Jilts ruled the state, and statesmen farces writ;

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[22] a London street famous for its bookshops.

[23] Sir Richard Blackmore (1652-1729) had attacked Pope in *A Satire on Wit*. The Reverend Luke Milbourne (1649-1720) had written unfavorably of Dryden's translation of Virgil.

[24] a Greek critic of the fourth century B.C., said to have been put to death for criticizing Homer.

[25] Charles II.

Nay, wits had pensions, and young lords had wit:
The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
And not a mask went unimproved away:
The modest fan was lifted up no more,
And virgins smiled at what they blushed before.
The following license of a foreign reign[26]
Did all the dregs of bold Socinus[27] drain;
Then unbelieving priests reformed the nation,
And taught more pleasant methods of salvation;
Where Heaven's free subjects might their rights dispute,
Lest God himself should seem too absolute:
Pulpits their sacred satire learned to spare
And vice admired to find a flatterer there!
Encourag'd thus, wit's Titans braved the skies,
And the press groaned with licensed blasphemies.
These monsters, critics! with your darts engage,
Here point your thunder, and exhaust your rage!
Yet shun their fault, who, scandalously nice,
Will needs mistake an author into vice;
All seems infected that the infected spy.
As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye.

Part III

Rules for the conduct and manners in a critic. 1. Candor. Modesty. Good breeding. Sincerity and freedom of advice. 2. When one's counsel is to be restrained. Character of an incorrigible poet. And of an impertinent critic. Character of a good critic. The history of criticism, and characters of the best critics. Aristotle, Horace, Dionysius, Petronius, Quintilian, Longinus. Of the decay of criticism, and its revival. Erasmus. Vida. Boileau. Lord Roscommon, &c. Conclusion.

Learn then what morals critics ought to show,
For 'tis but half a judge's task to know.
'Tis not enough taste, judgment, learning join;
In all you speak let truth and candor shine,
That not alone what to your sense is due
All may allow, but seek your friendship too.
Be silent always when you doubt your sense,
And speak, tho' sure, with seeming diffidence:
Some positive, persisting fops we know,
Who if once wrong, will needs be always so;
But you, with pleasure own your errors past,
And make each day a Critique on the last.
'Tis not enough your counsel still be true;
Blunt truths more mischief than nice falsehoods do;
Men must be taught as if you taught them not,
And things unknown propos'd as things forgot.
Without Good Breeding, truth is disapprov'd;
That only makes superior sense belov'd.
Be niggards of advice on no pretence:
For the worst avarice is that of sense.
With mean complaisance ne'er betray your trust,
Nor be so civil as to prove unjust.
Fear not the anger of the wise to raise;
Those best can bear reproof, who merit praise.
'Twere well might Critics still this freedom take,
But Appius[28] reddens at each word you speak,
And stares, tremendous, with a threat'ning eye,
Like some fierce Tyrant in old tapestry.
Fear most to tax an Honorable fool,
Whose right it is, uncensur'd, to be dull;
Such, without wit, are Poets when they please,
As without learning they can take Degrees.
Leave dang'rous truths to unsuccessful Satires,
And flattery to fulsome dedicators,
Whom, when they praise, the world believes no more
Than when they promise to give scribbling o'er.
'Tis best sometimes your censure to restrain,
And charitably let the dull be vain;
Your silence there is better than your spite,
For who can rail so long as they can write?
Still humming on their drowsy course they keep,
And lash'd so long, like tops, are lash'd asleep.
False steps but help them to renew the race,
As, after stumbling, jades will mind their pace.
What crowds of these, impenitently bold,
In sounds and jingling syllables grown old,
Still run on poets, in a raging vein,
Ev'n to the dregs and squeezings of the brain,
Strain out the last dull droppings of their sense,
And rhyme with all the rage of Impotence!
Such shameless Bards we have; and yet 'tis true,
There are as mad, abandon'd Critics too.
The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
With loads of learned lumber in his head,
With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
And always list'ning to himself appears.
All books he reads, and all he reads assails,
From Dryden's Fables down to D'Urfey's[29] Tales.
With him, most authors steal their works, or buy;
Garth[30] did not write his own Dispensary.
Name a new Play, and he's the Poet's friend,

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[26] the reign of William III.

[27] the name of two Italian theologians of the sixteenth century who were forerunners of modern Unitarianism.

[28] Dennis.

[29] Thomas D'Urfey (1653-1723) published *Tales Tragical and Comical* in 1704.

[30] Sir Samuel Garth's burlesque poem, *The Dispensary*, 1699.

Nay show'd his faults—but when would Poets mend?
No place so sacred from such fops is barr'd,
Nor is Paul's church more safe than Paul's church yard:[31]
Nay, fly to Altars; there they'll talk you dead;
For Fools rush in where Angels fear to tread.
Distrustful sense with modest caution speaks,
It still looks home, and short excursions makes;
But rattling nonsense in full volleys breaks,
And never shock'd, and never turn'd aside,
Bursts out, resistless, with a thund'ring tide.
But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleas'd to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbiass'd, or by favor, or by spite;
Not dully prepossess'd, nor blindly right;
Tho' learn'd well-bred; and tho' well-bred, sincere;
Modestly bold, and humanly severe:
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfin'd;
A knowledge both of books and human kind;
Gen'rous converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?
Such once were Critics; such the happy few,
Athens and Rome in better ages knew.
The mighty Stagirite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore;
He steer'd securely, and discover'd far,
Led by the light of the Mæonian Star.[32]
Poets, a race long unconfined, and free,
Still fond and proud of savage liberty,
Receiv'd his laws; and stood convinc'd 'twas fit,
Who conquer'd Nature, should preside o'er Wit.
Horace,[33] still charms with graceful negligence,
And without method talks us into sense,
Will, like a friend, familiarly convey
The truest notions in the easiest way.
He, who supreme in judgment, as in wit,
Might boldly censure, as he boldly writ,
Yet judg'd with coolness, tho' he sung with fire;
His Precepts teach but what his works inspire.
Our Critics take a contrary extreme,
They judge with fury, but they write with phlegm:
Nor suffers Horace more in wrong Translations
By Wits, than Critics in as wrong Quotations.
See Dionysius[34] Homer's thoughts refine,
And call new beauties forth from ev'ry line!
Fancy and art in gay Petronius[35] please,
The scholar's learning, with the courtier's ease.
In grave Quintilian's copious work,[36] we find
The justest rules, and clearest method join'd:
Thus useful arms in magazines we place,
All rang'd in order, and dispos'd with grace,
But less to please the eye, than arm the hand,
Still fit for use, and ready at command.
Thee, bold Longinus![37] all the Nine inspire,
And bless their Critic with a Poet's fire.
An ardent Judge, who zealous in his trust,
With warmth gives sentence, yet is always just;
Whose own example strengthens all his laws;
And is himself that great Sublime he draws.
Thus long succeeding Critics justly reign'd,
Licence repress'd, and useful laws ordain'd.
Learning and Rome alike in empire grew;
And Arts still follow'd where her Eagles[38] flew;
From the same foes, at last, both felt their doom,
And the same age saw Learning fall, and Rome.
With Tyranny, then Superstition join'd,
As that the body, this enslav'd the mind;
Much was believ'd, but little understood,
And to be dull was constru'd to be good;
A second deluge Learning thus o'er-run,
And the Monks finish'd what the Goths begun.
At length Erasmus,[39] that great injur'd name,
(The glory of the priesthood, and the shame!)
Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barb'rous age,
And drove those holy Vandals[40] off the stage.
But see! each Muse, in Leo's[41] golden days,
Starts from her trance, and trims her wither'd bays;
Rome's ancient Genius, o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then sculpture and her sister-arts revive;
Stones leap'd to form, and rocks began to live;
With sweeter notes each rising Temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida[42] sung.
Immortal Vida: on whose honor'd brow

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[31] which was filled with bookshops.

[32] Homer.

[33] Cf. *The Art of Poetry*, p. 528.

[34] Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a critic of the first century B.C.

[35] Petronius Arbiter, a Roman writer of the first century A.D.

[36] Quintilian's *Institutions of Oratory* appeared in Rome near the end of the first century A.D.

[37] author of *On the Sublime*. He wrote in Greek of the third century.

[38] the ensigns of the Roman army.

[39] Desiderius Erasmus (1465-1536), one of the greatest scholars of the Renaissance. He helped much with the revival of learning in England.

[40] the Medieval schoolmen.

[41] Pope Leo X (1475-1521), son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, Duke of Florence, and, like his father, a great patron of art.

[42] Marco Girolamo Vida (1480?-1566) was born at Cremona, Italy and was author of *De Arte Poetica*.

The Poet's bays and Critic's ivy grow:
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua,[43] next in fame!
But soon by impious arms from Latium[44] chas'd,
Their ancient bounds the banish'd Muses pass'd;
Thence Arts o'er all the northern world advance,
But Critic-learning flourish'd most in France;
The rules a nation, born to serve, obeys;
And Boileau[45] still in right of Horace sways.
But we, brave Britons, foreign laws despis'd,
And kept unconquer'd, and uncivilis'd;
Fierce for the liberties of wit, and bold,
We still defy'd the Romans, as of old.
Yet some there were, among the sounder few
Of those who less presum'd, and better knew,
Who durst assert the juster ancient cause,
And here restor'd wit's fundamental laws.
Such was the Muse[46] whose rules and practice tell
"Nature's chief masterpiece is writing well."
Such was Roscommon,[47] not more learn'd than good,
With manners gen'rous as his noble blood;
To him the wit of Greece and Rome was known,
And ev'ry author's merit but his own.
Such late was Walsh[48]—the Muse's judge and friend,
Who justly knew to blame or to commend;
To failings mild but zealous for desert,
The clearest head, and the sincerest heart.
This humble praise, lamented shade! receive;
This praise at least a grateful Muse may give:
The Muse whose early voice you taught to sing,
Prescribed her heights, and pruned her tender wing,
(Her guide now lost) no more attempts to rise,
But in low numbers short excursions tries;
Content if hence th' unlearn'd their wants may view,
The learn'd reflect on what before they knew:
Careless of censure, nor too fond of fame;
Still pleas'd to praise, yet not afraid to blame;
Averse alike to flatter or offend;
Not free from faults, nor yet too vain to mend.

(1711)

The Rape of the Lock

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

Composed at the suggestion of Pope's friend, John Caryll, this poem celebrates the most trivial of events: Lord Petre had stolen a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor, and a breach had occurred between the two families. That Pope's avowed purpose of ending the quarrel should have been successful will astonish the reader when he considers the unflattering light shed upon the principals. But it is characteristic of an age that placed a premium upon wit that Miss Fermor should have been pleased, rather than affronted, at Pope's deft malice. She is said to have exhibited the poem with pride to her friends. It was originally written in two cantos (1711; *published* 1712), achieving a success so immediate that Pope decided to enlarge its implications by expanding it to its present five cantos, which were published in 1714. It is in this second version that Pope incorporated the delightful machinery of the sylphs and gnomes.

This most brilliant of English satires, which seems to scintillate the more because of the very insignificance of its subject, is to be enjoyed in many ways. Its satire (inspired by Boileau's *Le Lutrin* and Vida's *The Game of Chess*) on the foibles, artifices, vanities, and lack of humor of the aristocracy, is deadly. The liquid music and delicate color of its lines are among the loveliest in our poetry (e.g. Canto II, lines 47-68). The masterful stroke of wit and extravagant compliment by which the conflict is resolved (Canto V, lines 123-end) cannot fail to delight. But Pope's setting his subject in the form of a mock-heroic was an act of sheer inspiration. Only the reader acquainted with the great poems of Homer, Virgil, and Milton will taste the full relish of Pope's wonderful use of epic ingredients. *The Rape of the Lock* opens, in true epic fashion (cf. pp. 436-7, *above*) with the statement of the subject and the appeal to the Muse, and begins in the middle of the action. As the gods in Homer and Virgil, and the angels in Milton, take sides, so do Pope's "bright inhabitants of air." There is a great combat over the cards, to match the great battles in Homer, Virgil, and Milton, and there is the descent into the nether world (the Cave of Spleen). Not only is the solemn heroic tone of the poem magnificently sustained, but many familiar passages and echoes from the great epics are also rephrased for Pope's own purposes. If the poet had written nothing more than this radiant poem, his immortality would have been assured. Only in the pages of Addison and Congreve will its equal in wit be met.

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[43] Virgil's birthplace.

[44] Rome.

[45] Cf. p. 630.

[46] From an essay on *Poetry* by John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, later Duke of Buckinghamshire (d. 1721).

[47] Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, author of *Essay on Translated Verse* (1684), and translator of Horace's *Art of Poetry*. Cf. p. 528.

[48] William Walsh (1663-1704), poet and critic.

To Mrs. Arabella Fermor

Madam,

It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to You. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young Ladies, who have good sense and good humor enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a Secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offered to a Bookseller, you had the good nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forced to, before I had executed half my design, for the Machinery was entirely wanting to complete it.

The Machinery, Madam, is a term invented by the Critics, to signify that part which the Deities, Angels, or Demons are made to act in a Poem: For the ancient Poets are in one respect like many modern Ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These Machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of Spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a Lady; but 'tis so much the concern of a Poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your Sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book called *Le Comte de Gabalis*, which both in its title and size is so like a Novel, that many of the Fair Sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these Gentlemen, the four Elements are inhabited by Spirits, which they call Sylphs, Gnomes, Nymphs, and Salamanders. The Gnomes or Demons of Earth delight in mischief; but the Sylphs, whose habitation is in the Air, are the best-conditioned creatures imaginable. For, they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle Spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true Adepts, an inviolate preservation of Chastity.

As to the following Cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous as the Vision at the beginning, or the Transformation at the end (except the loss of your Hair, which I always mention with reverence). The Human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones; and the character of Belinda, as it is now managed, resembles you in nothing but in Beauty. If this Poem had as many Graces as there are in your Person, or in your Mind, yet I could never hope it should pass through the world half so Uncensured as You have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with the truest esteem, Madam,

Your most obedient, Humble Servant,
A. Pope.

Canto I

What dire offense from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing—This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:
This, e'en Belinda may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?[1]
Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake,

[1] Directly imitated from Virgil's *Aeneid*, i, 11.

And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow pressed,
Her guardian Sylph prolonged the balmy rest:
'Twas He had summoned to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hovered o'er her head;
A Youth more glitt'ring than a Birth-night Beau
(That e'en in slumber caused her cheek to glow),
Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay,
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say:
"Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright Inhabitants of Air!
If e'er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the Nurse and all the Priest have taught;
Of airy Elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green,
Or virgins visited by Angel-pow'rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav'nly flow'rs;
Hear and believe! thy own importance know,
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learnèd pride concealed,
To Maids alone and Children are revealed:
What though no credit doubting Wits may give?
The Fair and Innocent shall still believe.
Know, then, unnumbered Spirits round thee fly,
The light Militia of the lower sky:
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o'er the Box,[2] and hover round the Ring.[3]
Think what an equipage thou hast in Air,
And view with scorn two Pages and a Chair.[4]
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclosed in Woman's beauteous mold;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly Vehicles to these of air.
Think not, when Woman's transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o'erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded Chariots, when alive,
And love of Ombre,[5] after death survive.
For when the Fair in all their pride expire,
To their first Elements their Souls retire:
The Sprites of fiery Termagants in Flame
Mount up, and take a Salamander's name.
Soft yielding minds to Water glide away,
And sip, with Nymphs, their elemental Tea.
The graver Prude sinks downward to a Gnome,
In search of mischief still on Earth to roam.
The light Coquettes in Sylphs aloft repair,
And sport and flutter in the fields of Air.
"Know further yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some Sylph embraced:
For Spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please.
What guards the purity of melting Maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires,
When music softens, and when dancing fires?
'Tis but their Sylph, the wise Celestials know,
Though Honor is the word with Men below.
"Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the Gnomes' embrace.
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained, and love denied:
Then gay Ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While Peers, and Dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And Garters, Stars, and Coronets[6] appear,
And in soft sounds, Your Grace[7] salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young Coquettes to roll,
Teach Infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a Beau.
"Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The Sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.
What tender maid but must a victim fall
To one man's treat, but for another's ball?
When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?
With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
They shift the moving Toyshop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
This erring mortals Levity may call;
Oh blind to truth! the Sylphs contrive it all.
"Of these am I, who thy protection claim,
A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
In the clear Mirror of thy ruling Star
I saw, alas! some dread event impend,

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[2] at the theater.

[3] Hyde Park Circus, where the persons of fashion rode.

[4] Fashionable ladies were carried in an enclosed chair by two pages.

[5] a card game, described at length in Canto III.

[6] symbolic of noble ranks or orders.

[7] the title of a duke or duchess.

Ere to the main this morning sun descend,
But heav'n reveals not what, or how, or where:
Warned by the Sylph, oh pious maid, beware!
This to disclose is all thy guardian can:
Beware of all, but most beware of Man!"
He said; when Shock, who thought she slept too long,
Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true;
Thy eyes first opened on a Billet-doux;[8]
Wounds, Charms, and Ardors were no sooner read,
But all the Vision vanished from thy head.
And now, unveiled, the Toilet stands displayed,
Each silver Vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the Nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the Cosmetic pow'rs.
A heav'nly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
Th' inferior Priestess,[9] at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of Pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various off'rings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the Goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
Now awful Beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens ev'ry grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy Sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and those divide the hair,
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labors not her own.

Canto II

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
The Sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair Nymphs, and well-dressed Youths around her shone,
But ev'ry eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those:
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.
This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two Locks which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a Lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.
For this, ere Phœbus[10] rose, he had implored
Propitious heav'n, and every pow'r adored,
But chiefly Love—to Love an Altar built,
Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves;
With tender Billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r,
The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.
But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sun-beams trembling on the floating tides:
While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die;
Smooth flow the waves, the Zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay.
All but the Sylph—with careful thoughts oppressed,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons straight his Denizens of air;
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:

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[8] love letter.

[9] her maid.

[10] the sun.

Soft o'er the shrouds aërial whispers breathe,
That seemed but Zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect-wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies,
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colors flings,
Colors that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel placed;
His purple pinions op'ning to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Demons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned
By laws eternal to th' aërial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky.
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,
Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main,
Or o'er the glebe distill the kindly rain.
Others on earth o'er human race preside,
Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide:
Of these the chief the care of Nations own,
And guard with Arms divine the British Throne.
"Our humbler province is to tend the Fair,
Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care;
To save the powder from too rude a gale,
Nor let th' imprisoned essences exhale;
To draw fresh colors from the vernal flow'rs;
To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
A brighter wash; to curl their waving hairs,
Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs;
Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
To change a Flounce, or add a Furbelow.
"This day, black Omens threat the brightest Fair,
That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care;
Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight;
But what, or where, the fates have wrapped in night.
Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law,[11]
Or some frail China jar receive a flaw;
Or stain her honor or her new brocade;
Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade;
Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball;
Or whether Heav'n has doomed that Shock must fall.
Haste, then, ye spirits! to your charge repair:
The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care;
The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign;
And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine;
Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite Lock;
Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.
"To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
We trust th' important charge, the Petticoat:
Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale;
Form a strong line about the silver bound,
And guard the wide circumference around.
"Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o'ertake his sins,
Be stopped in vials, or transfixed with pins;
Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
Or wedged whole ages in a bodkin's eye:
Gums and Pomatums shall his flight restrain,
While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain;
Or Alum styptics with contracting pow'r
Shrink his thin essence like a riveled flow'r:
Or, as Ixion,[12] fixed, the wretch shall feel
The giddy motion of the whirling Mill,
In fumes of burning Chocolate shall glow,
And tremble at the sea that froths below!"
He spoke; the spirits from the sails descend;
Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend;
Some thread the mazy ringlets of her hair;
Some hang upon the pendants of her ear:
With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
Anxious, and trembling for the birth of Fate.

CANTO III

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.[13]
Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom

[11] chastity.

[12] Ixion was bound to a wheel which continually turned

[13] Hampton Court, a palace a few miles southwest of London.

Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great Anna![14] whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take—and sometimes Tea.
Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a Court;
In various talk th' instructive hours they passed,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, *and all that.*
Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
The hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jurymen may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labors of the Toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites,
Burns to encounter two advent'rous Knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine.
Soon as she spreads her hand, th' aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perched upon a Matadore,[15]
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For Sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race,
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.
Behold, four Kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;[16]
And four fair Queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,
Th' expressive emblem of their softer pow'r;
Four Knaves[17] in garbs succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads, and halberts in their hand;
And particolored troops, a shining train,
Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.
The skillful Nymph reviews her force with care:
"Let Spades be trumps!" she said, and trumps they were.
Now move to war her sable Matadores,
In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.
Spadillio first, unconquerable Lord!
Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board.
As many more Manillio forced to yield,
And marched a victor from the verdant field.
Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard
Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.
With his broad saber next, a chief in years,
The hoary Majesty of Spades appears,
Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,
The rest, his many-colored robe concealed.
The rebel Knave, who dares his prince engage,
Proves the just victim of his royal rage.
E'en mighty Pam, that Kings and Queens o'erthrew
And mowed down armies in the fights of Lu.[18]
Sad chance of war! now destitute of aid,
Falls undistinguished by the victor spade!
Thus far both armies to Belinda yield;
Now to the Baron fate inclines the field.
His warlike Amazon her host invades,
Th' imperial consort of the crown of Spades.
The Club's black Tyrant first her victim died,
Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride:
What boots the regal circle on his head,
His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread;
That long behind he trails his pompous robe,
And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe?
The Baron now his Diamonds pours apace;
Th' embroidered King who shows but half his face,
And his refulgent Queen, with pow'rs combined
Of broken troops an easy conquest find.
Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green.
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierced battalions dis-united fall,
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.
The Knave of Diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (oh shameful chance!) the Queen of Hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look;
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill,
Just in the jaws of ruin, and Codille.
And now (as oft in some distempered State)
On one nice Trick depends the gen'ral fate.
An Ace of Hearts steps forth: The King unseen
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive Queen:

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[14] Anne, queen of England, 1702-14.

[15] valuable cards in the game of Ombre.

[16] The pattern of playing cards has changed slightly since Pope's day.

[17] jacks.

[18] Pam, the jack of clubs, is the highest card in the game of Lu.

He springs to Vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate Ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply.
O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honors shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.
For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining Altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide:
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the Fair her airy band;
Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed,
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes),
Sent up in vapors to the Baron's brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's Fate!
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their will,
How soon they find fit instruments of ill!
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case:
So Ladies in Romance assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the Lock a thousand Sprites repair,
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.
Just in that instant, anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the Virgin's thought;
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' Ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly Lover lurking at her heart.
Amazed, confused, he found his pow'r expired,
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.
The Peer now spreads the glitt'ring Forfex wide,
T' enclose the Lock; now joins it, to divide.
E'en then, before the fatal engine closed,
A wretched Sylph too fondly interposed;
Fate urged the shears, and cut the Sylph in twain
(But airy substance soon unites again),
The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!
Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav'n are cast,
When husbands, or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels fall'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine
(The victor cried) the glorious Prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis[19] shall be read,
Or the small pillow grace a Lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid in solemn days,
When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honor, name, and praise shall live!
What Time would spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
Steel could the labor of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' imperial towers of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel,
The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel?

Canto IV

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
And secret passions labored in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss,
Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravished Hair.
For, that sad moment, when the Sylphs withdrew

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[19] *The New Atalantis,* 1709, by Mrs. Manley, was notorious for its court and party scandals.

And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
As ever sullied the fair face of light,
Down to the central earth, his proper scene,
Repaired to search the gloomy Cave of Spleen.
Swift on his sooty pinions flits the Gnome,
And in a vapor reached the dismal dome.
No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
The dreaded East is all the wind that blows.
Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
Pain at her side, and Megrim[20] at her head.
Two handmaids wait the throne: alike in place,
But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed;
With store of pray'rs, for mornings, nights, and noons,
Her hand is filled; her bosom with lampoons.
There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
Practiced to lisp, and hang the head aside,
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,
Wrapped in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
The fair ones feel such maladies as these,
When each new night-dress gives a new disease.
A constant Vapor o'er the palace flies;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise;
Dreadful, as hermit's dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale specters, gaping tombs, and purple fires:
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes,
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.
Unnumbered throngs on every side are seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living Tea-pots stand, one arm held out,
One bent; the handle this, and that the spout:
A Pipkin there, like Homer's Tripod walks;
Here sighs a Jar, and there a Goose-pie talks;
Men prove with child, as powerful fancy works,
And maids turned bottles, call aloud for corks.
Safe passed the Gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing Spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the pow'r: "Hail, wayward Queen!
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen:
Parent of vapors and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays;
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh! if e'er thy Gnome could spoil a grace,
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like Citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds,
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a Prude,
Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease:
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin,
That single act gives half the world the spleen."
The Goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his pray'r.
A wondrous Bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds;[21]
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A Vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The Gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away,
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.
Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the Furies issued at the vent.
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cried
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied),
"Was it for this you took such constant care
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with tort'ring irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead?
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honor forbid! at whose unrivaled shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,

---

[20] headache.

[21] described in the *Odyssey,* book x.

And all your honor in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"
She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs:
(Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And thus broke out—"My lord, why, what the devil?
Z—ds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on 't! 'tis past a jest—nay prithee, pox!
Give her the hair"—he spoke, and rapped his box.
"It grieves me much" (replied the Peer again)
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain.
But by this Lock, this sacred Lock I swear
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honors shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew),
That while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honors of her head.
But Umbriel, hateful Gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the Vial whence the sorrows flow.
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drowned in tears;
On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said:
"For ever cursed be this detested day,
Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of Courts to num'rous ills betrayed.
O had I rather un-admired remained
In some lone isle, or distant Northern land;
Where the gilt Chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea![22]
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful Lords to roam?
O had I stayed, and said my pray'rs at home!
'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring China shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
A Sylph too warned me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late!
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs!
My hands shall rend what e'en thy rapine spares:
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands.
O hadst thou, cruel! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!"

CANTO V

She said: the pitying audience melt in tears.
But Fate and Jove had stopped the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.[23]
Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began:
"Say why are Beauties praised and honored most,
The wise man's passion, and the vain man's toast?
Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why Angels called, and Angel-like adored?
Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved Beaux,
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows;
How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains;
That men may say, when we the front-box grace:
'Behold the first in virtue as in face!'
Oh! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age away;
Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use?
To patch, nay ogle, might become a Saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.
But since, alas! frail beauty must decay,

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[22] a kind of tea.

[23] Dido's grief over the loss of Aeneas is described in the *Aeneid*, Book iv.

Curled or uncurled, since Locks will turn to gray;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,
And she who scorns a man, must die a maid;
What then remains but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humor still whate'er we lose?
And trust me, dear! good-humor can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."
So spoke the Dame, but no applause ensued;
Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her Prude.
"To arms, to arms!" the fierce Virago cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack;
Heroes' and Heroines' shouts confus'dly rise,
And bass, and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms:
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound:
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height
Clapped his glad wings, and sat to view the fight:
Propped on the bodkin spears, the Sprites survey
The growing combat, or assist the fray.
While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cried Dapperwit,[24] and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling[25] upwards cast,
"Those eyes are made so killing"—was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.
When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the Beau revived again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the Men's wits against the Lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor feared the Chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold Lord with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of Snuff the wily virgin threw;
The Gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
"Now meet thy fate," incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great great grandsire wore about his neck,
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs,
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)
'Boast not my fall" (he cried) "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low,
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah, let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."
"Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The Lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
In every place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be bless'd,
So heav'n decrees! with heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the Lunar sphere,
Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
There Heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases,
And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

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[24] a rake in Wycherley's *Love in a Wood.*

[25] Sir Fopling Flutter is the principal character in Etherege's *The Man of Mode.*

But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise,
Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes
(So Rome's great founder[26] to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus alone confessed in view);
A sudden Star, it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's Locks[27] first rose so bright,
The heav'ns bespangling with disheveled light.
The Sylph's behold it kindling as it flies,
And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.
This the Beau monde shall from the Mall[28] survey,
And hail with music its propitious ray.
This the bless'd Lover shall for Venus take,
And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.[29]
This Partridge[30] soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks through Galileo's eyes;[31]
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost.
For, after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die:
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

(1712-1714)

Eloïsa to Abelard

In 1714 John Hughes published his English version of a French adaptation of the Latin letters of Abelard and Eloise. It is true that this "heroic epistle" of Pope's, inspired by a reading of Hughes, has less of passion than of rhetoric, and that its attempts at the dramatic are without authentic fire. But it has many lovely touches, and its music is Pope's at its sweetest. Moreover, though it emanated from the pen of a leading neoclassicist, its romantic subject must be counted as a contribution to the slowly swelling tide of romanticism.

In these deep solitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-pensive contemplation dwells,
And ever-musing melancholy reigns;
What means this tumult in a Vestal's veins?
Why rove my thoughts beyond this last retreat?
Why feels my heart its long-forgotten heat?
Yet, yet I love!—From Abelard it came,
And Eloïsa yet must kiss the name.
Dear fatal name! rest ever unreveal'd,
Nor pass these lips in holy silence seal'd;
Hide it, my heart, within that close disguise,
Where mix'd with God's, his loved Idea lies:
Oh write it not, my hand—the name appears
Already written—wash it out, my tears!
In vain lost Eloïsa weeps and prays,
Her heart still dictates, and her hand obeys.
Relentless walls! whose darksome round contains
Repentant sighs, and voluntary pains:
Ye rugged rocks! which holy knees have worn;
Ye grots and caverns shagg'd with horrid thorn!
Shrines! where their vigils pale-ey'd virgins keep,
And pitying saints, whose statues learn to weep!
Tho' cold like you, unmov'd and silent grown,
I have not yet forgot myself to stone.
All is not Heav'n's while Abelard has part,
Still rebel nature holds out half my heart;
Nor pray'rs nor fasts its stubborn pulse restrain,
Nor tears for ages taught to flow in vain.
Soon as thy letters trembling I unclose,
That well-known name awakens all my woes.
Oh name for ever sad! for ever dear!
Still breath'd in sighs, still usher'd with a tear.
I tremble too, where'er my own I find,
Some dire misfortune follows close behind.
Line after line my gushing eyes o'erflow,
Led thro' a sad variety of woe;
Now warm in love, now with'ring in my bloom,
Lost in a convent's solitary gloom!

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[26] Romulus.

[27] Berenice, queen of Egypt, sacrificed her locks to secure the safe return of her husband from war. The hair was made into a constellation after her death.

[28] a promenade on the north side of Saint James's Park.

[29] in Saint James's Park.

[30] an almanac maker who had recently been made victim of a satire by Swift.

[31] the telescope.

There stern Religion quench'd th' unwilling flame,
There dy'd the best of passions, Love and Fame.
Yet write, oh write me all, that I may join
Griefs to thy griefs, and echo sighs to thine.
Nor foes nor fortune take this pow'r away;
And is my Abelard less kind than they?
Tears still are mine, and those I need not spare,
Love but demands what else were shed in pray'r;
No happier task these faded eyes pursue;
To read and weep is all they now can do.
Then share thy pain, allow that sad relief;
Ah, more than share it, give me all thy grief.
Heav'n first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid;
They live, they speak, they breathe what love inspires,
Warm from the soul, and faithful to its fires;
The virgin's wish without her fears impart,
Excuse the blush, and pour out all the heart,
Speed the soft intercourse from soul to soul,
And waft a sigh from Indus to the Pole.
Thou know'st how guiltless first I met the flame,
When Love approach'd me under Friendship's name;
My fancy form'd thee of angelic kind,
Some emanations of th' all-beauteous Mind.
Those smiling eyes, attemp'ring ev'ry ray,
Shone sweetly lambent with celestial day.
Guiltless I gaz'd; heav'n listen'd while you sung;
And truths divine came mended from that tongue.
From lips like those what precepts fail'd to move?
Too soon they taught me 'twas no sin to love:
Back thro' the paths of pleasing sense I ran,
Nor wish'd an Angel whom I loved a Man.
Dim and remote the joys of saints I see,
Nor envy them that heav'n I lose for thee.
How oft, when press'd to marriage, have I said,
Curse on all laws but those which love has made!
Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.
Let wealth, let honor, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove,
Fame, wealth, and honor! what are you to Love?
The jealous God, when we profane his fires,
Those restless passions in revenge inspires,
And bids them make mistaken mortals groan,
Who seek in love for aught but love alone.
Should at my feet the world's great master fall,
Himself, his throne, his world, I'd scorn 'em all:
Not Cæsar's empress would I deign to prove;
No, make me mistress to the man I love.
If there be yet another name more free,
More fond than mistress, make me that to thee!
Oh! happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature law:
All then is full, possessing, and possess'd,
No craving void left aching in the breast:
Ev'n thought meets thought, ere from the lips it part,
And each warm wish springs mutual from the heart.
This sure is bliss (if bliss on earth there be)
And once the lot of Abelard and me.
Alas, how chang'd! what sudden horrors rise!
A naked Lover bound and bleeding lies!
Where, where was Eloïse? her voice, her hand,
Her poniard had oppos'd the dire command.
Barbarian, stay! that bloody stroke restrain;
The crime was common, common be the pain.
I can no more, by shame, by rage suppress'd,
Let tears and burning blushes speak the rest.
Canst thou forget that sad, that solemn day,
When victims at yon altar's foot we lay?
Canst thou forget what tears that moment fell,
When warm in youth, I bade the world farewell?
As with cold lips I kiss'd the sacred veil,
The shrines all trembled, and the lamps grew pale:
Heav'n scarce believ'd the Conquest it survey'd,
And Saints with wonder heard the vows I made.
Yet then, to those dread altars as I drew,
Not on the cross my eyes were fix'd, but you:
Not grace, or zeal, love only was my call,
And if I lose thy love, I lose my all.
Come! with thy looks, thy words, relieve my woe;
Those still at least are left thee to bestow.
Still on that breast enamor'd let me lie,
Still drink delicious poison from thy eye,
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be press'd;
Give all thou canst—and let me dream the rest.
Ah, no! instruct me other joys to prize,
With other beauties charm my partial eyes;
Full in my view set all the bright abode,
And make my soul quit Abelard for God.
Ah think at least thy flock deserves thy care,
Plants of thy hand, and children of thy pray'r.
From the false world in early youth they fled,
By thee to mountains, wilds, and deserts led.
You rais'd these hallow'd walls; the desert smil'd,
And Paradise was open'd in the Wild.
No weeping orphan saw his father's stores
Our shrines irradiate, or emblaze the floors;
No silver saints, by dying misers giv'n,
Here brib'd the rage of ill-requited heav'n:
But such plain roofs as Piety could raise,
And only vocal with the Maker's praise.

In these lone walls (their day's eternal bound)
These moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd,
Where awful arches make a noon-day night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light;
Thy eyes diffus'd a reconciling ray,
And gleams of glory brighten'd all the day.
But now no face divine contentment wears,
'Tis all blank sadness, or continual tears.
See how the force of others' pray'rs I try,
(O pious fraud of am'rous charity!)
But why should I on others' pray'rs depend?
Come thou, my father, brother, husband, friend!
Ah, let thy handmaid, sister, daughter move,
And all those tender names in one, thy love!
The darksome pines that o'er yon rocks reclin'd
Wave high, and murmur to the hollow wind,
The wand'ring streams that shine between the hills,
The grots that echo to the tinkling rills,
The dying gales that pant upon the trees,
The lakes that quiver to the curling breeze;
No more these scenes my meditation aid,
Or lull to rest the visionary maid.
But o'er the twilight groves and dusky caves,
Long-sounding aisles, and intermingled graves,
Black Melancholy sits, and round her throws
A death-like silence, and a dread repose:
Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,
Shades every flower, and darkens every green,
Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,
And breathes a browner horror on the woods.
Yet here for ever, ever must I stay;
Sad proof how well a lover can obey!
Death, only Death can break the lasting chain;
And here, even then shall my cold dust remain;
Here all its frailties, all its flames resign,
And wait till 'tis no sin to mix with thine.
Ah, wretch! believed the spouse of God in vain,
Confessed within the slave of Love and man.
Assist me, Heaven! but whence arose that prayer?
Sprung it from piety or from despair?
Even here, where frozen Chastity retires,
Love finds an altar for forbidden fires.
I ought to grieve, but cannot what I ought;
I mourn the lover, not lament the fault;
I view my crime, but kindle at the view,
Repent old pleasures, and solicit new;
Now turned to Heaven, I weep my past offence,
Now think of thee, and curse my innocence.
Of all affliction taught a lover yet,
'Tis sure the hardest science to forget!
How shall I lose the sin, yet keep the sense,
And love th' offender, yet detest th' offence?
How the dear object from the crime remove,
Or how distinguish Penitence from Love?
Unequal task! a passion to resign,
For hearts so touched, so pierced, so lost as mine:
Ere such a soul regains its peaceful state,
How often must it love, how often hate!
How often hope, despair, resent, regret,
Conceal, disdain—do all things but forget!
But let Heaven seize it, all at once 'tis fired;
Not touched, but rapt; not wakened, but inspired!
O come! O teach me Nature to subdue,
Renounce my love, my life, myself—and You:
Fill my fond heart with God alone, for he
Alone can rival, can succeed to thee.
How happy is the blameless vestal's lot!
The world forgetting, by the world forgot;
Eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,
Each prayer accepted, and each wish resigned;
Labor and rest, that equal periods keep;
Obedient slumbers that can wake and weep;
Desires composed, affections ever even;
Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to Heaven.
Grace shines around her with serenest beams,
And whispering angels prompt her golden dreams.
For her th' unfading rose of Eden blooms,
And wings of seraphs shed divine perfumes;
For her the spouse prepares the bridal ring;
For her white virgins hymeneals[1] sing;
To sounds of heavenly harps she dies away,
And melts in visions of eternal day.
Far other dreams my erring soul employ,
Far other raptures of unholy joy.
When at the close of each sad, sorrowing day,
Fancy restores what vengeance snatched away,
Then conscience sleeps, and leaving Nature free,
All my loose soul unbounded springs to thee!
Oh curst, dear horrors of all-conscious night!
How glowing guilt exalts the keen delight!
Provoking demons all restraint remove,
And stir within me every source of love.
I hear thee, view thee, gaze o'er all thy charms,
And round thy phantom glue my clasping arms.
I wake:—no more I hear, no more I view;
The phantom flies me, as unkind as you.
I call aloud; it hears not what I say:
I stretch my empty arms; it glides away.
To dream once more I close my willing eyes;
Ye soft illusions, dear deceits, arise!
Alas, no more! methinks we wandering go
Through dreary wastes, and weep each other's woe,
Where round some moldering tower pale ivy creeps,

[1] wedding songs.

And low-browed rocks hang nodding o'er the deeps.
Sudden you mount, you beckon from the skies;
Clouds interpose, waves roar, and winds arise.
I shriek, start up, the same sad prospect find,
And wake to all the griefs I left behind.
For thee the fates, severely kind, ordain
A cool suspense from pleasure and from pain;
Thy life, a long, dead calm of fixed repose;
No pulse that riots, and no blood that glows;
Still as the sea, ere winds were taught to blow,
Or moving spirit bade the waters flow;
Soft as the slumbers of a saint forgiven,
And mild as opening gleams of promised Heaven.
Come, Abelard! for what hast thou to dread?
The torch of Venus burns not for the dead.
Nature stands check'd; Religion disapproves:
Ev'n thou art cold—yet Eloïsa loves.
Ah hopeless, lasting flames! like those that burn
To light the dead and warm th' unfruitful urn.
What scenes appear where'er I turn my view?
The dear Ideas, where I fly, pursue,
Rise in the grove, before the altar rise,
Stain all my soul, and wanton in my eyes.
I waste the Matin lamp in sighs for thee,
Thy image steals between my God and me,
Thy voice I seem in ev'ry hymn to hear,
With ev'ry bead I drop too soft a tear.
When from the censer clouds of fragrance roll,
And swelling organs lift the rising soul,
One thought of thee puts all the pomp to flight,
Priests, tapers, temples, swim before my sight:
In seas of flame my plunging soul is drown'd,
While Altars blaze, and Angels tremble round.
While prostrate here in humble grief I lie,
Kind, virtuous drops just gath'ring in my eye,
While praying, trembling, in the dust I roll,
And dawning grace is op'ning on my soul:
Come, if thou dar'st, all charming as thou art!
Oppose thyself to heav'n; dispute my heart;
Come, with one glance of those deluding eyes
Blot out each bright idea of the skies;
Take back that grace, those sorrows, and those tears;
Take back my fruitless penitence and pray'rs;
Snatch me just mounting, from the blest abode;
Assist the fiends, and tear me from my God!
No, fly me, fly me, far as Pole from Pole;
Rise Alps between us! and whole oceans roll!
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,
Nor share one pang of all I felt for thee.
Thy oaths I quit, thy memory resign;
Forget, renounce me, hate whate'er was mine.
Fair eyes, and tempting looks, (which yet I view!
Long lov'd, ador'd ideas, all adieu!
O Grace serene! O virtue heav'nly fair!
Divine oblivion of low-thoughted care!
Fresh blooming Hope, gay daughter of the sky!
And Faith, our early immortality!
Enter, each mild, each amicable guest;
Receive, and wrap me in eternal rest!
See in her cell sad Eloïsa spread,
Propt on some tomb, a neighbor of the dead.
In each low wind methinks a Spirit calls,
And more than Echoes talk along the walls.
Here, as I watch'd the dying lamps around,
From yonder shrine I heard a hollow sound.
"Come, sister, come! (it said, or seem'd to say,)
Thy place is here, sad sister, come away!
Once like thyself, I trembled, wept and pray'd,
Love's victim then, tho' now a sainted maid:
But all is calm in this eternal sleep;
Here grief forgets to groan, and love to weep,
Ev'n superstition loses ev'ry fear:
For God, not man, absolves our frailties here."
I come, I come! prepare your roseate bow'rs,
Celestial palms, and ever-blooming flowers.
Thither, where sinners may have rest, I go,
Where flames refin'd in breasts seraphic glow:
Thou, Abelard! the last sad office pay,
And smooth my passage to the realms of day;
See my lips tremble, and my eye-balls roll,
Suck my last breath, and catch my flying soul!
Ah no—in sacred vestments may'st thou stand,
The hallow'd taper trembling in thy hand,
Present the cross before my lifted eye,
Teach me at once, and learn of me to die.
Ah then, thy once-lov'd Eloïsa see!
It will be then no crime to gaze on me.
See from my cheek the transient roses fly!
See the last sparkle languish in my eye!
Till ev'ry motion, pulse, and breath be o'er,
And ev'n my Abelard be lov'd no more.
O Death, all-eloquent! you only prove
What dust we dote on, when 'tis man we love.
Then too, when fate shall thy fair frame destroy
(That cause of all my guilt, and all my joy,)
In trance ecstatic may the pangs be drown'd,
Bright clouds descend, and Angels watch thee round,
From op'ning skies may streaming glories shine,
And saints embrace thee with a love like mine.
May one kind grave unite each hapless name,
And graft my love immortal on thy fame!
Then, ages hence, when all my woes are o'er,
When this rebellious heart shall beat no more

If ever chance two wandering lovers brings,
To Paraclete's white walls and silver springs,
O'er the pale marble shall they join their heads,
And drink the falling tears each other sheds; 350
Then sadly say, with mutual pity moved,
"O may we never love as these have loved!"
From the full choir, when loud hosannas rise,
And swell the pomp of dreadful sacrifice,
Amid that scene if some relenting eye 355
Glance on the stone where our cold relics lie,
Devotion's self shall steal a thought from Heaven,
One human tear shall drop and be forgiven.
And sure if fate some future bard shall join
In sad similitude of griefs to mine, 360
Condemned whole years in absence to deplore,
And image charms he must behold no more;
Such if there be, who loves so long, so well;
Let him our sad, our tender story tell;
The well-sung woes will soothe my pensive
ghost; 365
He best can paint them who shall feel them most.
(1717)

An Essay on Man

Published anonymously to forestall the attacks which Pope knew might be expected from his enemies, this *Essay* won immediate fame. It had been written at the suggestion of Lord Bolingbroke, philosopher, literary dilettante, and politician. Too often has it been said that Pope here merely versified the ideas of the free-thinking Bolingbroke, with whom, as his neighbor after 1723, Pope had many philosophic discussions. Pope, it should be remembered, never rejected the fundamental dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church.

In the four dramatic epistles which make up the *Essay*, the subjects discussed are man's relation to the universe, to himself, to society, and to happiness. But little consistency will be found in them, and no attempt at a philosophic system. For Pope constantly vacillates between his professed purpose of vindicating "the ways of God to man," and a superficial deism. The poet everywhere exhibits his failure really to digest the philosophic concepts of his day; he seems to accept them all, more or less, even when they conflict with one another. If there is any basic idea in the poem, it is the comfortable eighteenth-century belief, promulgated by Leibnitz, that "Whatever is, is right." To us the great value of the work lies not in the thought behind it, but in the perfect epigrams with which it is studded. Many of them have passed into common parlance.

THE DESIGN

Having proposed to write some pieces on Human Life and Manners, such as, to use my Lord Bacon's expression, "come home to men's business and bosoms," I thought it more satisfactory to begin with considering Man in the abstract, his nature and his state: since to prove any moral duty, to enforce any moral precept, or to examine the perfection or imperfection of any creature whatsoever, it is necessary first to know what condition and relation it is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of its being.

The science of Human Nature is, like all other sciences, reduced to a few clear points: there are not many certain truths in this world. It is therefore in the anatomy of the mind, as in that of the body; more good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the conformations and uses of which will for ever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last; and, I will venture to say, they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice more than advanced the theory of morality. If I could flatter myself that this Essay has any merit, it is in steering betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite, in passing over terms utterly unintelligible and in forming a temperate, yet not inconsistent, and a short, yet not imperfect, system of ethics.

This I might have done in prose; but I chose verse, and even rhyme, for two reasons. The one will appear obvious; that principles, maxims, or precepts, so written, both strike the reader more strongly at first, and are more easily retained by him afterwards: the other may seem odd, but it is true: I found I could express them more shortly this way than in prose itself; and nothing is more certain than that much of the force as well as grace of arguments or instructions depends on their conciseness. I was unable to treat this part of my subject more in detail without becoming dry and tedious; or more poetically without sacrificing perspicuity to ornament, without wandering from the precision, or breaking the chain of reasoning. If any man can unite all these without diminution of any of them, I freely confess he will compass a thing above my capacity.

What is now published is only to be considered as a general Map of Man, marking out no more than the greater parts, their extent, their limits, and their connexion, but leaving the particular to be more fully delineated in the charts which are to follow; consequently these epistles in their progress (if I have health and leisure to make any progress) will be less dry, and more susceptible of poetical ornament. I am here only opening the fountains, and clearing the passage: to deduce the rivers, to follow them in their course, and to observe their effects, may be a task more agreeable.

Epistle I

Of the Nature and State of Man, with Respect to the Universe

ARGUMENT

Of Man in the abstract. I. That we can judge only with regard to our own system, being ignorant of the relations of systems and things, verse 17, etc. II. That Man is not to be deemed imperfect, but a being suited to his place and rank in the creation, agreeable to the general order of things, and conformable to ends and relations to him unknown, verse 35, etc. III. That it is partly upon his ignorance of future events, and partly upon the hope of a future state, that all his happiness in the present depends, verse 77, etc. IV. The pride of aiming at more knowledge, and pretending to more perfection, the cause of Man's error and misery. The impiety of putting himself in the place of God, and judging of the fitness or unfitness, perfection or imperfection, justice or injustice, of his dispensations, verse 113, etc. V. The absurdity of conceiting himself the final cause of the creation, or expecting that perfection in the moral world which is not in the natural, verse 131, etc. VI. The unreasonableness of his complaints against Providence, while, on the one hand, he demands the perfections of the angels, and, on the other, the bodily qualifications of the brutes; though to possess any of the sensitive faculties in a higher degree would render him miserable, verse 173, etc. VII. That throughout the whole visible world a universal order and gradation in the sensual and mental faculties is observed, which causes a subordination of creature to creature, and of all creatures to man. The gradations of Sense, Instinct, Thought, Reflection, Reason: that Reason alone countervails all the other faculties, verse 207, etc. VIII. How much further this order and subordination of living creatures may extend above and below us; were any part of which broken, not that part only, but the whole connected creation must be destroyed, verse 213, etc. IX. The extravagance, madness, and pride of such a desire, verse 290, etc. X The consequence of all, the absolute submission due to Providence, both as to our present and future state, verse 281, etc., to the end.

Awake, my St. John![1] leave all meaner things
To low ambition and the pride of Kings.
Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us and to die,
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man;
A mighty maze! but not without a plan;
A wild, where weeds and flowers promiscuous shoot,
Or garden, tempting with forbidden fruit.
Together let us beat this ample field,
Try what the open, what the covert yield;
The latent tracts, the giddy heights, explore
Of all who blindly creep or sightless soar;
Eye Nature's walks, shoot folly as it flies,
And catch the manners living as they rise;
Laugh where we must, be candid where we can,
But vindicate the ways of God to man.
  I. Say first, of God above or Man below
What can we reason but from what we know?
Of man what see we but his station here,
From which to reason, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumbered tho' the God be known
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He who thro' vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe,
Observe how system into system runs,
What other planets circle other suns,
What varied being peoples every star,
May tell why Heaven has made us as we are:
But of this frame, the bearings and the ties,
The strong connexions, nice dependencies,
Gradations just, has thy pervading soul
Looked thro'; or can a part contain the whole?
  Is the great chain that draws all to agree,
And drawn supports, upheld by God or thee?
  II. Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst tho find,
Why formed so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess
Why formed no weaker, blinder, and no less!
Ask of thy mother earth why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade!
Or ask of yonder argent fields above[2]
Why Jove's satellites are less than Jove!
  Of systems possible, if 'tis confest
That wisdom infinite must form the best,
Where all must fall or not coherent be,
And all that rises rise in due degree;
Then in the scale of reasoning life 'tis plain
There must be, somewhere, such a rank as Man:
And all the question (wrangle e'er so long)
Is only this, if God has placed him wrong?
  Respecting man, whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right, as relative to all.
In human works, tho' labor'd on with pain,
A thousand movements scarce one purpose gain
In God's, one single can its end produce;
Yet serves to second too, some other use.
So Man, who here seems principal alone,
Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal;
'Tis but a part we see, and not a whole.
  When the proud steed shall know why Man restrains
His fiery course, or drives him o'er the plains;
When the dull Ox, why now he breaks the clod,
Is now a victim, and now Egypt's God:[3]
Then shall Man's pride and dulness comprehend
His actions', passions', being's use and end;
Why doing, suff'ring, check'd, impell'd; and wh

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[1] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751).

[2] the skies.

[3] the ox was a sacred animal in Egypt.

This hour a slave, the next a deity.
Then say not Man's imperfect, Heav'n in fault;
Say rather, Man's as perfect as he ought:
His knowledge measur'd to his state and place;
His time a moment, and a point his space.
If to be perfect in a certain sphere,
What matter, soon or late, or here or there?
The blest to-day is as completely so,
As who began a thousand years ago.
III. Heav'n from all creatures hides the book of Fate,
All but the page prescrib'd, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer Being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy Reason, would he skip and play?
Pleas'd to the last, he crops the flow'ry food,
And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood.
Oh blindness to the future! kindly giv'n,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n:
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.
Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
What future bliss, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that Hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never Is, but always To be blest:
The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates[4] in a life to come.
Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul, proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n,
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, an humbler heav'n,
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To Be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no Angel's wings, no Seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.
IV. Go, wiser thou! and, in thy scale of sense,
Weigh thy Opinion against Providence;
Call imperfection what thou fancy'st such,
Say here he gives too little, there too much:
Destroy all creatures for thy sport or gust,
Yet cry, if Man's unhappy, God's unjust;
If Man alone engross not Heaven's high care,
Alone made perfect here, immortal there:
Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Re-judge his justice, be the God of God.
In Pride, in reas'ning Pride, our error lies;
All quit their sphere, and rush into the skies.
Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,
Men would be Angels, Angels would be Gods.
Aspiring to be Gods, if Angels fell,
Aspiring to be Angels, Men rebel:
And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of Order, sins against th' Eternal Cause.
V. Ask for what end the heav'nly bodies shine—
Earth for whose use? Pride answers, " 'Tis for mine:
For me kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies."
But errs not Nature from this gracious end,
From burning suns when livid deaths descend,
When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep
Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?
"No," 'tis replied, "the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial but by general laws;
Th' exceptions few; some change since all began;
And what created perfect?"—Why then man?
If the great end be human happiness,
Then Nature deviates; and can man do less?
As much that end a constant course requires
Of showers and sunshine, as of man's desires;
As much eternal springs and cloudless skies,
As men for ever temperate, calm, and wise.
If plagues or earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Catiline?[5]
Who knows but He, whose hand the lightning forms,
Who heaves old ocean, and who wings the storms;
Pours fierce ambition in a Cæsar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon[6] loose to scourge mankind?

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[4] wanders.

[5] Cesare Borgia (1476-1507), Italian Cardinal and military leader notorious for his cruelty and treachery; Cataline, the Roman conspirator of the first century B.C. against whom Cicero delivered many orations.

[6] Alexander the Great.

From pride, from pride, our very reasoning springs;
Account for moral as for natural things:
Why charge we Heaven in those, in these acquit?
In both, to reason right is to submit.
  Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind,
That never passion discomposed the mind:
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life.
The general order, since the whole began,
Is kept in Nature, and is kept in Man.
  VI. What would this Man? Now upward will he soar,
And little less than Angel, would be more;
Now looking downwards, just as grieved appears
To want the strength of bulls, the fur of bears,
Made for his use all creatures if he call,
Say what their use, had he the powers of all?
Nature to these without profusion kind,
The proper organs, proper powers assigned:
Each seeming want compensated of course,
Here with degrees of swiftness, there of force;
All in exact proportion to the state;
Nothing to add, and nothing to abate;
Each beast, each insect, happy in its own:
Is Heaven unkind to man, and man alone?
Shall he alone, whom rational we call,
Be pleased with nothing if not blessed with all?
  The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No powers of body or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear.
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.
Say, what the use, were finer optics given,
To inspect a mite, not comprehend the Heaven?
Or touch, if tremblingly alive all o'er,
To smart and agonize at every pore?
Or quick effluvia darting thro' the brain,
Die of a rose in aromatic pain?
If Nature thundered in his opening ears,
And stunned him with the music of the spheres,
How would he wish that Heaven had left him still
The whispering zephyr and the purling rill?
Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives and what denies?
  VII. Far as creation's ample range extends,
The scale of sensual, mental powers ascends.
Mark how it mounts to man's imperial race
From the green myriads in the peopled grass:
What modes of sight betwixt each wide extreme,
The mole's dim curtain and the lynx's beam:
Of smell, the headlong lioness between
And hound sagacious on the tainted green:
Of hearing, from the life that fills the flood
To that which warbles thro' the vernal wood.
The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line:
In the nice bee what sense so subtly true,
From poisonous herbs extracts the healing dew!
How instinct varies in the grovelling swine,
Compared, half-reasoning elephant, with thine!
'Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier!
For ever separate, yet for ever near!
Remembrance and reflection how allied;
What thin partitions sense from thought divide:
And middle natures, how they long to join,
Yet never pass th' insuperable line!
Without this just gradation, could they be
Subjected, these to those, or all to thee?
The powers of all subdued by thee alone,
Is not thy reason all these powers in one?
  VIII. See, through this air, this ocean, and this earth
All matter quick, and bursting into birth.
Above, how high, progressive life may go!
Around, how wide! how deep extend below!
Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect, what no eye can see,
No glass can reach; from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing.—On superior powers
Were we to press, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one step broken, the great scale's destroyed:
From nature's chain whatever link you strike,
Tenth, or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike.
  And, if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to th' amazing whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the whole must fall.
Let earth unbalanced from her orbit fly,
Planets and suns run lawless through the sky;
Let ruling angels from their spheres be hurled,
Being on being wrecked, and world on world;
Heaven's whole foundations to their centre nod,
And nature tremble to the throne of God.
All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
Vile worm!—Oh, madness! pride! impiety!
  IX. What if the foot, ordained the dust to tread,
Or hand, to toil, aspired to be the head?
What if the head, the eye, or ear repined
To serve mere engines to the ruling mind?
Just as absurd for any part to claim

To be another, in this general frame;
Just as absurd, to mourn the tasks or pains,
The great directing Mind of all ordains.
All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same;
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph, that adores and burns:
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.
X. Cease then, nor ORDER imperfection name:
Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.
Know thy own point: This kind, this due degree
Of blindness, weakness, Heaven bestows on thee.
Submit.—In this, or any other sphere,
Secure to be as blest as thou canst bear:
Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good:
And, spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

(1732-1734)

HORACE (65-8 B.C.)

Of the great Roman satirists Horace alone seems to have so universalized his topics that they are as fresh today as when he first wrote about them. Moreover, that urbanity which imparts a rare flavor to his lyrics is not absent from the *Satires* and assures us that his barbs are not poisoned. The bore whom Horace met on the Sacred Way is still with us; and we are likely to be as helpless in his hands as was the Roman poet. A reading of this poem, even in translation, will make plain why Horace was admired by every neoclassicist. Dryden in his *Essay on Satire* confesses a preference for the liveliness of Juvenal over the mellowness of Horace; but in his *Absalom* the influence of Horace is the more conspicuous, particularly in the portrait of Zimri (cf. *above*). Pope, like Boileau, made a series of adaptations of Horace to which the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* was intended as a prologue; here too the spirit of Horace is strong. (For a fuller note on Horace, cf. p. 377, *above*.)

THE BORE

(*Translated by Theodore Martin*)

It chanced that I, the other day,
Was sauntering up the Sacred Way,[1]
And musing, as my habit is,
Some trivial random fantasies,
That for the time absorbed me quite,
When there comes running up a wight,
Whom only by his name I knew;
"Ha, my dear fellow, how d'ye do?"
Grasping my hand, he shouted. "Why,
As times go, pretty well," said I;
"And you, I trust, can say the same."
But after me as still he came,
"Sir, is there anything," I cried,
"You want of me?" "Oh," he replied,
"I'm just the man you ought to know;—
A scholar, author!" "Is it so?
For this I'll like you all the more!"
Then, writhing to evade the bore,
I quicken now my pace, now stop,
And in my servant's ear let drop
Some words, and all the while I feel
Bathed in cold sweat from head to heel.
"Oh for a touch," I moaned in pain,
"Bolanus, of thy slapdash vein,
To put this incubus to rout!"
As he went chattering on about
Whatever he descries or meets,
The crowds, the beauty of the streets,
The city's growth, its splendor, size.
"You're dying to be off," he cries;
For all the while I'd been struck dumb.
"I've noticed it some time. But come,
Let's clearly understand each other;
It's no use making all this pother.
My mind's made up to stick by you;
So where you go, there I go too."
"Don't put yourself," I answered, "pray,
So very far out of your way.
I'm on the road to see a friend,
Whom you don't know, that's near his end,

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[1] The places mentioned in this poem are all in Rome.

Away beyond the Tiber far,
Close by where Cæsar's gardens are."
"I've nothing in the world to do,
And what's a paltry mile or two?
I like it, so 'll follow you!"
Down dropped my ears on hearing this
Just like a vicious jackass's
That's loaded heavier than he likes;
But off anew my torment strikes,
"If well I know myself, you'll end
With making of me more a friend
Than Viscus, aye, or Varius; for
Of verses who can run off more,
Or run them off at such a pace?
Who dance with such distinguished grace?
And as for singing, zounds!" said he,
"Hermogenes might envy me!"
Here was an opening to break in.
"Have you a mother, father, kin,
To whom your life is precious?" None;—
Oh happy they, I inly groan.
Now I am left, and I alone.
Quick, quick, despatch me where I stand!
Now is the direful doom at hand
Which erst the Sabine beldam old,
Shaking her magic urn, foretold
In days when I was yet a boy:—
"Him shall no poisons fell destroy,
Nor hostile sword in shock of war,
Nor gout, nor colic, nor catarrh.
In fullness of the time his thread
Shall by a prate-apace be shred;
So let him, when he's twenty-one,
If he be wise, all babblers shun."
Now we were close to Vesta's fane.[2]
'Twas hard on ten, and he, my bane,
Was bound to answer to his bail,
Or lose his cause, if he should fail.
"Do, if you love me, step aside
One moment with me here," he cried.
"Upon my life, indeed, I can't;
Of law I'm wholly ignorant;
And you know where I'm hurrying to."
"I'm fairly puzzled what to do.
Give you up, or my cause?" "Oh, me,
Me, by all means!" "I won't," quoth he;
And stalks on, holding by me tight.
As with your conqueror to fight
Is hard, I follow. "How," anon
He rambles off—"how get you on,
You and Mæcenas?[3] To so few
He keeps himself. So clever, too!
No man more dexterous to seize
And use his opportunities.
Just introduce me, and you'll see,
We'll pull together famously;
And hang me, then, if with my backing,
You don't send all your rivals packing!"
"Things in that quarter, sir, proceed
In very different style indeed.
No house more free from all that's base,
In none cabals more out of place.
It hurts me not, if there I see
Men richer, better read than me.
Each has his place!" "Amazing tact!
Scarce credible!" "But 'tis the fact."
"You quicken my desire to get
An introduction to his set."
"With merit such as yours, you need
But wish it, and you must succeed.
He's to be won, and that is why
Of strangers he's so very shy."
"I'll spare no pains, no arts, no shifts!
His servants I'll corrupt with gifts.
Today though driven from his gate,
What matter? I will lie in wait,
To catch some lucky chance; I'll meet,
Or overtake him in the street;
I'll haunt him like his shadow! Nought
In life without much toil is bought."
Just at this moment who but my
Dear friend Aristius should come by?
My rattle-brain right well he knew.
We stop. "Whence, friends, and whither to?"
He asks and answers. Whilst we ran
The usual courtesies, I began
To pluck him by the sleeve, to pinch
His arms, that feel but will not flinch,
By nods and winks most plain to see
Imploring him to rescue me:
He, wickedly obtuse the while,
Meets all my signals with a smile.
I, choked with rage, said, "Was there not
Some business, I've forgotten what,
You mentioned, that you wished with me
To talk about, and privately?"
"Oh, I remember! Never mind.
Some more convenient time I'll find.
The Thirtieth Sabbath this! Would you
Offend the circumcised Jew?"
"Religious scruples I have none."
"Ah! But I have. I am but one
Of the canaille—a feeble brother.
Your pardon! Some fine day or other

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[2] the famous temple of Vesta.
[3] a man of great wealth and patron to Horace.

I'll tell you what it was." Oh, day
Of woeful doom to me! Away
The rascal bolted like an arrow,
And left me underneath the harrow;
When by the rarest luck, we ran
At the next turn against the man
Who had the lawsuit with my bore.
"Ha, knave!" he cried with loud uproar,
"Where are you off to? Will you here
Stand witness?" I present my ear.
To court he hustles him along;
High words are bandied, high and strong,
A mob collects, the fray to see;
So did Apollo rescue me.

JUVENAL (60?-140 A.D.)

Decimus Junius Juvenal was the most notable satirist of his day. Of his many satires sixteen are extant. He was an indefatigable critic of the shortcomings of his contemporaries. The daily habits of the Romans, the condition of the poor, the vanity of women, family pride, the fickleness of human desires, the luxury of the age, and the rapacity of legacy-hunters—all met with his scornful disapproval. Though one must allow for the exaggerations of a man who was interested in noting only the vices of men, Juvenal affords us some of our most valued pictures of Rome during his lifetime.

Where Horace was urbane, Juvenal was vitriolic. A stubborn realist, he penned his attacks with a kind of fury. But he is never careless, and is indeed master of the epigram. His sincerity atones for his coarseness, and he is most admirable for the vigor of his lines. A favorite of the English poets, his spirit is to be found reflected in the Elizabethan comedies of Ben Jonson; his satires were adapted by Dryden and Oldham; and Samuel Johnson in the next century wrote his first important work, *London,* on Juvenal's model.

SATIRE III

(*Translated by William Gifford*)

Grieved though I am to see the man depart,[1]
Who long has shared, and still must share, my heart,
Yet (when I call my better judgment home)
I praise his purpose; to retire from Rome,
And give, on Cumæ's[2] solitary coast,
The Sibyl—one inhabitant to boast!
  Full on the road to Baiæ, Cumæ lies,
And many a sweet retreat her shore supplies—
Though I prefer ev'n Prochyta's[3] bare strand
To the Suburra—for, what desert land,
What wild, uncultured spot, can more affright,
Than fires, wide blazing through the gloom of night,
Houses, with ceaseless ruin, thundering down,
And all the horrors of this hateful town?
Where poets, while the dog-star glows, rehearse,
To gasping multitudes, their barbarous verse!
  Now had my friend, impatient to depart,
Consigned his little all to one poor cart:
For this, without the town he chose to wait;
But stopped a moment at the Conduit-gate.—
Here Numa[4] erst his nightly visits paid,
And held high converse with the Egerian maid:[5]
Now the once-hallowed fountain, grove, and fane,
Are let to Jews, a wretched, wandering train,
Whose furniture's a basket filled with hay—
For every tree is forced a tax to pay;
And while the heaven-born Nine[6] in exile rove,
The beggar rents their consecrated grove!
  Thence slowly winding down the vale, we view
The Egerian grots—ah, how unlike the true!
Nymph of the Spring; more honored hadst thou been,
If, free from art, an edge of living green,
Thy bubbling fount had circumscribed alone,
And marble ne'er profaned the native stone.
  Umbritius here his sullen silence broke,
And turned on Rome, indignant, as he spoke.
Since virtue droops, he cried, without regard,
And honest toil scarce hopes a poor reward;
Since every morrow sees my means decay,
And still makes less the little of today;
I go, where Dædalus,[7] as poets sing,

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[1] Juvenal is imagining that Umbritius (who really represents Juvenal's better self) is walking after the van which carries his goods and stops at the spring in the valley of Egeria to take leave of the poet, who cannot make up his mind to leave Rome.

[2] the home of the Sibyl, now long deserted.

[3] Prochyta (an island near Naples), Suburra (a noisy part of Rome).

[4] second king of Rome.

[5] Egeria was divine counselor of Numa.

[6] the Muses.

[7] the mythical hero who first flew with wings; he descended at Cumae.

First checked his flight, and closed his weary wing:
While something yet of health and strength remains,
And yet no staff my faltering step sustains;
While few gray hairs upon my head are seen,
And my old age is vigorous still, and green.
Here, then, I bid my much-loved home farewell—
Ah, mine no more!—there let Arturius dwell,
And Catulus; knaves, who, in truth's despite,
Can white to black transform, and black to white,
Build temples, furnish funerals, auctions hold,
Farm rivers, ports, and scour the drains for gold!
Once they were trumpeters, and always found,
With strolling fencers, in their annual round,
While their puffed cheeks, which every village knew,
Called to "high feats of arms" the rustic crew:
Now they give Shows themselves; and, at the will
Of the base rabble, raise the sign—to kill,
Ambitious of their voice: then turn, once more,
To their vile gains, and farm the common shore!
And why not every thing?—since Fortune throws
Her more peculiar smiles on such as those,
Whene'er, to wanton merriment inclined,
She lifts to thrones the dregs of human kind!
But why, my friend, should I at Rome remain?
I can not teach my stubborn lips to feign;
Nor, when I hear a great man's verses, smile,
And beg a copy, if I think them vile.
A sublunary wight, I have no skill
To read the stars; I neither can, nor will,
Presage a father's death; I never pried,
In toads, for poison, nor—in aught beside.
Others may aid the adulterer's vile design,
And bear the insidious gift, and melting line,
Seduction's agents! I such deeds detest;
And, honest, let no thief partake my breast.
For this, without a friend, the world I quit;
A palsied limb, for every use unfit.
Who now is loved, but he whose conscious breast
Swells with dark deeds, still, still to be supprest?
He pays, he owes, thee nothing (strictly just),
Who gives an honest secret to thy trust;
But, a dishonest!—there, he feels thy power,
And buys thy friendship high from hour to hour.
But let not all the wealth which Tagus[8] pours
In Ocean's lap, not all his glittering stores,
Be deemed a bribe, sufficient to requite
The loss of peace by day, of sleep by night:—
Oh, take not, take not, what thy soul rejects,
Nor sell the faith, which he, who buys, suspects!
The nation, by the *great*, admired, carest,
And hated, shunned by *me*, above the rest,
No longer, now, restrained by wounded pride,
I haste to show (nor thou my warmth deride),
I can not rule my spleen, and calmly see,
A Grecian capital, in Italy!
Grecian? O no! with this vast sewer compared,
The dregs of Greece are scarcely worth regard:
Long since, the stream that wanton Syria laves[9]
Has disembogued its filth in Tiber's waves,
Its language, arts; o'erwhelmed us with the scum
Of Antioch's streets, its minstrel, harp, and drum.
Hie to the Circus! ye who pant to prove
A barbarous mistress, an outlandish love;
Hie to the Circus! there, in crowds they stand,
Tires on their head, and timbrels in their hand.
Thy rustic, Mars, the trechedipna[10] wears,
And on his breast, smeared with ceroma,[11] bears
A paltry prize, well-pleased; while every land,
Sicyon, and Amydos, and Alaband,
Tralles, and Samos, and a thousand more,
Thrive on his indolence, and daily pour
Their starving myriads forth: hither they come,
And batten on the genial soil of Rome;
Minions, then lords, of every princely dome!
A flattering, cringing, treacherous, artful race,
Of torrent tongue, and never-blushing face;
A Protean[12] tribe, one knows not what to call,
Which shifts to every form, and shines in all:
Grammarian, painter, augur, rhetorician,
Rope-dancer, conjurer, fiddler, and physician,
All trades his own, your hungry Greekling counts;
And bid him mount the sky—the sky he mounts!
You smile—was't a barbarian, then, that flew?
No, 'twas a Greek; 'twas an *Athenian*, too!
—Bear with their state who will: for I disdain
To feed their upstart pride, or swell their train:
Slaves, that in Syrian lighters stowed, so late,
With figs and prunes (an inauspicious freight),
Already see their faith preferred to mine,
And sit above me! and before me sign!—
That on the Aventine[13] I first drew air,
And, from the womb, was nursed on Sabine[14] fare,
Avails me not! our birthright now is lost,
And all our privilege, an empty boast!
For lo! where versed in every soothing art,
The wily Greek assails his patron's heart,
Finds in each dull harangue an air, a grace,

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[8] a gold-bearing river in Spain.

[9] the Orontes.

[10] a garment for a formal dinner.

[11] an unguent.

[12] ever changing their shapes, like Proteus in the *Odyssey*.

[13] one of the seven hills of Rome.

[14] The Sabine country was not far from Rome

And all Adonis in a Gorgon face;[15]
Admires the voice that grates upon the ear,
Like the shrill scream of amorous chanticleer;
And equals the crane neck, and narrow chest,
To Hercules, when, straining to his breast
The giant-son of Earth, his every vein
Swells with the toil, and more than mortal pain.
We too can cringe as low, and praise as warm,
But flattery from the Greeks alone can charm.
See! they step forth, and figure to the life,
The naked nymph, the mistress, or the wife,
So just, you view the very woman there,
And fancy all beneath the girdle bare!
No longer now, the favorites of the stage
Boast their exclusive power to charm the age:
The happy art with them a nation shares,
Greece is a theater, where all are players,
For lo! their patron smiles,—they burst with mirth;
He weeps—they droop, the saddest souls on earth;
He calls for fire—they court the mantle's heat;
'Tis warm he cries—and they dissolve in sweat.
Ill-matched!—secure of victory they start,
Who, taught from youth to play a borrowed part,
Can, with a glance, the rising passion trace,
And mold their own, to suit their patron's face;
At deeds of shame their hands admiring raise,
And mad debauchery's worst excesses praise.
Besides, no bound their raging lust restrains,
All ties it breaks, all sanctity profanes;
Wife, virgin-daughter, son unstained before—
And, where these fail, they tempt the grandam hoar:
They notice every word, haunt every ear,
Your secrets learn, and fix you theirs from fear.
Turn to their schools:—yon gray professor see,
Smeared with the sanguine stains of perfidy!
That tutor most accursed his pupil sold!
That Stoic sacrificed his friend to gold!
A true-born Grecian! littered on the coast,
Where the Gorgonian hack a pinion lost.
Hence, Romans, hence! no place for you remains,
Where Diphilus, where Erimanthus[16] reigns;
Miscreants, who, faithful to their native art,
Admit no rival in a patron's heart:
For let them fasten on his easy ear,
And drop one hint, one secret slander there,
Sucked from their country's venom, or their own,
That instant they possess the man alone;
While we are spurned, contemptuous, from the door,
Our long, long slavery thought upon no more.
'Tis but a client lost!—and that, we find,
Sits wondrous lightly on a patron's mind:
And (not to flatter our poor pride, my friend)
What merit with the great can we pretend,
Though, in our duty we prevent[17] the day,
And, darkling, run our humble court to pay;
When the brisk prætor, long before, is gone,
And hastening, with stern voice, his lictors on,
Lest his colleagues o'erpass him in the street,
And first the rich and childless matrons greet,
Alba and Modia, who impatient wait,
And think the morning homage comes too late!
Here freeborn youths wait the rich servant's call,
And, if they walk beside him, yield the wall;
And wherefore? this, forsooth, can fling away,
On one voluptuous night, a legion's pay,
While those, when some Calvina, sweeping by,
Inflames the fancy, check their roving eye,
And frugal of their scanty means, forbear,
To tempt the wanton from her splendid chair.
Produce, at Rome, your witness: let him boast,
The sanctity of Berecynthia's[18] host,
Of Numa, or of him, whose zeal divine
Snatched pale Minerva from her blazing shrine:[19]
To search his rent-roll, first the bench prepares,
His honesty employs their latest cares:
What table does he keep, what slaves maintain,
And what, they ask, and where, is his domain?
These weighty matters known, his faith they rate,
And square his probity to his estate.
The poor may swear by all the immortal Powers,
By the Great Gods of Samothrace, and ours,
His oaths are false, they cry; he scoffs at heaven,
And all its thunders; scoffs—and is forgiven!
Add, that the wretch is still the theme of scorn,
If the soiled cloak be patched, the gown o'erworn;
If, through the bursting shoe, the foot be seen,
Or the coarse seam tell where the rent has been.
O Poverty, thy thousand ills combined
Sink not so deep into the generous mind,
As the contempt and laughter of mankind!
"Up! up! these cushioned benches," Lectius cries,
"Befit not your estates: for shame! arise."
For "shame!"—but you say well: the pander's heir,
The spawn of bulks and stews, is seated there;
The crier's spruce son, fresh from the fencer's school,
And prompt the taste to settle and to rule. —
So Otho[20] fixed it, whose preposterous pride

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[15] Adonis, the beloved of Venus, is contrasted to the Gorgon, symbol of the hideous.

[16] characteristic Greek names.

[17] anticipate.

[18] Cybele, the Great Mother.

[19] Lucius Caecilius Metellus saved the Palladium from the burning temple of Vesta (241 B.C.) but lost his eyesight through his exertions.

[20] Emperor of Rome, 69 A.D.

First dared to chase us from their Honors' side.
  In these cursed walls, devote alone to gain,
When do the poor a wealthy wife obtain?
When are they named in Wills? when called to share
The Ædile's council, and assist the chair?— 240
Long since should they have risen, thus slighted, spurned,
And left their home, but—not to have returned!
  Depressed by indigence, the good and wise,
In every clime, by painful efforts rise;
Here, by more painful still, where scanty cheer,
Poor lodging, mean attendance—all is dear. 246
In earthen-ware he scorns, at Rome, to eat,
Who, called abruptly to the Marsian's seat,[21]
From such, well pleased, would take his simple food,
Nor blush to wear the cheap Venetian hood. 250
  There's many a part of Italy, 'tis said,
Where none assume the toga but the dead:[22]
There, when the toil foregone and annual play,
Mark, from the rest, some high and solemn day,
To theaters of turf the rustics throng, 255
Charmed with the farce that charmed their sires so long;
While the pale infant, of the mask in dread,
Hides, in his mother's breast, his little head.
No modes of dress high birth distinguish there;
All ranks, all orders, the same habit wear, 260
And the dread Ædile's dignity is known,
O sacred badge! by his white vest alone.
But here, beyond our power arrayed we go,
In all the gay varieties of show; 264
And when our purse supplies the charge no more,
Borrow, unblushing, from our neighbor's store:
Such is the reigning vice; and so we flaunt,
Proud in distress, and prodigal in want!
Briefly, my friend, here all are slaves to gold,
And words, and smiles, and every thing is sold. 270
What will you give for Cossus' nod? how high
The silent notice of Veiento buy?
—One favorite youth is shaved, another shorn;
And, while to Jove the precious spoil is borne,
Clients are taxed for offerings, and, (yet more 275
To gall their patience), from their little store,
Constrained to swell the minion's ample hoard,
And bribe the page, for leave to bribe his lord.
  Who fears the crash of houses in retreat?
At simple Gabii, bleak Præneste's seat, 280
Volsinium's craggy heights, embowered in wood,
Or Tibur, beetling o'er prone Anio's flood?
While half the city here by shores is staid,
And feeble cramps, that lend a treacherous aid:
For thus the stewards patch the riven wall, 285
Thus prop the mansion, tottering to its fall;
Then bid the tenant court secure repose,
While the pile nods to every blast that blows.
  O! may I live where no such fears molest,
No midnight fires burst on my hour of rest! 290
For here 'tis terror all; mid the loud cry
Of "water! water!" the scared neighbors fly,
With all their haste can seize—the flames aspire,
And the third floor is wrapt in smoke and fire, 294
While you, unconscious, doze: Up, ho! and know,
The impetuous blaze which spreads dismay below,
By swift degrees will reach the aerial cell,
Where, crouching, underneath the tiles you dwell,
Where your tame doves their golden couplets rear,
"And you could not mischance, but drowning, fear!"
  "Codrus had but one bed, and that too short 301
For his short wife;" his goods, of every sort,
Were else but few:—six little pipkins graced
His cupboard head, a little can was placed
On a snug shelf beneath, and near it lay 305
A Chiron, of the same cheap marble—clay.
And was this all? O no: he yet possest
A few Greek books, shrined in an ancient chest,
Where barbarous mice through many an inlet crept,
And fed on heavenly numbers, while he slept.— 310
"Codrus, in short, had nothing." You say true;
And yet poor Codrus lost that nothing too!
One curse alone was wanting, to complete
His woes: that, cold and hungry, through the street,
The wretch should beg, and, in the hour of need,
Find none to lodge, to clothe him, or to feed! 316
  But should the raging flames on grandeur prey,
And low in dust Asturius'[23] palace lay,
The squalid matron sighs, the senate mourns,
The pleaders cease, the judge the court adjourns;
All join to wail the city's hapless fate, 321
And rail at fire with more than common hate.
Lo! while it burns, the obsequious courtiers haste,
With rich materials, to repair the waste:
This, brings him marble, that, a finished piece, 325
The far-famed boast of Polyclete[24] and Greece;
This, ornaments, which graced of old the fane
Of Asia's gods; that, figured plate and plain;
This, cases, books, and busts the shelves to grace,
And piles of coin his specie to replace— 330
So much the childless Persian swells his store,
(Though deemed the richest of the rich before,)
That all ascribe the flames to thirst of pelf,
And swear, Asturius fired his house himself.

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[21] Marsi, symbolic of the simplicity of country life.

[22] In contrast to the city where many togas were worn in a single year.

[23] a rich man.

[24] a Greek sculptor of the time of Pericles.

Oh, had you, from the Circus, power to fly,
In many a halcyon village might you buy
Some elegant retreat, for what will here,
Scarce hire a gloomy dungeon through the year!
There wells, by nature formed, which need no rope,
No laboring arm, to crane their waters up,
Around your lawn their facile streams shall shower,
And cheer the springing plant and opening flower.
There live, delighted with the rustic's lot,
And till, with your own hands, the little spot;
The little spot shall yield you large amends,
And glad, with many a feast, your Samian friends.
And, sure,—in any corner we can get,
To call one lizard ours, is something yet!
Flushed with a mass of undigested food,
Which clogs the stomach and inflames the blood,
What crowds, with watching wearied and o'erprest,
Curse the slow hours, and die for want of rest!
For who can hope his languid lids to close,
Where brawling taverns banish all repose?
Sleep, to the rich alone, "his visits pays:"
And hence the seeds of many a dire disease.
The carts loud rumbling through the narrow way,
The drivers' clamors at each casual stay,
From drowsy Drusus[25] would his slumber take,
And keep the calves of Proteus[26] broad awake!
If business call, obsequious crowds divide,
While o'er their heads the rich securely ride,
By tall Illyrians borne, and read, or write,
Or (should the early hour to rest invite),
Close the soft litter, and enjoy the night.
Yet reach they first the goal; while, by the throng
Elbowed and jostled, scarce we creep along;
Sharp strokes from poles, tubs, rafters, doomed to feel;
And plastered o'er with mud, from head to heel:
While the rude soldier gores us as he goes,
Or marks, in blood, his progress on our toes!
See, from the Dole, a vast tumultuous throng,
Each followed by his kitchen, pours along!
Huge pans, which Corbulo[27] could scarce uprear,
With steady neck a puny slave must bear,
And, lest amid the way the flames expire,
Glide nimbly on, and gliding, fan the fire;
Through the close press with sinuous efforts wind,
And, piece by piece, leave his botched rags behind.
Hark! groaning on, the unwieldy wagon spreads
Its cumbrous load, tremendous! o'er our heads,
Projecting elm or pine, that nods on high,
And threatens death to every passer by.
Heavens! should the axle crack, which bears a weight
Of huge Ligurian stone, and pour the freight
On the pale crowd beneath, what would remain,
What joint, what bone, what atom of the slain?
The body, with the soul, would vanish quite,
Invisible as air, to mortal sight!—
Meanwhile, unconscious of their fellow's fate,
At home, they heat the water, scour the plate,
Arrange the strigils,[28] fill the cruse with oil,
And ply their several tasks with fruitless toil:
For he who bore the dole, poor mangled ghost,
Sits pale and trembling on the Stygian[29] coast,
Scared at the horrors of the novel scene,
At Charon's[30] threatening voice, and scowling mien;
Nor hopes a passage, thus abruptly hurled,
Without his farthing, to the nether world.
Pass we these fearful dangers, and survey
What other evils threat our nightly way.
And first, behold the mansion's towering size,
Where floors on floors to the tenth story rise;
Whence heedless garreteers their potsherds throw,
And crush the unwary wretch that walks below!
Clattering the storm descends from heights unknown,
Plows up the street, and wounds the flinty stone!
'Tis madness, dire improvidence of ill,
To sup abroad, before you sign your Will;
Since fate in ambush lies, and marks his prey,
From every wakeful window in the way:
Pray, then—and count your humble prayer well sped,
If pots be only—emptied on your head.
The drunken bully, ere his man be slain,
Frets through the night, and courts repose in vain;
And while the thirst of blood his bosom burns,
From side to side, in restless anguish, turns,
Like Peleus' son, when, quelled by Hector's hand,
His loved Patroclus prest the Phrygian strand.[31]
There are, who murder as an opiate take,
And only when no brawls await them wake:
Yet even these heroes, flushed with youth and wine,
All contest with the purple robe decline;
Securely give the lengthened train to pass,
The sun-bright flambeaux, and the lamps of brass.—
Me, whom the moon, or candle's paler gleam,
Whose wick I husband to the last extreme,
Guides through the gloom, he braves, devoid of fear:
The prelude to our doughty quarrel hear,
If that be deemed a quarrel, where, heaven knows,

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[25] The Emperor Claudius, well-known for his sleepiness.

[26] Seals, who are proverbially sleepy.

[27] A man of uncommon strength appointed by Nero as commander in Armenia.

[28] a scraper for the body to be used at the bath.

[29] Hades.

[30] the boatman who ferries souls across the Styx.

[31] Reference is to the anguish of Achilles when Patroclus is killed by Hector at Troy.

He only gives, and I receive, the blows!
Across my path he strides, and bids me STAND!
I bow, obsequious to the dread command;
What else remains, where madness, rage, combine
With youth, and strength superior far to mine?
"Whence come you, rogue?" he cries; "whose beans tonight
Have stuffed you thus? what cobbler clubbed his mite,
For leeks and sheep's-head porridge? Dumb! quite dumb!
Speak, or be kicked.—Yet, once again! your home?
Where shall I find you? At what beggar's hand?"
Whether I strive some humble plea to frame,
Or steal in silence by, 'tis just the same;
I'm beaten first, then dragged in rage away;
Bound to the peace, or punished for the fray!
Mark here the boasted freedom of the poor!
Beaten and bruised, that goodness to adore,
Which, at their humble prayer, suspends its ire,
And sends them home, with yet a bone entire!
Nor this the worst; for when deep midnight reigns,
And bolts secure our doors, and massy chains,
When noisy inns a transient silence keep,
And harassed nature woos the balm of sleep,
Then, thieves and murderers ply their dreadful trade;
With stealthy steps our secret couch invade:—
Roused from the treacherous calm, aghast we start,
And the fleshed sword—is buried in our heart!
Hither from bogs, from rocks, and caves pursued
(The Pontine marsh, and Gallinarian wood),
The dark assassins flock, as to their home,
And fill with dire alarms the streets of Rome.
Such countless multitudes our peace annoy,
That bolts and shackles every forge employ,
And cause so wide a waste, the country fears
A want of ore for mattocks, rakes, and shares.
O! happy were our sires, estranged from crimes;
And happy, happy, were the good old times,
Which saw, beneath their kings', their tribunes' reign,
One cell the nation's criminals contain!
Much could I add, more reasons could I cite,
If time were ours, to justify my flight;
But see! the impatient team is moving on,
The sun declining; and I must be gone:
Long since, the driver murmured at my stay,
And jerked his whip, to beckon me away.
Farewell, my friend! with this embrace we part!
Cherish my memory ever in your heart:
And when, from crowds and business, you repair,
To breathe at your Aquinum freer air,
Fail not to draw me from my loved retreat,
To Elvine Ceres,[32] and Diana's seat:
For your bleak hills my Cumæ I'll resign,
And (if you blush not at such aid as mine)
Come well equipped, to wage, in angry rhymes,
Fierce war, with you, on follies and on crimes.

Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot[1]

Although Pope is known to most people as a man who had a genius for provoking enmity, the fact is that most of his literary battles were not initiated by him. This *Epistle*, written as a prologue to the *Satires*, was occasioned by a set of verses which attacked, as Pope tells us, "not only my writings . . . but my person, morals, and family, whereof, to those who know me not, a truer information may be requisite." When, therefore, his good friend and physician, Arbuthnot, wrote to Pope urging him to cease writing invective, Pope decided to address an epistle to him in which he would explain his position as a satirist.

The poem is second to none penned by its author in its biographical interest. At the time it was written Pope was at the height of his fame and powers. The keen edge of the satire does not rob what the poet has to say of a dignified pride in, and devotion to, his profession. No work of Pope better exhibits his gift for easy grace and terse epigram. The most celebrated passage in the poem is the portrait of Addison as *Atticus*, a valuable sidelight on the weaker aspects of an undeniably great man.

Dr. Arbuthnot was himself a man of literary attainments, a warm friend to Pope and Swift, and vitally interested in artistic concerns of his day.

[32] Ceres was worshipped under this epithet at Aquinum.

[1] Dr. John Arbuthnot (1675-1735), distinguished physician and man of letters.

P. Shut, shut the door, good John![2] fatigued, I said;
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The Dog-star rages![3] nay, 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam,[4] or Parnassus,[5] is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thickets, through my grot[6] they glide;
By land, by water, they renew the charge,
They stop the chariot, and they board the barge.
No place is sacred, not the church is free;
E'en Sunday shines no Sabbath day to me:
Then from the Mint walks forth the man of rhyme,
Happy to catch me just at dinner-time.
Is there a parson, much bemused in beer,
A maudlin poetess, a rhyming peer,
A clerk, foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
Who pens a stanza, when he should engross?
Is there, who, locked from ink and paper, scrawls
With desperate charcoal round his darkened walls?
All fly to Twit'nam, and in humble strain
Apply to me, to keep them mad or vain.
Arthur,[7] whose giddy son neglects the laws,
Imputes to me and my damn'd works the cause:
Poor Cornus[8] sees his frantic wife elope,
And curses wit, and poetry, and Pope.
Friend to my life! (which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song)
What drop or nostrum can this plague remove?
Or which must end me, a fool's wrath or love?
A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped:
If foes, they write, if friends, they read me dead.
Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie.
To laugh, were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave, exceeds all power of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish, and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine years."[9]
"Nine years!" cries he, who high in Drury Lane,[10]
Lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before term ends,
Obliged by hunger, and request of friends:
"The piece, you think, is incorrect? why, take it,
I'm all submission, what you'd have it, make it."
Three things another's modest wishes bound,
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.
Pitholeon[11] sends to me: "You know his Grace,
I want a Patron; ask him for a Place."
Pitholeon libell'd me—"But here's a letter
Informs you, Sir, 'twas when he knew no better.
Dare you refuse him? Curll[12] invites to dine,
He'll write a *Journal*, or he'll turn Divine."
Bless me! a packet.—" 'Tis a stranger sues,
A Virgin Tragedy, an Orphan Muse."
If I dislike it, "Furies, death and rage!"
If I approve, "Commend it to the Stage."
There (thank my stars) my whole commission ends,
The Play'rs and I are, luckily, no friends;
Fir'd that the house reject him, " 'Sdeath! I'll print it,
And shame the fools— Your int'rest, Sir, with Lintot."[13]
Lintot, dull rogue! will think your price too much:
"Not, Sir, if you revise it, and retouch."
All my demurs but double his attacks;
And last he whispers, "Do; and we go snacks."
Glad of a quarrel, straight I clap the door,
Sir, let me see your works and you no more.
'Tis sung, when Midas' Ears began to spring
(Midas, a sacred person and a King)
His very Minister who spy'd them first,
(Some say his Queen) was forc'd to speak, or burst.
And is not mine, my friend, a sorer case,
When ev'ry coxcomb perks them in my face?
A. Good friend, forbear! you deal in dang'rous things,

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[2] Pope's servant, John Searl.

[3] the Dog-star, Sirius, rises at the same time as the sun in August. This season, the hottest of the year, is therefore spoken of as "the dog days."

[4] Bethlehem Hospital for the insane.

[5] the mount sacred to the Muses.

[6] Pope had an artificial grotto in his grounds at Twickenham, up the river from London.

[7] Arthur Moore, father of James Moore-Smythe, a subject of Pope's ridicule.

[8] probably refers to Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), the Whig prime minister.

[9] the advice contained in Horace's *Art of Poetry*; cf. p. 528.

[10] the street in London devoted to playhouses.

[11] This is the name of a foolish poet of Rhodes who pretended to much Greek. Here the reference is probably to Leonard Welstead (1688-1747), an enemy of Pope.

[12] Edmund Curll (1675-1747), an unscrupulous publisher.

[13] Bernard Lintot (1675-1736), publisher of many of Pope's works.

I'd never name Queens, Ministers, or Kings;
Keep close to Ears, and those let asses prick,
'Tis nothing—— *P.* Nothing? if they bite and kick?
Out with it, Dunciad![14] let the secret pass,
That secret to each fool, that he's an Ass:
The truth once told (and wherefore should we lie?)
The Queen of Midas slept, and so may I.
You think this cruel? take it for a rule,
No creature smarts so little as a fool.
Let peals of laughter, Codrus![15] round thee break,
Thou unconcern'd canst hear the mighty crack:
Pit, box, and gall'ry in convulsions hurl'd,
Thou stand'st unshook amidst a bursting world.
Who shames a Scribbler? break one cobweb thro',
He spins the slight, self-pleasing thread anew:
Destroy his fib or sophistry, in vain,
The creature's at his dirty work again,
Thron'd in the centre of his thin designs,
Proud of a vast extent of flimsy lines!
Whom have I hurt? has Poet yet or Peer,
Lost the arch'd eyebrow, or Parnassian sneer?
And has not Colley[16] still his lord, and whore?
His butchers Henley,[17] his free-masons Moore?[18]
Does not one table Bavius[19] still admit ?
Still to one Bishop Philips[20] seem a wit?
Still Sappho[21]—— *A.* Hold! for God's sake—you'll offend,
No names—be calm—learn prudence of a friend!
I too could write, and I am twice as tall;
But foes like these—— *P.* One Flatt'rer's worse than all.
Of all mad creatures, if the learn'd are right,
It is the slaver kills, and not the bite.
A fool quite angry is quite innocent:
Alas! 'tis ten times worse when they *repent.*
One dedicates in high heroic prose,
And ridicules beyond a hundred foes:
One from all Grub Street will my fame defend,
And more abusive, calls himself my friend.
This prints my Letters, that expects a bribe,
And others roar aloud, "Subscribe, subscribe."
There are, who to my person pay their court:
I cough like Horace, and, tho' lean, am short.
Ammon's great son[22] one shoulder had too high,
Such Ovid's nose, and, "Sir! you have an eye—"
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see
All that disgrac'd my Betters, met in me.
Say, for my comfort, languishing in bed,
"Just so immortal Maro[23] held his head:"
And, when I die, be sure you let me know
Great Homer died three thousand years ago."
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipt me in ink, my parent's, or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobey'd.
The Muse but serv'd to ease some friend, not Wife,
To help me thro' this long disease, my Life,
To second, Arbuthnot! thy Art and Care,
And teach the Being you preserv'd, to bear.
But why then publish? Granville[24] the polite,
And knowing Walsh, would tell me I could write;
Well-natur'd Garth[25] inflam'd with early praise,
And Congreve lov'd, and Swift endur'd my lays;
The courtly Talbot, Somers, Sheffield[26] read,
Ev'n mitred Rochester[27] would nod the head,
And St. John's[28] self (great Dryden's friend before)
With open arms receiv'd one Poet more.
Happy my studies, when by these approv'd!
Happier their author, when by these belov'd!
From these the world will judge of men and books,
Not from the Burnets, Oldmixons, and Cookes.[29]
Soft were my numbers; who could take offence
While pure Description held the place of Sense?

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[14] a biting satire written by Pope in two parts, 1728 and 1743.

[15] a Roman poet ridiculed by Virgil.

[16] Colley Cibber (1671-1757), actor, dramatist and poet laureate.

[17] John Henley (1692-1756), preacher before the Butchers' Guild.

[18] James Moore-Smythe, mentioned in note 7.

[19] an inferior Roman poet of the first century A.D.

[20] the patron of Ambrose Philips (1675?-1749) was the Archbishop of Armagh (Ireland).

[21] This reference to the famous Greek poetess is really to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762).

[22] Alexander the Great.

[23] Virgil.

[24] George Granville, Lord Lansdowne. Pope dedicated his *Windsor Forest* to him.

[25] Samuel Garth (1671-1719), physician and man of letters.

[26] Charles Talbot, Duke of Shrewsbury; John, Lord Somers; and John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham were all statesmen who had encouraged Pope.

[27] Francis Atterbury (1662-1732), Bishop of Rochester.

[28] Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke; cf. *Essay on Man*, p. 659.

[29] Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Solsberry (d. 1715), author of *History of My Own Times*; John Oldmixon (1673-1742), writer of history; Thomas Cooke (1703-1756), who had abused Pope in the vulgar journals.

Like gentle Fanny's[80] was my flow'ry theme,
A painted mistress, or a purling stream.
Yet then did Gildon[81] draw his venal quill;
I wish'd the man a dinner, and sate still.
Yet then did Dennis[82] rave in furious fret;
I never answer'd—I was not in debt.
If want provok'd, or madness made them print,
I wag'd no war with Bedlam or the Mint.
Did some more sober Critic come abroad,
If wrong, I smil'd; if right, I kiss'd the rod.
Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.
Commas and points they set, exactly right,
And 'twere a sin to rob them of their mite.
Yet ne'er one sprig of laurel grac'd these ribalds,
From slashing Bentley[83] down to piddling Tibbalds;[84]
Each wight, who reads not, and but scans and spells,
Each Word-catcher, that lives on syllables,
Ev'n such small Critics some regard may claim,
Preserv'd in Milton's or in Shakespeare's name.
Pretty! in amber to observe the forms
Of hairs, or straws, or dirt, or grubs, or worms!
The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there.
Were others angry: I excused them too;
Well might they rage, I gave them but their due.
A man's true merit 'tis not hard to find;
But each man's secret standard in his mind,—
That casting-weight pride adds to emptiness,—
This, who can gratify? for who can guess?
The bard[85] whom pilfered Pastorals renown,
Who turns a Persian tale for half a crown,
Just writes to make his barrenness appear,
And strains from hard-bound brains, eight lines a year;
He, who still wanting, though he lives on theft,
Steals much, spends little, yet has nothing left;
And he, who now to sense, now nonsense leaning,
Means not, but blunders round about a meaning;
And he, whose fustian's so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad:
All these, my modest satire bade translate,
And owned that nine such poets made a Tate.[86]
How did they fume, and stamp, and roar, and chafe!
And swear, not Addison himself was safe.
Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blessed with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging, that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato,[87] give his little senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars[88] every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus[89] were he!
What though my name stood rubric on the walls,
Or plastered posts, with claps, in capitals?
Or smoking forth, a hundred hawkers' load,
On wings of winds came flying all abroad?
I sought no homage from the race that write;
I kept, like Asian monarchs, from their sight:
Poems I heeded (now be-rhymed so long)
No more than thou, great George! a birthday song.
I ne'er with wits or witlings passed my days,
To spread about the itch of verse and praise;
Nor like a puppy, daggled through the town,
To fetch and carry sing-song up and down;
Nor at rehearsals sweat, and mouthed, and cried,
With handkerchief and orange at my side;
But sick of fops, and poetry, and prate,
To Bufo[40] left the whole Castalian state.
Proud as Apollo on his forked hill,
Sat full-blown Bufo, puffed by every quill;

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[80] a contemptuous reference to Lord Hervey (1696-1743).

[81] Charles Gildon (1665-1724), a playwright and hostile critic.

[82] John Dennis (1657-1734), a reputable critic but unfriendly to Pope.

[83] Richard Bentley (1662-1742), a classical scholar and editor of Milton's *Paradise Lost.*

[84] Lewis Theobald (1688-1744), an editor of Shakespeare who had attacked Pope's edition of Shakespeare.

[85] Ambrose Philips; cf. note 20.

[86] Nahum Tate (1652-1715), dramatist and poet laureate.

[87] Roman statesman (234-149 B.C.), hero of Addison's tragedy, *Cato,* for which Pope had written the prologue.

[88] law students.

[89] Roman scholar of the first century B.C.; the reference here is to Addison.

[40] Charles Montague, Lord Halifax (1671-1715), a patron of letters.

Fed with soft dedication all day long,
Horace and he went hand in hand in song.
His library (where busts of poets dead
And a true Pindar stood without a head)
Received of wits an undistinguished race,
Who first his judgment asked, and then a place.
Much they extolled his pictures, much his seat,
And flattered every day, and some days eat:
Till grown more frugal in his riper days,
He paid some bards with port, and some with praise;
To some a dry rehearsal was assigned,
And others (harder still) he paid in kind.
Dryden alone (what wonder?) came not nigh;
Dryden alone escaped this judging eye:
But still the great have kindness in reserve;
He helped to bury whom he helped to starve.
May some choice patron bless each gray goose quill!
May every Bavius have his Bufo still!
So when a statesman wants a day's defence,
Or Envy holds a whole week's war with Sense,
Or simple Pride for flattery makes demands,
May dunce by dunce be whistled off my hands!
Blessed be the great! for those they take away,
And those they left me—for they left me Gay;[41]
Left me to see neglected Genius bloom,
Neglected die, and tell it on his tomb:
Of all thy blameless life the sole return
My Verse and Queensbury[42] weeping o'er thy urn!
Oh let me live my own, and die so too
(To live and die is all I have to do)!
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please;
Above a Patron, tho' I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my Friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead.
Why am I asked what next shall see the light?
Heavens! was I born for nothing but to write?
Has life no joys for me? or (to be grave)
Have I no friend to serve, no soul to save?
"I found him close with Swift"—"Indeed? no doubt
(Cries prating Balbus)[43] something will come out."
'Tis all in vain, deny it as I will;
"No, such a genius never can lie still":
And then for mine obligingly mistakes
The first lampoon Sir Will[44] or Bubo[45] makes.
Poor guiltless I! and can I choose but smile,
When every coxcomb knows me by my style?
Curst be the verse, how well soe'er it flow,
That tends to make one worthy man my foe,
Give Virtue scandal, Innocence a fear,
Or from the soft-eyed virgin steal a tear!
But he who hurts a harmless neighbor's peace,
Insults fallen Worth, or Beauty in distress,
Who loves a lie, lame Slander helps about,
Who writes a libel, or who copies out;
That fop whose pride affects a patron's name,
Yet absent, wounds an author's honest fame;
Who can your merit selfishly approve,
And show the sense of it without the love;
Who has the vanity to call you friend,
Yet wants the honor, injured, to defend;
Who tells whate'er you think, whate'er you say,
And, if he lie not, must at least betray;
Who to the Dean and Silver Bell can swear,
And sees at Canons what was never there[46]
Who reads but with a lust to misapply,
Make satire a lampoon, and fiction lie:
A lash like mine no honest man shall dread,
But all such babbling blockheads in his stead.
Let Sporus[47] tremble— *A.* What? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of Ass's milk?
Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
P. Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet Wit ne'er tastes, and Beauty ne'er enjoys;
So well-bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite.
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way,
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad,
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies;
His wit all see-saw between *that* and *this*,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile Antithesis.

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[41] John Gay (1688-1732), author of the *Beggar's Opera*.
[42] the Duchess of Queensbury, who had befriended Gay.
[43] Lord Kinnoul (d. 1758), a famous rake.
[44] Sir William Young (d. 1755).
[45] Bubb Doddington, Lord Melcombe. Both of the last two men wrote very bad verse.
[46] Canons was the country seat of the Duke of Chandos. The reference here is to the false report that Pope had meant to lampoon the Duke of Chandos.
[47] Lord Hervey; cf. note 30.

Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart;
Fop at the toilet, flatt'rer at the board,
Now trips a Lady, and now struts a Lord.
Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
A Cherub's face, a reptile all the rest.[48]
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust.
Not Fortune's worshipper, nor Fashion's fool,
Not Lucre's madman, nor Ambition's tool,
Not proud, nor servile; Be one Poet's praise,
That, if he pleas'd, he pleas'd by manly ways:
That Flatt'ry, ev'n to Kings, he held a shame;
And thought a Lie in verse or prose the same;
That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moralis'd his song:
That not for Fame, but Virtue's better end,
He stood the furious foe, the timid friend,
The damning critics, half-approving wit,
The coxcomb hit, or fearing to be hit;
Laugh'd at the loss of friends he never had,
The dull, the proud, the wicked, and the mad;
The distant threats of vengeance on his head,
The blow unfelt, the tear he never shed;
The tale revived, the lie so oft o'erthrown,
Th' imputed trash, and dullness not his own;
The morals blackened when the writings scape,
The libelled person, and the pictured shape;
Abuse, on all he loved, or loved him, spread,
A friend in exile, or a father dead;
The whisper, that to greatness still too near,
Perhaps, yet vibrates on his Sovereign's ear—
Welcome for thee, fair virtue! all the past;
For thee, fair virtue! welcome e'en the last!
A. But why insult the poor, affront the great?
P. A knave's a knave, to me, in every state:
Alike my scorn, if he succeed or fail,
Sporus at Court, or Japhet[49] in a jail,
A hireling scribbler, or a hireling peer,
Knight of the post corrupt, or of the shire;
If on a pillory, or near a throne,
He gain his prince's ear, or lose his own.
Yet soft by nature, more a dupe than wit,
Sappho can tell you how this man was bit:
This dreaded satirist Dennis will confess
Foe to his pride, but friend to his distress:
So humble, he has knocked at Tibbald's door,
Has drunk with Cibber, nay has rhymed for Moore.
Full ten years slandered, did he once reply?
Three thousand suns went down on Welsted's lie.[50]
To please a mistress one aspersed his life;
He lashed him not, but let her be his wife.
Let Budgell[51] charge low Grub Street on his quill,
And write whate'er he pleased, except his will;
Let the two Curlls[52] of town and court, abuse
His father, mother, body, soul, and Muse.
Yet why? that father held it for a rule,
It was a sin to call our neighbor fool:
That harmless mother thought no wife a whore:
Hear this, and spare his family, James Moore!
Unspotted names, and memorable long!
If there be force in virtue, or in song.
Of gentle blood (part shed in honor's cause,
While yet in Britain honor had applause)
Each parent sprung—— *A.* What fortune, pray?— *P.* Their own,
And better got, than Bestia's[53] from the throne.
Born to no pride, inheriting no strife,
Nor marrying discord in a noble wife,
Stranger to civil and religious rage,
The good man walked innoxious through his age.
No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
Unlearn'd, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
No language, but the language of the heart.
By nature honest, by experience wise,
Healthy by temperance, and by exercise;
His life, though long, to sickness passed unknown,
His death was instant, and without a groan.
O grant me thus to live, and thus to die!
Who sprung from kings shall know less joy than I.
O friend! may each domestic bliss be thine!
Be no unpleasing melancholy mine:
Me, let the tender office long engage,
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thought, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky!
On cares like these if length of days attend,
May Heaven, to bless those days, preserve my friend,
Preserve him social, cheerful, and serene,
And just as rich as when he served a queen.
A. Whether that blessing be denied or given,
Thus far was right, the rest belongs to Heaven.

(1735)

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[48] The pictures of the serpent in the garden of Eden.

[49] Japhet Crook, who had been imprisoned and had his ears cut off for forgery.

[50] This refers to note 46.

[51] Eustace Budgell (1686-1737), author of many of the *Spectator* papers, was charged with forging a will.

[52] unscrupulous publishers.

[53] This probably refers to the Duke of Marlborough, accused of making a considerable profit from the War of the Spanish Succession.

Conclusion to *The Dunciad*

The history of Pope's most important long satire, *The Dunciad,* is too complicated to give here in any fulness. Patterned in the form of a mock-epic after Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* (cf. *above*), it was first intended as an attack chiefly against Lewis Theobald, rival editor of Shakespeare. Theobald had attacked Pope's editorship on quite just grounds, and in return Pope placed him on the throne of Dullness. But when *The Dunciad* was finally revised in 1742-3, Pope substituted the Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber, as Monarch of Dullness.

The poem has been criticized for attacking insignificant people, many of whom would today be forgotten had not Pope immortalized them. But that very criticism proves that the poet could distinguish dunces even when they had a reputation among his contemporaries. Throughout the work Pope is seen at his most powerful. The influence of Juvenal, rather than Horace, is apparent in the asperity with which he slays his victims. We do not, however, pretend to represent *The Dunciad* by this concluding section. It is here printed because the passage is not only one of Pope's best, but also shows him master of an unaccustomed voice, a voice of dark and lofty imagination.

In vain, in vain—the all-composing hour
Resistless falls: the Muse obeys the power.
She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of Night primeval and of Chaos old!
Before her, Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's[1] strain,
The sickening stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,[2]
Closed one by one to everlasting rest:
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after art goes out, and all is night.
See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heaped o'er her head!
Philosophy, that leaned on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
In vain! they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion blushing veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private, dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine!
Lo! thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch! lets the curtain fall;
And universal darkness buries all.

(1728-9, 1743)

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[1] the sorceress of Greek legend and drama. The reference here may be to Corneille's *Médée,* IV, I: *"Je fis pâlir la lune"* (I made the moon turn pale)

[2] Argus was the hundred-eyed monster who was defeated by Hermes, who used his wand to put all the eyes to sleep at once.

Jonathan Swift

(1667-1745)

The force of his genius made Swift the greatest writer of the neoclassical age, the foremost of English prose-satirists, and one of the world's leading literary figures. But as a man and as a writer he remains a paradox. He has been acclaimed for having achieved perfect lucidity, exactness, and firmness of style; it has often been said that his prose is the best of its kind in our language—prose, with all the virtues opposite to Browne's, from which all shadows and overtones have been excluded—the complete artistic realization of the age of reason. Nevertheless, no man of his time made less of a stir about form and the criteria of art. Again: Swift founded his principles on purely rational, and even practical, considerations; yet behind his sculptured lines one feels the surge of enormous passions and quivering rage.

Paradox confronts one at every point in his career. He despised the petty opportunism and venality of mankind; few of his contemporaries were more persistent in search of worldly advancement. He has been admired by everyone as a wit; his inner life was one of suffering and tragic disillusionment. He was fond of merry pranks; he is said to have laughed only twice in his life. When he lashed out, sometimes at those he cherished, his anger spared no one; all his life he reacted with painful acuteness to the miseries of others. He had no love for Ireland, where he was forced to spend much of his life (he expressed a fear that he might die there "in a rage, like a poisoned rat in a hole"); his sensitivity to the injustices inflicted upon Ireland caused him to wield his pen to ameliorate the wretchedness of Irishmen and to fight against the English attempt to debase their currency, and with such effect that he lifted their spirit, brought succor to their expiring trade, and improved the lot of their clergy.

Descended from the same great-grandfather as Dryden, Swift was a posthumous child of English parents who had settled in Dublin. Born into poverty, he received his education through the help of a dutiful uncle who bore him no affection. At Kilkenny Grammar School he met Congreve. From there he went to Trinity College in his native Dublin. After taking his degree he was employed by a distant relative, Sir William Temple, as private secretary at Moor Park, Surrey, where he remained, with interruptions, from 1688 to 1699. Temple, a cultivated diplomat and man of letters, was appreciative of his secretary; but to the proud young man the post seemed one of mere servitude. Swift produced a number of verses, upon seeing which Dryden prophesied with justice: "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet."

His occupations at Moor Park left him free to read deeply in literature, and to compose his earliest major works, *The Battle of the Books* and *The Tale of a Tub*, both written before 1699, and published together in 1704. *The Battle of the Books* was undertaken in his employer's behalf. Temple had become involved in a fresh resurgence of the old Renaissance controversy on the comparative value of the Ancients and the Moderns. In Swift's prose mock-epic, the books in a library take up the quarrel. An imaginary battle is held: Homer, Virgil, Pindar, Plato, and Aristotle tilt against such moderns as Milton, Hobbes, and Descartes. Although neither side is granted victory, Swift's sympathies are with the ancients because of their closeness to nature. *The Tale of a Tub*, a satire on the divisions of Christianity, shows Swift's genius already fully ripened. As is usually the case with him, the subject is managed by a disarmingly simple device. A father dies, and leaves legacies to his three sons, Peter (Saint Peter), Martin (Luther), and Jack (John Calvin). Each heir has inherited a good coat, which he proceeds to alter in his own way. As Swift tells how the three sons (who represent the Roman Catholic

Church and the various Protestant churches) go about to pervert their father's expressed intention in his will, we have a splendidly ironic picture of the dissensions among Christian churches. Carlyle took the central idea for his masterpiece, *Sartor Resartus* (cf. Vol. II), from a passage in this work.

It was during his decade at Moor Park that he formed his attachment for Esther Johnson, the deepest of his life. Fourteen years his junior, she was a protegée of Temple's, and was committed to Swift's tutelage. Swift's relations with the woman he immortalized as "Stella" are still shrouded in mystery, and it has never been settled whether or not they were married at some time. No great importance attaches to the puzzle, however, for if a secret marriage ever did take place, it was undoubtedly one in name only. What is important is that she remained, as he himself put it, "the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I, or perhaps any other person ever was blessed with." Although Swift induced her to live with a friend near him, they never met alone. Among the papers in his desk after his death was found a lock of her hair with the identification, "Only a woman's hair."

Upon Temple's death in 1699, Swift, having some time before been ordained in the Church of England, accepted the living in the small parish of Laracor, near Dublin. From here he made frequent excursions to London in search of advancement. He was an immense success with the patrons of the coffeehouses, and Addison before long was calling him "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of the age." His earlier connection with Temple made him sought after by the Whigs, for whom he wrote many pamphlets in the hopes of a better position. In 1708 he published a whimsical satire against the Deists, *An Argument to Prove That the Abolishing of Christianity in England May, As Things Now Stand, Be Attended with Some Inconveniences.* In the same year appeared the gayest of his works, the witty *Partridge Predictions.* John Partridge, a quack writer of almanacs, had achieved something of a reputation as a prognosticator. In February 1708, there appeared a rival almanac-pamphlet by one "Isaac Bickerstaff," prophesying the death of Partridge on March 29. On March 30 appeared another with a full description of the final illness and death of Partridge. The latter, poor victim, attempted to insist that he was still alive; but Bickerstaff retorted that Partridge's demise had been sufficiently proved, and there was an end of the matter. Swift had indeed killed Partridge and at the same time aimed a blow at astrology. In something of the same spirit he wrote another delightful piece in 1710; as secretary to Lord Berkeley he had been required to read to Her Ladyship the dreary *Meditations* of Boyle; one day he substituted a rollicking parody of it, *A Meditation upon a Broomstick.*

The Whigs were more willing to make promises to Swift than to fulfill them. Swift's own inclinations would never have led him to their camp, and there was little logic in his being, as a warm believer in the Church of England, of their party. In 1710, therefore, he allied himself with the Tories, and for the next three years put all his gifts at their disposal. The new Government had great need of his talents in maintaining public support. His abilities as a pamphleteer were in demand, and statesmen sought him out for his advice. It is an historical fact that Swift kept the Tories in office, and he may be pardoned for exulting in his brief distinction as the most important man in England at the moment. Of this period he kept an account in a letter-journal, which he sent at intervals to Stella in Ireland. Published eventually as the *Journal to Stella* (1710-13), it reveals Swift at his most intimate; the tenderness, playfulness, and warmth of these letters form an important counterpoise to the dour personality exhibited in many of his other works. His change in politics cost him the friendship of Addison; but Pope, Arbuthnot, Gay, Prior, and Parnell—all members of the Scriblerus Club—remained loyal. In 1713 Queen Anne, who did not like him, gave him a post he did not particularly covet, the Deanery of St. Patrick's in Dublin. With her death the next year, the Tories went out of power for nearly half a century, and Swift was forced to content himself with exile in Ireland for the rest of his days.

After Stella had joined him in Dublin, Swift was nonplussed by the arrival of Miss Van Homrigh, whom he had known in London during his days of Tory eminence. He had undertaken to guide her education at the request of her mother, and had taken pleasure in the company of the young girl, to whom he had given the name of "Vanessa." She was madly in love with him, and, careless of scandal, had followed him to Dublin. Unable to return her feelings, and unwilling to be cruel to her, Swift tried to compromise by maintaining an impersonal friendship with her. After causing him, Stella, and herself much pain, she died in 1723 of a broken heart.

Although he accepted his retirement to Ireland with bitterness, Swift could not repulse the demands made upon his conscience by the outrageous misery of the Irish. In *A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture* (1720) he suggested a boycott of English furniture and clothing. In the famous *Drapier's Letters* (1724) he succeeded in uniting Ireland in a national boycott which brought the Whig government to terms on a proposed debasing of Irish coinage; "all government without the consent of the governed is the very definition of slavery," he declared. These letters made Swift a national hero in a land that he thought only "good enough to die in." He continued his defense of the Irish in *A Short View of the State of Ireland* (1727) and in one of his greatest and most savage satires, *A Modest Proposal* (1729). (Cf. *below.*) In the midst of these exertions he found time to see through the press his masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), one of the world's great books (cf. *below*).

Stella died in 1728, and without the comfort of her love Swift's temper deepened in gloom. Toward the end of his life, he was struck by a terrible mental disease. His last days were spent in a mist through which only occasionally there would come gleams of his old genius; he was for long periods unable to speak, and he was tortured by racking pain. When he died in 1745, he was buried, as he had wished, beside Stella in St. Patrick's, where, in the words of his epitaph, "savage indignation can no longer tear the heart."

The standard edition of his works was edited by T. Scott in twelve volumes (1897-1908). An authoritative edition under the guidance of H. Davis is to appear. H. Williams's edition of the poems (1937) is complete. For individual works, consult: A. C. Guthkelch and D. N. Smith, *A Tale of a Tub* (1920); H. Williams, *Gulliver's Travels* (1926); H. Davis, *The Drapier's Letters* (1935). Swift's correspondence has been edited by F. E. Ball (1910-13) in six volumes; a supplementary volume was edited by D. N. Smith (1935). Among excellent biographies and studies are: C. Van Doren, *Swift* (1930); and R. Quintana, *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift* (1936).

Gulliver's Travels

The *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, by Lemuel Gulliver* in expurgated versions has been read with delight by generations of children the world over. The work which Swift actually wrote is a strong dose for the most rugged of adult constitutions, for it is nothing less than the severest indictment ever drawn up against humanity.

On the surface it pretends to be no more than a satire on popular books of travel, which by tradition were filled with fabulous adventures. But it is typical of Swift that he should have taken an apparently innocent point of departure for his bitter denunciation of mankind. The first book deals with Captain Gulliver's adventures in Lilliput, a land of pygmies whose stuntedness is a mirror of human pettiness. The satire in this section is sometimes made more particular; in its relations with the neighboring country of Blefuscu, Lilliput stands for England and Blefuscu for France; the high-heels and the low-heels of Lilliput are, of course, the Tories and the Whigs of England. Most of the attack, however, is directed against human nature everywhere: the fickleness of Lilliputian conduct toward Gulliver, the trivial origins of grave national disputes, and the general absurdities of human bias. The same points are made by a reverse process in the second book, where Gulliver is in Brobdingnag, a land of giants. Before that pleasant people Gulliver boastfully recounts the manners of his own world, with the result that the giants can hardly believe that Nature would indeed allow so "pernicious a race of little odious vermin" to crawl upon the earth. The third voyage is to Laputa and other strange places, where the satire against pedantry and other matters is more diffuse; this part of the work has always proved the least interesting. It is in the last voyage, to the country of the Houyhnhnms, that Swift is most ruthless. In this land the Houyhnhnms, a race of cultivated horses, are the masters, and lead a life ruled by reason, simplicity, virtue, and benevolence. They are forced to keep in subjection, for the good of all, a race of human beasts, the Yahoos—a vile, loathsome tribe debased by filth and vice. Gulliver at first insists that, though he resembles physically the Yahoos, he is not one of them; but as he studies the ways of the wise Houyhnhnms, he is forced to admit that he belongs to that detestable species. All men, Swift implies, are Yahoos, and their civilization has merely given other appearances to the viciousness which the Yahoos exhibit in native crudity.

The satire in the last book is so acrid that many critics who have admired the rest of *Gulliver's Travels* have declared this section to be the product of a diseased mind. There is little doubt that an incurable optimist will find the portrait of humanity in the persons of the Yahoos not to his taste. It should be remembered, to understand fully Swift's message, that he wrote with the fundamental conviction that a life ordered by the dictates of reason could lift even animals to a higher plane, and that mankind living by its lowest impulses can be debased lower than the animals. That Swift composed *Gulliver's Travels* in terrible anger against the cruelty, viciousness, treachery, and stupidity of humanity, no one, however, could deny. He told Pope that he desired to vex the world rather than to entertain it. His actual position will readily be understood in a famous letter he wrote to Pope in 1725:

"When you think of the world give it one lash the more at my request. I have ever hated all nations, professions, and communities, and all my love is toward individuals. . . . I hate and detest that animal called man, although I heartily love John, Peter, Thomas, and so forth. . . . I have got materials toward a treatise, proving the falsity of that definition *animal rationale*, and to show it would be only *rationis capax*. Upon this great foundation of misanthropy . . . the whole building of my Travels is erected; and I never will have peace of mind till all honest men are of my opinion."

The plan of *Gulliver's Travels* was conceived by Swift before 1714, but he wrote most of it after 1720. When published in 1726 it created an immediate sensation, not so much because of the scope of its satire as because of the political satire it contained. It affords the basis of interesting comparisons with More's *Utopia* (cf. p. 224, *above*) and Bacon's *New Atlantis*. Its rank as one of the world's few superlative satires has never been challenged, even by those who charge it with being one-sided. Swift's style which, as Oliver Elton justly says, has "a power of statement that is beyond competition in English," is here seen at its best.

Part I

A VOYAGE TO LILLIPUT

Chapter I

The Author gives some account of himself and family, his first inducements to travel. He is ship-wrecked, and swims for his life, gets safe on shore in the country of *Lilliput*, is made a prisoner, and is carried up country.

My father had a small estate in Nottinghamshire; I was the third of five sons. He sent me to Emanuel College in Cambridge, at fourteen years old, where I resided three years, and applied myself close to my studies; but the charge of maintaining me (although I had a very scanty allowance) being too great for a narrow fortune, I was bound apprentice to Mr. James Bates, an eminent surgeon in London, with whom I continued four years; and my father now and then sending me small sums of money, I laid them out in learning navigation, and other parts of the mathematics, useful to those who intend to travel, as I always believed it would be some time or other my fortune to do. When I left Mr. Bates, I went down to my father; where, by the assistance of him and my uncle John, and some other relations, I got forty pounds, and a promise of thirty pounds a year to maintain me at Leyden:[1] there I studied physic two years and seven months, knowing it would be useful in long voyages.

Soon after my return from Leyden, I was recommended by my good master, Mr. Bates, to be surgeon to the *Swallow*, Captain Abraham Pannell, commander; with whom I continued three years and a half, making a voyage or two into the Levant,[2] and some other parts. When I came back I resolved to settle in London, to which Mr. Bates, my master, encouraged me, and by him I was recommended to several patients. I took part of a small house in the Old Jury;[3] and being advised to alter my condition, I married Mrs. Mary Burton, second daughter to Mr. Edmund Burton, hosier, in Newgate-street, with whom I received four hundred pounds for a portion.

But, my good master Bates dying in two years after, and I having few friends, my business began to fail; for my conscience would not suffer me to imitate the bad practice of too many among my brethren. Having therefore consulted with my wife, and some of my acquaintance, I determined to go again to sea. I was surgeon successively in two ships, and made several voyages, for six years, to the East and West-Indies, by which I got some addition to my fortune. My hours of leisure I spent in reading the best authors, ancient and modern, being always provided with a good number of books; and when I was ashore, in observing the manners and dispositions of the people, as well as learning their language, wherein I had a great facility by the strength of my memory.

The last of these voyages not proving very fortunate, I grew weary of the sea, and intended to stay at home with my wife and family. I removed from the Old Jury to Fetter-Lane, and from thence to Wapping, hoping to get business among the sailors; but it would not turn to account. After three years expectation that things would mend, I accepted an advantageous offer from Captain William Prichard, master of the *Antelope*, who was making a voyage to the South-Sea. We set sail from Bristol, May 4, 1699, and our voyage at first was very prosperous.

It would not be proper, for some reasons, to trouble the reader with the particulars of our adventures in those seas: let it suffice to inform him, that in our passage from thence to the East-Indies, we were driven by a violent storm to the north-west of Van Diemen's Land.[4] By an observation, we found ourselves in the latitude of 30 degrees 2 minutes south. Twelve of our crew were dead by immoderate labor, and ill food, the rest were in a very weak condition. On the fifth of November, which was the beginning of summer in those parts, the weather being very hazy, the seamen spied a rock, within half a cable's length of the ship; but the wind was so strong, that we were driven directly upon it, and immediately split. Six of the crew, of whom I was one, having let down the boat into the sea, made a shift to get clear of the ship, and the rock. We rowed, by my computation, about three leagues, till we were able to work no longer, being already spent with labor while we were in the ship. We therefore trusted ourselves to the mercy of the waves, and in about half an hour the boat was overset by a sudden flurry from the north. What became of my companions in the boat, as well as of those who escaped on the rock, or were left in the vessel, I cannot tell; but conclude they were all lost. For my own part, I swam as fortune directed me, and was pushed forward by wind and tide. I often let my legs drop, and could feel no bottom: but when I was almost gone, and able to struggle no longer, I found myself within my depth; and by this time the storm was much abated. The declivity was so small, that I walked near a mile before I got to the shore, which I conjectured was about eight o'clock in the evening. I then advanced forward near half a mile, but could not discover any sign of houses or inhabitants; at least I was in so weak a condition, that I did not observe them. I was extremely tired, and with that, and the heat of the weather, and about half a pint of brandy that I drank as I left the ship, I found myself much inclined to sleep. I lay down on the grass, which was very short and soft, where I slept sounder than ever I remember to have done in my life, and, as I reckoned, about nine hours; for when I awaked, it was just daylight. I attempted to rise, but was not able to stir: for as I happened to lie on my back, I found my arms and legs were strongly fastened on each side to the ground; and my hair, which was long and thick, tied down in the same manner. I likewise felt several slender ligatures across my body, from my arm-pits to my thighs. I could only look upwards, the sun began to grow hot, and the light offended my eyes. I heard a confused noise about me, but in the posture I lay, could see nothing except the sky. In a little time I felt something alive moving on my left leg, which advancing gently forward over my breast, came almost up to my chin; when bending my eyes downwards as much as I could, I perceived it to be a human creature not six inches high, with a bow and arrow in his hands, and a quiver at his back. In the mean time, I felt at least forty more of the same kind (as I conjectured) following the first. I was in the utmost astonishment, and roared so loud, that they all ran back in a fright; and some of them, as I was afterwards told, were hurt with the falls they got by leaping from my sides upon the ground. However, they soon returned, and one of them, who ventured so far as to get a full sight of my face, lifting up his hands and eyes by way of admiration, cried out in a shrill, but distinct voice, *Hekinah degul:* the others repeated the same words several times, but then I knew not what they meant. I lay all this while, as the reader may believe, in great uneasiness: at length, struggling to get loose, I had the fortune to break the strings, and wrench out the pegs that fastened my left arm to the ground; for, by lifting it up to my face, I discovered the methods they had taken to bind me, and at the same time with a violent pull, which gave me excessive pain, I a little loosened the strings that tied down my hair on the left side, so that I was just able to turn my head about two inches. But the creatures ran off a second time, before I could seize them; whereupon there was a great shout in a very shrill accent, and after it ceased, I heard one of them cry aloud *Tolgo phonac;* when in an instant I felt above an hundred arrows discharged on my left hand, which pricked me like so many needles; and besides, they shot another flight into the air, as we do bombs in Europe, whereof many, I suppose, fell on my body, (though I felt them not) and some on my face, which I immediately covered with my left hand. When this shower of arrows was over, I fell a groaning with grief and pain, and then striving again to get loose, they discharged another volley larger than the first, and some of them attempted with spears to stick me in the sides; but, by good luck, I had on a buff jerkin, which they could not pierce. I thought it the most prudent method to lie still, and my design was to continue so till night, when, my left hand being already loose, I could easily free myself: and as for the inhabitants, I had reason to believe I might be a match for the greatest armies they could bring against me, if they were all of the same size with him that I saw. But fortune disposed otherwise of me. When the people observed I was quiet, they discharged no more arrows; but, by the noise I heard, I knew their numbers increased; and about four yards from me, over-against my right ear, I heard a knocking for above an hour, like that of people at work; when turning my head that way, as well as the pegs and strings would permit me, I saw a stage erected, about a foot and a half from the ground, capable of holding four of the inhabitants, with two or three ladders to mount it: from whence one of them, who seemed to be a person of quality, made me a long speech, whereof I understood not one syllable. But I should have mentioned, that before the principal person began his oration, he cried out three times, *Langro dehul san:* (these words and the former were afterwards repeated and explained to me). Whereupon immediately about fifty of the inhabitants came and cut the strings that fastened the left side of my head, which gave me the liberty of turning it to the right, and of observing the person and gesture of him that was to speak. He appeared to be of a middle age, and taller than any of the other three who attended him, whereof one was a page that held up his train, and seemed to be somewhat longer than my middle finger; the other two stood one on each side to support him. He acted every part of an orator, and I could observe many periods of threatenings, and others of promises, pity, and kindness. I answered in a few words, but in the most submissive manner, lifting up my left hand, and both my eyes to the sun, as calling him for a witness; and being almost famished with hunger, having not eaten a morsel for some hours before I left the ship, I found the demands of nature so strong upon me, that I could not forbear showing my impatience (perhaps against the strict rules of decency) by putting my finger frequently on my mouth, to signify that I wanted food. The *Hurgo* (for so they call a great lord, as I afterwards learnt) understood me very well. He descended from the stage, and commanded that several ladders should be applied to my sides, on which above an hundred of the inhabitants mounted and walked towards my mouth, laden with baskets full of meat, which had been provided and sent thither by the King's orders, upon the first intelligence he received of me. I observed there was the flesh of several animals, but could not distinguish them by the taste. There were shoulders, legs, and loins, shaped like those of mutton, and very well dressed, but smaller than the wings of a lark. I eat them by two or three at a mouthful, and took three loaves at a time, about the bigness of musket bullets. They supplied me as fast as they could, showing a thousand marks of wonder and astonishment at my bulk and appetite. I then made another sign that I wanted drink. They found by my eating, that a small quantity would not suffice me; and being a most ingenious people, they slung up with great dexterity one of their largest hogsheads, then rolled it towards my hand, and beat out the top; I drank it off at a draught, which I might well do, for it did not hold half a pint, and tasted like a small wine of Burgundy, but much more delicious. They brought me a second hogshead, which I drank in the same manner, and made signs for more, but they had none to give me. When I had performed these wonders, they shouted for joy, and danced upon my breast, repeating several times as they did at first, *Hekinah degul.* They made me a sign that I should throw down the two hogsheads, but first warning the people below to stand out of the way, crying aloud, *Borach mivola,* and when they saw the vessels in the air, there was an universal shout of *Hekinah degul.* I confess I was often tempted while they were passing backwards and forwards on my body, to seize forty or fifty of the first that came in my reach, and dash them against the ground. But the remembrance of what I had felt, which probably might not be the worst they could do, and the promise of honor I made them, for so I interpreted my submissive behavior, soon drove out these imaginations. Besides, I now considered myself as bound by the laws of hospitality to a people who had treated me with so much expense and magnificence. However, in my thoughts, I could not sufficiently wonder at the intrepidity of these diminutive mortals, who durst venture to mount and walk upon my body, while one of my hands was at liberty, without trembling at the very sight of so prodigious a creature as I must appear to them. After some time, when they observed that I made no more demands for meat, there appeared before me a person of high rank from his Imperial Majesty. His Excellency, having mounted on the small of my right leg, advanced forwards up to my face, with about a dozen of his retinue. And producing his credentials under the Signet Royal, which he applied close to my eyes, spoke about ten minutes, without any signs of anger, but with a kind of determinate resolution; often pointing forwards, which, as I afterwards found, was towards the capital city, about half a mile distant, whither it was agreed by his Majesty in council that I must be conveyed. I answered in few words, but to no purpose, and made a sign with my hand that was loose, putting it to the other (but over his Excellency's head for fear of hurting him or his train) and then to my own head and body, to signify that I desired my liberty. It appeared that he understood me well enough, for he shook his head by way of disapprobation, and held his hand in a posture to show that I must be carried as a prisoner. However, he made other signs to let me understand that I should have meat and drink enough, and very good treatment. Whereupon I once more thought of attempting to break my bonds; but again, when I felt the smart of their arrows, upon my face and hands, which were all in blisters, and many of the darts still sticking in them, and observing likewise that the number of my enemies increased, I gave tokens to let them know that they might do with me what they pleased. Upon this, the *Hurgo* and his train withdrew, with much civility and cheerful countenances. Soon after I heard a general shout, with frequent repetitions of the words, *Peplom selan,* and I felt great numbers of people on my left side relaxing the cords to such a degree, that

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[1] a university in Holland.

[2] the countries at the eastern end of the Mediterranean.

[3] a district in London largely occupied by Jews.

[4] the old name for Tasmania; perhaps Australia is meant.

I was able to turn upon my right, and to ease myself with making water; which I very plentifully did, to the great astonishment of the people, who conjecturing by my motions what I was going to do, immediately opened to the right and left on that side to avoid the torrent which fell with such noise and violence from me. But before this, they had daubed my face and both my hands with a sort of ointment very pleasant to the smell, which in a few minutes removed all the smart of their arrows. These circumstances, added to the refreshment I had received by their victuals and drink, which were very nourishing, disposed me to sleep. I slept about eight hours, as I was afterwards assured; and it was no wonder, for the physicians, by the Emperor's order, had mingled a sleepy potion in the hogshead of wine.

It seems that upon the first moment I was discovered sleeping on the ground after my landing, the Emperor had early notice of it by an express;[5] and determined in council that I should be tied in the manner I have related (which was done in the night while I slept) that plenty of meat and drink should be sent to me, and a machine prepared to carry me to the capital city.

This resolution perhaps may appear very bold and dangerous, and I am confident would not be imitated by any prince in Europe on the like occasion; however, in my opinion, it was extremely prudent, as well as generous: for supposing these people had endeavored to kill me with their spears and arrows while I was asleep, I should certainly have awaked with the first sense of smart, which might so far have roused my rage and strength, as to have enabled me to break the strings wherewith I was tied; after which, as they were not able to make resistance, so they could expect no mercy.

These people are most excellent mathematicians, and arrived to a great perfection in mechanics, by the countenance and encouragement of the Emperor, who is a renowned patron of learning. This prince hath several machines fixed on wheels, for the carriage of trees and other great weights. He often builds his largest men of war, whereof some are nine foot long, in the woods where the timber grows, and has them carried on these engines three or four hundred yards to the sea. Five hundred carpenters and engineers were immediately set at work to prepare the greatest engine they had. It was a frame of wood raised three inches from the ground, about seven foot long and four wide, moving upon twenty-two wheels. The shout I heard was upon the arrival of this engine, which it seems set out in four hours after my landing. It was brought parallel to me as I lay. But the principal difficulty was to raise and place me in this vehicle. Eighty poles, each of one foot high, were erected for this purpose, and very strong cords of the bigness of packthread were fastened by hooks to many bandages, which the workmen had girt round my neck, my hands, my body, and my legs. Nine hundred of the strongest men were employed to draw up these cords by many pulleys fastened on the poles, and thus, in less than three hours, I was raised and slung into the engine, and there tied fast. All this I was told, for, while the whole operation was performing, I lay in a profound sleep, by the force of that soporiferous medicine infused into my liquor. Fifteen hundred of the Emperor's largest horses, each about four inches and a half high, were employed to draw me towards the metropolis, which, as I said, was half a mile distant.

About four hours after we began our journey, I awaked by a very ridiculous accident; for the carriage being stopped a while to adjust something that was out of order, two or three of the young natives had the curiosity to see how I looked when I was asleep; they climbed up into the engine, and advancing very softly to my face, one of them, an officer in the guards, put the sharp end of his half-pike a good way up into my left nostril, which tickled my nose like a straw, and made me sneeze violently: whereupon they stole off unperceived, and it was three weeks before I knew the cause of my awaking so suddenly. We made a long march the remaining part of that day, and rested at night with five hundred guards on each side of me, half with torches, and half with bows and arrows, ready to shoot me if I should offer to stir. The next morning at sun-rise we continued our march, and arrived within two hundred yards of the city gates about noon. The Emperor, and all his court, came out to meet us; but his great officers would by no means suffer his Majesty to endanger his person by mounting on my body.

At the place where the carriage stopped, there stood an ancient temple, esteemed to be the largest in the whole kingdom; which having been polluted some years before by an unnatural murder, was, according to the zeal of those people, looked upon as profane, and therefore had been applied to common uses, and all the ornaments and furniture carried away. In this edifice it was determined I should lodge. The great gate fronting to the

[5] messenger.

north was about four foot high, and almost two foot wide, through which I could easily creep. On each side of the gate was a small window not above six inches from the ground: into that on the left side, the King's smiths conveyed fourscore and eleven chains, like those that hang to a lady's watch in Europe, and almost as large, which were locked to my left leg with six and thirty padlocks. Over-against this temple, on t'other side of the great highway, at twenty foot distance, there was a turret at least five foot high. Here the Emperor ascended, with many principal lords of his court, to have an opportunity of viewing me, as I was told, for I could not see them. It was reckoned that above an hundred thousand inhabitants came out of the town upon the same errand; and, in spite of my guards, I believe there could not be fewer than ten thousand at several times, who mounted my body by the help of ladders. But a proclamation was soon issued to forbid it upon pain of death. When the workmen found it was impossible for me to break loose, they cut all the strings that bound me; whereupon I rose up, with as melancholy a disposition as ever I had in my life. But the noise and astonishment of the people at seeing me rise and walk, are not to be expressed. The chains that held my left leg were about two yards long, and gave me not only the liberty of walking backwards and forwards in a semicircle; but, being fixed within four inches of the gate, allowed me to creep in, and lie at my full length in the temple.

Chapter II

The Emperor of *Lilliput*, attended by several of the nobility, comes to see the Author in his confinement. The Emperor's person and habit described. Learned men appointed to teach the Author their language. He gains favor by his mild disposition. His pockets are searched, and his sword and pistols taken from him.

When I found myself on my feet, I looked about me and must confess I never beheld a more entertaining prospect. The country round appeared like a continued garden, and the inclosed fields, which were generally forty foot square, resembled so many beds of flowers. These fields were intermingled with woods of half a stang,[5a] and the tallest trees, as I could judge, appeared to be seven foot high. I viewed the town on my left hand, which looked like the painted scene of a city in a theater.

The Emperor was already descended from the tower, and advancing on horseback towards me, which had like to have cost him dear; for the beast, though very well trained, yet wholly unused to such a sight, which appeared as if a mountain moved before him, reared up on his hinder feet: but that prince, who is an excellent horseman, kept his seat, till his attendants ran in, and held the bridle, while his Majesty had time to dismount. When he alighted, he surveyed me round with great admiration, but kept beyond the length of my chain. He ordered his cooks and butlers, who were already prepared, to give me victuals and drink, which they pushed forward in a sort of vehicles upon wheels, till I could reach them. I took these vehicles, and soon emptied them all; twenty of them were filled with meat, and ten with liquor; each of the former afforded me two or three good mouthfuls, and I emptied the liquor of ten vessels, which was contained in earthen vials, into one vehicle, drinking it off at a draught; and so I did with the rest. The Empress, and young Princes of the blood of both sexes, attended by many ladies, sat at some distance in their chairs; but upon the accident that happened to the Emperor's horse, they alighted, and came near his person, which I am now going to describe. He is taller by almost the breadth of my nail, than any of his court; which alone is enough to strike an awe into the beholders. His features[6] are strong and masculine, with an Austrian lip and arched nose, his complexion olive, his countenance erect, his body and limbs well proportioned, all his motions graceful, and his deportment majestic. He was then past his prime, being twenty-eight years and three quarters old, of which he had reigned about seven, in great felicity, and generally victorious. For the better convenience of beholding him, I lay on my side, so that my face was parallel to his, and he stood but three yards off: however, I have had him since many times in my hand, and therefore cannot be deceived in the description. His dress was very plain and simple, and the fashion of it between the Asiatic and the European: but he had on his head a light helmet of gold, adorned with jewels, and a plume on the crest. He held his sword drawn in his hand, to defend himself, if I should happen to break loose; it was almost three inches long, the hilt and scabbard were gold enriched with diamonds. His voice was shrill, but very clear and articulate, and I could distinctly hear it when I stood up. The ladies and courtiers were all most magnificently clad, so that the spot they stood upon seemed to resemble a petticoat spread on the ground, embroidered with figures of gold and silver. His Imperial Majesty spoke often to me, and I returned answers, but neither of us could understand a syllable. There were several of his priests and lawyers present (as I conjectured by their habits) who were commanded to address themselves to me, and I spoke to them in as many languages as I had the least smattering of, which were High and Low Dutch, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian, and Lingua Franca[7]; but all to no purpose. After about two hours the court retired, and I was left with a strong guard, to prevent the impertinence, and probably the malice of the rabble, who were very impatient to crowd about me as near as they durst, and some of them had the impudence to shoot their arrows at me as I sat on the ground by the door of my house, whereof one very narrowly missed my left eye. But the colonel ordered six of the ringleaders to be seized, and thought no punishment so proper as to deliver them bound into my hands, which some of his soldiers accordingly did, pushing them forwards with the butt-ends of their pikes into my reach; I took them all in my right hand, put five of them into my coat-pocket, and as to the sixth, I made a countenance as if I would eat him alive. The poor man squalled terribly, and the colonel and his officers were in much pain, especially when they saw me take out my pen-knife: but I soon put them out of fear: for, looking mildly, and immediately cutting the strings he was bound with, I set him gently on the ground, and away he ran. I treated the rest in the same manner, taking them one by one out of my pocket, and I observed both the soldiers and people were highly obliged at this mark of my clemency, which was represented very much to my advantage at court.

[5a] a pole or perch; sixteen and one-half feet.

[6] This description of King George I is not altogether accurate. Perhaps Swift wished to avoid any trouble that might come from too close a portrait.

Towards night I got with some difficulty into my house, where I lay on the ground, and continued to do so about a fortnight; during which time the Emperor gave orders to have a bed prepared for me. Six hundred beds of the common measure were brought in carriages, and worked up in my house; an hundred and fifty of their beds sewn together made up the breadth and length, and these were four double, which however kept me but very indifferently from the hardness of the floor, that was of smooth stone. By the same computation they provided me with sheets, blankets, and coverlets, tolerable enough for one who had been so long inured to hardships as I.

As the news of my arrival spread through the kingdom, it brought prodigious numbers of rich, idle, and curious people to see me; so that the villages were almost emptied, and great neglect of tillage and household affairs must have ensued, if his Imperial Majesty had not provided, by several proclamations and orders of state, against this inconveniency. He directed that those who had already beheld me should return home, and not presume to come within fifty yards of my house without license from court; whereby the secretaries of state got considerable fees.

In the meantime, the Emperor held frequent councils to debate what course should be taken with me; and I was afterwards assured by a particular friend, a person of great quality, who was looked upon to be as much in the secret as any, that the court was under many difficulties concerning me. They apprehended my breaking loose, that my diet would be very expensive, and might cause a famine. Sometimes they determined to starve me, or at least to shoot me in the face and hands with poisoned arrows, which would soon dispatch me; but again they considered, that the stench of so large a carcass might produce a plague in the metropolis, and probably spread through the whole kingdom. In the midst of these consultations, several officers of the army went to the door of the great council-chamber; and two of them being admitted, gave an account of my behavior to the six criminals above-mentioned, which made so favorable an impression in the breast of his Majesty and the whole board, in my behalf, that an Imperial Commission was issued out, obliging all the villages nine hundred yards round the city, to deliver in every morning six beeves, forty sheep, and other victuals for my sustenance; together with a proportionable quantity of bread, and wine, and other liquors; for the due payment of which his Majesty gave assignments upon his treasury. For this prince lives chiefly upon his own demesnes,[8] seldom, except upon great occasions, raising any subsidies upon his subjects, who are bound to attend him in his wars at their own expense. An establishment was also made of six hundred persons to be my domestics, who had board-wages allowed for their maintenance, and tents built for them very conveniently on each side of my door. It was likewise ordered, that three hundred tailors should make me a suit of clothes after the fashion of the country: that six of his Majesty's greatest scholars should be employed to instruct me in their language: and, lastly, that the Emperor's horses, and those of the nobility, and troops of guards, should be frequently exercised in my sight, to accustom themselves to me. All these orders were duly put in execution, and in about three weeks I made a great progress in learning their language; during which time, the Emperor frequently honored me with his visits, and was pleased to assist my masters in teaching me. We began already to converse together in some sort; and the first words I learnt were to express my desire that he would please give me my liberty, which I every day repeated on my knees. His answer, as I could comprehend it, was, that this must be a work of time, not to be thought on without the advice of his council, and that first I must *Lumos kelmin pesso desmar lon Emposo*; that is, swear a peace with him and his kingdom. However, that I should be used with all kindness; and he advised me to acquire, by my patience and discreet behavior, the good opinion of himself and his subjects. He desired I would not take it ill, if he gave orders to certain proper officers to search me; for probably I might carry about me several weapons, which must needs be dangerous things, if they answered the bulk of so prodigious a person. I said, his Majesty should be satisfied, for I was ready to strip myself, and turn up my pockets before him. This I delivered part in words, and part in signs. He replied, that by the laws of the kingdom I must be searched by two of his officers; that he knew this could not be done without my consent and assistance; that he had so good an opinion of my generosity and justice, as to trust their persons in my hands: that whatever they took from me should be returned when I left the country, or paid for at the rate which I would set upon them. I took up the two officers in my hands, put them first into my coat-pockets, and then into every other pocket about me, except my two fobs, and another secret pocket which I had no mind should be searched, wherein I had some little necessaries that were of no consequence to any but myself. In one of my fobs there was a silver watch, and in the other a small quantity of gold in a purse. These gentlemen, having pen, ink, and paper about them, made an exact inventory of every thing they saw; and when they had done, desired I would set them down, that they might deliver it to the Emperor. This inventory I afterwards translated into English, and is word for word as follows.

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[7] a language compounded of French, Spanish, Greek and Arabic, and spoken in the Mediterranean ports.

[8] estate.

Imprimis, In the right coat-pocket of the Great Man-Mountain (for so I interpret the words *Quinbus Flestrin*) after the strictest search, we found only one great piece of coarse cloth, large enough to be a foot-cloth for your Majesty's chief room of state. In the left pocket we saw a huge silver chest, with a cover of the same metal, which we, the searchers, were not able to lift. We desired it should be opened, and one of us stepping into it, found himself up to the mid leg in a sort of dust, some part whereof flying up to our faces, set us both a sneezing for several times together. In his right waistcoat-pocket we found a prodigious bundle of white thin substances, folded one over another, about the bigness of three men, tied with a strong cable, and marked with black figures; which we humbly conceive to be writings, every letter almost half as large as the palm of our hands. In the left there was a sort of engine, from the back of which were extended twenty long poles, resembling the pallisados before your Majesty's court; wherewith we conjecture the Man-Mountain combs his head; for we did not always trouble him with questions, because we found it a great difficulty to make him understand us. In the large pocket on the right side of his middle cover (so I translate the word *ranfu-lo*, by which they meant my breeches) we saw a hollow pillar of iron, about the length of a man, fastened to a strong piece of timber, larger than the pillar; and upon one side of the pillar were huge pieces of iron sticking out, cut into strange figures, which we know not what to make of. In the left pocket, another engine of the same kind. In the smaller pocket on the right side, were several round flat pieces of white and red metal, of different bulk; some of the white, which seemed to be silver, were so large and heavy, that my comrade and I could hardly lift them. In the left pocket were two black pillars irregularly shaped: we could not, without difficulty, reach the top of them as we stood at the bottom of his pocket. One of them was covered, and seemed all of a piece: but at the upper end of the other, there appeared a white round substance, about twice the bigness of our heads. Within each of these was enclosed a prodigious plate of steel; which, by our orders, we obliged him to show us, because we apprehended they might be dangerous engines. He took them out of their cases, and told us, that in his own country his practice was to shave his beard with one of these, and cut his meat with the other. There were two pockets which we could not enter: these he called his fobs; they were two large slits cut into the top of his middle cover, but squeezed close by the pressure of his belly. Out of the right fob hung a great silver chain, with a wonderful kind of engine at the bottom. We directed him to draw out whatever was fastened to that chain; which appeared to be a globe, half silver, and half of some transparent metal; for, on the transparent side, we saw certain strange figures circularly drawn, and thought we could touch them, till we found our fingers stopped by that lucid substance. He put this engine to our ears, which made an incessant noise like that of a water-mill. And we conjecture it is either some unknown animal, or the god that he worships; but we are more inclined to the latter opinion, because he assured us, (if we understood him right, for he expressed himself very imperfectly) that he seldom did any thing without consulting it. He called it his oracle, and said it pointed out the time for every action of his life. From the left fob he took out a net almost large enough for a fisherman, but contrived to open and shut like a purse, and served him for the same use: we found therein several massy pieces of yellow metal, which, if they be real gold, must be of immense value.

Having thus, in obedience to your Majesty's commands, diligently searched all his pockets, we observed a girdle about his waist made of the hide of some prodigious animal; from which, on the left side, hung a sword of the length of five men; and on the right, a bag or pouch divided into two cells, each cell capable of holding three of your Majesty's subjects. In one of these cells were several globes or balls of a most ponderous metal, about the bigness of our heads, and requiring a strong hand to lift them: the other cell contained a heap of certain black grains, but of no great bulk or weight, for we could hold above fifty of them in the palms of our hands.

This is an exact inventory of what we found about the body of the Man-Mountain, who used us with great civility, and due respect to your Majesty's Commission. Signed and sealed on the fourth day of the eighty-ninth moon of your Majesty's auspicious reign.

CLEFRIN FRELOCK, MARSI FRELOCK.

When this inventory was read over to the Emperor, he directed me, although in very gentle terms, to deliver up the several particulars. He first called for my scimitar, which I took out, scabbard and all. In the mean time he ordered three thousand of his choicest troops (who then attended him) to surround me at a distance, with their bows and arrows just ready to discharge: but I did not observe it, for my eyes were wholly fixed upon his Majesty. He then desired me to draw my scimitar, which, although it had got some rust by the sea-water, was in most parts exceeding bright. I did so, and immediately all the troops gave a shout between terror and surprise; for the sun shone clear, and the reflection dazzled their eyes, as I waved the scimitar to and fro in my hand. His Majesty, who is a most magnanimous prince, was less daunted than I could expect; he ordered me to return it into the scabbard, and cast it on the ground as gently as I could, about six foot from the end of my chain. The next thing he demanded, was one of the hollow iron pillars, by which he meant my pocket-pistols. I drew it out, and at his desire, as well as I could, expressed to him the use of it; and charging it only with powder, which, by the closeness of my pouch, happened to escape wetting in the sea (an inconvenience against which all prudent mariners take special care to provide) I first cautioned the Emperor not to be afraid, and then I let it off in the air. The astonishment here was much greater than at the sight of my scimitar. Hundreds fell down as if they had been struck dead; and even the Emperor, although he stood his ground, could not recover himself in some time. I delivered up both my pistols in the same manner as I had done my scimitar, and then my pouch of powder and bullets; begging him that the former might be kept from fire, for it would kindle with the smallest spark, and blow up his imperial palace into the air. I likewise delivered up my watch, which the Emperor was very curious to see, and commanded two of his tallest yeomen of the guards to bear it on a pole upon their shoulders, as draymen in England do a barrel of ale. He was amazed at the continual noise it made, and the motion of the minute-hand, which he could easily discern; for their sight is much more acute than ours: and asked the opinions of his learned men about him, which were various and remote, as the reader may well imagine without my repeating; although indeed I could not very perfectly understand them. I then gave up my silver and copper money, my purse, with nine large pieces of gold, and some smaller ones; my knife and razor, my comb and silver snuff-box, my handkerchief and journal-book. My scimitar, pistols, and pouch, were conveyed in carriages to his Majesty's stores; but the rest of my goods were returned to me.

I had, as I before observed, one private pocket which escaped their search, wherein there was a pair of spectacles (which I sometimes use for the weakness of my eyes), a pocket perspective,[9] and several other little conveniences; which being of no consequence to the Emperor, I did not think myself bound in honor to discover, and I apprehended they might be lost or spoiled if I ventured them out of my possession.

CHAPTER III

The author diverts the Emperor, and his nobility of both sexes, in a very uncommon manner. The diversions of the court of *Lilliput* described. The Author has his liberty granted him upon certain conditions.

My gentleness and good behavior had gained so far on the Emperor and his court, and indeed upon the army and people in general, that I vegan to conceive hopes of getting my liberty in a short time. I took all possible methods to cultivate this favorable disposition. The natives came by degrees to be less apprehensive of any danger from me. I would sometimes lie down, and let five or six of them dance on my hand. And at last the boys and girls would venture to come and play at hide and seek in my hair. I had now made a good progress in understanding and speaking their language. The Emperor had a mind one day to entertain me with several of the country shows, wherein they exceed all nations I have known, both for dexterity and magnificence. I was diverted with none so much as that of the rope-dancers, performed upon a slender white thread, extended about two foot, and twelve inches from the ground. Upon which I shall desire liberty, with the reader's patience, to enlarge a little.

This diversion is only practiced by those persons who are candidates for great employments, and high favor, at court.[10] They are trained in this art from their youth, and are not always of noble birth, or liberal education. When a great office is vacant, either by death or disgrace, (which often happens) five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling, succeeds in the office. Very often the chief ministers themselves are commanded to show their skill, and to convince the Emperor that they have not lost their faculty. Flimnap, the Treasurer, is allowed to cut a caper on the straight rope, at least an inch higher than any other lord in the whole empire. I have seen him do the summerset several times together upon a trencher fixed on the rope, which is no thicker than a common packthread in England. My friend Reldresal, principal Secretary for private Affairs, is, in my opinion, if I am not partial, the second after the Treasurer; the rest of the great officers are much upon a par.

These diversions are often attended with fatal accidents, whereof great numbers are on record. I myself have seen two or three candidates break a limb. But the danger is much greater when the ministers themselves are commanded to show their dexterity; for, by contending to excel themselves and their fellows, they strain so far, that there is hardly one of them who hath not received a fall, and some of them two or three. I was assured that a year or two before my arrival, Flimnap would have infallibly broke his neck, if one of the King's cushions, that accidentally lay on the ground, had not weakened the force of his fall.

There is likewise another diversion, which is only shown before the Emperor and Empress, and first minister, upon particular occasions. The Emperor lays on the table three fine silken threads of six inches long. One is blue, the other red, and the third green.[11] These threads are proposed as prizes for those persons whom the Emperor hath a mind to distinguish by a peculiar mark of his favor. The ceremony is performed in his Majesty's great chamber of state, where the candidates are to undergo a trial of dexterity very different from the former, and such as I have not observed the least resemblance of in any other country of the old or the new world. The Emperor holds a stick in his hands, both ends parallel to the horizon, while the candidates advancing one by one, sometimes leap over the stick, sometimes creep under it backwards and forwards several times, according as the stick is advanced or depressed. Sometimes the Emperor holds one end of the stick, and his first minister the other; sometimes the minister has it entirely to himself. Whoever performs his part with most agility, and holds out the longest in leaping and creeping, is rewarded with the blue-colored silk; the red is given to the next, and the green to the third, which they all wear girt twice round about the middle; and you see few great persons about this court, who are not adorned with one of these girdles.

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[9] telescope.

[10] This refers to the devious means used by politicians to get power.

[11] a reference to the ribbons of the Garter, the Bath, and the Thistle.

The horses of the army, and those of the royal stables, having been daily led before me, were no longer shy, but would come up to my very feet without starting. The riders would leap them over my hand as I held it on the ground, and one of the Emperor's huntsmen, upon a large courser, took[12] my foot, shoe and all; which was indeed a prodigious leap. I had the good fortune to divert the Emperor one day after a very extraordinary manner. I desired he would order several sticks of two foot high, and the thickness of an ordinary cane, to be brought me; whereupon his Majesty commanded the master of his woods to give directions accordingly; and the next morning six woodmen arrived with as many carriages, drawn by eight horses to each. I took nine of these sticks, fixing them firmly in the ground in a quadrangular figure, two foot and a half square. I took four other sticks, and tied them parallel at each corner, about two foot from the ground; then I fastened my handkerchief to the nine sticks that stood erect, and extended it on all sides, till it was tight as the top of a drum; and the four parallel sticks rising about five inches higher than the handkerchief, served as ledges on each side. When I had finished my work, I desired the Emperor to let a troop of his best horse, twenty-four in number, come and exercise upon this plain. His Majesty approved of the proposal, and I took them up, one by one, in my hands, ready mounted and armed, with the proper officers to exercise them. As soon as they got into order, they divided into two parties, performed mock skirmishes, discharged blunt arrows, drew their swords, fled and pursued, attacked and retired, and in short discovered the best military discipline I ever beheld. The parallel sticks secured them and their horses from falling over the stage; and the Emperor was so much delighted that he ordered this entertainment to be repeated several days, and once was pleased to be lifted up and give the word of command; and, with great difficulty, persuaded even the Empress herself to let me hold her in her close chair within two yards of the stage, from whence she was able to take a full view of the whole performance. It was my good fortune that no ill accident happened in these entertainments, only once a fiery horse, that belonged to one of the captains, pawing with his hoof, struck a hole in my handkerchief, and his foot slipping, he overthrew his rider and himself; but I immediately relieved them both, and covering the hole with one hand, I set down the troop with the other, in the same manner as I took them up. The horse that fell was strained in the left shoulder, but the rider got no hurt, and I repaired my handkerchief as well as I could: however, I would not trust to the strength of it any more in such dangerous enterprises.

About two or three days before I was set at liberty, as I was entertaining the court with these kind of feats, there arrived an express to inform his Majesty, that some of his subjects riding near the place where I was first taken up, had seen a great black substance lying on the ground, very oddly shaped, extending its edges round as wide as his Majesty's bedchamber, and rising up in the middle as high as a man; that it was no living creature, as they at first apprehended, for it lay on the grass without motion, and some of them had walked round it several times: that by mounting upon each other's shoulders, they had got to the top, which was flat and even, and stamping upon it they found it was hollow within; that they humbly conceived it might be something belonging to the Man-Mountain; and if his Majesty pleased, they would undertake to bring it with only five horses. I presently knew what they meant, and was glad at heart to receive this intelligence. It seems upon my first reaching the shore after our shipwreck, I was in such confusion, that before I came to the place where I went to sleep, my hat, which I had fastened with a string to my head while I was rowing, and had stuck on all the time I was swimming, fell off after I came to land; the string, as I conjecture, breaking by some accident which I never observed, but thought my hat had been lost at sea. I intreated his Imperial Majesty to give orders it might be brought to me a soon as possible, describing to him the use and the nature of it: and the next day the waggoners arrived with it, but not in a very good condition; they had bored two holes in the brim, within an inch and half of the edge, and fastened two hooks in the holes; these hooks were tied by a long cord to the harness, and thus my hat was dragged along for above half an English mile; but the ground in that country being extremely smooth and level, it received less damage than I expected.

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[12] jumped over.

Two days after this adventure, the Emperor having ordered that part of his army which quarters in and about his metropolis to be in readiness, took a fancy of diverting himself in a very singular manner. He desired I would stand like a Colossus, with my legs as far asunder as I conveniently could. He then commanded his General (who was an old experienced leader, and a great patron of mine) to draw up the troops in close order, and march them under me; the foot by twenty-four in a breast, and the horse by sixteen, with drums beating, colors flying, and pikes advanced. This body consisted of three thousand foot, and a thousand horse. His Majesty gave orders, upon pain of death, that every soldier in his march should observe the strictest decency with regard to my person; which, however, could not prevent some of the younger officers from turning up their eyes as they passed under me. And, to confess the truth, my breeches were at that time in so ill a condition, that they afforded some opportunities for laughter and admiration.

I had sent so many memorials and petitions for my liberty, that his Majesty at length mentioned the matter, first in the cabinet, and then in a full council; where it was opposed by none, except Skyresh Bolgolam,[13] who was pleased, without any provocation, to be my mortal enemy. But it was carried against him by the whole board, and confirmed by the Emperor. That minister was *Galbet*, or Admiral of the Realm, very much in his master's confidence, and a person well versed in affairs, but of a morose and sour complexion. However, he was at length persuaded to comply; but prevailed that the articles and conditions upon which I should be set free, and to which I must swear, should be drawn up by himself. These articles were brought to me by Skyresh Bolgolam in person, attended by two under-secretaries, and several persons of distinction. After they were read, I was demanded to swear to the performance of them; first in the manner of my own country, and afterwards in the method prescribed by their laws; which was to hold my right foot in my left hand, to place the middle finger of my right hand on the crown of my head, and my thumb on the tip of my right ear. But because the reader may be curious to have some idea of the style and manner of expression peculiar to that people, as well as to know the articles upon which I recovered my liberty, I have made a translation of the whole instrument word for word, as near as I was able, which I here offer to the public.

Golbasto Momarem Evlame Gurdilo Shefin Mully Ully Gue, most mighty Emperor of Lilliput, delight and terror of the universe, whose dominions extend five thousand *blustrugs* (about twelve miles in circumference) to the extremities of the globe; monarch of all monarchs, taller than the sons of men; whose feet press down to the center, and whose head strikes against the sun; at whose nod the princes of the earth shake their knees; pleasant as the spring, comfortable as the summer, fruitful as autumn, dreadful as winter. His most sublime Majesty proposeth to the Man-Mountain, lately arrived to our celestial dominions, the following articles, which by a solemn oath he shall be obliged to perform.

First, The Man-Mountain shall not depart from our dominions, without our license under our great seal.

2d, He shall not presume to come into our metropolis, without our express order; at which time, the inhabitants shall have two hours' warning to keep within their doors.

3d, The said Man-Mountain shall confine his walks to our principal high roads, and not offer to walk or lie down in a meadow or field of corn.

4th, As he walks the said roads, he shall take the utmost care not to trample upon the bodies of any of our loving subjects, their horses, or carriages, nor take any of our subjects into his hands, without their own consent.

5th, If an express requires extraordinary dispatch, the Man-Mountain shall be obliged to carry in his pocket the messenger and horse a six days' journey once in every moon, and return the said messenger back (if so required) safe to our Imperial Presence.

6th, He shall be our ally against our enemies in the Island of Blefuscu,[14] and do his utmost to destroy their fleet, which is now preparing to invade us.

7th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, at his times of leisure, be aiding and assisting our workmen, in helping to raise certain great stones, towards covering the wall of the principal park, and other our royal buildings.

8th, That the said Man-Mountain shall, in two moons' time, deliver in an exact survey of the circumference of our dominions by a computation of his own paces round the coast.

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[13] perhaps the Duke of Argyle, whom Swift had angered by strictures against the Scotch in his political pamphlet, *The Public Spirit of the Whigs.*

[14] France.

Lastly, That upon his solemn oath to observe all the above articles, the said Man-Mountain shall have a daily allowance of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 of our subjects, with free access to our Royal Person, and other marks of our favor. Given at our Palace at Belfaborac the twelfth day of the ninety-first moon of our reign.

I swore and subscribed to these articles with great cheerfulness and content, although some of them were not so honorable as I could have wished; which proceeded wholly from the malice of Skyresh Bolgolam, the High-Admiral: whereupon my chains were immediately unlocked, and I was at full liberty; the Emperor himself in person did me the honor to be by at the whole ceremony. I made my acknowledgments by prostrating myself at his Majesty's feet: but he commanded me to rise; and after many gracious expressions, which, to avoid the censure of vanity, I shall not repeat, he added, that he hoped I should prove a useful servant, and well deserve all the favors he had already conferred upon me, or might do for the future.

The reader may please to observe, that in the last articles for the recovery of my liberty, the Emperor stipulates to allow me a quantity of meat and drink sufficient for the support of 1728 Lilliputians. Some time after, asking a friend at court how they came to fix on that determinate number; he told me that his Majesty's mathematicians, having taken the height of my body by the help of a quadrant, and finding it to exceed theirs in the proportion of twelve to one, they concluded from the similarity of their bodies, that mine must contain at least 1728 of theirs, and consequently would require as much food as was necessary to support that number of Lilliputians. By which, the reader may conceive an idea of the ingenuity of that people, as well as the prudent and exact economy of so great a prince.

Chapter IV

Mildendo, the metropolis of *Lilliput*, described, together with the Emperor's palace. A conversation between the Author and a principal Secretary, concerning the affairs of that empire. The Author's offer to serve the Emperor in his wars.

The first request I made after I had obtained my liberty, was, that I might have license to see Mildendo, the metropolis; which the Emperor easily granted me, but with a special charge to do no hurt either to the inhabitants or their houses. The people had notice by proclamation of my design to visit the town. The wall which encompassed it, is two foot and an half high, and at least eleven inches broad, so that a coach and horses may be driven very safely round it; and it is flanked with strong towers at ten foot distance. I stepped over the great Western Gate, and passed very gently, and sideling through the two principal streets, only in my short waistcoat, for fear of damaging the roofs and eaves of the houses with the skirts of my coat. I walked with the utmost circumspection, to avoid treading on any stragglers, that might remain in the streets, although the orders were very strict, that all people should keep in their houses, at their own peril. The garret windows and tops of houses were so crowded with spectators, that I thought in all my travels I had not see a more populous place. The city is an exact square, each side of the wall being five hundred foot long. The two great streets, which run cross and divide it into four quarters, are five foot wide. The lanes and alleys, which I could not enter, but only viewed them as I passed, are from twelve to eighteen inches. The town is capable of holding five hundred thousand souls. The houses are from three to five stories. The shops and markets well provided.

The Emperor's palace is in the center of the city, where the two great streets meet. It is inclosed by a wall of two foot high, and twenty foot distant from the buildings. I had his Majesty's permission to step over his wall; and the space being so wide between that and the palace, I could easily view it on every side. The outward court is a square of forty foot, and includes two other courts: in the inmost are the royal apartments, which I was very desirous to see, but found it extremely difficult; for the great gates, from one square into another, were but eighteen inches high, and seven inches wide. Now the buildings of the outer court were at least five foot high, and it was impossible for me to stride over them without infinite damage to the pile, though the walls were strongly built of hewn stone, and four inches thick. At the same time the Emperor had a great desire that I should see the magnificence of his palace; but this I was not able to do till three days after, which I spent in cutting down with my knife some of the largest trees in the royal park, about an hundred yards distant from the city. Of these trees I made two stools, each about three foot high, and strong enough to bear my weight. The people having received notice a second time, I went again through the city to the palace, with my two stools in my hands. When I came to the side of the outer court, I stood upon one stool, and took the other in my hand: this I lifted over the roof, and gently set it down on the space between the first and second court, which was eight foot wide. I then stept over the buildings very conveniently from one stool to the other, and drew up the first after me with a hooked stick. By this contrivance I got into the inmost court; and lying down upon my side, I applied my face to the windows of the middle stories, which were left open on purpose, and discovered the most splendid apartments that can be imagined. There I saw the Empress and the young Princes, in their several lodgings, with their chief attendants about them. Her Imperial Majesty[15] was pleased to smile very graciously upon me, and gave me out of the window her hand to kiss.

But I shall not anticipate the reader with farther descriptions of this kind, because I reserve them for a greater work, which is now almost ready for the press, containing a general description of this empire, from its first erection, through a long series of princes, with a particular account of their wars and politics, laws, learning, and religion: their plants and animals, their peculiar manners and customs, with other matters very curious and useful; my chief design at present being only to relate such events and transactions as happened to the public, or to myself, during a residence of about nine months in that empire.

One morning, about a fortnight after I had obtained my liberty, Reldresal, principal Secretary (as they style him) of private Affairs, came to my house attended only by one servant. He ordered his coach to wait at a distance, and desired I would give him an hour's audience; which I readily consented to, on account of his quality and personal merits, as well as the many good offices he had done me during my solicitations at court. I offered to lie down, that he might the more conveniently reach my ear; but he chose rather to let me hold him in my hand during our conversation. He began with compliments on my liberty; said he might pretend to some merit in it: but, however, added, that if it had not been for the present situation of things at court, perhaps I might not have obtained it so soon. For, said he, as flourishing a condition as we may appear to be in to foreigners, we labor under two mighty evils; a violent faction at home, and the danger of an invasion by a most potent enemy from abroad. As to the first, you are to understand, that for about seventy moons past there have been two struggling parties in this empire, under the names of *Tramecksan* and *Slamecksan*, from the high and low heels on their shoes,[16] by which they distinguish themselves. It is alleged indeed, that the high heels are most agreeable to our ancient constitution: but however this be, his Majesty hath determined to make use of only low heels in the administration of the government, and all offices in the gift of the Crown, as you cannot but observe; and particularly, that his Majesty's Imperial heels are lower at least by a *drurr* than any of his court; (*drurr* is a measure about the fourteenth part of an inch). The animosities between these two parties run so high, that they will neither eat nor drink, nor talk with each other. We compute the *Tramecksan*, or High-Heels, to exceed us in number; but the power is wholly on our side. We apprehend his Imperial Highness, the Heir to the Crown, to have some tendency towards the High-Heels; at least we can plainly discover one of his heels higher than the other, which gives him a hobble in his gait.[17] Now, in the midst of these intestine disquiets, we are threatened with an invasion from the Island of Blefuscu, which is the other great empire of the universe, almost as large and powerful as this of his Majesty. For as to what we have heard you affirm, that there are other kingdoms and states in the world inhabited by human creatures as large as yourself, our philosophers are in much doubt, and would rather conjecture that you dropped from the moon, or one of the stars; because it is certain, that an hundred mortals of your bulk would, in a short time, destroy all the fruits and cattle of his Majesty's dominions. Besides, our histories of six thousand moons make no mention of any other regions, than the two great empires of Lilliput and Blefuscu. Which two mighty powers have, as I was going to tell you, been engaged in a most obstinate war for six and thirty moons past. It began upon the following occasion. It is allowed on all hands, that the primitive way of breaking eggs before we eat them, was upon the larger end: but his present Majesty's grandfather,[18] while he was a boy, going to eat an egg, and breaking it according to the ancient practice, happened to cut one of his fingers. Whereupon the Emperor his father published an edict, commanding all his subjects, upon great penalties, to break the smaller end of their eggs.[19] The people so highly resented this law, that our histories tell us there have been six rebellions raised on that account; wherein one Emperor lost his life, and another his crown.[20] These civil commotions were constantly fomented by the monarchs of Blefuscu; and when they were quelled, the exiles always fled for refuge to that empire. It is computed, that eleven thousand persons have, at several times, suffered death, rather than submit to break their eggs at the smaller end. Many hundred large volumes have been published upon this controversy: but the books of the Big-Endians have been long forbidden, and the whole party rendered incapable by law of holding employments. During the course of these troubles, the Emperors of Blefuscu did frequently expostulate by their ambassadors, accusing us of making a schism in religion, by offending against a fundamental doctrine of our great prophet Lustrog, in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Blundecral (which is their Alcoran). This, however, is thought to be a mere strain upon the text: for the words are these; *That all true believers break their eggs at the convenient end:* and which is the convenient end, seems, in my humble opinion, to be left to every man's conscience, or at least in the power of the chief magistrate to determine. Now the Big-Endian exiles have found so much credit in the Emperor of Blefuscu's court, and so much private assistance and encouragement from their party here at home, that a bloody war has been carried on between the two empires for six and thirty moons with various success; during which time we have lost forty capital ships, and a much greater number of smaller vessels, together with thirty thousand of our best seamen and soldiers; and the damage received by the enemy is reckoned to be somewhat greater than ours. However, they have now equipped a numerous fleet, and are just preparing to make a descent upon us; and his Imperial Majesty, placing great confidence in your valor and strength, has commanded me to lay this account of his affairs before you.

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[15] Queen Anne.

[16] The high heels are the Tories or High Church party; the low heels, the Whigs or Low Church party.

[17] A reference to the intrigues with both parties conducted by the Prince of Wales, later George II.

[18] Henry VIII, who withdrew from the Church of Rome and established the English Church.

I desired the Secretary to present my humble duty to the Emperor, and to let him know, that I thought it would not become me, who was a foreigner, to interfere with parties; but I was ready, with the hazard of my life, to defend his person and state against all invaders.

CHAPTER V

The Author, by an extraordinary stratagem, prevents an invasion. A high title of honor is conferred upon him. Ambassadors arrive from the Emperor of *Blefuscu*, and sue for peace. The Empress's apartment on fire by an accident; the Author instrumental in saving the rest of the palace.

The Empire of Blefuscu is an island situated to the north north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion, I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me, all intercourse between the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our Emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to his Majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet: which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbor ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen, upon the depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed, who told me, that in the middle at high-water it was seventy *glumgluffs* deep, which is about six foot of European measure; and the rest of it fifty *glumgluffs* at most. I walked towards the north-east coast over against Blefuscu; and lying down behind a hillock, took out my small pocket perspective-glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty men of war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as packthread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting-needle. I trebled the cable to make it strong, and for the same reason I twisted three of the iron bars together, binding the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the north-east coast, and putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea in my leathern jerkin, about half an hour before high water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards till I felt ground; I arrived at the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frighted when they saw me, that they leaped out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face; and besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for my eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept among other little necessaries a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had scaped the Emperor's searchers. These I took out and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and thus armed went on boldly with my work in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect, further than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and taking the knot in my hand, began to pull; but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord, and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving about two hundred shots in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables, to which my hooks were tied, and with great ease drew fifty of the enemy's largest men of war after me.

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[19] The Big-Endians are the Catholics; the Little-Endians the Protestants.

[20] Charles I lost his life and James II his crown.

The Blefuscudians, who had not the least imagination of what I intended, were at first confounded with astonishment. They had seen me cut the cables, and thought my design was only to let the ships run a-draft, or fall foul on each other: but when they perceived the whole fleet moving in order, and saw me pulling at the end, they set up such a scream of grief and despair, that it is almost impossible to describe or conceive. When I had got out of danger, I stopped awhile to pick out the arrows that stuck in my hands and face; and rubbed on some of the same ointment that was given me at my first arrival, as I have formerly mentioned. I then took off my spectacles, and waiting about an hour, till the tide was a little fallen, I waded through the middle with my cargo, and arrived safe at the royal port of Lilliput.

The Emperor and his whole court stood on the shore, expecting the issue of this great adventure. They saw the ships move forward in a large half-moon, but could not discern me, who was up to my breast in water. When I advanced in the middle of the channel, they were yet in more pain, because I was under water to my neck. The Emperor concluded me to be drowned, and that the enemy's fleet was approaching in a hostile manner: but he was soon eased of his fears, for the channel growing shallower every step I made, I came in a short time within hearing, and holding up the end of a cable by which the fleet was fastened, I cried in a loud voice, *Long live the most puissant Emperor of Lilliput!* This great prince received me at my landing with all possible encomiums, and created me a *Nardac* upon the spot, which is the highest title of honor among them.

His Majesty desired I would take some other opportunity of bringing all the rest of his enemy's ships into his ports. And so immeasurable is the ambition of princes, that he seemed to think of nothing less than reducing the whole empire of Blefuscu into a province, and governing it by a viceroy; of destroying the Big-Endian exiles, and compelling the people to break the smaller end of their eggs, by which he would remain the sole monarch of the whole world. But I endeavored to divert him from this design, by many arguments drawn from the topics of policy as well as justice; and I plainly protested, that I would never be an instrument of bringing a free and brave people into slavery. And when the matter was debated in council, the wisest part of the ministry were of my opinion.

This open bold declaration of mine was so opposite to the schemes and politics of his Imperial Majesty, that he could never forgive it; he mentioned it in a very artful manner at council, where I was told that some of the wisest appeared, at least by their silence, to be of my opinion; but others, who were my secret enemies, could not forbear some expressions, which by a side-wind reflected on me. And from this time began an intrigue between his Majesty and a junto of ministers maliciously bent against me, which broke out in less than two months, and had like to have ended in my utter destruction. Of so little weight are the greatest services to princes, when put into the balance with a refusal to gratify their passions.

About three weeks after this exploit, there arrived a solemn embassy from Blefuscu, with humble offers of a peace; which was soon concluded upon conditions very advantageous to our Emperor, wherewith I shall not trouble the reader. There were six ambassadors, with a train of about five hundred persons, and their entry was very magnificent, suitable to the grandeur of their master, and the importance of their business. When their treaty was finished, wherein I did them several good offices by the credit I now had, or at least appeared to have at court, their Excellencies, who were privately told how much I had been their friend, made me a visit in form. They began with many compliments upon my valor and generosity, invited me to that kingdom in the Emperor their master's name, and desired me to show them some proofs of my prodigious strength, of which they had heard so many wonders; wherein I readily obliged them, but shall not trouble the reader with the particulars.

When I had for some time entertained their Excellencies, to their infinite satisfaction and surprise, I desired they would do me the honor to present my most humble respects to the Emperor their master, the renown of whose virtues had so justly filled the whole world with admiration, and whose royal person I resolved to attend before I returned to my own country: accordingly, the next time I had the honor to see our Emperor, I desired his general licence to wait on the Blefuscudian monarch, which he was pleased to grant me, as I could perceive, in a very cold manner; but could not guess the reason, till I had a whisper from a certain person that Flimnap and Bolgolam had represented my intercourse with those ambassadors as a mark of disaffection, from which I am sure my heart was wholy free. And this was the first time I began to conceive some imperfect idea of courts and ministers.

It is to be observed, that these ambassadors spoke to me by an interpreter, the languages of both empires differing as much from each other as any two in Europe, and each nation priding itself upon the antiquity, beauty, and energy of their own tongues, with an avowed contempt for that of their neighbor; yet our Emperor, standing upon the advantage he had got by the seizure of their fleet, obliged them to deliver their credentials, and make their speech in the Lilliputian tongue. And it must be confessed, that from the great intercourse of trade and commerce between both realms, from the continual reception of exiles, which is mutual among them, and from the custom in each empire to send their young nobility and richer gentry to the other, in order to polish themselves by seeing the world, and understanding men and manners; there are few persons of distinction, or merchants, or seamen, who dwell in the maritime parts, but what can hold conversation in both tongues; as I found some weeks after, when I went to pay my respects to the Emperor of Blefuscu, which in the midst of great misfortunes, through the malice of my enemies, proved a very happy adventure to me, as I shall relate in its proper place.

The reader may remember, that when I signed those articles upon which I recovered my liberty, there were some which I disliked upon account of their being too servile, neither could anything but an extreme necessity have forced me to submit. But being now a *Nardac* of the highest rank in that empire, such offices were looked upon as below my dignity, and the Emperor (to do him justice) never once mentioned them to me. However, it was not long before I had an opportunity of doing his Majesty, at least, as I then thought, as most signal service. I was alarmed at midnight with the cries of many hundred people at my door; by which being suddenly awaked, I was in some kind of terror. I heard the word *burglum* repeated incessantly: several of the Emperor's court, making their way through the crowd, entreated me to come immediately to the palace, where her Imperial Majesty's apartment was on fire, by the carelessness of a maid of honor, who fell asleep while she was reading a romance. I got up in an instant; and orders being given to clear the way before me, and it being likewise a moonshine night, I made a shift to get to the palace without trampling on any of the people. I found they had already applied ladders to the walls of the apartment, and were well provided with buckets, but the water was at some distance. These buckets were about the size of a large thimble, and the poor people supplied me with them as fast as they could; but the flame was so violent that they did little good. I might easily have stifled it with my coat, which I unfortunately left behind me for haste, and came away only in my leathern jerkin. The case seemed wholly desperate and deplorable; and this magnificent palace would have infallibly been burnt down to the ground, if, by a presence of mind, unusual to me, I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I had the evening before drunk plentifully of a most delicious wine, called *glimigrim*, (the Blefuscudians call it *flunec*, but ours is esteemed the better sort) which is very diuretic. By the luckiest chance in the world, I had not discharged myself of any part of it. The heat I had contracted by coming very near the flames, and by laboring to quench them, made the wine begin to operate by urine; which I voided in such a quantity, and applied so well to the proper places, that in three minutes the fire was wholly extinguished, and the rest of that noble pile, which had cost so many ages in erecting, preserved from destruction.

It was now day-light, and I returned to my house without waiting to congratulate with the Emperor: because, although I had done a very eminent piece of service, yet I could not tell how his Majesty might resent the manner by which I had performed it: for, by the fundamental laws of the realm, it is capital in any person, of what quality soever, to make water within the precincts of the palace. But I was a little comforted by a message from his Majesty, that he would give orders to the Grand Justiciary for passing my pardon in form; which, however, I could not obtain. And I was privately assured, that the Empress, conceiving the greatest abhorrence of what I had done, removed to the most distant side of the court, firmly resolved that those buildings should never be repaired for her use; and, in the presence of her chief confidents could not forbear vowing revenge.

CHAPTER VI

Of the inhabitants of *Lilliput*; their learning, laws, and customs, the manner of educating their children. The Author's way of living in that country. His vindication of a great lady.

Although I intend to leave the description of this empire to a particular treatise, yet in the mean time I am content to gratify the curious reader with some general ideas. As the common size of the natives is somewhat under six inches high, so there is an exact proportion in all other animals, as well as plants and trees: for instance, the tallest horses and oxen are between four and five inches in height, the sheep an inch and a half, more or less: their geese about the bigness of a sparrow, and so the several gradations downwards till you come to the smallest, which, to my sight, were almost invisible; but nature hath adapted the eyes of the Lilliputians to all objects proper for their view: they see with great exactness, but at no great distance. And to show the sharpness of their sight towards objects that are near, I have been much pleased with observing a cook pulling a lark, which was not so large as a common fly; and a young girl threading an invisible needle with invisible silk. Their tallest trees are about seven foot high: I mean some of those in the great royal park, the tops whereof I could but just reach with my fist clinched. The other vegetables are in the same proportion; but this I leave to the reader's imagination.

I shall say but little at present of their learning, which for many ages hath flourished in all its branches among them: but their manner of writing is very peculiar, being neither from the left to the right, like the Europeans; nor from the right to the left, like the Arabians; nor from up to down, like the Chinese; nor from down to up, like the Cascagians; but aslant from one corner of the paper to the other, like ladies in England.

They bury their dead with their heads directly downwards, because they hold an opinion, that in eleven thousand moons they are all to rise again, in which period the earth (which they conceive to be flat) will turn upside down, and by this means they shall, at their resurrection, be found ready standing on their feet. The learned among them confess the absurdity of this doctrine, but the practice still continues, in compliance to the vulgar.

There are some laws and customs in this empire very peculiar; and if they were not so directly contrary to those of my own dear country, I should be tempted to say a little in their justification. It is only to be wished, that they were as well executed. The first I shall mention, relates to informers. All crimes against the state are punished here with the utmost severity; but if the person accused maketh his innocence plainly to appear upon his trial, the accuser is immediately put to an ignominious death; and out of his goods or lands, the innocent person is quadruply recompensed for the loss of his time, for the danger he underwent, for the hardship of his imprisonment, and for all the charges he hath been at in making his defence. Or, if that fund be deficient, it is largely supplied by the Crown. The Emperor does also confer on him some public mark of his favor, and proclamation is made of his innocence through the whole city.

They look upon fraud as a greater crime than theft, and therefore seldom fail to punish it with death; for they allege, that care and vigilance, with a very common understanding, may preserve a man's goods from thieves, but honesty has no fence against superior cunning; and since it is necessary that there should be a perpetual intercourse of buying and selling, and dealing upon credit, where fraud is permitted and connived at, or hath no law to punish it, the honest dealer is always undone, and the knave gets the advantage. I remember when I was once interceding with the Emperor for a criminal who had wronged his master of a great sum of money, which he had received by order, and ran away with; and happening to tell his Majesty, by way of extenuation, that it was only a breach of trust; the Emperor thought it monstrous in me to offer, as a defence, the greatest aggravation of the crime: and truly I had little to say in return, farther than the common answer, that different nations had different customs; for, I confess, I was heartily ashamed.

Although we usually call reward and punishment the two hinges upon which all government turns, yet I could never observe this maxim to be put in practice by any nation except that of Lilliput. Whoever can there bring sufficient proof that he hath strictly observed the laws of his country for seventy-three moons, hath a claim to certain privileges, according to his quality and condition of life, with a proportionable sum of money out of a fund appropriated for that use: he likewise acquires the title of *Snilpall*, or Legal, which is added to his name, but does not descend to his posterity. And these people thought it a prodigious defect of policy among us, when I told them that our laws were enforced only by penalties, without any mention of reward. It is upon this account that the image of Justice, in their courts of judicature, is formed with six eyes, two before, as many behind, and on each side one, to signify circumspection; with a bag of gold open in her right hand, and a sword sheathed in her left, to show she is more disposed to reward than to punish.

In choosing persons for all employments, they have more regard to good morals than to great abilities; for, since government is necessary to mankind, they believe that the common size of human understandings is fitted to some station or other, and that Providence never intended to make the management of public affairs a mystery, to be comprehended only by a few persons of sublime genius, of which there seldom are three born in an age: but they suppose truth, justice, temperance, and the like, to be in every man's power; the practice of which virtues, assisted by experience and a good intention, would qualify any man for the service of his country, except where a course of study is required. But they thought the want of moral virtues was so far from being supplied by superior endowments of the mind, that employments could never be put into such dangerous hands as those of persons so qualified; and at least, that the mistakes committed by ignorance in a virtuous disposition, would never be of such fatal consequence to the public weal, as the practices of a man whose inclinations led him to be corrupt, and had great abilities to manage, and multiply, and defend his corruptions.

In like manner, the disbelief of a Divine Providence renders a man uncapable of holding any public station; for, since kings avow themselves to be the deputies of Providence, the Lilliputians think nothing can be more absurd than for a prince to employ such men as disown the authority under which he acts.

In relating these and the following laws, I would only be understood to mean the original institutions, and not the most scandalous corruptions into which these people are fallen by the degenerate nature of man. For as to that infamous practice of acquiring great employments by dancing on the ropes, or badges of favor and distinction by leaping over sticks and creeping under them, the reader is to observe, that they were first introduced by the grandfather of the Emperor now reigning, and grew to the present height, by the gradual increase of party and faction.

Ingratitude is among them a capital crime, as we read it to have been in some other countries: for they reason thus, that whoever makes ill returns to his benefactor, must needs be a common enemy to the rest of mankind, from whom he hath received no obligation, and therefore such a man is not fit to live.

Their notions relating to the duties of parents and children differ extremely from ours. For, since the conjunction of male and female is founded upon the great law of nature, in order to propagate and continue the species, the Lilliputians will needs have it, that men and women are joined together like other animals, by the motives of concupiscence; and that their tenderness towards their young proceeds from the like natural principle: for which reason they will never allow, that a child is under any obligation to his father for begetting him, or to his mother for bringing him into the world, which, considering the miseries of human life, was neither a benefit in itself, nor intended so by his parents, whose thoughts in their love-encounters were otherwise employed. Upon these, and the like reasonings, their opinion is, that parents are the last of all others to be trusted with the education of their own children; and therefore they have in every town public nurseries, where all parents, except cottagers and laborers, are obliged to send their infants of both sexes to be reared and educated when they come to the age of twenty moons, at which time they are supposed to have some rudiments of docility. These schools are of several kinds, suited to different qualities, and to both sexes. They have certain professors well skilled in preparing children for such a condition of life as befits the rank of their parents, and their own capacities as well as inclinations. I shall first say something of the male nurseries, and then of the female.

The nurseries for males of noble or eminent birth, are provided with grave and learned professors, and their several deputies. The clothes and food of the children are plain and simple. They are bred up in the principles of honor, justice, courage, modesty, clemency, religion, and love of their country; they are always employed in some business, except in the times of eating and sleeping, which are very short, and two hours for diversions, consisting of bodily exercises. They are dressed by men till four years of age, and then are obliged to dress themselves, although their quality be ever so great; and the women attendants, who are aged proportionably to ours at fifty, perform only the most menial offices. They are never suffered to converse with servants, but go together in small or greater numbers to take their diversions, and always in the presence of a professor, or one of his deputies; whereby they avoid those early bad impressions of folly and vice to which our children are subject. Their parents are suffered to see them only twice a year; the visit is to last but an hour. They are allowed to kiss the child at meeting and parting; but a professor, who always stands by on those occasions, will not suffer them to whisper, or use any fondling expressions, or bring any presents of toys, sweetmeats, and the like.

The pension from each family for the education and entertainment of a child, upon failure of due payment, is levied by the Emperor's officers.

The nurseries for children of ordinary gentlemen, merchants, traders, and handicrafts, are managed proportionably after the same manner; only those designed for trades, are put out apprentices at eleven years old, whereas those of persons of quality continue in their exercises till fifteen, which answers to one and twenty with us: but the confinement is gradually lessened for the last three years.

In the female nurseries, the young girls of quality are educated much like the males, only they are dressed by orderly servants of their own sex; but always in the presence of a professor or deputy; till they come to dress themselves, which is at five years old. And if it be found that these nurses ever presume to entertain the girl with frightful or foolish stories, or the common follies practiced by chambermaids among us, they are publicly whipped thrice about the city, imprisoned for a year, and banished for life to the most desolate part of the country. Thus the young ladies there are as much ashamed of being cowards and fools, as the men, and despise all personal ornaments beyond decency and cleanliness: neither did I perceive any difference in their education, made by their difference of sex, only that the exercises of the females were not altogether so robust; and that some rules were given them relating to domestic life, and a smaller compass of learning was enjoined them: for their maxim is, that among people of quality, a wife should be always a reasonable and agreeable companion, because she cannot always be young. When the girls are twelve years old, which among them is the marriageable age, their parents or guardians take them home, with great expressions of gratitude to the professors, and seldom without tears of the young lady and her companions.

In the nurseries of females of the meaner sort, the children are instructed in all kinds of works proper for their sex, and their several degrees: those intended for apprentices, are dismissed at seven years old, the rest are kept to eleven.

The meaner families who have children at these nurseries, are obliged, besides their annual pension, which is as low as possible, to return to the steward of the nursery a small monthly share of their gettings, to be a portion for the child; and therefore all parents are limited in their expenses by the law. For the Lilliputians think nothing can be more unjust, than for people, in subservience to their own appetites, to bring children into the world, and leave the burthen of supporting them on the public. As to persons of quality, they give security to appropriate a certain sum for each child, suitable to their condition; and these funds are always managed with good husbandry, and the most exact justice.

The cottagers and laborers keep their children at home, their business being only to till and cultivate the earth, and therefore their education is of little consequence to the public; but the old and diseased among them are supported by hospitals: for begging is a trade unknown in this empire.

And here it may perhaps divert the curious reader, to give some account of my domestic, and my manner of living in this country, during a residence of nine months and thirteen days. Having a head mechanically turned, and being likewise forced by necessity, I had made for myself a table and chair convenient enough, out of the largest trees in the royal park. Two hundred sempstresses were employed to make me shirts, and linen for my bed and table, all of the strongest and coarsest kind they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in several folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than lawn. Their linen was usually three inches wide, and three foot make a piece. The sempstresses took my measure as I lay on the ground, one standing at my neck, and another at my mid-leg, with a strong cord extended, that each held by the end, while the third measured the length of the cord with a rule an inch long. Then they measured my right thumb, and desired no more; for by a mathematical computation, that twice round the thumb is once round the wrist, and so on to the neck and the waist, and by the help of my old shirt, which I displayed on the ground before them for a pattern, they fitted me exactly. Three hundred tailors were employed in the same manner to make me clothes; but they had another contrivance for taking my measure. I kneeled down, and they raised a ladder from the ground to my neck; upon this ladder one of them mounted, and let fall a plumb-line from my collar to the floor, which just answered the length of my coat: but my waist and arms I measured myself. When my clothes were finished, which was done in my house, (for the largest of theirs would not have been able to hold them) they looked like the patch-work made by the ladies in England, only that mine were all of a color.

I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals, in little convenient huts built about my house, where they and their families lived, and prepared me two dishes a-piece. I took up twenty waiters in my hand, and placed them on the table: an hundred more attended below on the ground, some with dishes of meat, and some with barrels of wine, and other liquors, slung on their shoulders; all of which the waiters above drew up as I wanted, in a very ingenious manner, by certain cords, as we draw the bucket up a well in Europe. A dish of their meat was a good mouthful, and a barrel of their liquor a reasonable draught. Their mutton yields to ours, but their beef is excellent. I have had a sirloin so large, that I have been forced to make three bites of it; but this is rare. My servants were astonished to see me eat it bones and all, as in our country we do the leg of a lark. Their geese and turkeys I usually eat at a mouthful, and I must confess they far exceed ours. Of their smaller fowl I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my knife.

One day his Imperial Majesty, being informed of my way of living, desired that himself and his Royal Consort, with the young Princes of the blood of both sexes, might have the happiness (as he was pleased to call it) of dining with me. They came accordingly, and I placed them in chairs of state on my table, just over against me, with their guards about them. Flimnap, the Lord High Treasurer, attended there likewise with his white staff; and I observed he often looked on me with a sour countenance, which I would not seem to regard, but eat more than usual, in honor to my dear country, as well as to fill the court with admiration. I have some private reasons to believe, that this visit from his Majesty gave Flimnap an opportunity of doing me ill offices to his master. That minister had always been my secret enemy, though he outwardly caressed me more than was usual to the moroseness of his nature. He represented to the Emperor the low condition of his treasury; that he was forced to take up money at great discount; that exchequer bills would not circulate under nine per cent. below par; that in short I had cost his Majesty above a million and a half of *sprugs* (their greatest gold coin, about the bigness of a spangle); and upon the whole, that it would be advisable in the Emperor to take the first fair occasion of dismissing me.

I am here obliged to vindicate the reputation of an excellent lady, who was an innocent sufferer upon my account. The Treasurer took a fancy to be jealous of his wife, from the malice of some evil tongues, who informed him that her Grace had taken a violent affection for my person; and the court-scandal ran for some time, that she once came privately to my lodging. This I solemnly declare to be a most infamous falsehood, without any grounds, farther than that her Grace was pleased to treat me with all innocent marks of freedom and friendship. I own she came often to my house, but always publicly, nor ever without three more in the coach, who were usually her sister and young daughter, and some particular acquaintance; but this was common to many other ladies of the court. And I still appeal to my servants round, whether they at any time saw a coach at my door without knowing what persons were in it. On those occasions, when a servant had given me notice, my custom was to go immediately to the door; and, after paying my respects, to take up the coach and two horses very carefully in my hands, (for, if there were six horses, the postillion always unharnessed four) and place them on a table, where I had fixed a movable rim quite round, of five inches high, to prevent accidents. And I have often had four coaches and horses at once on my table full of company, while I sat in my chair leaning my face towards them; and when I was engaged with one set, the coachmen would gently drive the others round my table. I have passed many an afternoon very agreeably in these conversations. But I defy the Treasurer or his two informers (I will name them, and let them make their best of it) Clustril and Drunlo, to prove that any person ever came to me *incognito*, except the secretary Reldresal, who was sent by express command of his Imperial Majesty, as I have before related. I should not have dwelt so long upon this particular, if it had not been a point wherein the reputation of a great lady is so nearly concerned, to say nothing of my own; though I then had the honor to be a *Nardac*, which the Treasurer himself is not; for all the world knows he is only a *Glumglum*, a title inferior by one degree, as that of a Marquis is to a Duke in England, although I allow he preceded me in right of his post. These false informations, which I afterwards came to the knowledge of, by an accident not proper to mention, made Flimnap, the Treasurer, show his lady for some time an ill countenance, and me a worse; and although he were at last undeceived and reconciled to her, yet I lost all credit with him, and found my interest decline very fast with the Emperor himself, who was indeed too much governed by that favorite.

CHAPTER VII

The Author, being informed of a design to accuse him of high-treason, makes his escape to Blefuscu. His reception there.

Before I proceed to give an account of my leaving this kingdom, it may be proper to inform the reader of a private intrigue which had been for two months forming against me.

I had been hitherto all my life a stranger to courts, for which I was unqualified by the meanness of my condition. I had indeed heard and read enough of the dispositions of great princes and ministers; but never expected to have found such terrible effects of them in so remote a country, governed, as I thought, by very different maxims from those in Europe.

When I was just preparing to pay my attendance on the Emperor of Blefuscu, a considerable person at court (to whom I had been very serviceable at a time when he lay under the highest displeasure of his Imperial Majesty) came to my house very privately at night in a close chair, and without sending his name, desired admittance. The chairmen were dismissed; I put the chair, with his Lordship in it, into my coat-pocket; and giving orders to a trusty servant to say I was indisposed and gone to sleep, I fastened the door of my house, placed the chair on the table, according to my usual custom, and sat down by it. After the common salutations were over, observing his Lordship's countenance full of concern, and enquiring into the reason, he desired I would hear him with patience in a matter that highly concerned my honor and my life. His speech was to the following effect, for I took notes of it as soon as he left me:

"You are to know," said he, "that several Committees of Council have been lately called in the most private manner on your account; and it is but two days since his Majesty came to a full resolution.

"You are very sensible that Skyresh Bolgolam (*Galbet*, or High-Admiral) hath been your mortal enemy almost ever since your arrival. His original reasons I know not; but his hatred is much increased since your great success against Blefuscu, by which his glory, as Admiral, is obscured. This Lord, in conjunction with Flimnap the High-Treasurer, whose enmity against you is notorious on account of his lady, Limtoc the General, Lalcon the Chamberlain, and Balmuff the Grand Justiciary, have prepared articles of impeachment against you, for treason, and other capital crimes."

This preface made me so impatient, being conscious of my own merits and innocence, that I was going to interrupt; when he entreated me to be silent, and thus proceeded:

"Out of gratitude for the favors you have done me, I procured information of the whole proceedings, and a copy of the articles, wherein I venture my head for your service."

Articles of Impeachment against Quinbus Flestrin (*the* Man-Mountain.)

Article I

Whereas, by a statute made in the reign of his Imperial Majesty Calin Deffar Plune, it is enacted, that whoever shall make water within the precincts of the royal palace, shall be liable to the pains and penalties of high treason; notwithstanding, the said Quinbus Flestrin, in open breach of the said law, under color of extinguishing the fire kindled in the apartment of his Majesty's most dear Imperial Consort, did maliciously, traitorously, and devilishly, by discharge of his urine, put out the said fire kindled in the said apartment, lying and being within the precincts of the said royal palace, against the statute in that case provided, *etc.* against the duty, *etc.*

Article II

That the said Quinbus Flestrin having brought the imperial fleet of Blefuscu into the royal port, and being afterwards commanded by his Imperial Majesty to seize all the other ships of the said empire of Blefuscu, and reduce that empire to a province, to be governed by a viceroy from hence, and to destroy and put to death not only all the Big-Endian exiles, but likewise all the people of that empire, who would not immediately forsake the Big-Endian heresy: He, the said Flestrin, like a false traitor against his most Auspicious, Serene, Imperial Majesty, did petition to be excused from the said service, upon pretence of unwillingness to force the consciences, or destroy the liberties and lives of an innocent people.

Article III

That, whereas certain ambassadors arrived from the court of Blefuscu, to sue for peace in his Majesty's court: He, the said Flestrin, did, like a false traitor, aid, abet, comfort, and divert the said ambassadors, although he knew them to be servants to a Prince who was lately an open enemy to his Imperial Majesty, and in open war against his said Majesty.

Article IV

That the said Quinbus Flestrin, contrary to the duty of a faithful subject, is now preparing to make a voyage to the court and empire of Blefuscu, for which he hath received only verbal licence from his Imperial Majesty; and under color of the said licence, doth falsely and traitorously intend to take the said voyage, and thereby to aid, comfort, and abet the Emperor of Blefuscu, so late an enemy, and in open war with his Imperial Majesty aforesaid.

"There are some other articles, but these are the most important, of which I have read you an abstract.

"In the several debates upon this impeachment, it must be confessed that his Majesty gave many marks of his great lenity, often urging the services you had done him, and endeavoring to extenuate your crimes. The Treasurer and Admiral insisted that you should be put to the most painful and ignominious death, by setting fire on your house at night, and the General was to attend with twenty thousand men armed with poisoned arrows to shoot you on the face and hands. Some of your servants were to have private orders to strew a poisonous juice on your shirts, which would soon make you tear your own flesh, and die in the utmost torture. The General came into the same opinion; so that for a long time there was a majority against you. But his Majesty resolving, if possible, to spare your life, at last brought off the Chamberlain.

"Upon this incident, Reldresal, Principal Secretary for Private Affairs, who always approved himself your true friend, was commanded by the Emperor to deliver his opinion, which he accordingly did; and therein justified the good thoughts you have of him. He allowed your crimes to be great, but that still there was room for mercy, the most commendable virtue in a prince, and for which his Majesty was so justly celebrated. He said, the friendship between you and him was so well known to the world, that perhaps the most honorable board might think him partial: however, in obedience to the command he had received, he would freely offer his sentiments. That if his Majesty, in consideration of your services, and pursuant to his own merciful disposition, would please to spare your life, and only give orders to put out both your eyes, he humbly conceived, that by this expedient, justice might in some measure be satisfied, and all the world would applaud the lenity of the Emperor, as well as the fair and generous proceedings of those who have the honor to be his counsellors. That the loss of your eyes would be no impediment to your bodily strength, by which you might still be useful to his Majesty. That blindness is an addition to courage, by concealing dangers from us; that the fear you had for your eyes, was the greatest difficulty in bringing over the enemy's fleet, and it would be sufficient for you to see by the eyes of the ministers, since the greatest princes do no more.

"This proposal was received with the utmost disapprobation by the whole board. Bolgolam, the

Admiral, could not preserve his temper; but rising up in fury, said, he wondered how the Secretary durst presume to give his opinion for preserving the life of a traitor: that the services you had performed, were, by all true reasons of state, the great aggravation of your crimes; that you, who were able to extinguish the fire, by discharge of urine in her Majesty's apartment (which he mentioned with horror), might, at another time, raise an inundation by the same means, to drown the whole palace; and the same strength which enabled you to bring over the enemy's fleet, might serve, upon the first discontent, to carry it back: that he had good reasons to think you were a Big-Endian in your heart; and as treason begins in the heart, before it appears in overt acts, so he accused you as a traitor on that account, and therefore insisted you should be put to death.

"The Treasurer was of the same opinion; he showed to what straits his Majesty's revenue was reduced by the charge of maintaining you, which would soon grow insupportable: that the Secretary's expedient of putting out your eyes was so far from being a remedy against this evil, that it would probably increase it, as it is manifest from the common practice of blinding some kind of fowl, after which they fed the faster, and grew sooner fat: that his sacred Majesty and the Council, who are your judges, were in their own consciences fully convinced of your guilt, which was a sufficient argument to condemn you to death, without the formal proofs required by the strict letter of the law.

"But his Imperial Majesty, fully determined against capital punishment, was graciously pleased to say, that since the Council thought the loss of your eyes too easy a censure, some other may be inflicted hereafter. And your friend the Secretary humbly desiring to be heard again, in answer to what the Treasurer had objected concerning the great charge his Majesty was at in maintaining you, said, that his Excellency, who had the sole disposal of the Emperor's revenue, might easily provide against that evil, by gradually lessening your establishment; by which, for want of sufficient food, you would grow weak and faint, and lose your appetite, and consequently decay and consume in a few months; neither would the stench of your carcass be then so dangerous, when it should become more than half diminished; and immediately upon your death, five or six thousand of his Majesty's subjects might, in two or three days, cut your flesh from your bones, take it away by cart-loads, and bury it in distant parts to prevent infection, leaving the skeleton as a monument of admiration to posterity.

"Thus by the great friendship of the Secretary the whole affair was compromised. It was strictly enjoined, that the project of starving you by degrees should be kept a secret, but the sentence of putting out your eyes was entered on the books; none dissenting except Bolgolam the Admiral who, being a creature of the Empress, was perpetually instigated by her Majesty to insist upon your death, she having borne perpetual malice against you, on account of that infamous and illega method you took to extinguish the fire in her apartment.

"In three days your friend the Secretary wil be directed to come to your house, and read before you the articles of impeachment; and then to signify the great lenity and favor of his Majesty and Council, whereby you are only condemned to the loss of your eyes, which his Majesty doth not question you will gratefully and humbly submi to; and twenty of his Majesty's surgeons will attend, in order to see the operation well performed by discharging very sharp-pointed arrows into the balls of your eyes, as you lie on the ground.

"I leave to your prudence what measures you will take; and to avoid suspicion, I must immediately return in as private a manner as I came."

His Lordship did so, and I remained alone, under many doubts and perplexities of mind.

It was a custom introduced by this prince and his ministry (very different, as I have been assured, from the practices of former times,) tha after the court had decreed any cruel execution either to gratify the monarch's resentment, or the malice of a favorite, the Emperor always made a speech to his whole Council, expressing his grea lenity and tenderness, as qualities known and confessed by all the world. This speech was immediately published through the kingdom; nor did any thing terrify the people so much as those encomiums on his Majesty's mercy; because it wa observed, that the more these praises were enlarged and insisted on, the more inhuman was the punishment, and the sufferer more innocent. And a to myself, I must confess, having never been designed for a courtier either by my birth or education, I was so ill a judge of things, that I could no discover the lenity and favor of his sentence, bu conceived it (perhaps erroneously) rather to be rigorous than gentle. I sometimes thought of standing my trial, for although I could not deny the facts alleged in the several articles, yet I hoped they would admit of some extenuations. But having in my life perused many state-trials, which I ever observed to terminate as the judges thought fit to direct, I durst not rely on so dangerous a decision, in so critical a juncture, and against such powerful enemies. Once I was strongly bent upon resistance, for while I had liberty, the whole strength of that empire could hardly subdue me, and I might easily with stones pelt the metropolis to pieces; but I soon rejected that project with horror, by remembering the oath I had made to the Emperor, the favors I received from him, and the high title of *Nardac* he conferred upon me. Neither had I so soon learned the gratitude of courtiers, to persuade myself that his Majesty's present severities acquitted me of all past obligations.

At last I fixed upon a resolution, for which it is probable I may incur some censure, and not unjustly; for I confess I owe the preserving my eyes, and consequently my liberty, to my own great rashness and want of experience: because if I had then known the nature of princes and ministers, which I have since observed in many other courts, and their methods of treating criminals less obnoxious than myself, I should with great alacrity and readiness have submitted to so easy a punishment. But hurried on by the precipitancy of youth, and having his Imperial Majesty's licence to pay my attendance upon the Emperor of Blefuscu, I took this opportunity, before the three days were elapsed, to send a letter to my friend the Secretary, signifying my resolution of setting out that morning for Blefuscu pursuant to the leave I had got; and without waiting for an answer, I went to that side of the island where our fleet lay. I seized a large man of war, tied a cable to the prow, and, lifting up the anchors, I stripped myself, put my clothes (together with my coverlet, which I brought under my arm) into the vessel, and drawing it after me between wading and swimming, arrived at the royal port of Blefuscu, where the people had long expected me: they lent me two guides to direct me to the capital city, which is of the same name. I held them in my hands till I came within two hundred yards of the gate, and desired them to signify my arrival to one of the secretaries, and let him know, I there waited his Majesty's command. I had an answer in about an hour, that his Majesty, attended by the Royal Family, and great officers of the court, was coming out to receive me. I advanced a hundred yards. The Emperor and his train alighted from their horses, the Empress and ladies from their coaches, and I did not perceive they were in any fright or concern. I lay on the ground to kiss his Majesty's and the Empress's hands. I told his Majesty, that I was come according to my promise, and with the licence of the Emperor my master, to have the honor of seeing so mighty a monarch, and to offer him any service in my power, consistent with my duty to my own prince; not mentioning a word of my disgrace, because I had hitherto no regular information of it, and might suppose myself wholly ignorant of any such design; neither could I reasonably conceive that the Emperor would discover the secret while I was out of his power: wherein, however, it soon appeared I was deceived.

I shall not trouble the reader with the particular account of my reception at this court, which was suitable to the generosity of so great a prince; nor of the difficulties I was in for want of a house and bed, being forced to lie on the ground, wrapped up in my coverlet.

CHAPTER VIII

The Author, by a lucky accident, finds means to leave *Blefuscu*; and, after some difficulties, returns safe to his native country.

Three days after my arrival, walking out of curiosity to the north-east coast of the island, I observed, about half a league off, in the sea, somewhat that looked like a boat overturned. I pulled off my shoes and stockings, and wading two or three hundred yards, I found the object to approach nearer by force of the tide; and then plainly saw it to be a real boat, which I supposed might, by some tempest, have been driven from a ship; whereupon I returned immediately towards the city, and desired his Imperial Majesty to lend me twenty of the tallest vessels he had left after the loss of his fleet, and three thousand seamen under the command of his Vice-Admiral. This fleet sailed round, while I went back the shortest way to the coast where I first discovered the boat; I found the tide had driven it still nearer. The seamen were all provided with cordage, which I had beforehand twisted to a sufficient strength. When the ships came up, I stripped myself, and waded till I came within an hundred yards of the boat, after which I was forced to swim till I got up to it. The seamen threw me the end of the cord, which I fastened to a hole in the fore-part of the boat, and the other end to a man of war; but I found all my labor to little purpose; for being out of my depth, I was not able to work. In this necessity, I was forced to swim behind, and push the boat forwards as often as I could, with one of my hands; and the tide favoring me, I advanced so far, that I could just hold up my chin and feel the ground. I rested two or three minutes, and then gave the boat another shove, and so on till the sea was no higher than my arm-pits; and now the most laborious part being over, I took out my other cables, which were stowed in one of the ships, and fastening them first to the boat, and then to nine of the vessels which attended me; the wind being favorable, the seamen towed, and I shoved till we arrived within forty yards of the shore; and waiting till the tide was out, I got dry to the boat, and by the assistance of two thousand men, with ropes and engines, I made a shift to turn it on its bottom, and found it was but little damaged.

I shall not trouble the reader with the difficulties I was under by the help of certain paddles, which cost me ten days making, to get my boat to the royal port of Blefuscu, where a mighty concourse of people appeared upon my arrival, full of wonder at the sight of so prodigious a vessel. I told the Emperor that my good fortune had thrown this boat in my way, to carry me to some place from whence I might return into my native country, and begged his Majesty's orders for getting materials to fit it up, together with his licence to depart; which, after some kind expostulations, he was pleased to grant.

I did very much wonder, in all this time, not to have heard of any express relating to me from our Emperor to the court of Blefuscu. But I was afterwards given privately to understand, that his Imperial Majesty, never imagining I had the least notice of his designs, believed I was only gone to Blefuscu in performance of my promise, according to the licence he had given me, which was well known at our court, and would return in a few days when that ceremony was ended. But he was at last in pain at my long absence; and after consulting with the Treasurer, and the rest of that cabal, a person of quality was dispatched with the copy of the articles against me. This envoy had instructions to represent to the monarch of Blefuscu, the great lenity of his master, who was content to punish me no farther than with the loss of my eyes; that I had fled from justice, and if I did not return in two hours, I should be deprived of my title of *Nardac*, and declared a traitor. The envoy further added, that in order to maintain the peace and amity between both empires, his master expected, that his brother of Blefuscu would give orders to have me sent back to Lilliput, bound hand and foot, to be punished as a traitor.

The Emperor of Blefuscu having taken three days to consult, returned an answer consisting of many civilities and excuses. He said, that as for sending me bound, his brother knew it was impossible; that although I had deprived him of his fleet, yet he owed great obligations to me for many good offices I had done him in making the peace. That however both their Majesties would soon be made easy; for I had found a prodigious vessel on the shore, able to carry me on the sea, which he had given order to fit up with my own assistance and direction; and he hoped in a few weeks both empires would be freed from so insupportable an incumbrance.

With this answer the envoy returned to Lilliput, and the monarch of Blefuscu related to me all that had passed; offering me at the same time (but under the strictest confidence) his gracious protection, if I would continue in his service; wherein although I believed him sincere, yet I resolved never more to put any confidence in princes or ministers, where I could possibly avoid it; and therefore, with all due acknowledgements for his favorable intentions, I humbly begged to be excused. I told him, that since fortune, whether good or evil, had thrown a vessel in my way, I was resolved to venture myself in the ocean, rather than be an occasion of difference between two such mighty monarchs. Neither did I find the Emperor at all displeased; and I discovered by a certain accident, that he was very glad of my resolution, and so were most of his ministers.

These considerations moved me to hasten my departure somewhat sooner than I intended; to which the court, impatient to have me gone, very readily contributed. Five hundred workmen were employed to make two sails to my boat, according to my directions, by quilting thirteen fold of their strongest linen together. I was at the pains of making ropes and cables, by twisting ten, twenty or thirty of the thickest and strongest of theirs. A great stone that I happened to find, after a long search, by the sea-shore, served me for an anchor. I had the tallow of three hundred cows for greasing my boat, and other uses. I was at incredible pains in cutting down some of the largest timber-trees for oars and masts, wherein I was, however, much assisted by his Majesty's ship-carpenters, who helped me in smoothing them, after I had done the rough work.

In about a month, when all was prepared, I sent to receive his Majesty's commands, and take my leave. The Emperor and Royal Family came out of the palace; I lay down on my face to kiss his hand, which he very graciously gave me: so did the Empress and young Princess of the blood. His Majesty presented me with fifty purses of two hundred *sprugs* a-piece, together with his picture at full length, which I put immediately into one of my gloves, to keep it from being hurt. The ceremonies at my departure were too many to trouble the reader with at this time.

I stored the boat with the carcases of an hundred oxen, and three hundred sheep, with bread and drink proportionable, and as much meat ready dressed as four hundred cooks could provide. I took with me six cows and two bulls alive, with as many ewes and rams, intending to carry them into my own country, and propagate the breed. And to feed them on board, I had a good bundle of hay, and a bag of corn. I would gladly have taken a dozen of the natives, but this was a thing the Emperor would by no means permit; and besides a diligent search into my pockets, his Majesty engaged my honor not to carry away any of his subjects, although with their own consent and desire.

Having thus prepared all things as well as I was able, I set sail on the twenty-fourth day of September 1701, at six in the morning; and when I had gone about four leagues to the northward, the wind being a south-east, at six in the evening I descried a small island about half a league to the north-west. I advanced forward, and cast anchor on the lee-side of the island, which seemed to be uninhabited. I then took some refreshment, and went to my rest. I slept well, and as I conjecture at least six hours, for I found the day broke in two hours after I awaked. It was a clear night. I eat my breakfast before the sun was up; and heaving anchor, the wind being favorable, I steered the same course that I had done the day before, wherein I was directed by my pocket-compass. My intention was to reach, if possible, one of those islands, which I had reason to believe lay to the north-east of Van Diemen's Land. I discovered nothing all that day; but upon the next, about three in the afternoon, when I had by my computation made twenty-four leagues from Blefuscu, I descried a sail steering to the south-east; my course was due east. I hailed her, but could get no answer; yet I found I gained upon her, for the wind slackened. I made all the sail I could, and in half an hour she spied me, then hung out her ancient, and discharged a gun. It is not easy to express the joy I was in upon the unexpected hope of once more seeing my beloved country, and the dear pledges I had left in it. The ship slackened her sails, and I came up with her between five and six in the evening, September 26; but my heart leaped within me to see her English colors. I put my cows and sheep into my coat-pockets, and got on board with all my little cargo of provisions. The vessel was an English merchantman, returning from Japan by the North and South Seas; the Captain, Mr. John Biddel of Deptford, a very civil man, and an excellent sailor. We were now in the latitude of 30 degrees south; there were about fifty men in the ship; and here I met an old comrade of mine, one Peter Williams, who gave me a good character to the Captain. This gentleman treated me with kindness, and desired I would let him know what place I came from last, and whither I was bound; which I did in a few words, but he thought I was raving, and that the dangers I underwent had disturbed my head; whereupon I took my black cattle and sheep out of my pocket, which, after great astonishment, clearly convinced him of my veracity. I then showed him the gold given me by the Emperor of Blefuscu, together with his Majesty's picture at full length, and some other rarities of that country. I gave him two purses of two hundred *sprugs* each, and promised, when we arrived in England, to make him a present of a cow and a sheep big with young.

I shall not trouble the reader with a particular account of this voyage, which was very prosperous for the most part. We arrived in the Downs on the 13th of April, 1702. I had only one misfortune, that the rats on board carried away one of my sheep; I found her bones in a hole, picked clean from the flesh. The rest of my cattle I got safe on shore, and set them a grazing in a bowling-green at Greenwich, where the fineness of the grass made them feed very heartily, though I had always feared the contrary: neither could I possibly have preserved them in so long a voyage, if the Captain had not allowed me some of his best biscuit, which, rubbed to powder, and mingled with water, was their constant food. The short time I continued in England, I made a considerable profit by showing my cattle to many persons of quality, and others: and before I began my second voyage, I sold them for six hundred pounds. Since my last return, I find the breed is considerably increased, especially the sheep; which I hope will prove much to the advantage of the woollen manufacture, by the fineness of the fleeces.

I stayed but two months with my wife and family; for my insatiable desire of seeing foreign countries would suffer me to continue no longer. I left fifteen hundred pounds with my wife, and fixed her in a good house at Redriff. My remaining stock I carried with me, part in money, and part in goods, in hopes to improve my fortunes. My eldest uncle John had left me an estate in land, near Epping, of about thirty pounds a year; and I had a long lease of the Black Bull in Fetter-Lane, which yielded me as much more; so that I was not in any danger of leaving my family upon the parish. My son Johnny, named so after his uncle, was at the Grammar School, and a towardly child. My daughter Betty (who is now well married, and has children) was then at her needlework. I took leave of my wife, and boy and girl, with tears on both sides, and went on board the *Adventure*, a merchant-ship of three hundred tons, bound for Surat, Captain John Nicholas, of Liverpool, Commander. But my account of this voyage must be referred to the second part of my Travels.

The End of the First Part

(1726)

A Modest Proposal

For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public

Written in a spirit akin to the savage irony of the final voyage in *Gulliver's Travels*, this most famous of Swift's writings on Irish affairs exhibits one of its author's most characteristic devices. As in *The Partridge Predictions*, Swift attacks an evil by pretending to defend a more monstrous one to supersede it. Ireland had been subjected for long years to the economic depredations of its English conquerors (cf. p. 249, *above*), and its population reduced to the extreme of poverty. The inability of the Irish to find relief or assistance called forth this bitter tract. Born in Ireland of English ancestry, Swift was not devoted to that country, although his efforts in its behalf made him a national hero. But he could not bear injustice and tyranny, and so he spoke out in one of his masterful compositions. What is really unique in Swift's satire can here be seen in all its power: his ability to cover his rage with a cold, calm manner that cuts like icy steel.

It is a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town[1] or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors, crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers, instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants: who as they grow up either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country to fight for the pretender[2] in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and, therefore, whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound, useful members of the commonwealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them as those who demand our charity in the streets.

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[1] Dublin.

[2] James Stuart, son of James II, who was attempting to secure the British throne.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in the computation. It is true, a child just dropped from its dam may be supported by her milk for a solar year, with little other nourishment; at most not above the value of *2s.*,[3] which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner as instead of being a charge upon their parents or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall on the contrary contribute to the feeding, and partly to the clothing, of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us! sacrificing the poor innocent babes I doubt more to avoid the expense than the shame, which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about 200,000 couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract 30,000 couple who are able to maintain their own children (although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom); but this being granted, there will remain 170,000 breeders. I again subtract 50,000 for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remains 120,000 children of poor parents annually born. The question therefore is, how this number shall be reared and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed. For we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land; they can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing, till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts; although I confess they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time, they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no saleable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above *3l.* or *3l. 2s. 6d.*[4] at most on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricasse or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to public consideration that of the 120,000 children already computed, 20,000 may be reserved for breed, whereof only one-fourth part to be males; which is more than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine; and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages, therefore one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining 100,000 may, at a year old, be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune through the kingdom; always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends; and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentifully in March, and a little before and after: for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolific diet, there are more children born in

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[3] two shillings, perhaps two dollars at present value.

[4] three pounds, or three pounds, two shillings and sixpence, forty or fifty dollars in our money nowadays.

Roman Catholic countries about nine months after Lent than at any other season; therefore, reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of popish infants is at least three to one in this kingdom; and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage by lessening the number of papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, laborers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about 2*s*. per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give 10*s*. for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I said, will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he has only some particular friend or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among the tenants; the mother will have 8*s*. net profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which artificially dressed will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased in discoursing on this matter to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve for want of work and service; and these to be disposed of by their parents, if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me, from frequent experience that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our school-boys by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable; and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think, with humble submission be a loss to the public, because they soon would become breeders themselves: and besides, it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly), as a little bordering upon cruelty; which, I confess, has always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar,[5] a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London about twenty years ago: and in conversation told my friend, that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality as a prime dainty; and that in his time the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the emperor, was sold to his imperial majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at 400 crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who without one single groat to their fortunes cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at playhouse and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for, the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known that they are every day dying and rotting by cold and famine, and filth and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the young laborers, they are now in as hopeful a condition; they cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labor, they have not strength to perform it; and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For first, as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of papists, with whom we are yearly overrun, being the principal breeders of the nation as well as our most dangerous enemies; and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country than stay at home and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

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[5] George Psalmanazar who, for some time, pretended to be a native of Formosa, of which he published a *Description*.

Secondly, The poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own, which by law may be made liable to distress and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, Whereas the maintenance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old and upward, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a-piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, beside the profit of a new dish introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom who have any refinement in taste. And the money will circulate among ourselves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, The constant breeders, beside the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, This food would likewise bring great custom to taverns; where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection, and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating: and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, This would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards or enforced by laws and penalties. It would increase the care and tenderness of mothers toward their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the public, to their annual profit instead of expense. We should see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, their sows when they are ready to farrow; nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barreled beef, the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables; which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well-grown, fat, yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a lord mayor's feast or any other public entertainment. But this and many others I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city would be constant customers for infants' flesh, beside others who might have it at merry-meetings, particularly weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses; and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and it was indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe, that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland and for no other that ever was, is, or I think ever can be upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at five shillings a pound; of using neither clothes nor household furniture except what is of our own growth and manufacture; of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury; of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women; of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence, and temperance; of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders and the inhabitants of Topinamboo;[6] of quitting our animosities and factions, nor act any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken; of being a little cautious not to sell our country and conscience for nothing; of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy toward their tenants; lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shopkeepers; who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

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[6] **a district of Brazil.**

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope that there will be ever some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to myself, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success I fortunately fell upon this proposal; which, as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion as to reject any offer proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors will be pleased maturely to consider two points. First, as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for an hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And secondly, there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those who are beggars by profession to the bulk of farmers, cottagers, and laborers, with their wives and children who are beggars in effect: I desire those politicians who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold as to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like or greater miseries upon their breed for ever.

I profess, in the sincerity of my heart that I have not the least personal interest in endeavoring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the public good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old, and my wife past child-bearing. (1729)

Joseph Addison *and* Richard Steele

(1672-1719) (1672-1729)

The most celebrated of literary partners, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, were born within a few weeks of each other, the former in a Wiltshire village, the latter in Dublin. At Charterhouse in London and later at Oxford they were schoolmates, and for the rest of their lives close friends. Their characters were so opposite that they perfectly supplemented each other. Addison was diffident, retiring, modest, formal but gracious, the typical scholar; Steele was warm, affectionate, impulsive, very sociable, and often irresponsible. Fundamentally they must have had tastes in common, and certainly each found supplied in the other the deficiencies of his own temperament. During the days of their most significant literary activity they were to be seen often together at Button's coffeehouse, or in Pope's, Congreve's, or Swift's company. Together they did their best work, but each had his independent career.

Addison took his M.A. at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1689, was granted a fellowship there, and by his studies and writings in that academic atmosphere won repute for his Latin verse. In those days such attainments made a man desirable to political parties, and the Whigs in 1699 offered him the opportunity to travel abroad as a preparation for a public career. For four years (1699-1703) he visited France, Germany, Italy, and other countries on the Continent with the help of a government pension, until the death of William III brought political changes which altered his prospects. In 1704 came another opportunity when he was asked to write a poem celebrating the victory of Blenheim; he obliged with *The Campaign*, an elegant but unexciting poem in heroic couplets. It was successful enough to bring him as a reward the post of Under-Secretary of State (1706). In 1708 he entered Parliament, where he retained his seat until his death. He became secretary to Lord Halifax in 1708, chief secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1709, and a commissioner for Trade and Colonies in 1716. His marriage to the Countess Dowager of Warwick in 1716 was instrumental in his obtaining the Secretaryship of State (1717-18). Upon his death in 1719 he was buried in Westminster Abbey. Besides his great essays in the periodicals, Addison's only other memorable work was the frigid classical tragedy, *Cato* (1713), written according to Boileau's rules. Despite its prosiness, rant, and feebleness, this play in blank verse had an enormous success because both Whigs and Tories saw in it an allegory of their own party's devotion to liberty. As Samuel Johnson later said: "The Whigs applauded every line in which Liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to show that the satire was unfelt."

Steele's story is a very different one. Running away from Christ's Church College, Oxford, without taking his degree, he enlisted under an assumed name in the Duke of Ormond's guards; and for this headstrongness was disinherited by his uncle. His identity became known and his ability recognized, so that he was promoted to the rank of captain in Lord Lucas's regiment. Soon he was well known among the frequenters of the coffeehouses as a wit, a member of the distinguished Kit-Kat Club, and a lover of the life of fashion in London. Steele's easygoing nature led him to follow the path of least resistance, and he forever promised himself that he would develop moral stamina. In one of these repentant moods, he wrote *The Christian Hero* (1701), in which he insisted that only Christianity could save a man from the temptations surrounding him in London. It is said that in order to atone to his fellow soldiers for this pious outburst, he wrote in the same year his first play, *The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode* (1701), a comedy satirizing lawyers and undertakers. But despite the fun in it, this drama contains the germ of that high-moral purpose which is characteristic of Steele's writings. Two years later came his second comedy, *The Lying Lover* (1703), based on a plot of Corneille's; this play is the first of its author's to give impetus to that love of the sentimental which nearly extinguished English comedy in the eighteenth century and fairly buried it in the nineteenth.

Steele's moral earnestness made him deplore the corrupt tone of the brilliant Restoration comedies in which vice was made amusing and respectability bad taste. In his own plays and in a number of his periodical essays he succeeded in bringing Restoration sophistication into disfavor. The audience in his time, it should be noted, was made up of other folk than the court-dependents who had patronized drama in Dryden's day. Queen Anne (1702-1714) had no interest in the playhouses and George I (1714-1727) would not have understood a line of the English spoken in them. The beaux and belles still filled the boxes in the theatre, but the tradesmen were also coming to see the plays, and lackeys thronged the upper gallery. These non-aristocratic folk were easy to wean from the traditions of Congreve. Something of a beginning in the direction Steele was to take had been made by Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift* (1696), in which the usual Restoration rakes underwent a last-minute conversion, and a typical Restoration plot had affixed to it a would-be moral ending. Steele's *The Lying Lover*, *The Tender Husband* (1705) which is based on Molière, and *The Conscious Lovers* (1722) which is an adaptation of Terence, continued the dramatic tradition begun by Cibber, and by their great popularity established the "weeping comedy," as it has been called, in the English theatre. The trouble with these plays, and, even more with the hundreds of plays written after them, is that their moral values are false. They are not ennobled by sentiment, they are merely debased by sentimentality. They are written from a gushing heart that would explain away all evil and crime as mere "carelessness" and thoughtlessness; eleventh-hour regenerations in them are supposed to atone for all the harm done. On the artistic side, they provoked such distrust of honest fun that most of them are comedies without wit or humor. So thoroughly did they annihilate the English sense of proportion in comedy that during the whole eighteenth century only one play of Goldsmith's and a few of Sheridan's are worthy of the name. The nineteenth century was nearing its close before a true comedy had been written by an Englishman. In this literary malfeasance Steele was a well-meaning but potent agent.

In 1706 Steele was appointed gentleman-in-waiting to the husband of Queen Anne, Prince George of Denmark, and in the next year to the editorship of the official government newspaper, the *London Gazette.* He married Mary Scurlock, the "dear Prue" of his letters, in 1707. Most men, with such advances as Steele had been granted, would have been well on the way to prosperity; but he had a genius for spending more than he could earn. Since that failing was partly responsible for his starting *The Tatler* in 1709, however, we must be grateful that his character was no stronger. *The Tatler* was followed by *The Spectator* in 1711. These (1709-12) were the crowning years in the lives of both Addison and Steele. After the discontinuance of *The Spectator* Steele tried other ventures in the periodical, *The Guardian* (1713), *The Englishman* (1714), *Town Talk* (1715), *The Plebeian* (1718), and *The Theatre* (1720), among others, without ever recapturing the quality of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator.* In 1713 he was elected to Parliament, but was impeached and expelled by the Tory majority for his championing of the Hanoverian succession. He was, however, re-elected, and in 1715 knighted by George I. In the same year he was appointed patentee of the Drury Lane Theatre. His financial struggles, in the long run, proved too much for him, and he finally was forced to retire to some property in Wales (1724).

Steele had predecessors in the field of journalism, but their importance is only historical. News-sheets in the form of letters had been published irregularly during Elizabeth's reign. Later, Nathaniel Butler established a regular newspaper with *The Weekly Newes* (1622-41). Numbers of news-sheets, courants, and dailies appeared during the Commonwealth. The *London Gazette* (1666) had a long history as the official newspaper of the Government. In John Dunton's *Athenian Gazette* (1690) were some interesting departures. Of the periodicals with literary pretensions, mention should be made of the *Mercurius Librarius* (1680) and the *Gentleman's Journal* (1691-4). But Steele's only significant forerunner was Defoe (cf. *above*) whose *Review* was issued intermittently from February 19, 1704, to June 11, 1713. This was, unlike Steele's paper, primarily and aggressively a political journal; but its "Scandalous Club" department, a "weekly history of nonsense, impertinence, vice, and debauchery" was really the prototype of the periodical essay, and inspired Steele to try his luck with it in his own paper.

On April 12, 1709, Steele issued the first number of *The Tatler*, which thereafter appeared three times a week, selling for a penny and later for twopence. Taking Swift's pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff from *The Partridge Predictions* (cf. *above*), Steele professed to name his paper in honor of the fair sex. In his first number he announced his intention of reporting and considering "all matters of what kind soever that shall occur to me, and publish such my advices and reflections every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the week." The material was to be subdivided by being dated from various coffee-houses, according to the nature of the gossip common to each. "All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-house; poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; learning, under the title of the Grecian; foreign and domestic news from St. James's Coffee-house; and what else I shall on any other subject offer, shall be dated from my own apartment."

Addison was in Ireland as secretary to the Lord Lieutenant when the early numbers of *The Tatler* appeared. Recognizing the hand of his old friend, he began to send contributions to the paper, much to the delight of Steele. The whole tone of *The Tatler* is dominated, however, by Steele, who wrote 188 out of the total 271 papers, while Addison contributed 42; 36 of them were done jointly. (A few papers were written by friends.) In keeping with Steele's interests, the editorial policy of recommending "truth, honor, and virtue as the chief ornaments of life" was maintained. Had these didactic aims alone been realized there would be no need of even mentioning the periodical here; but *The Tatler* succeeded in being an amazing record of the life of the middle-class Londoners who read it, and in preserving their gossip and their interests in letters, the theatre, popular learning, fashions, scandals, and public affairs. It is, in consequence, impossible to overestimate Addison's importance to its literary vitality. In the first place, it is doubtful whether Steele's undisciplined enthusiasm could have kept the sheet going (as witness his later failures) without the controlling influence of his friend. Moreover, Steele's zeal for reform was often unmatched by literary care; his essays are racy and kindly, but sometimes done without art. Addison, on the other hand, brought to *The Tatler* a cultivated mind, an urbane literary personality, and perfect stylistic grace, which set a standard that Steele could not always overlook. It was also through Addison's interest, probably, that the journal gradually excluded the news articles and began to assume the form, on most occasions, of a single essay.

On January 2, 1711, *The Tatler* made its last appearance, though it was at the height of its popularity. Steele ascribes its discontinuance to his having come to the end of his "ambition in this matter," and to having "nothing further to say to the world under the character of Isaac Bickerstaff." The poet Gay tells us how the public felt at his withdrawal: "His disappearing seemed to be bewailed as some general calamity: everyone wanted so agreeable an amusement; and the coffeehouses began to be sensible that the Esquire's lucubrations alone had brought them more customers than all their other newspapers put together. . . . It is incredible to conceive the effect his writings have had on the town: how many thousand follies they may have either quite banished, or given a very great check to: how much countenance they have added to virtue and religion."

The coffeehouse public, however, had not long to mourn, for some two months later, on March 1, 1711, appeared the first number of *The Spectator*, which was published six times a week, and ran until December 6, 1712. Its plan was the result of much care, not tentative as had been its predecessor's. In it the larger portion was written by Addison. Of the original 555 essays, he wrote 274, Steele 236, and their friends (including Pope and Tickell) the rest. To lend unity to the series a mythical Spectator Club was invented, of which the chief personages are: Sir Roger de Coverley (an idealized country gentleman), Sir Andrew Freeport (of the merchant upper middle class), Will Honeycomb (the man of fashion), and Captain Sentry (one of the military). Learning was represented by the Templar, by the Clergyman, and particularly by Mr. Spectator himself. These portraits were fully rounded in the series, as their prototypes in *The Tatler* had not been; created during the formative days of the novel, they served an important function as examples of character depiction.

Addison, the presiding genius of this venture, explained in the tenth paper the high function of *The Spectator*: "I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermittent starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. . . . It was said of Socrates, that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

His readers were largely members of the merchant class with leisure to spend occasional hours in pleasant gossip; their presence made the coffeehouse the middle-class equivalent of the aristocratic *salon.* They were mostly descendants of the earnest-minded men who had made the Puritan Revolution. Addison's task, therefore, was to bring to them the refinement and learning which had been cultivated by the Court during the Restoration, but to bring them these purged of their Restoration immorality and flippancy. He estimated that *The Spectator* had "about three-score thousand disciples in London and Westminster." When one reflects that Swift, with greater power and genius, succeeded in doing little to impress that same middle-class audience, in whose hands lay the future of literature, it is pleasant to reflect that Addison and Steele were able to perform miracles through their kindly satire. Not only did they succeed in rendering the Restoration pose of sophistication ridiculous and unpopular, so that goodness was once more esteemed as worthy of emulation as "gallantry" had been, but they also did much to end many time-honored follies, such as dueling. More than this, they made the middle-class Londoner literature-conscious and thus were invaluable in bringing literature away from the court and back to the people. These effects they accomplished without pain to their readers, for they were able to delight while they instructed. The subjects covered in the essays are remarkable for their range: ladies' fashions, eccentricities of public conduct, suggestions for lovers, London sights, audiences in the theatre, Italian opera, the pleasures of the imagination, the difference between true and false wit, the improvement of the English language, popular petty vices, anecdotes, literary and dramatic criticism, and religious discussions. Among the most important is a series of papers in which Addison made an extended criticism of *Paradise Lost*; they remain among the finest pages ever written on Milton, for although Addison, in neoclassical fashion, subjected that great poem to the critical canons of the day, he had the depth of understanding to allow that the highest genius is above the best of rules.

The Spectator ended its first existence on December 6, 1712. On June 18, 1714, it was revived to run three times a week until December 20 of the same year. In the interim Steele's *Guardian* (1713) had appeared and to it Addison had made contributions. The latter started a paper of his own, *The Freeholder* (1715-16), which lived through 55 issues. But the success of the original *Spectator* was not repeated.

After their publication in sheet-form *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* were reprinted in collected editions for an even wider public. The essays were imitated and translated in many other languages; in England, among dozens of imitations, were Johnson's *Rambler* and *Idler*, Boswell's *The Hypochondriac*, and Goldsmith's *The Bee* and *Citizen of the World.* For a century, indeed, they stood as models for the periodical essay—and with justice. One must pass from Bacon to Addison and Steele in seeking the masters of the English essay. Yet nothing could be less like Bacon's than the work of these partners. Even when discoursing on intellectual matters, Addison and Steele kept an air of easy informality. But though they are closer in this respect, therefore, to Montaigne, they have not his discursiveness and egoism.

It would be idle to decide the comparative superiority of Addison and Steele. Steele is warmer, more spontaneous, more skilled in the ways of the world, more inventive, and more conversational in style, but his impatience sometimes led him to be slipshod in his writing. There is little sentiment in Addison, but more thought; he has more dignity, urbanity, subtlety, irony, and grace than Steele. Those who look for feeling will love Steele, although he sometimes falls into mere sentimentality; those who prefer intellect and charm will admire Addison. As a stylist Addison has few equals in any literature; in his essays classicism will be seen at its best. Nothing is ever overstated or underlined. And not least admirable is Addison's perfect feeling for the length of what he writes: at the final period, one realizes that the author has been neither too brief nor too long, but has achieved an ideal proportion for his subject. "Whoever," said Samuel Johnson, "wishes to

G. A. Aitken has thoroughly annotated editions of *The Tatler* (four volumes, 1898), and of *The Spectator* (eight volumes, 1898). G. G. Smith's edition of *The Spectator* (eight volumes, 1897-8) is also very good. G. A. Aitken's biography of Steele (1889) is authoritative. W. J. Courthope's biography of Addison (1884) is the best. Two important studies are: G. S. Marr, *Periodical Essayists of the Eighteenth Century* (1925) and W. J. Graham, *English Literary Periodicals* (1930).

From *The Tatler*

On Duelling

The Tatler, No. 25. *June 7, 1709*

Quicquid agunt homines ——
—— nostri est farrago libelli.
JUVENAL, *Sat.* I, 85, 86

Whate'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,
Our motley paper seizes for its theme.

White's Chocolate House, June 6

A letter from a young lady, written in the most passionate terms, wherein she laments the misfortune of a gentleman, her lover, who was lately wounded in a duel, has turned my thoughts to that subject and inclined me to examine into the causes which precipitate men into so fatal a folly. And as it has been proposed to treat of subjects of gallantry in the article from hence, and no one point in nature is more proper to be considered by the company who frequent this place than that of duels, it is worth our consideration to examine into this chimerical, groundless humor and to lay every other thought aside, until we have stripped it of all its false pretenses to credit and reputation amongst men.

But I must confess, when I consider what I am going about, and run over in my imagination all the endless crowd of men of honor who will be offended at such a discourse, I am undertaking, methinks, a work worthy an invulnerable hero in romance, rather than a private gentleman with a single rapier: but as I am pretty well acquainted, by great opportunities, with the nature of man, and know of a truth that all men fight against their will, the danger vanishes and resolution rises upon this subject. For this reason, I shall talk very freely on a custom which all men wish exploded, though no man has courage enough to resist it.

But there is one unintelligible word, which I fear will extremely perplex my dissertation, and I confess to you I find very hard to explain, which is the term "satisfaction." An honest country gentleman had the misfortune to fall into company with two or three modern men of honor, where he happened to be very ill-treated; and one of the company, being conscious of his offense, sends a note to him in the morning and tells him he was ready to give him satisfaction. "This is fine doing," says the plain fellow; "last night he sent me away cursedly out of humor, and this morning he fancies it would be a satisfaction to be run through the body."

As the matter at present stands, it is not to do handsome actions denominates a man of honor; it is enough if he dares to defend ill ones. Thus you often see a common sharper in competition with a gentleman of the first rank; though all mankind is convinced that a fighting gamester is only a pickpocket with the courage of a highwayman. One cannot with any patience reflect on the unaccountable jumble of persons and things in this town and nation; which occasions very frequently that a brave man falls by a hand below that of a common hangman, and yet his executioner escapes the clutches of the hangman for doing it. I shall, therefore, hereafter consider how the bravest men in other ages and nations have behaved themselves upon such incidents as we decide by combat; and show, from their practice, that this resentment neither has its foundation from true reason or solid fame; but is an imposture, made of cowardice, falsehood, and want of understanding. For this work, a good history of quarrels would be very edifying to the public; and I apply myself to the town for particulars and circumstances within their knowledge, which may serve to embellish the dissertation with proper cuts. Most of the quarrels I have ever known have proceeded from some valiant coxcomb's persisting in the wrong to defend some prevailing folly, and preserve himself from the ingenuousness of owning a mistake.

By this means it is called "giving a man satisfaction," to urge your offense against him with your sword; which puts me in mind of Peter's order to the keeper in *The Tale of a Tub*:[1] "if you neglect to do all this, damn you and your generation for ever: and so we bid you heartily farewell." If the contradiction in the very terms of one of our challenges were as well explained and turned into downright English, would it not run after this manner?

"Your extraordinary behavior last night, and the liberty you were pleased to take with me, makes me this morning give you this, to tell you, because you are an ill-bred puppy, I will meet you in Hyde Park an hour hence; and because you want both breeding and humanity, I desire you would come with a pistol in your hand, on horseback, and endeavor to shoot me through the head, to teach you more manners. If you fail of doing me this pleasure, I shall say you are a rascal on every post in town: and so, sir, if you will not injure me more, I shall never forgive what you have done already. Pray, sir, do not fail of getting everything ready; and you will infinitely oblige, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant, etc."

(Steele)

The Trumpet Club

The Tatler, No. 132. *Feb. 11, 1710*

Habeo senectuti magnam gratiam, quae mihi sermonis aviditatem auxit, potionis et cibi sustulit.

Tullius, de Senectute

I am much beholden to old age, which has increased my eagerness for conversation in proportion as it has lessened my appetites of hunger and thirst.

After having applied my mind with more than ordinary attention to my studies, it is my usual custom to relax and unbend it in the conversation of such as are rather easy than shining companions. This I find particularly necessary for me before I retire to rest, in order to draw my slumbers upon me by degrees, and fall asleep insensibly. This is the particular use I make of a set of heavy, honest men, with whom I have passed many hours with much indolence, though not with great pleasure. Their conversation is a kind of preparative for sleep: it takes the mind down from its abstractions, leads it into the familiar traces of thought, and lulls it into that state of tranquility which is the condition of a thinking man, when he is but half awake. After this, my reader will not be surprised to hear the account which I am about to give of a club of my own contemporaries among whom I pass two or three hours every evening. This I look upon as taking my first nap before I go to bed. The truth of it is, I should think myself unjust to posterity, as well as to the society at the Trumpet, of which I am a member, did not I in some part of my writings give an account of the persons among whom I have passed almost a sixth part of my time for these last forty years. Our club consisted originally of fifteen; but, partly by the severity of the law in arbitrary times, and partly by the natural effects of old age, we are at present reduced to a third part of that number; in which, however, we have this consolation, that the best company is said to consist of five persons. I must confess, besides the aforementioned benefit which I meet with in the conversation of this select society, I am not the less pleased with the company, in that I find myself the greatest wit among them, and am heard as their oracle in all points of learning and difficulty.

Sir Jeoffery Notch, who is the oldest of the club, has been in possession of the right-hand chair time out of mind, and is the only man among us that has the liberty of stirring the fire. This, our foreman, is a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion, and run it out in hounds, horses, and cock-fighting; for which reason he looks upon himself as an honest, worthy gentleman, who has had misfortunes in the world, and calls every thriving man a pitiful upstart.

Major Matchlock is the next senior, who served in the last civil wars[1] and has all the battles by heart. He does not think any action in Europe worth talking of since the fight of Marston Moor;[2] and every night tells us of his having been knocked off his horse at the rising of the London apprentices; for which he is in great esteem among us.

Honest old Dick Reptile is the third of our society. He is a good-natured, indolent man who speaks little himself, but laughs at our jokes; and brings his young nephew along with him, a youth of eighteen years old, to show him good company, and give him a taste of the world. This young fellow sits generally silent; but whenever he opens his mouth or laughs at any thing that passes, he is constantly told by his uncle, after a jocular manner, "Ay, ay, Jack, you young men think us fools; but we old men know you are."

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[1] a well-known satire by Swift.

[1] the English Civil Wars of the 1640's.

[2] an important battle of the English Civil Wars, fought in 1644.

The greatest wit of our company, next to myself, is a bencher of the neighboring Inn,[3] who in his youth frequented the ordinaries[4] about Charing Cross, and pretends to have been intimate with Jack Ogle. He has about ten distiches of *Hudibras*[5] without book, and never leaves the club till he has applied them all. If any modern wit be mentioned, or any town frolic spoken of, he shakes his head at the dullness of the present age, and tells us a story of Jack Ogle.

For my own part, I am esteemed among them, because they see I am something respected by others; though at the same time I understand by their behavior, that I am considered by them as a man of a great deal of learning, but no knowledge of the world; insomuch, that the Major sometimes, in the height of his military pride, calls me the philosopher; and Sir Jeoffery, no longer ago than last night, upon a dispute what day of the month it was then in Holland,[6] pulled his pipe out of his mouth and cried, "What does the scholar say to it?"

Our club meets precisely at six o'clock in the evening; but I did not come last night until half an hour after seven, by which means I escaped the battle of Naseby, which the Major usually begins at about three-quarters after six: I found also that my good friend the Bencher had already spent three of his distiches; and only waited an opportunity to hear a sermon spoken of, that he might introduce the couplet where "a stick" rhymes to "ecclesiastic." At my entrance into the room, they were naming a red petticoat and a cloak, by which I found that the Bencher had been diverting them with a story of Jack Ogle.

I had no sooner taken my seat, but Sir Jeoffery, to show his good will toward me, gave me a pipe of his own tobacco, and stirred up the fire. I look upon it as a point of morality to be obliged by those who endeavor to oblige me; and therefore, in requital for his kindness, and to set the conversation a-going, I took the best occasion I could to put him upon telling us the story of old Gantlett, which he always does with very particular concern. He traced up his descent on both sides for several generations, describing his diet and manner of life, with his several battles, and particularly that in which he fell. This Gantlett was a game cock, upon whose head the knight, in his youth, had won five hundred pounds, and lost two thousand. This naturally set the Major upon the account of Edgehill fight,[7] and ended in a duel of Jack Ogle's.

Old Reptile was extremely attentive to all that was said, though it was the same he had heard every night for these twenty years, and, upon all occasions, winked upon his nephew to mind what passed.

This may suffice to give the world a taste of our innocent conversation, which we spun out until about ten of the clock, when my maid came with a lantern to light me home. I could not but reflect with myself, as I was going out, upon the talkative humor of old men, and the little figure which that part of life makes in one who cannot employ his natural propensity in discourses which would make him venerable. I must own, it makes me very melancholy in company, when I hear a young man begin a story; and have often observed that one of a quarter of an hour long in a man of five-and-twenty gathers circumstances every time he tells it, until it grows into a long Canterbury tale of two hours by that time he is threescore.

The only way of avoiding such a trifling and frivolous old age is to lay up in our way to it such stores of knowledge and observation as may make us useful and agreeable in our declining years. The mind of man in a long life will become a magazine of wisdom or folly, and will consequently discharge itself in something impertinent or improving. For which reason, as there is nothing more ridiculous than an old trifling story-teller, so there is nothing more venerable than one who has turned his experience to the entertainment and advantage of mankind.

In short, we who are in the last stage of life, and are apt to indulge ourselves in talk, ought to consider if what we speak be worth being heard, and endeavor to make our discourse like that of Nestor, which Homer compares to the flowing of honey for its sweetness.

I am afraid I shall be thought guilty of this excess I am speaking of, when I cannot conclude without observing that Milton certainly thought of this passage in Homer when, in his description of an eloquent spirit, he says,

"His tongue dropped manna."

(Steele)

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[3] a senior member of an Inn of Court.

[4] restaurants.

[5] a satirical poem written by Samuel Butler and published between 1663 and 1678.

[6] England at that time was using the old-style calendar, whereas Holland used the modern system. There was a difference of twelve days between the two.

[7] a battle in the English Civil Wars, fought in 1642.

Character of the Upholsterer

The Tatler, No. 155. *April 6, 1710*

> —*Aliena negotia curat.*
> *Excussus propriis.*—Hor. 2 Sat. iii 19.
> When he had lost all business of his own,
> He ran in quest of news through all the town.

From My Own Apartment, April 5

There lived some years since within my neighborhood a very grave person, an upholsterer, who seemed a man of more than ordinary application to business. He was a very early riser, and was often abroad two or three hours before any of his neighbors. He had a particular carefulness in the knitting of his brows, and a kind of impatience in all his motions, that plainly discovered he was always intent on matters of importance. Upon my inquiry into his life and conversation, I found him to be the greatest newsmonger in our quarter; that he rose before day to read the *Post Man*; and that he would take two or three turns to the other end of the town before his neighbors were up, to see if there were any Dutch mails come in. He had a wife and several children; but was much more inquisitive to know what passed in Poland than in his own family, and was in greater pain and anxiety of mind for King Augustus's[1] welfare than that of his nearest relations. He looked extremely thin in a dearth of news, and never enjoyed himself in a westerly wind. This indefatigable kind of life was the ruin of his shop; for about the time that his favorite prince left the crown of Poland, he broke and disappeared.

This man and his affairs had been long out of my mind, till about three days ago, as I was walking in St. James's Park, I heard somebody at a distance hemming after me: and who should it be but my old neighbor the upholsterer? I saw he was reduced to extreme poverty, by certain shabby superfluities in his dress: for, notwithstanding that it was a very sultry day for the time of the year, he wore a loose greatcoat and a muff, with a long campaign-wig out of curl; to which he had added the ornament of a pair of black garters buckled under the knee. Upon his coming up to me, I was going to inquire into his present circumstances; but was prevented by his asking me, with a whisper, Whether the last letters brought any accounts that one might rely upon from Bender? I told him, None that I heard of; and asked him, Whether he had yet married his eldest daughter? He told me, No. But pray, says he, tell me sincerely, what are your thoughts of the king of Sweden?[2] (for though his wife and children were starving, I found his chief concern at present was for this great monarch). I told him, that I looked upon him as one of the first heroes of the age. But pray, says he, do you think there is anything in the story of his wound? and finding me surprised at the question, Nay, says he, I only propose it to you. I answered, that I thought there was no reason to doubt it. But why in the heel, says he, more than in any part of the body? Because, says I, the bullet chanced to light there.

This extraordinary dialogue was no sooner ended, but he began to launch out into a long dissertation upon the affairs of the North; and after having spent some time on them, he told me, he was in a great perplexity how to reconcile the *Supplement* with the *English Post*, and had been just now examining what the other papers say upon the same subject. The *Daily Courant*, says he, has these words; 'We have advices from very good hands, that a certain prince has some matters of great importance under consideration.' This is very mysterious; but the *Post Boy* leaves us more in the dark; for he tells us, 'That there are private intimations of measures taken by a certain prince, which time will bring to light.' Now the *Post Man*, says he, who used to be very clear, refers to the same news in these words; 'The late conduct of a certain prince affords great matter of speculation.' This certain prince, says the upholsterer, whom they are all so cautious of naming, I take to be—upon which, though there was nobody near us, he whispered something in my ear which I did not hear, or think worth my while to make him repeat.

We were now got to the upper end of the Mall, where were three or four very odd fellows sitting together upon the bench. These I found were all of them politicians, who used to sun themselves in that place every day about dinner-time. Observing them to be curiosities in their kind, and my friend's acquaintance, I sat down among them.

The chief politician of the bench was a great assertor of paradoxes. He told us, with a seeming concern, that by some news he had lately read from Muscovy,[3] it appeared to him that there was a storm gathering in the Black Sea, which might in time do hurt to the naval forces of this nation. To this he added, that, for his part, he could not wish to see the Turk driven out of Europe, which he believed could not but be prejudicial to our woolen manufacture. He then told us, that he looked upon those extraordinary revolutions which had lately happened in these parts of the world, to have risen chiefly from two persons who were not much talked of; and those, says he, are Prince Menzikoff, and the Duchess of Mirandola. He backed his assertions with so many broken hints, and such a show of depth and wisdom, that we gave ourselves up to his opinions.

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[1] King of Poland.

[2] Charles XII

[3] Russia.

The discourse at length fell upon a point which seldom escapes a knot of true-born Englishmen, whether in case of a religious war, the Protestants would not be too strong for the Papists? This we unanimously determined on the Protestant side. One who sat on my right hand, and, as I found by his discourse, had been in the West Indies, assured us, that it would be a very easy matter for the Protestants to beat the pope at sea; and added, that whenever such a war does break out, it must turn to the good of the Leeward Islands. Upon this, one who sat at the end of the bench, and, as I afterwards found, was the geographer of the company, said, that in case the Papists should drive the Protestants from these parts of Europe, when the worst came to the worst, it would be impossible to beat them out of Norway and Greenland, provided the northern crowns hold together, and the Czar of Muscovy stand neuter.

He further told us for our comfort, that there were vast tracts of lands about the pole, inhabited neither by Protestants nor Papists, and of greater extent than all the Roman Catholic dominions in Europe.

When we had fully discussed this point, my friend the upholsterer began to exert himself upon the present negotiations of peace, in which he deposed princes, settled the bounds of kingdoms, and balanced the power of Europe, with great justice and impartiality.

I at length took my leave of the company, and was going away; but had not gone thirty yards before the upholsterer hemmed again after me. Upon his advancing towards me with a whisper, I expected to hear some secret piece of news, which he had not thought fit to communicate to the bench; but instead of that, he desired me in my ear to lend him half-a-crown.[4] In compassion to so needy a statesman, and to dissipate the confusion I found he was in, I told him, if he pleased, I would give him five shillings, to receive five pounds of him when the Great Turk was driven out of Constantinople; which he very readily accepted, but not before he had laid down to me the impossibility of such an event, as the affairs of Europe now stand.

This paper I design for the particular benefit of those worthy citizens who live more in a coffee house than in their shops, and whose thoughts are so taken up with the affairs of the allies, that they forget their customers.

(Addison)

MOLIERE (1622-1673).

Molière's desire to expose in particular the defects of "the men of our time" is brilliantly realized in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. In conformance with the neoclassical love of elegance, certain *salons* of his day were sponsoring a euphuistic mode of expression in order to expunge "coarseness" from the French tongue. They went to such absurd extremes of artificiality that Molière took them to task in this merry satire. The attack, at the same time, is leveled against those members of the *beau monde* who without any gifts were making great pretenses to learning. The well-deserved popularity of Molière's plays among English writers has already been indicated. This selection, when compared with Addison's *Ned Softly* which follows it, may give some idea of how far Molière was sometimes imitated. The similarity of the satire is too close to have been an accident.

To understand the dialogue, the reader should perhaps be given the outline of the plot. The two girls have had their heads turned by the new elegance and have rejected their sweethearts on the ground of their possessing no literary distinction. In revenge, one of the lovers dresses up his lackey in the newest finery and sends him off, with a fellow servant, to pay court as would-be-noblemen to the two girls. The lackeys carry off the new preciosity with a perfect flair and convince the girls that they are in the presence of the very jewels of the *salons*.

(Cf. Introduction to his *Misanthrope, above,* for an account of Molière's career.)

From THE RIDICULOUS PRECIOUS LADIES

(Translated by Bernard D. N. Grebanier)

Mascarille. Indeed, it's a shame not to have the latest of everything that's going on. But don't be bothered about it. I'm going to start a learned society of choice wits at your house here. And I promise you that not a bit of verse will be written in Paris but you shall know it by heart before anyone else. As for myself, just as you see me, I try my hand a little at it, when I'm in the mood. You'll find in the best boudoirs of Paris two hundred songs, as many sonnets, four hundred epigrams, and more than a thousand madrigals of my making,—not counting riddles and characters.

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[4] a crown is five shillings.

MAGDELON. I protest I'm furiously fond of characters. I think nothing more gallant.

MASC. Characters are difficult to write. They require deep wit. You'll see some of mine that won't displease you.

CATHOS. As for me, I'm terribly fond of riddles.

MASC. They exercise the wit. I wrote four of 'em this morning, that I'll have you figure out.

MAGD. Madrigals are charming when well turned.

MASC. They're my particular talent. Right now I'm putting the entire History of Rome into madrigals.

MAGD. Ah! That will be the last word in the lovely. I'll have a copy, at least, if you print it?

MASC. I promise you each one, beautifully bound. It's all rather below my rank, but I do it only for the sake of the publishers who persecute me.

MAGD. I should think it a great pleasure to see yourself in print.

MASC. No doubt. By the way, I ought to recite for you an impromptu thing I made up yesterday at the home of one of my duchess friends. I'm damn clever with these impromptu pieces.

CATH. Impromptu pieces are really the touchstone of wit.

MASC. Listen then.

MAGD. We're all ears.

MASC.

Oh! Oh! To think! No care took I
While, guileless, I did see you by!
Your sly eye steals my heart in fief—
Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief!

CATH. Ah! Goodness me! There's a thing carried to the limit of gallantry!

MASC. Everything I do has the cavalier air. Nothing pedantic about that.

MAGD. It's more than two thousand miles removed from the pedantic.

MASC. Did you notice the beginning? *Oh! Oh!* Now that's extraordinary. *Oh! Oh!* Like a man who starts thinking all of a sudden. *Oh! Oh!* The surprise of it! *Oh! Oh!*

MAGD. Yes, I find that *Oh! Oh!* admirable.

MASC. It may look like nothing.

CATH. Ah! Good Lord! What are you saying? It's beyond price.

MAGD. No doubt. I'd rather have written that *Oh! Oh!* than an epic poem![1]

MASC. You've good taste.

MAGD. It's not so bad.

MASC. But didn't you also like: *To think! No care took I? No care took I,*—I didn't perceive it,—a natural way of putting it: *No care took I! While guileless,*—while innocently, without malice, like a poor sheep—, *I did see you by,*—that's to say: I took pleasure in looking at you, I see you, I contemplate you. *Your sly eye. . . .* What do you think of that word *sly?* Isn't it well chosen?

CATH. Entirely so.

MASC. *Sly,*—stealthy,—like a cat who's just caught a mouse—*sly.*

MAGD. It couldn't be better.

MASC. *Steals my heart in fief,*—takes it away from me, seizes it. *Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief!* Wouldn't you think it's a man crying and running after a thief to have him stopped? *Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief! Stop thief!*

MAGD. One must admit it has a witty and gallant turn.

MASC. I'll sing the tune I composed for it.

CATH. You've studied music?

MASC. I? Not at all.

CATH. Then how could you manage it?

MASC. People of quality know everything without study.

MAGD. (*to Cathos*) Naturally, my dear.

MASC. Listen. See if you like the tune. Hem, hem. (*sings*) *La, la, la, la, la.* This stupid weather has furiously devastated my voice's sweetness. But it don't matter. (*sings*) *Oh! Oh! To think! etc.*

CATH. (*when he's done*) Ah! What a passionate tune! Simply killing!

MAGD. There are chromatics[2] in it.

MASC. Don't you think the thought is well suited to the music? *Stop thief!* And then, as if I cried out loud *Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop! Stop thief!* And all of a sudden, like a man out of breath, *Stop thief!*

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[1] Addison translates this remark almost verbatim in the last paragraph of *Ned Softly.*

[2] The precious Magdelon has, of course, no idea of what chromatics are.

Ned Softly the Poet

(Cf. the preceding selection from Molière's *The Ridiculous Precious Ladies.*) Although the best of the fun in this essay was inspired by Molière, the grace and inimitable perfection of proportion are typically Addisonian. Ned Softly can still be met, in the cafés of any literary Bohemia, anxious to read his verses to anyone who will listen, and impervious to criticism even as withering as Mr. Bickerstaff's.

The Tatler, No. 163. *April 25, 1710*

Idem inficeto est inficetior rure,
Simul poemata attigit; neque idem unquam
Æque est beatus, ac poema cum scribit:
Tam gaudet in se, tamque se ipse miratur.
Nimirum idem omnes fallimur; neque est quisquam
Quem non in aliqua re videre Suffenum
Possis.

CATULLUS, XXII, 14.

Suffenus has no more wit than a mere clown, when he attempts to write verses; and yet he is never happier than when he is scribbling; so much does he admire himself and his compositions. And, indeed, this is the foible of every one of us; for there is no man living who is not a Suffenus in one thing or other.

Will's Coffee-house, April 24

I yesterday came hither about two hours before the company generally make their appearance, with a design to read over all the newspapers; but upon my sitting down, I was accosted by Ned Softly, who saw me from a corner in the other end of the room, where I found he had been writing something. "Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, "I observe by a late paper of yours that you and I are just of a humor; for you must know, of all impertinences, there is nothing which I so much hate as news. I never read a Gazette in my life, and never trouble my head about our armies, whether they win or lose, or in what part of the world they lie encamped." Without giving me time to reply, he drew a paper of verses out of his pocket, telling me that he had something which would entertain me more agreeably, and that he would desire my judgment upon every line, for that we had time enough before us till the company came in.

Ned Softly is a very pretty poet, and a great admirer of easy lines. Waller[1] is his favorite; and as that admirable writer has the best and worst verses of any among our great English poets, Ned Softly has got all the bad ones without book, which he repeats upon occasion, to show his reading and garnish his conversation. Ned is indeed a true English reader, incapable of relishing the great and masterly strokes of this art, but wonderfully pleased with the little Gothic ornaments of epigrammatical conceits, turns, points, and quibbles, which are so frequent in the most admired of our English poets, and practised by those who want genius and strength to represent, after the manner of the ancients, simplicity in its natural beauty and perfection.

Finding myself unavoidably engaged in such a conversation, I was resolved to turn my pain into a pleasure, and to divert myself as well as I could with so very odd a fellow. "You must understand," says Ned, "that the sonnet I am going to read to you was written upon a lady, who showed me some verses of her own making, and is, perhaps, the best poet of our age. But you shall hear it."

Upon which he began to read as follows:

TO MIRA ON HER INCOMPARABLE POEMS

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine,
  And tune your soft melodious notes,
You seem a sister of the Nine,
  Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

I fancy, when your song you sing,
  (Your song you sing with so much art)
Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing;
  For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Why," says I, "this is a little nosegay of conceits, a very lump of salt: every verse has something in it that piques; and then the *dart* in the last line is certainly as pretty a sting in the tail of an epigram, for so I think you critics call it, as ever entered into the thought of a poet." "Dear Mr. Bickerstaff," says he, shaking me by the hand, "everybody knows you to be a judge of these things; and to tell you truly, I read over Roscommon's translation of 'Horace's Art of Poetry,'[2] three several times, before I sat down to write the sonnet which I have shown you. But you shall hear it again, and pray observe every line of it; for not one of them shall pass without your approbation.

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[1] Cf. p. 390.

[2] Cf. p. 528.

When dressed in laurel wreaths you shine.

"That is," says he, "when you have your garland on; when you are writing verses." To which I replied, "I know your. meaning: a metaphor!" "The same," said he, and went on:

"And tune your soft melodious notes.

"Pray observe the gliding of that verse; there is scarce a consonant in it: I took care to make it run upon liquids. Give me your opinion of it." "Truly," said I, "I think it as good as the former." "I am very glad to hear you say so," says he; "but mind the next:

You seem a sister of the Nine.

"That is," says he, "you seem a sister of the Muses; for if you look into ancient authors, you will find it was their opinion that there were nine of them." "I remember it very well," said I; "but pray proceed."

"Or Phœbus' self in petticoats.

"Phœbus," says he, "was the God of Poetry. These little instances, Mr. Bickerstaff, show a gentleman's reading. Then to take off from the air of learning, which Phœbus and the Muses have given to this first stanza, you may observe how it falls all of a sudden into the familiar, 'in petticoats!'

Or Phœbus' self in petticoats."

"Let us now," says I, "enter upon the second stanza. I find the first line is still a continuation of the metaphor:

I fancy, when your song you sing."

"It is very right," says he; "but pray observe the turn of words in those two lines. I was a whole hour in adjusting of them, and have still a doubt upon me, whether in the second line it should be, 'Your song you sing'; or, 'You sing your song'? You shall hear them both:

"I fancy when your song you sing
(Your song you sing with so much art).

Or,

I fancy, when your song you sing
(You sing your song with so much art.)"

"Truly," said I, "the turn is so natural either way that you have made me almost giddy with it." "Dear sir," said he, grasping me by the hand, "you have a great deal of patience; but pray what do you think of the next verse:

Your pen was plucked from Cupid's wing?"

"Think!" says I; "I think you have made Cupid look like a little goose." "That was my meaning," says he; "I think the ridicule is well enough hit off. But we now come to the last, which sums up the whole matter:

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"Pray, how do you like that 'Ah!' Does it not make a pretty figure in that place? *Ah!*——it looks as if I felt the dart, and cried out as being pricked with it!

For, ah! it wounds me like his dart.

"My friend Dick Easy," continued he, "assured me, he would rather have written that *Ah!* than to have been the author of the Æneid. He indeed objected, that I made Mira's pen like a quill in one of the lines, and like a dart in the other. But as to that——" "Oh! as to that," says I, "it is but supposing Cupid to be like a porcupine, and his quills and darts will be the same thing." He was going to embrace me for the hint; but half a dozen critics coming into the room, whose faces he did not like, he conveyed the sonnet into his pocket, and whispered me in the ear, "he would show it me again as soon as his man had written it over fair."

(Addison)

Character of Sir Timothy Tittle

The Tatler, No. 165. *April 29, 1710*

From my own Apartment, April 28

It has always been my endeavor to distinguish between realities and appearances, and to separate true merit from the pretense to it. As it shall ever be my study to make discoveries of this nature in human life, and to settle the proper distinctions between the virtues and perfections of mankind and those false colors and resemblances of them that shine alike in the eyes of the vulgar, so I shall be more particularly careful to search into the various merits and pretenses of the learned world. This is the more necessary, because there seems to be a general combination among the pedants to extol one another's labors, and cry up one another's parts; while men of sense, either through that modesty which is natural to them, or the scorn they have for such trifling commendations, enjoy their stock of knowledge, like a hidden treasure, with satisfaction and silence. Pedantry indeed, in learning, is like hypocrisy in religion, a form of knowledge without the power of it; that attracts the eyes of the common people; breaks out in noise and show; and finds its reward, not from any inward pleasure that attends it, but from the praises and approbations which it receives from men.

Of this shallow species there is not a more importunate, empty, and conceited animal than that which is generally known by the name of a Critic. This, in the common acceptation of the word, is one that, without entering into the sense and soul of an author, has a few general rules, which, like mechanical instruments, he applies to the works of every writer; and as they quadrate with them, pronounces the author perfect or defective. He is master of a certain set of words, as Unity, Style, Fire, Phlegm, Easy, Natural, Turn, Sentiment, and the like; which he varies, compounds, divides, and throws together, in every part of his discourse, without any thought or meaning. The marks you may know him by are an elevated eye and a dogmatical brow, a positive voice and a contempt for everything that comes out, whether he has read it or not. He dwells altogether in generals. He praises or dispraises in the lump. He shakes his head very frequently at the pedantry of universities, and bursts into laughter when you mention an author that is not known at Will's.[1] He hath formed his judgment upon Homer, Horace, and Virgil, not from their own works, but from those of Rapin and Bossu.[2] He knows his own strength so well, that he never dares praise any thing in which he has not a French author for his voucher.

With these extraordinary talents and accomplishments, Sir Timothy Tittle puts men in vogue, or condemns them to obscurity, and sits as judge of life and death upon every author that appears in public. It is impossible to represent the pangs, agonies, and convulsions which Sir Timothy expresses in every feature of his face, and muscle of his body, upon the reading a bad poet.

About a week ago, I was engaged, at a friend's house of mine, in an agreeable conversation with his wife and daughters, when, in the height of our mirth, Sir Timothy, who makes love to my friend's eldest daughter, came in amongst us, puffing and blowing as if he had been very much out of breath. He immediately called for a chair, and desired leave to sit down without any further ceremony. I asked him, where he had been? whether he was out of order? He only replied, that he was quite spent, and fell a cursing in soliloquy. I could hear him cry, "A wicked rogue—an execrable wretch—was there ever such a monster!" The young ladies upon this began to be affrighted, and asked, whether anyone had hurt him? He answered nothing, but still talked to himself. "To lay the first scene," says he, "in St. James's Park, and the last in Northamptonshire!"

"Is that all?" said I. "Then I suppose you have been at the rehearsal of a play this morning."

"Been!" says he; "I have been at Northampton, in the park, in a lady's bed-chamber, in a dining-room, everywhere; the rogue has led me such a dance——"

Though I could scarce forbear laughing at his discourse, I told him I was glad it was no worse, and that he was only metaphorically weary.

"In short, sir," says he, "the author has not observed a single unity in his whole play; the scene shifts in every dialogue;[3] the villain has hurried me up and down at such a rate that I am tired off my legs."

I could not but observe with some pleasure, that the young lady whom he made love to conceived a very just aversion towards him, upon seeing him so very passionate in trifles. And as she had that natural sense which makes her a better judge than a thousand critics, she began to rally him upon this foolish humor. "For my part," says she, "I never knew a play take that was written up to your rules, as you call them."

"How, Madam!" says he. "Is that your opinion? I am sure you have a better taste."

"It is a pretty kind of magic," says she, "the poets have, to transport an audience from place to place without the help of a coach and horses; I could travel round the world at such a rate. It is such an entertainment as an enchantress finds when she fancies herself in a wood, or upon a mountain, at a feast, or a solemnity; though at the same time she has never stirred out of her cottage."

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[1] a well-known coffee-house.

[2] French literary critics of the seventeenth century.

[3] "Unity of place," not recommended by Aristotle, but read into his *Poetics* by the seventeenth-century critics.

"Your simile, Madam," says Sir Timothy, "is by no means just."

"Pray," says she, "let my similes pass without a criticism. I must confess," continued she (for I found she was resolved to exasperate him), "I laughed very heartily at the last new comedy which you found so much fault with."

"But, Madam," says he, "you ought not to have laughed; and I defy anyone to show me a single rule that you could laugh by."

"Ought not to laugh!" says she. "Pray, who should hinder me?"

"Madam," says he, "there are such people in the world as Rapin, Dacier, and several others, that ought to have spoiled your mirth."

"I have heard," says the young lady, "that your great critics are always very bad poets: I fancy there is as much difference between the works of one and the other as there is between the carriage of a dancing-master and a gentleman. I must confess," continued she, "I would not be troubled with so fine a judgment as yours is; for I find you feel more vexation in a bad comedy than I do in a deep tragedy."

"Madam," says Sir Timothy, "that is not my fault. They should learn the art of writing."

"For my part," says the young lady, "I should think the greatest art in your writers of comedies is to please."

"To please!" says Sir Timothy; and immediately fell a-laughing. "Truly," says she, "that is my opinion." Upon this, he composed his countenance, looked upon his watch, and took his leave.

I hear that Sir Timothy has not been at my friend's house since this notable conference, to the great satisfaction of the young lady, who by this means has got rid of a very impertinent fop.

I must confess I could not but observe, with a great deal of surprise, how this gentleman, by his ill nature, folly, and affectation, has made himself capable of suffering so many imaginary pains, and looking with such a senseless severity upon the common diversions of life.

(Addison)

From *The Spectator*

The Uses of the Spectator

The Spectator, No. 10. *March 12, 1711*

Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit, si bracchia forte remisit,
Atque illum praeceps prono rapit alveus amni.
VIRGIL, *Georg.* I, 201.

So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And slow advancing, struggle with the stream:
But if they slack their hands, or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive.
DRYDEN

It is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day: so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates, that he brought philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.

I would, therefore, in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families, that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think that where the *Spectator* appears the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my reader's consideration, whether is it not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy[1] or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds and make enmities irreconcilable?

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies; I mean the fraternity of spectators who live in the world without having anything to do in it, and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars[2] that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, everyone that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring? and by that means gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of till about twelve o'clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instill into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seem contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures; and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's,[3] or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and embroidery, and their greatest drudgery the preparation of jellies and sweetmeats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavor to make an innocent, if not an improving, entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavor to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments, of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hindrance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me, lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day; but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other little pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat[4] against this piece of raillery.

(Addison)

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[1] Russia.

[2] students or practitioners of the law.

[3] dry goods merchant.

[4] warning.

Westminster Abbey

The Spectator, No. 26 *March 30, 1711*

Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres, O beate Sesti,
Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam:
Jam te premet nox, fabulaeque manes,
Et domus exilis Plutonia ——.

HORACE, *Odes*, I, IV, 13

With equal foot, rich friend, impartial fate
Knocks at the cottage, and the palace gate;
Life's span forbids thee to extend thy cares,
And stretch thy hopes beyond thy years;
Night soon will seize, and you must quickly go
To story'd ghosts, and Pluto's house below.

CREECH

When I am in a serious humor, I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; where the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, that is not disagreeable. I yesterday passed a whole afternoon in the churchyard, the cloisters, and the church, amusing myself with the tombstones and inscriptions that I met with in those several regions of the dead. Most of them recorded nothing else of the buried person, but that he was born upon one day, and died upon another: the whole history of his life being comprehended in those two circumstances that are common to all mankind. I could not but look upon these registers of existence, whether of brass or marble, as a kind of satire upon the departed persons; who had left no other memorial of them but that they were born, and that they died. They put me in mind of several persons mentioned in the battles of heroic poems, who have sounding names given them, for no other reason but that they may be killed, and are celebrated for nothing but being knocked on the head.

Γλαῦκόν τε Μέδοντά τε Θερσίλοχόν τε.
HOMER.

Glaucumque, Medontaque, Thersilochumque.
VIRGIL.

Glaucus, and Medon, and Thersilochus.

The life of these men is finely described in Holy Writ by "the path of an arrow," which is immediately closed up and lost.

Upon my going into the church, I entertained myself with the digging of a grave; and saw in every shovelful of it that was thrown up the fragment of a bone or skull intermixed with a kind of fresh mouldering earth that some time or other had a place in the composition of an human body. Upon this, I began to consider with myself, what innumerable multitudes of people lay confused together under the pavement of that ancient Cathedral; how men and women, friends and enemies, priests and soldiers, monks and prebendaries, were crumbled amongst one another, and blended together in the same common mass; how beauty, strength, and youth, with old age, weakness, and deformity, lay undistinguished in the same promiscuous heap of matter.

After having thus surveyed this great magazine of mortality, as it were, in the lump, I examined it more particularly by the accounts which I found on several of the monuments which are raised in every quarter of that ancient fabric. Some of them were covered with such extravagant epitaphs that, if it were possible for the dead person to be acquainted with them, he would blush at the praises which his friends have bestowed upon him. There are others so excessively modest that they deliver the character of the person departed in Greek or Hebrew, and by that means are not understood once in a twelve-month. In the poetical quarter, I found there were poets who had no monuments, and monuments which had no poets. I observed, indeed, that the present war had filled the church with many of these uninhabited monuments, which had been erected to the memory of persons whose bodies were perhaps buried in the plains of Blenheim,[1] or in the bosom of the ocean.

I could not but be very much delighted with several modern epitaphs, which are written with great elegance of expression and justness of thought, and therefore do honor to the living as well as to the dead. As a foreigner is very apt to conceive an idea of the ignorance or politeness of a nation from the turn of their public monuments and inscriptions, they should be submitted to the perusal of men of learning and genius before they are put in execution. Sir Cloudesley Shovel's[2] monument has very often given me great offense. Instead of the brave, rough, English admiral, which was the distinguishing character of that plain, gallant man, he is represented on his tomb by the figure of a beau, dressed in a long periwig, and reposing himself upon velvet cushions under a canopy of state. The inscription is answerable to the monument; for, instead of celebrating the many remarkable actions he had performed in the service of his country, it acquaints us only with the manner of his death, in which it was impossible for him to reap any honor. The Dutch, whom we are apt to despise for want of genius, show an infinitely greater taste of antiquity and politeness in their buildings and works of this nature, than what we meet with in those of our own country. The monuments of their admirals, which have been erected at the public expense, represent them like themselves, and are adorned with rostral crowns and naval ornaments, with beautiful festoons of seaweed, shells, and coral.

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[1] a battle in the War of the Spanish Succession, fought in 1704 at a village in western Bavaria.

[2] an English admiral, born about 1650, drowned in 1707.

But to return to our subject. I have left the repository of our English kings for the contemplation of another day, when I shall find my mind disposed for so serious an amusement. I know that entertainments of this nature are apt to raise dark and dismal thoughts in timorous minds and gloomy imaginations; but for my own part, though I am always serious, I do not know what it is to be melancholy; and can therefore take a view of nature in her deep and solemn scenes, with the same pleasure as in her most gay and delightful ones. By this means I can improve myself with those objects, which others consider with terror. When I look upon the tombs of the great, every emotion of envy dies in me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful, every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves, I consider the vanity of grieving for those whom we must quickly follow. When I see kings lying by those who deposed them, when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs, of some that died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together.

(Addison)

THE BOOK OF A THOUSAND NIGHTS AND A NIGHT

In the metrical romances and in Chaucer's *Squier's Tale* may be heard echoes of stories which medieval merchants and travelers brought into Europe from the East. With the fall of Constantinople (1453) an Eastern people, the Turks, was brought nearer to European consciousness, with the result that some Renaissance tales and plays exhibit a certain superficial interest in the Orient (e.g. *Tamburlaine*). Renewed activity of travelers and historians in the seventeenth century increased this interest: in France, pseudo-Oriental tales became popular, and their general characteristics were reproduced in England in the heroic tragedies of the Restoration. But the beginnings of Orientalism in England have been traced to a translation of Marana's satire, *The Turkish Spy,* in 1687. And Oriental influences may be said to appear in our literature after the first English version of *The Arabian Nights.*

The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night (or, as it is popularly called, *The Arabian Nights*) is a compilation, originally Persian, which contains stories that date from the eighth century A.D. to the sixteenth. The French scholar, Antoine Galland, was the first European to unearth this mine by his translation, issued in 1704, which was immediately retranslated into English. An accomplished linguist, Galland was appointed secretary to the French ambassador to Constantinople, where he mastered new dialects; later he made a second and a third journey to the East. In the closing years of the seventeenth century he translated the *Koran* and won much acclaim. His first part of the *Arabian Nights*, published as *Mille et Une Nuits* (1704), abridged though it was, captured enough of the marvel and luxuriance of the original to cause enormous excitement. Galland performed an inestimable service to European letters by his work, despite its fragmentary character. His pleasant style, good taste, and sympathy with his material are responsible for rendering Shahrazad, Dunyazad, Haroun Alraschid, the Calendars, Sindbad, and countless other characters of the *Nights*, familiar persons to generations of delighted children and adults.

The date of the first English translation of Galland is not known. But by 1713 the fourth edition was being printed, and by 1778 there was a fourteenth. (In *Spectator 535* of Nov. 13, 1712, Addison introduces a story which he says he hopes "may serve as a moral to an Arabian tale which I find translated into French by Monsieur Galland.") Thereafter the influence of *The Arabian Nights* never waned. Miss Conant has said of it: "With the exception of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Orient has given us no book that has become so intimate a part of our imaginative inheritance." The first collection of Oriental tales to be published in English, it was soon followed by many others (e.g. the *Persian Tales* of 1714). Galland was translated anew by Forster (1810), by Beaumont (1811), by Mrs. Sugden (1863). Forster's edition is very common still among the reprints for children. The versions familiar to most readers, because they are based on Galland, contain only one-fourth of the tales, modify much of the original local color, ignore the rhymed prose, the verse, and many of the pithy epigrams of the actual *Nights*. A new and still expurgated translation was made by E. W. Lane (1839-41); it was done in a thoroughly turgid and emasculated style. The first really adequate translation of the *Nights* was made by John Payne (1882-84), a well-written and much more accurate work of scholarship. But the great Orientalist, Sir Richard F. Burton, who spent a quarter of a century on his translation, collating all the various texts of the original *Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, by his ten-volume edition (1886) superseded all the endeavors of his predecessors. His copious notes and supplementary essays alone form an important body of material for the anthropologist and the Orientalist. The translation itself is a great achievement, expurgating nothing, and reproducing with bewildering variety all the tones and stylistic traits of the original. It is not likely that a new translation of the *Nights* will be attempted for a long time.

Burton thus sums up what the reader learns from a reading of the complete *Nights*: "He has seen the medieval Arab at his best and, perhaps, at his worst. In glancing over the myriad pictures of this panorama, those who can discern the soul of goodness in things evil will note the true nobility of the Moslem's mind in the *Moyen Age*, and the cleanliness of his life from cradle to grave. As a child he is devoted to his parents, fond of his comrades and respectful to his 'pastors and masters,' even school masters. As a lad he prepares for manhood with a will and this training occupies him throughout youthtide: he is a gentleman in manners without awkwardness, vulgar astonishment or *mauvaise-honte*. As a man he is high-spirited and energetic, . . . courteous and affable, rarely failing in temperance of mind and self-respect, self-control and self-command; hospitable to the stranger, attached to his fellow-citizens, submissive to superiors and kindly to inferiors. . . . As a friend he proves a model to the Damons and Pythiases: as a lover an exemplar to Don Quijote without the noble old Caballero's touch of eccentricity. As a knight he is the mirror of chivalry, doing battle for the weak and debelling the strong, while ever 'defending the honor of women.' As a husband his patriarchal position causes him to be loved. . . . Lastly, his death is simple, pathetic, and edifying as the life which led to it."

Had Burton made this analysis for a neoclassical rather than a Victorian reader, we should not have been surprised. It must have been these very qualities which appealed powerfully to the didactic eighteenth century. Certainly, the Oriental influence, when it appears in the eighteenth century, is almost inevitably linked to some moral purpose of the author. In France, the Oriental disguise became a favored one of the great pre-Revolutionary writers; by pretending to be dealing with Eastern customs, they were able to castigate the European without coming under the ban of the Church or the censor. Among the important satiric works of this kind are: Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (cf. *below*), Crébillon's *The Skimmer* and *The Sofa*, and Voltaire's *Zadig*.

In England, the Oriental has a full history in the eighteenth century. In *The Spectator* numbers *50, 94, 159, 195, 289, 293, 343, 349, 511, 512, 535, 557, 584,* and *585*; in Johnson's *Rambler* (cf. *below*) numbers *38, 65, 120, 190, 204,* in three papers of his *Idler*, and in his *Rasselas*; in the very conception of Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*; in Walpole's *Letter from Xo-Ho, a Chinese Philosopher;* in Beckford's *Vathek*; and in the novels of Sterne and Smollett—the Oriental will be found employed for didactic ends.

There are, of course, other sides to the Arab in the *Nights*, ignored by the neoclassicists. Burton says of him: "Our Arab at his worst is a mere barbarian who has not forgotten the savage. He is a model mixture of childishness and astuteness, of simplicity and cunning. . . . His stolid instinctive conservatism grovels before the tyrant rule of routine, despite that turbulent and licentious independence which ever suggests revolt against the ruler. . . . His crass and self-satisfied ignorance makes him glorify the most ignoble superstitions, while acts of revolting savagery are the natural results of a malignant fanaticism and a furious hatred of every creed beyond the pale of Al-Islam." This darker aspect of the *Nights*, and even more, their riot of color and luxury, their fullness of language, their romance and dealings with the marvelous and the exotic, were to make an appeal to later poets, in the nineteenth century. Wordsworth tells us in *The Prelude* (V, 460) of how he had fed his imagination upon them. In Coleridge, Southey, Moore, and particularly in Byron, we find the East admired not for didactic ends, but for the wonder and glamor it held. Thus the Oriental influence, whose introduction in the neoclassical period may be considered as the planting of a germ for a new romanticism, came to be intimately associated in the nineteenth century with the ideals of the Romantic Revolt.

It should be unnecessary to do more than remind the reader of the general plan of *The Arabian Nights*: King Shahriyar, disillusioned in women, had been exterminating them at the rate of one beauty a night, when the brilliant daughter of his Wazir, the lovely Shahrazad, undertook to save her sex by entertaining the King with a series of stories which she told, without interruption, during a thousand and one nights. Her tales are often stories within stories, and stopping, as she did, always with the dawn, she kept the King's curiosity so much on edge that he refrained from killing her each night so that he could hear the sequel. At the end, he was so won over by her wit and the three children she had, in the meantime, borne him, that he abandoned his hatred of women and made her his most honored wife.

An extremely important study is M. P. Conant's *The Oriental Tale in England in the 18th Century* (1908).

THE MOCK CALIPH

(*Translated by Richard F. Burton*)

It is related that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, was one night restless with extreme restlessness, so he summoned his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, and said to him, "My breast is straitened and I have a desire to divert myself to-night by walking about the streets of Bagdad and looking into folks' affairs; but with this precaution that we disguise ourselves in merchants' gear, so none shall know us." He answered, "Hearkening and obedience." They rose at once and doffing the rich raiment they wore, donned merchants' habits and sallied forth three in number, the Caliph, Ja'afar and Masrur the sworder. Then they walked from place to place, till they came to the Tigris and saw an old man sitting in a boat; so they went up to him and saluting him, said, "O Shaykh, we desire thee of thy kindness and favor to carry us a-pleasuring down the river, in this thy boat, and take this dinar to thy hire."—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Eighty-Sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when they said to the old man, "We desire thee to carry us a-pleasuring in this thy boat and take this dinar;" he answered, "Who may go a-pleasuring on the Tigris? The Caliph Harun al-Rashid every night cometh down Tigris-stream in his state-barge and with him one crying aloud:—Ho, ye people all, great and small, gentle and simple, men and boys, whoso is found in a boat on the Tigris by night, I will strike off his head or hang him to the mast of his craft! And ye had well nigh met him; for here cometh his carrack." But the Caliph and Ja'afar said, "O Shaykh, take these two dinars, and run us under one of yonder arches, that we may hide there till the Caliph's barge have passed." The old man replied, "Hand over your gold and rely we on Allah, the Almighty!" So he took the two dinars and embarked them in the boat; and he put off and rowed about with them awhile, when behold, the barge came down the river in mid-stream with lighted flambeaux and cressets flaming therin. Quoth the old man, "Did not I tell you that the Caliph passed along the river every night?"; and ceased not muttering, "O Protector, remove not the veils of Thy protection!" Then he ran the boat under an arch and threw a piece of black cloth over the Caliph and his companions, who looked out from under the covering and saw, in the bows of the barge, a man holding in hand a cresset of red gold which he fed with Sumatran lign-aloes and the figure was clad in a robe of red satin, with a narrow turband of Mosul shape round on his head; and over one of his shoulders hung a sleeved cloak of cramoisy satin, and on the other was a green silk bag full of the aloes-wood, with which he fed the cresset by way of firewood. And they sighted in the stern another man, clad like the first and bearing a like cresset, and in the barge were two hundred white slaves, standing ranged to the right and left; and in the middle a throne of red gold, whereon sat a handsome young man, like the moon, clad in a dress of black, embroidered with yellow gold. Before him they beheld a man, as he were the Wazir Ja'afar, and at his head stood an eunuch, as he were Masrur, with a drawn sword in his hand; besides a score of cup-companions. Now when the Caliph saw this, he turned and said, "O Ja'afar," and the Minister replied, "At thy service, O Prince of True Believers." Then quoth the Caliph, "Belike this is one of my sons, Al-Amin or Al-Maamun." Then he examined the young man who sat on the throne and finding him perfect in beauty and loveliness and stature and symmetric grace, said to Ja'afar, "Verily, this young man abateth nor jot nor tittle of the state of the Caliphate! See, there standeth before him one as he were thyself, O Ja'afar; yonder eunuch who standeth at his head is as he were Masrur and those courtiers as they were my own. By Allah, O Ja'afar, my reason is confounded and I am filled with amazement at this matter!"—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Eighty-Seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that when the Caliph saw this spectacle his reason was confounded and he cried, "By Allah, I am filled with amazement at this matter!" and Ja'afar replied "And I also, by Allah, O Commander of the Faithful." Then the barge passed on and disappeared from sight; whereupon the boatman pushed out again into the stream, saying, "Praised be Allah for safety, since none hath fallen in with us!" Quoth the Caliph, "O, old man, doth the Caliph come down the Tigris-river every night?" The boatman answered, "Yes, O my lord; and on such wise hath he done every night this year past." "O Shaykh," rejoined Al-Rashid, "we wish thee of thy favor to await us here to-morrow night and we will give thee five golden dinars, for we are stranger folk, lodging in the quarter Al-Khandak, and we have a mind to divert ourselves." Said the oldster, "With joy and good will!" Then the Caliph and Ja'afar and Masrur left the boatman and returned to the palace, where they doffed their merchants' habits and, donning their apparel of state, sat down each in his several stead; and came the Emirs and Wazirs and Chamberlains and Officers; and the Divan assembled and was crowded as of custom. But when day ended and all the folk had dispersed and wended each his own way, the Caliph said to his Wazir, "Rise, O Ja'afar, let us go and amuse ourselves by looking on the second Caliph." At this, Ja'afar and Masrur laughed, and the three, donning merchants' habits, went forth by a secret postern and made their way through the city, in great glee, till they came to the Tigris, where they found the greybeard sitting and awaiting them. They embarked with him in the boat and hardly had they sat down before up came the mock Caliph's barge; and, when they looked at it attentively, they saw therein two hundred Mamelukes other than those of the previous night, while the link-bearers cried aloud as of wont. Quoth the Caliph, "O Wazir, had I heard tell of this, I had not believed it; but I have seen it with my own sight." Then said he to the boatman, "Take, O Shaykh, these ten dinars and row us along abreast of them, for they are in the light and we in the shade, and we can see them and amuse ourselves by looking on them, but they cannot see us." So the man took the money and pushing off ran abreast of them in the shadow of the barge--And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Eighty-Eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph Harun al-Rashid said to the old man, "Take these ten dinars and row us abreast of them;" to which he replied, "I hear and I obey." And he fared with them and ceased not going in the blackness of the barge, till they came amongst the gardens that lay alongside of them and sighted a large walled enclosure; and presently, the barge cast anchor before a postern door, where they saw servants standing with a she-mule saddled and bridled. Here the mock Caliph landed and, mounting the mule, rode away with his courtiers and his cup-companions preceded by the cresset-bearers crying aloud, and followed by his household which busied itself in his service. Then Harun al-Rashid, Ja'afar and Masrur landed also and, making their way through the press of servants, walked on before them. Presently, the cresset-bearers espied them and seeing three persons in merchants' habits, and strangers to the country, took offence at them; so they pointed them out and brought them before the other Caliph, who looked at them and asked, "How came ye to this place and who brought you at this tide?" They answered, "O our lord, we are foreign merchants and far from our homes, who arrived here this day and were out a-walking to-night, and behold, ye came up and these men laid hands on us and brought us to thy presence; and this is all our story." Quoth the mock Caliph, "Since ye be stranger folk no harm shall befal you; but had ye been of Bagdad, I had struck off your heads." Then he turned to his Wazir and said to him, "Take these men with thee; for they are our guests to-night." "To hear is to obey, O our lord," answered he; and they companied him till they came to a lofty and splendid palace set upon the firmest base; no Sultan possesseth such a place; rising from the dusty mold and upon the marges of the clouds laying hold. Its door was of Indian teak-wood inlaid with gold that glowed; and through it one passed into a royal-hall in whose midst was a jetting fount girt by a raised estrade. It was provided with carpets and cushions of brocade and small pillows and long settees and hanging curtains; it was furnished with a splendor that dazed the mind and dumbed the tongue, and upon the door were written these two couplets:—

A Palace whereon be blessings and praise! Which
with all their beauty have robed the Days:
Where marvels and miracle-sights abound, And to
write its honors the pen affrays.

The false Caliph entered with his company, and sat down on a throne of gold set with jewels and covered with a prayer-carpet of yellow silk; whilst the boon-companions took their seats and the sword-bearer of high works stood before him. Then the tables were laid and they ate; after which the dishes were removed and they washed their hands and the wine-service was set on with flagons and bowls in due order. The cup went round till it came to the Caliph, Harun al-Rashid, who refused the draught and the mock Caliph said to Ja'afar, "What mattereth thy friend that he drinketh not?" He replied, "O my lord, indeed 'tis a long while he hath drunk naught of this." Quoth the sham Caliph, "I have drink other than this, a kind of apple-wine, that will suit thy companion." So he bade them bring the cider which they did forthright when the false Caliph, coming up to Harun al-Rashid, said to him, "As often as it cometh to thy turn drink thou of this." Then they continued to drink and make merry and pass the cup till the wine rose to their brains and mastered their wits;—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Eighty-Ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the false Caliph and his co-sitters sat at their cups and gave not over drinking till the wine rose to their brains and mastered their wits; and Harun al-Rashid said to the Minister, "O Ja'afar, by Allah, we have no such vessels as these. Would to Heaven I knew what manner of man this youth is!" But while they were talking privily the young man cast a glance upon them and seeing the Wazir whisper the Caliph said, "'Tis rude to whisper." He replied, "No rudeness was meant: this my friend did but say to me:—Verily I have travelled in most countries and have caroused with the greatest of Kings and I have companied with noble captains; yet never saw I a goodlier ordering than this entertainment nor passed a more delightful night; save that the people of Bagdad are wont to say, Wine without music often leaves you sick." When the second Caliph heard this, he smiled pleasantly and struck with a rod he had in his hand a round gong; and behold, a door opened and out came a eunuch, bearing a chair of ivory, inlaid with gold glittering fiery red and followed by a damsel of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and grace. He set down the chair and the damsel seated herself on it, as she were the sun shining sheen in a sky serene. In her hand she had a lute of Hindu make, which she laid in her lap and bent down over it as a mother bendeth over her little one, and sang to it, after a prelude in four-and-twenty modes, amazing all wits. Then she returned to the first mode and to a lively measure chanted these couplets:—

Love's tongue within my heart speaks plain to thee,
    Telling thee clearly I am fain of thee;
Witness the fevers of a tortured heart, And ulcered
    eyelid tear-flood rains for thee;
God's fate o'ertaketh all created things! I knew not
    love till learnt Love's pain of thee.

Now when the mock Caliph heard these lines sung by the damsel, he cried with a great cry and rent his raiment to the very skirt, whereupon they let down a curtain over him and brought him a fresh robe, handsomer than the first. He put it on and sat as before, till the cup came round to him, when he struck the gong a second time and lo! a door opened and out of it came a eunuch with a chair of gold, followed by a damsel fairer than the first, bearing a lute, such as would strike the envious mute. She sat down on the chair and sang to her instrument these two couplets:—

How patient bide, with love in sprite of me, And
    tears in tempest blinding sight of me?
By Allah, life has no delight of me! How gladden
    heart whose core is blight of me?

No sooner had the youth heard this poetry than he cried out with a loud cry and rent his raiment to the skirt: whereupon they let down the curtain over him and brought him another suit of clothes. He put it on and, sitting up as before, fell again to cheerful talk, till the cup came round to him, when he smote once more upon the gong and out came a eunuch with a chair, followed by a damsel fairer than she who forewent her. So she sat down on the chair, with a lute in her hand, and sang thereto these couplets:—

Cease ye this farness; 'bate this pride of you, To
    whom my heart clings, by life-tide of you!
Have ruth on hapless, mourning, lover-wretch,
    Desire-full, pining, passion-tried of you:
Sickness hath wasted him, whose ecstasy Prays
    Heaven it may be satisfied of you:
Oh fullest moons[1] that dwell in deepest heart!
    How can I think of aught by side of you?

Now when the young man heard these couplets, he cried out with a great cry and rent his raiment, whereupon they let fall the curtain over him and brought him other robes. Then he returned to his former case with his boon-companions and the bowl went round as before, till the cup came to him, when he struck the gong a fourth time and the door opening, out came a page-boy bearing a chair followed by a damsel. He set the chair for her and she sat down thereon and taking the lute, tuned it and sang to it these couplets:—

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[1] Eastern languages often use the plural to act as a superlative for the singular, as here.

When shall disunion and estrangement end? When
shall my bygone joys again be kenned?
Yesterday we were joined in same abode; Conversing heedless of each envious friend:
Trickt us that traitor Time, disjoined our lot: And
our waste home to desert fate condemned:
Wouldst have me, Grumbler! from my dearling
fly? I find my vitals blame will not perpend:
Cease thou to censure; leave me to repine; My
mind e'er findeth thoughts that pleasure lend.
O Lords[1] of me who brake our troth and plight,
Deem not to lose your hold of heart and sprite!

When the false Caliph heard the girl's song, he cried out with a loud outcry and rent his raiment— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Ninetieth Night,

She said, When the false Caliph heard the girl's song, he cried with a loud outcry and rent his raiment and fell to the ground fainting; whereupon they would have let down the curtain over him, as of custom; but its cords stuck fast and Harun al-Rashid, after considering him carefully, saw on his body the marks of beating with palm-rods and said to Ja'afar, "By Allah, he is a handsome youth, but a foul thief!" "Whence knowest thou that, O Commander of the Faithful?" asked Ja'afar, and the Caliph answered, "Sawest thou not the whip-scars on his ribs?" Then they let fall the curtain over him and brought him a fresh dress, which he put on and sat up as before with his courtiers and cup-companions. Presently he saw the Caliph and Ja'afar whispering together and said to them, "What is the matter, fair sirs?" Quoth Ja'afar, "O my lord, all is well, save that this my comrade, who (as is not unknown to thee) is of the merchant-company and hath visited all the great cities and countries of the world and hath consorted with kings and men of highest consideration, saith to me:—Verily, that which our lord the Caliph hath done this night is beyond measure extravagant, never saw I any do the like doings in any country; for he hath rent such and such dresses, each worth a thousand dinars and this is surely excessive unthriftiness." Replied the second Caliph, "Ho thou, the money is my money and the stuff my stuff, and this is by way of largesse to my suite and servants; for each suit that is rent belongeth to one of my cup-companions here present, and I assign to them with each suit of clothes the sum of five hundred dinars." The Wazir Ja'afar replied, "Well is whatso thou doest, O our lord," and recited these two couplets:—

Virtue in hand of thee hath built a house, And to
mankind thou dost thy wealth expose:
If an the virtues ever close their doors, That hand
would be a key the lock to unclose.

Now when the young man heard these verses recited by the Minister Ja'afar, he ordered him to be gifted with a thousand dinars and a dress of honor. Then the cup went round among them and the wine was sweet to them; but, after a while quoth the Caliph to Ja'afar, "Ask him of the marks on his sides, that we may see what he will say by way of reply." Answered Ja'afar, "Softly, O my lord, be not hasty and soothe thy mind, for patience is more becoming." Rejoined the Caliph, "By the life of my head and by the revered tomb of Al-Abbas, except thou ask him, I will assuredly stop thy breath!" With this the young man turned towards the Minister and said to him, "What aileth thee and thy friend to be whispering together? Tell me what is the matter with you." "It is nothing save good," replied Ja'afar; but the mock Caliph rejoined, "I conjure thee, by Allah, tell me what aileth you and hide from me nothing of your case." Answered the Wazir, "O my lord, verily this one here saw on thy sides the marks of beating with whips and palm-fronds and marvelled thereat with exceeding marvel, saying:—How came the Caliph to be beaten?; and he would fain know the cause of this." Now when the youth heard this, he smiled and said, "Know ye that my story is wondrous and my case marvellous; were it graven with needles on the eye-corners, it would serve as a warner to whoso would be warned." And he sighed and repeated these couplets:—

Strange is my story, passing prodigy; By love I
swear, my ways wax strait on me!
An ye desire to hear me, listen, and Let all in this
assembly silent be.
Heed ye my words which are of meaning deep,
Nor lies my speech; 'tis truest verity.
I'm slain by longing and by ardent love; My slayer's the pearl of fair virginity.

She hath a jet black eye like Hindi blade, And bowed eyebrows shoot her archery;
My heart assures me our Iman is here, This age's Caliph, old nobility:
Your second, Ja'afar hight, is his Wazir; A Sahib, Sahib-son of high degree:
The third is called Masrur who wields the sword: Now, if in words of mine some truth you see,
I have won every wish by this event Which fills my heart with joy and gladdest gree.

When they heard these words Ja'afar swore to him an ambiguous oath that they were not those he named, whereupon he laughed and said:—Know, O my lords, that I am not the Commander of the Faithful and that I do but style myself thus, to win my will of the sons of the city. My true name is Mohammed Ali, son of Ali the Jeweller, and my father was one of the notables of Bagdad, who left me great store of gold and silver and pearls and coral and rubies and chrysolites and other jewels, besides messuages[2] and lands, Hammam-baths and brickeries, orchards and flower-gardens. Now as I sat in my shop one day surrounded by my eunuchs and dependents, behold, there came up a young lady, mounted on a she-mule and attended by three damsels like moons. Riding up to my shop she alighted and seated herself by my side and said, "Art thou Mohammed the Jeweller?" Replied I, "Even so! I am he, thy Mameluke, thy chattel." She asked, "Hast thou a necklace of jewels fit for me?" and I answered, "O my lady, I will show thee what I have; and lay all before thee and, if any please thee, it will be of thy slave's good luck; if they please thee not, of his ill fortune." Now I had by me an hundred necklaces and showed them all to her; but none of them pleased her and she said, "I want a better than those I have seen." I had a small necklace which my father had bought at an hundred thousand dinars and whose like was not to be found with any of the great kings; so I said to her, "O my lady, I have yet one necklace of fine stones fit for bezels, the like of which none possesseth, great or small." Said she, "Show it to me," so I showed it to her, and she said, "This is what I wanted and what I have wished for all my life;" adding, "What is its price?" Quoth I, "It cost my father an hundred thousand dinars;" and she said, "I will give thee five thousand dinars to thy profit." I answered, "O my lady, the necklace and its owner are at thy service and I cannot gainsay thee." But she rejoined, "Needs must thou have the profit, and I am still most grateful to thee." Then she rose without stay or delay; and, mounting the mule in haste, said to me, "O my lord, in Allah's name, favor us with thy company to receive the money; for this thy day with us is white as milk." So I shut the shop and accompanied her, in all security, till we came to a house, on which were manifest the signs of wealth and rank; for its door was wrought with gold and silver and ultramarine, and thereon were written these two couplets:—

Hola, thou mansion! woe ne'er enter thee; Nor be thine owner e'er misused of Fate;
Excellent mansion to all guests art thou, When other mansions to the guest are strait.

The young lady dismounted and entered the house, bidding me sit down on the bench at the gate, till the money-changer should arrive. So I sat awhile, when behold, a damsel came out to me and said, "O my lord, enter the vestibule; for it is a dishonor that thou shouldst sit at the gate." Thereupon I arose and entered the vestibule and sat down on the settle there; and, as I sat, lo! another damsel came out and said to me, "O my lord, my mistress biddeth thee enter and sit down at the door of the saloon, to receive thy money." I entered and sat down, nor had I sat a moment when behold, a curtain of silk which concealed a throne of gold was drawn aside, and I saw seated thereon the lady who had made the purchase; and round her neck she wore the necklace which looked pale and wan by the side of a face as it were the rounded moon. At her sight, my wit was troubled and my mind confounded, by reason of her exceeding beauty and loveliness; but when she saw me she rose from her throne and coming close up to me, said, "O light of mine eyes, is every handsome one like thee pitiless to his mistress?" I answered, "O my lady, beauty, all of it, is in thee and is but one of thy hidden charms." And she rejoined, "O Jeweller, know that I love thee and can hardly credit that I have brought thee hither." Then she bent towards me and I kissed her and she kissed me and, as she caressed me, drew me towards her and to her breast she pressed me.—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Ninety-First Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Jeweller continued:—Then she bent towards me and kissed and caressed me; and, as she caressed me, drew me towards her and to her breast she pressed me. Now she knew by my condition that I had a mind to enjoy her; so she said to me, "O my lord, wouldst thou foregather with me unlawfully? By Allah, may he not live who would do the like of this sin and who takes pleasure in talk unclean! I am a maid, a virgin whom no man hath approached, nor am I unknown in the city. Knowest thou who I am?" Quoth I, "No, by Allah, O my lady!"; and quoth she, "I am the Lady Dunya, daughter of Yahya bin Khalid the Barmecide and sister of Ja'afar, Wazir to the Caliph." Now as I heard this, I drew back from her, saying, "O my lady, it is no fault of mine if I have been over-bold with thee; it was thou didst encourage me to aspire to thy love, by giving me access to thee." She answered, "No harm shall befall thee, and needs must thou attain thy desire in the only way pleasing to Allah. I am my own mistress and the Kazi shall act as my guardian in consenting to the marriage contract; for it is my will that I be to thee wife and thou be to me man. Then she sent for the Kazi and the witnesses and busied herself with making ready; and, when they came, she said to them, "Mohammed Ali, bin Ali the Jeweller, seeketh me in wedlock and hath given me the necklace to my marriage-settlement; and I accept and consent." So they wrote out the contract of marriage between us; and ere I went in to her the servants brought the wine-furniture and the cups passed round after the fairest fashion and the goodliest ordering; and, when the wine mounted to our heads, she ordered a damsel, a lute player, to sing. So she took the lute and sang to a pleasing and stirring motive these couplets:—

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[2] farms.

He comes; and fawn and branch and moon delight these eyne Fie on his heart who sleeps o' nights without repine;
Fair youth, for whom Heaven willed to quench in cheek one light, And left another light on other cheek bright li'en:
I fain finesse my chiders when they mention him, As though the hearing of his name I would decline;
And willing ear I lend when they of other speak; Yet would my soul within outflow in floods of brine:
Beauty's own prophet, he is all a miracle Of heavenly grace, and greatest shows his face for sign:
To prayer Bilál-like cries that Mole[3] upon his cheek To ward from pearly brow all eyes of ill design:
The censors of their ignorance would my love dispel But after Faith I can't at once turn infidel.

We were ravished by the sweet music she made striking the strings, and the beauty of the verses she sang; and the other damsels went on to sing and to recite one after another, till ten had so done; when the Lady Dunya took the lute and playing a lively measure, chanted these couplets:—

I swear by swayings of that form so fair, Aye from thy parting fiery pangs I bear:
Pity a heart which burneth in thy love, O bright as fullest moon in blackest air!
Vouchsafe thy boons to him who ne'er will cease In light of winecup all thy charms declare,
Amid the roses which with varied hues Are to the myrtle-bush[4] a mere despair.

When she had finished her verse, I took the lute from her hands and, playing a quaint and no vulgar prelude sang the following verses:—

Laud to my Lord who gave thee all of loveliness; Myself amid thy thralls I willingly confess:
O thou, whose eyes and glances captivate mankind, Pray that I 'scape those arrows shot with all thy stress!
Two hostile rivals, water and enflaming fire Thy cheek hath married, which for marvel I profess:
Thou art Sa'ir in heart of me and eke Na'im[5]; Thou agro-dolce,[6] eke heart's sweetest bitterness.

When she heard this my song she rejoiced with exceeding joy; then, dismissing her slave-women, she brought me to a most goodly place, where they had spread us a bed of various colors. So I rejoiced in her and never in my born days spent I a more delicious night.—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

NOW WHEN IT WAS THE TWO HUNDRED AND NINETY-SECOND NIGHT,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mohammed bin Ali the Jeweller continued:—So

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[3] The mole, black as Bilál the Abyssinian, calls to prayers for his preservation.

[4] The young beard (myrtle) can never hope to excel the beauties of his cheeks (roses).

[5] i.e. Hell and Heaven.

[6] bitter-sweet.

I went in unto the Lady Dunya, daughter of Yahya bin Khalid the Barmecide, So I rejoiced in her and repeated these couplets:—

> O Night here stay! I want no morning light; My
> lover's face to me is lamp and light:
> As ring of ring-dove round his neck's my arm;
> And made my palm his mouth-veil; and, twas
> right.
> This be the crown of bliss, and ne'er we'll cease
> To clip, nor care to be in other plight.

And I abode with her a whole month, forsaking shop and family and home, till one day she said to me, "O light of my eyes, O my lord Mohammed, I have determined to go to the Hammam to-day; so sit thou on this couch and rise not from thy place, till I return to thee." "I hear and I obey," answered I, and she made me swear to this; after which she took her women and went off to the bath. But by Allah, O my brothers, she had not reached the head of the street ere the door opened and in came an old woman, who said to me, "O my lord Mohammed, the Lady Zubaydah biddeth thee to her, for she hath heard of thy fine manners and accomplishments and skill in singing." I answered, "By Allah, I will not rise from my place, till the Lady Dunya come back." Rejoined the old woman, "O my lord, do not anger the Lady Zubaydah with thee and vex her so as to make her thy foe: nay, rise up and speak with her and return to thy place." So I rose at once and followed her into the presence of the Lady Zubaydah and, when I entered her presence she said to me, "O light of the eye, art thou the Lady Dunya's beloved?" "I am thy Mamluke, thy chattel," replied I. Quoth she, "Sooth spake he who reported thee possessed of beauty and grace and good breeding and every fine quality; indeed, thou surpassest all praise and all report. But now sing to me, that I may hear thee." Quoth I, "Hearkening and obedience;" so she brought me a lute, and I sang to it these couplets:—

> The hapless lover's heart is of his wooing weary
> grown; And hand of sickness wasted him till
> naught but skin and bone:
> Who should be amid the riders which the haltered
> camels urge, But that same lover whose beloved
> doth in the litters wone:
> To Allah's charge I leave that moon-like Beauty
> in your tents Whom my heart loves, albe my
> glance on her may ne'er be thrown.
> Now she is fain; then she is fierce: how sweet her
> coyness shows; Yea, sweet whatever doth or
> saith to lover loved one!

When I had finished my song she said to me, "Allah assain[7] thy body and thy voice! Verily, thou art perfect in beauty and good breeding and singing. But now rise and return to thy place, ere the Lady Dunya come back, lest she find thee not and be wroth with thee." Then I kissed the ground before her and the old woman forewent me till I reached the door whence I came. So I entered and, going up to the couch, found that my wife had come back from the bath and was lying asleep there. Seeing this I sat down at her feet and rubbed them: whereupon she opened her eyes and seeing me, drew up both her feet and gave me a kick that threw me off the couch, saying, "O traitor, thou hast been false to thine oath and hast perjured thyself. Thou swarest to me that thou wouldst not rise from thy place; yet didst thou break thy promise and go to the Lady Zubaydah. By Allah, but that I fear public scandal, I would pull down her palace over her head!" Then said she to her black slave, "O Sawab, arise and strike off this lying traitor's head, for we have no further need of him." So the slave came up to me and, tearing a strip from his skirt, bandaged with it my eyes and would have struck off my head;— And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Ninety-Third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Mohammed the Jeweller continued:—So the slave came up to me and, tearing a strip from his skirt, bandaged with it my eyes and would have struck off my head; but all her women, great and small, rose and came up to her and said to her, "O our lady, this is not the first who hath erred: indeed, he knew not thy humor and hath done thee no offence deserving death." Replied she, "By Allah, I must needs set my mark on him." And she bade them bash me; so they beat me on my ribs and the marks ye saw are the scars of that fustigation. Then she ordered them to cast me out, and they carried me to a distance from the house and threw me down like a log. After a time I rose and dragged myself little by little to my own place, where I sent for a surgeon and showed him my hurts; and he comforted me and did his best to cure me. As soon as I was recovered I went to the Hammam and, as my pains and sickness had left me, I repaired to my shop and took and sold all that was therein. With the proceeds, I bought me four hundred white slaves, such as no King ever got together, and caused two hundred of them to ride out with me every day. Then I made me yonder barge whereon I spent five thousand gold pieces; and styled myself Caliph and appointed each of my servants to the charge of some one of the Caliph's officers and clad him in official habit. Moreover, I made proclamation, "Whoso goeth apleasuring on the Tigris by night, I will strike off his head, without ruth or delay;" and on such wise have I done this whole year past, during which time I have heard no news of the lady neither happened upon any trace of her. Then wept he copiously and repeated these couplets:—

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[7] bless, give good health to.

> By Allah! while the days endure ne'er shall forget her I, Nor drawn to any nigh save those who draw her to me nigh:
> Like to the fullest moon her form and favor show to me; Laud to her Allcreating Lord, laud to the Lord on high!
> She left me full of mourning, sleepless, sick with pine and pain And ceaseth not my heart to yearn her mystery to espy.

Now when Harun al-Rashid heard the young man's story and knew the passion and transport and love-lowe that afflicted him, he was moved to compassion and wonder and said, "Glory be to Allah, who hath appointed to every effect a cause!" Then they craved the young man's permission to depart; which being granted, they took leave of him, the Caliph purposing to do him justice meet, and him with the utmost munificence entreat; and they returned to the palace of the Caliphate, where they changed clothes for others befitting their state and sat down, whilst Masrur the Sworder of High Justice stood before them. After awhile, quoth the Caliph to Ja'afar, "O Wazir, bring me the young man"—And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now When It Was the Two Hundred and Ninety-Fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that quoth the Caliph to his Minister, "Bring me the young man with whom we were last night." "I hear and obey," answered Ja'afar and, going to the youth, saluted him, saying, "Obey the summons of the Commander of the Faithful, the Caliph Harun al-Rashid." So he returned with him to the palace, in great anxiety by reason of the summons; and, going in to the King, kissed ground before him; and offered up a prayer for the endurance of his glory and prosperity, for the accomplishment of his desires, for the continuance of his beneficence and for the cessation of evil and punishment; ordering his speech as best he might and ending by saying, "Peace be on thee, O Prince of True Believers and Protector of the folk of the Faith!" Then he repeated these two couplets:—

> Kiss thou his fingers which no fingers are; Keys of our daily bread those fingers ken:
> And praise his actions which no actions are; But precious necklaces round necks of men.

So the Caliph smiled in his face and returned his salute, looking on him with the eye of favor; then he bade him draw near and sit down before him and said to him, "O Mohammed Ali, I wish thee to tell me what befell thee last night, for it was strange and passing strange." Quoth the youth, "Pardon, O Commander of the Faithful, give me the kerchief of immunity, that my dread may be appeased and my heart eased." Replied the Caliph, "I promise thee safety from fear and woes." So the young man told him his story from first to last, whereby the Caliph knew him to be a lover and severed from his beloved and said to him, "Desirest thou that I restore her to thee?" "This were of the bounty of the Commander of the Faithful," answered the youth and repeated these two couplets:—

> Ne'er cease thy gate be Ka'abah to mankind; Long may its threshold dust man's brow beseem!
> That o'er all countries it may be proclaimed, This is the Place and thou art Ibrahim.

Thereupon the Caliph turned to his Minister and said to him, "O Ja'afar, bring me thy sister, the Lady Dunya, daughter of the Wazir Yahya bin Khalid!" "I hear and I obey," answered he and fetched her without let or delay. Now when she stood before the Caliph he said to her, "Dost thou know who this is?"; and she replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, how should women have knowledge of men?" So the Caliph smiled and said, "O Dunya, this is thy beloved, Mohammed bin Ali the Jeweller. We are acquainted with his case, for we have heard the whole story from beginning to end, and have apprehended its inward and its outward; and it is no more hidden from me, for all it was kept in secrecy."

Replied she, "O Commander of the Faithful, this was written in the Book of Destiny; I crave the forgiveness of Almighty Allah for the wrong I have wrought, and pray thee to pardon me of thy favor." At this the Caliph laughed and, summoning the Kazi and witnesses, renewed the marriage-contract between the Lady Dunya and her husband, Mohammed Ali son of the Jeweller whereby there betided them, both her and him the utmost felicity, and to their enviers mortification and misery. Moreover, he made Mohammed Ali one of his boon-companions, and they abode in joy and cheer and gladness, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies.

The Vision of Mirza

This is one of the essays in which Addison capitalizes on the newly awakened interest in the Oriental, following the first English version of *The Arabian Nights* (cf. *above*). Like a good neoclassicist, his use of an Eastern setting is chiefly to lend dignity to his moral purposes. He makes some attempt to introduce Oriental images, but without any interest in their color. As ever, he proceeds with lucidity and ease.

The Spectator, No. 159. *Saturday, September 1, 1711*

—Omnem, quæ nunc obducta tuenti
Mortales hebetat visus tibi, et humida circum
Caligat, nubem eripiam—
—Virg. Æn. ii. 604.

The cloud, which, intercepting the clear light,
Hangs o'er thy eyes, and blunts thy mortal sight,
I will remove—

When I was at Grand Cairo, I picked up several Oriental manuscripts, which I have still by me. Among others I met with one entitled The Visions of Mirza, which I have read over with great pleasure. I intend to give it to the public when I have no other entertainment for them; and shall begin with the first vision, which I have translated word for word as follows:—

"On the fifth day of the moon, which according to the custom of my forefathers I always keep holy, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hills of Bagdad, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer. As I was here airing myself on the tops of the mountains, I fell into a profound contemplation on the vanity of human life; and passing from one thought to another, 'Surely,' said I, 'man is but a shadow, and life a dream.' Whilst I was thus musing, I cast my eyes towards the summit of a rock that was not far from me, where I discovered one in the habit of a shepherd, with a little musical instrument in his hand. As I looked upon him he applied it to his lips, and began to play upon it. The sound of it was exceeding sweet, and wrought into a variety of tunes that were inexpressibly melodious, and altogether different from anything I had ever heard. They put me in mind of those heavenly airs that are played to the departed souls of good men upon their first arrival in Paradise, to wear out the impressions of their last agonies, and qualify them for the pleasures of that happy place. My heart melted away in secret raptures.

"I had been often told that the rock before me was the haunt of a Genius; and that several had been entertained with music who had passed by it, but never heard that the musician had before made himself visible. When he had raised my thoughts by those transporting airs which he played to taste the pleasures of his conversation, as I looked upon him like one astonished, he beckoned to me, and by the waving of his hand directed me to approach the place where he sat. I drew near with that reverence which is due to a superior nature; and as my heart was entirely subdued by the captivating strains I had heard, I fell down at his feet and wept. The Genius smiled upon me with a look of compassion and affability that familiarized him to my imagination, and at once dispelled all the fears and apprehensions with which I approached him. He lifted me from the ground, and taking me by the hand, 'Mirza,' said he, 'I have heard thee in thy soliloquies; follow me.'

"He then led me to the highest pinnacle of the rock, and placing me on the top of it, 'Cast thy eyes eastward,' said he, 'and tell me what thou seest.' 'I see,' said I, 'a huge valley, and a prodigious tide of water rolling through it.' 'The valley that thou seest,' said he, 'is the Vale of Misery, and the tide of water that thou seest is part of the great Tide of Eternity.' 'What is the reason,' said I, 'that the tide I see rises out of a thick mist at one end, and again loses itself in a thick mist at the other?' 'What thou seest," said he, 'is that portion of eternity which is called time, measured out by the sun, and reaching from the beginning of the world to its consummation. Examine now,' said he, 'this sea that is bounded with darkness at both ends, and tell me what thou discoverest in it.' 'I see a bridge,' said I, 'standing in the midst of the tide.' 'The bridge thou seest,' said he, 'is Human Life; consider it attentively.' Upon a more leisurely survey of it, I found that it consisted of threescore and ten entire arches, with several broken arches, which added to those that were entire, made up the number about an hundred. As I was counting the arches, the Genius told me that this bridge consisted at first of a thousand arches; but that a great flood swept away the rest, and left the bridge in the ruinous condition I now beheld it. 'But tell me farther,' said he, 'what thou discoverest on it.' 'I see multitudes of people passing over it,' said I, 'and a black cloud hanging on each end of it.' As I looked more attentively, I saw several of the passengers dropping through the bridge into the great tide that flowed underneath it; and upon further examination, perceived there were innumerable trap-doors that lay concealed in the bridge, which the passengers no sooner trod upon, but they fell through them into the tide and immediately disappeared. These hidden pitfalls were set very thick at the entrance of the bridge, so that throngs of people no sooner broke through the cloud, but many of them fell into them. They grew thinner towards the middle, but multiplied and lay closer together towards the end of the arches that were entire.

"There were indeed some persons, but their number was very small, that continued a kind of hobbling march on the broken arches, but fell through one after another, being quite tired and spent with so long a walk.

"I passed some time in the contemplation of this wonderful structure, and the great variety of objects which it presented. My heart was filled with a deep melancholy to see several dropping unexpectedly in the midst of mirth and jollity, and catching at every thing that stood by them to save themselves. Some were looking up towards the heavens in a thoughtful posture, and in the midst of a speculation stumbled and fell out of sight. Multitudes were very busy in the pursuit of bubbles that glittered in their eyes and danced before them, but often when they thought themselves within the reach of them, their footing failed and down they sunk. In this confusion of objects, I observed some with scimitars in their hands, and others[1] with urinals, who ran to and fro upon the bridge, thrusting several persons on trap-doors which did not seem to lie in their way, and which they might have escaped, had they not been thus forced upon them.

"The genius, seeing me indulge myself in this melancholy prospect, told me I had dwelt long enough upon it. 'Take thine eyes off the bridge,' said he, 'and tell me if thou yet seest any thing thou dost not comprehend.' Upon looking up, 'What mean,' said I, 'those great flights of birds that are perpetually hovering about the bridge, and settling upon it from time to time? I see vultures, harpies, ravens, cormorants; and among many other feathered creatures several little winged boys that perch in great numbers upon the middle arches.' 'These,' said the genius, 'are envy, avarice, superstition, despair, love, with the like cares and passions that infest human life.'

"I here fetched a deep sigh. 'Alas,' said I, 'man was made in vain! How is he given away to misery and mortality! tortured in life, and swallowed up in death!' The genius being moved with compassion towards me, bid me quit so uncomfortable a prospect: 'Look no more,' said he, 'on man in the first stage of his existence, in his setting out for eternity; but cast thine eye on that thick mist into which the tide bears the several generations of mortals that fall into it.' I directed my sight as I was ordered, and (whether or no the good Genius strengthened it with any supernatural force, or dissipated part of the mist that was before too thick for the eye to penetrate), I saw the valley opening at the farther end, and spreading forth into an immense ocean, that had a huge rock of adamant running through the midst of it, and dividing it into two equal parts. The clouds still rested on one half of it, insomuch that I could discover nothing in it; but the other appeared to me a vast ocean planted with innumerable islands, that were covered with fruits and flowers, and interwoven with a thousand little shining seas that ran among them. I could see persons dressed in glorious habits with garlands upon their heads, passing among the trees, lying down by the sides of fountains, or resting on beds of flowers; and could hear a confused harmony of singing birds, falling waters, human voices, and musical instruments. Gladness grew in me upon the discovery of so delightful a scene. I wished for the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away to those happy seats; but the Genius told me there was no passage to them, except through the gates of death that I saw opening every moment upon the bridge. 'The islands,' said he, 'that lie so fresh and green before thee, and with which the whole face of the ocean appears spotted as far as thou canst see, are more in number than the sands on the sea-shore; there are myriads of islands behind those which thou here discoverest, reaching farther than thine eye, or even thine imagination can extend itself. These are the mansions of good men after death, who, according to the degree and kinds of virtue in which they excelled, are distributed among these several islands, which abound with pleasures of different kinds and degrees, suitable to the relishes and perfections of those who are settled in them; every island is a paradise accommodated to its respective inhabitants. Are not these, O Mirza, habitations worth contending for? Does life appear miserable that gives thee opportunities of earning such a reward? Is death to be feared that will convey thee to so happy an existence? Think not man was made in vain, who has such an eternity reserved for him.' I gazed with inexpressible pleasure on these happy islands. At length, said I, 'Show me now, I beseech thee, the secrets that lie hid under those dark clouds which cover the ocean on the other side of the rock of adamant.' The Genius making me no answer, I turned me about to address myself to him a second time, but I found that he had left me; I then turned again to the vision which I had been so long contemplating; but instead of the rolling tide, the arched bridge, and the happy islands, I saw nothing but the long hollow valley of Bagdad, with oxen, sheep, and camels grazing upon the sides of it."

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[1] doctors.

(Addison)

Dissection of a Beau's Head

The Spectator, No. 275. *January 15, 1712*

—— tribus Anticyris caput insanabile.
HORACE, *Ars. Poet.* 300
A head no hellebore can cure.

I was yesterday engaged in an assembly of virtuosos,[1] where one of them produced many curious observations which he had lately made in the anatomy of an human body. Another of the company communicated to us several wonderful discoveries, which he had also made on the same subject, by the help of very fine glasses. This gave birth to a great variety of uncommon remarks, and furnished discourse for the remaining part of the day.

The different opinions which were started on this occasion presented to my imagination so many new ideas that, by mixing with those which were already there, they employed my fancy all the last night, and composed a very wild extravagant dream.

I was invited, methought, to the dissection of a beau's head, and of a coquette's heart, which were both of them laid on a table before us. An imaginary operator opened the first with a great deal of nicety, which, upon a cursory and superficial view, appeared like the head of another man; but, upon applying our glasses to it, we made a very odd discovery, namely, that what we looked upon as brains, were not such in reality, but an heap of strange materials wound up in that shape and texture, and packed together with wonderful art in the several cavities of the skull. For, as Homer tells us that the blood of the gods is not real blood, but only something like it; so we found that the brain of a beau is not real brain, but only something like it.

The pineal gland, which many of our modern philosophers suppose to be the seat of the soul, smelt very strong of essence and orange-flower water, and was encompassed with a kind of horny substance, cut into a thousand little faces or mirrors, which were imperceptible to the naked eye; insomuch that the soul, if there had been any here, must have been always taken up in contemplating her own beauties.

We observed a large antrum or cavity in the sinciput, that was filled with ribbons, lace, and embroidery, wrought together in a most curious piece of network, the parts of which were likewise imperceptible to the naked eye. Another of these antrums or cavities was stuffed with invisible billet-doux, love-letters, pricked dances, and other trumpery of the same nature. In another we found a kind of powder, which set the whole company a sneezing, and by the scent discovered itself to be right Spanish. The several other cells were stored with commodities of the same kind, of which it would be tedious to give the reader an exact inventory.

There was a large cavity on each side of the head, which I must not omit. That on the right side was filled with fictions, flatteries, and falsehoods, vows, promises, and protestations; that on the left with oaths and imprecations. There issued out a duct from each of these cells, which ran into the root of the tongue, where both joined together, and passed forward in one common duct to the tip of it. We discovered several little roads or canals running from the ear into the brain, and took particular care to trace them out through their several passages. One of them extended itself to a bundle of sonnets and little musical instruments. Others ended in several bladders which were filled either with wind or froth. But the large canal entered into a great cavity of the skull, from whence there went another canal into the tongue. This great cavity was filled with a kind of spongy substance, which the French anatomists call *galimatias*, and the English nonsense.

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[1] scientific experimenters.

The skins of the forehead were extremely tough and thick, and, what very much surprised us, had not in them any single blood-vessel that we were able to discover, either with or without our glasses; from whence we concluded that the party when alive must have been entirely deprived of the faculty of blushing.

The *os cribriforme* was exceedingly stuffed, and in some places damaged with snuff. We could not but take notice in particular of that small muscle, which is not often discovered in dissections, and draws the nose upwards, when it expresses the contempt which the owner of it has, upon seeing anything he does not like, or hearing anything he does not understand. I need not tell my learned reader, this is that muscle which performs the motion so often mentioned by the Latin poets, when they talk of a man's cocking his nose, or playing the rhinoceros.

We did not find anything very remarkable in the eye, saving only that the *musculi amatorii*, or as we may translate it into English, the ogling muscles, were very much worn and decayed with use; whereas on the contrary, the elevator, or the muscle which turns the eye toward heaven, did not appear to have been used at all.

I have only mentioned in this dissection such new discoveries as we were able to make, and have not taken any notice of those parts which are to be met with in common heads. As for the skull, the face, and indeed the whole outward shape and figure of the head, we could not discover any difference from what we observe in the heads of other men. We were informed, that the person to whom this head belonged, had passed for a man above five and thirty years; during which time he ate and drank like other people, dressed well, talked loud, laughed frequently, and on particular occasions had acquitted himself tolerably at a ball or an assembly; to which one of the company added, that a certain knot of ladies took him for a wit. He was cut off in the flower of his age by the blow of a paring-shovel, having been surprised by an eminent citizen, as he was tendering some civilities to his wife.

When we had thoroughly examined this head with all its apartments, and its several kinds of furniture, we put up the brain, such as it was, into its proper place, and laid it aside under a broad piece of scarlet cloth, in order to be prepared, and kept in a great repository of dissections; our operator telling us that the preparation would not be so difficult as that of another brain, for that he had observed several of the little pipes and tubes which ran through the brain were already filled with a kind of mercurial substance, which he looked upon to be true quicksilver.

He applied himself in the next place to the coquette's heart, which he likewise laid open with great dexterity. There occurred to us many particularities in this dissection; but, being unwilling to burden my reader's memory too much, I shall reserve this subject for the speculation of another day.

(Addison)

Dissection of a Coquette's Heart

The Spectator, No. 281. *January 22, 1712*

Pectoribus inhians spirantia consulit exta.
VIRGIL, *Aen.* IV, 64
Anxious the reeking entrails he consults.

Having already given an account of the dissection of a beau's head, with the several discoveries made on that occasion, I shall here, according to my promise, enter upon the dissection of a coquette's heart and communicate to the public such particularities as we observed in that curious piece of anatomy.

I should, perhaps, have waived this undertaking, had not I been put in mind of my promise by several of my unknown correspondents, who are very importunate with me to make an example of the coquette, as I have already done of the beau. It is, therefore, in compliance with the request of friends, that I have looked over the minutes of my former dream, in order to give the public an exact relation of it, which I shall enter upon without further preface.

Our operator, before he engaged in this visionary dissection, told us, that there was nothing in his art more difficult, than to lay open the heart of a coquette, by reason of the many labyrinths and recesses which are to be found in it, and which do not appear in the heart of any other animal.

He desired us first of all to observe the *pericardium*, or outward case of the heart, which we did very attentively; and, by the help of our glasses, discerned in it millions of little scars, which seemed to have been occasioned by the points of innumerable darts and arrows, that from time to time had glanced upon the outward coat; though we could not discover the smallest orifice, by which any of them had entered and pierced the inward substance.

Every smatterer in anatomy knows that this *pericardium*, or case of the heart, contains in it a thin reddish liquor, supposed to be bred from the vapors which exhale out of the heart, and being stopped here, are condensed into this watery substance. Upon examining this liquor, we found that it had in it all the qualities of that spirit which is made use of in the thermometer to show the change of weather.

Nor must I here omit an experiment one of the company assured us he himself had made with this liquor, which he found in great quantity about the heart of a coquette whom he had formerly dissected. He affirmed to us, that he had actually enclosed it in a small tube made after the manner of a weather-glass; but that, instead of acquainting him with the variations of the atmosphere, it showed him the qualities of those persons who entered the room where it stood. He affirmed also, that it rose at the approach of a plume of feathers, an embroidered coat, or a pair of fringed gloves; and that it fell as soon as an ill-shaped periwig, a clumsy pair of shoes, or an unfashionable coat came into his house: nay, he proceeded so far as to assure us, that upon his laughing aloud when he stood by it, the liquor mounted very sensibly, and immediately sunk again upon his looking serious. In short, he told us that he knew very well by this invention whenever he had a man of sense or a coxcomb in his room.

Having cleared away the *pericardium*, or the case, and liquor above mentioned, we came to the heart itself. The outward surface of it was extremely slippery, and the *mucro*, or point, so very cold withal that, upon endeavoring to take hold of it, it glided through the fingers like a smooth piece of ice.

The fibres were turned and twisted in a more intricate and perplexed manner than they are usually found in other hearts; insomuch, that the whole heart was wound up together like a Gordian knot, and must have had very irregular and unequal motions, whilst it was employed in its vital function.

One thing we thought very observable, namely, that upon examining all the vessels which came into it or issued out of it, we could not discover any communication that it had with the tongue.

We could not but take notice, likewise, that several of those little nerves in the heart, which are affected by the sentiments of love, hatred, and other passions, did not descend to this before us from the brain, but from the muscles which lie about the eye.

Upon weighing the heart in my hand, I found it to be extremely light, and consequently very hollow; which I did not wonder at, when, upon looking into the inside of it, I saw multitudes of cells and cavities running one within another, as our historians describe the apartments of Rosamond's Bower.[1] Several of these little hollows were stuffed with innumerable sorts of trifles, which I shall forbear giving any particular account of, and shall therefore only take notice of what lay first and uppermost, which, upon our unfolding it and applying our microscope to it, appeared to be a flame-colored hood.

We were informed that the lady of this heart, when living, received the addresses of several who made love to her, and did not only give each of them encouragement, but made everyone she conversed with believe that she regarded him with an eye of kindness; for which reason we expected to have seen the impression of multitudes of faces among the several plaits and foldings of the heart; but, to our great surprise, not a single print of this nature discovered itself, till we came into the very core and centre of it. We there observed a little figure, which, upon applying our glasses to it, appeared dressed in a very fantastic manner. The more I looked upon it, the more I thought I had seen the face before, but could not possibly recollect either the place or time; when at length one of the company, who had examined this figure more nicely than the rest, showed us plainly by the make of its face, and the several turns of its features, that the little idol that was thus lodged in the middle of the heart was the deceased beau, whose head I gave some account of in my last Tuesday's paper.

As soon as we had finished our dissection, we resolved to make an experiment of the heart, not being able to determine among ourselves the nature of its substance, which differed in so many particulars from that of the heart in other females. Accordingly we laid it into a pan of burning coals, when we observed in it a certain salamandrine quality, that made it capable of living in the midst of fire and flame, without being consumed, or so much as singed.

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[1] a subterranean labyrinth in Blenheim Park, said to have been built by Henry II as a retreat for his mistress, Rosamond Clifford.

As we were admiring this strange phenomenon, and standing round the heart in a circle, it gave a most prodigious sigh, or rather crack, and dispersed all at once in smoke and vapor. This imaginary noise, which methought was louder than the burst of a cannon, produced such a violent shake in my brain, that it dissipated the fumes of sleep, and left me in an instant broad awake.

(Addison)

The Fine Lady's Journal

The Spectator, No. 323. *March 11, 1712*

. . . Modo vir, modo fœmina.

VIRG.

Sometimes a man, sometimes a woman.

The journal with which I presented my reader on Tuesday last, has brought me in several letters, with accounts of many private lives cast into that form. I have the Rake's Journal, the Sot's Journal, and among several others a very curious piece, entitled—"The Journal of a Mohock."[1] By these instances I find that the intention of my last Tuesday's paper has been mistaken by many of my readers. I did not design so much to expose vice as idleness, and aimed at those persons who pass away their time rather in trifle and impertinence, than in crimes and immoralities. Offences of this latter kind are not to be dallied with, or treated in so ludicrous a manner. In short, my journal only holds up folly to the light, and shews the disagreeableness of such actions as are indifferent in themselves, and blamable only as they proceed from creatures endowed with reason.

My following correspondent, who calls herself *Clarinda*, is such a journalist as I require: she seems by her letter to be placed in a modish state of indifference between vice and virtue, and to be susceptible of either, were there proper pains taken with her. Had her journal been filled with gallantries, or such occurrences as had shewn her wholly divested of her natural innocence, notwithstanding it might have been more pleasing to the generality of readers, I should not have published it; but as it is only the picture of a life filled with a fashionable kind of gaiety and laziness, I shall set down five days of it, as I have received it from the hand of my fair correspondent.

Dear Mr. Spectator,

You having set your readers an exercise in one of your last week's papers, I have performed mine according to your orders, and herewith send it you enclosed. You must know, Mr. Spectator, that I am a maiden lady of a good fortune, who have had several matches offered me for these ten years last past, and have at present warm applications made to me by a very pretty fellow. As I am at my own disposal, I come up to town every winter, and pass my time in it, after the manner you will find in the following journal, which I begun to write upon the very day after your Spectator upon that subject.

Tuesday night. Could not go to sleep till one in the morning for thinking of my journal.

Wednesday. From eight till ten. Drank two dishes of chocolate in bed, and fell asleep after them.

From ten to eleven. Eat a slice of bread and butter, drank a dish of bohea,[2] read the Spectator.

From eleven to one. At my toilette, tried a new head.[3] Gave orders for Veny[4] to be combed and washed. *Mem.* I look best in blue.

From one till half an hour after two. Drove to the Change. Cheapened[5] a couple of fans.

Till four. At dinner. *Mem.* Mr. Froth passed by in his new liveries.

From four to six. Dressed, paid a visit to old Lady Blithe and her sister, having before heard they were gone out of town that day.

From six to eleven. At Basset.[6] *Mem.* Never set again upon the ace of diamonds.

Thursday. From eleven at night to eight in the morning. Dreamed that I punted[7] to Mr. Froth.

From eight to ten. Chocolate. Read two acts in Aurengzebe[8] a-bed.

From ten to eleven. Tea-table. Read the playbills. Received a letter from Mr. Froth. *Mem.* Locked it up in my strong box.

Rest of the morning. Fontange, the tire-woman, her account of my Lady Blithe's wash. Broke a tooth in my little tortoise shell comb. Sent Frank to know how my Lady Hectic rested after her monkey's leaping out at window. Looked pale. Fontange tells me my glass is not true. Dressed by three.

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[1] Hoodlum.

[2] tea.
[3] head-dress.
[4] her lap dog.
[5] bought.
[6] a card game.
[7] played cards.
[8] a play by Dryden.

From three to four. Dinner cold before I sat down.

From four to eleven. Saw company. Mr. Froth's opinion of Milton. His account of the Mohocks. His fancy for a pin-cushion. Picture in the lid of his snuff-box. Old Lady Faddle promises me her woman to cut my hair. Lost five guineas at crimp.[9]

Twelve o'clock at night. Went to bed.

Friday. Eight in the morning. A-bed. Read over all Mr. Froth's letters.

Ten o'clock. Staid within all day, not at home.

From ten to twelve. In conference with my mantua-maker.[10] Sorted a suit of ribbons. Broke my blue china cup.

From twelve to one. Shut myself up in my chamber, practised Lady Betty Modely's skuttle.[11]

One in the afternoon. Called for my flowered handkerchief. Worked half a violet-leaf in it. Eyes ached and head out of order. Threw by my work, and read over the remaining part of Aurengzebe.

From three to four. Dined.

From four to twelve. Changed my mind, dressed, went abroad, and played at crimp till midnight. Found Mrs. Spitely at home. Conversation: Mrs. Brilliant's necklace false stones. Old Lady Loveday going to be married to a young fellow that is not worth a groat.[12] Miss Prue gone into the country. Tom Townley has red hair. *Mem.* Mrs. Spitely whispered in my ear that she had something to tell me about Mr. Froth. I am sure it is not true.

Between twelve and one. Dreamed that Mr. Froth lay at my feet, and called me Indamora.[13]

Saturday. Rose at eight o'clock in the morning. Sat down to my toilette.

From eight to nine. Shifted a patch for half an hour before I could determine it. Fixed it above my left eyebrow.

From nine to twelve. Drank my tea, and dressed.

From twelve to two. At chapel. A great deal of good company. *Mem.* The third air in the new opera. Lady Blithe dressed frightfully.

From three to four. Dined. Miss Kitty called upon me to go to the opera, before I was risen from table.

From dinner to six. Drank tea. Turned off a footman for being rude to Veny.

Six o'clock. Went to the opera. I did not see Mr. Froth till the beginning of the second act. Mr. Froth talked to a gentleman in a black wig. Bowed to a lady in the front box. Mr. Froth and his friend clapped Nicolini in the third act. Mr. Froth cried out Ancora. Mr. Froth led me to my chair. I think he squeezed my hand.

Eleven at night. Went to bed. Melancholy dreams. Methought Nicolini said he was Mr. Froth.

Sunday. Indisposed.

Monday. Eight o'clock. Waked by Miss Kitty. Aurengzebe lay upon the chair by me. Kitty repeated without book the eight best lines in the play. Went in our mobs[14] to the dumb man according to appointment. Told me that my lover's name began with a G. *Mem.* The conjurer was within a letter of Mr. Froth's name, &c.

Upon looking back into this my journal, I find that I am at a loss to know whether I pass my time well or ill; and indeed never thought of considering how I did it before I perused your speculation upon that subject. I scarce find a single action in these five days that I can thoroughly approve of, except the working upon the violet-leaf, which I am resolved to finish the first day I am at leisure. As for Mr. Froth and Veny, I did not think they took up so much of my time and thoughts as I find they do upon my journal. The latter of them I will turn off, if you insist upon it; and if Mr. Froth does not bring matters to a conclusion very suddenly, I will not let my life run away in a dream. Your humble servant, CLARINDA.

To resume one of the morals of my first paper, and to confirm Clarinda in her good inclinations, I would have her consider what a pretty figure she would make among posterity, were the history of her whole life published like these five days of it. I shall conclude my paper with an epitaph written by an uncertain author[15] on Sir Philip Sidney's sister, a lady who seems to have been of a temper very much different from that of Clarinda. The last thought of it is so very noble, that I dare say my reader will pardon me the quotation.

ON THE COUNTESS DOWAGER OF PEMBROKE

Underneath this marble hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother:
Death, ere thou hast kill'd another,
Fair and learned and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

(Addison)

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[9] a card game. [10] dressmaker. [11] a short, hurried run. [12] a coin worth fourpence. [13] Beloved.

[14] caps with frills and fastened under the chin.
[15] Cf. p. 380.

Samuel Johnson

(1709-1784)

The years covering Johnson's adult life form a period of important changes in the social and economic life of England. Many new machines were invented to multiply production: Kay's flying shuttle (1733), Hargreave's spinning jenny (1764), Arkwright's water frame (1769), Crompton's "mule" (1779), etc. All of these were essential factors in the gradual disappearance of home manufacturing, the growth of the factory system, the degradation of the class of yeomen, the appearance of a new class of wage-earners (the "proletariat"), and the complete emergence of the upper middle class into a position of power through its control of industry. It was a period that witnessed the amassing of large fortunes, on the one hand, and the evolution of the slum, on the other. In France the despotism of the state sharpened the lines of the different classes, and provoked a stimulating current of politico-critical thought among those philosophers who prepared the way to the French Revolution: Montesquieu, Voltaire, St. Pierre, Diderot, D'Alembert, Rousseau, and the Encyclopedists.

Although the classical examples of Pope, Swift, and Addison were to prevail for the rest of the eighteenth century, the instances of a break with them became more numerous with each decade. A changing social setting was naturally matched by the appearance of new conceptions in literature. In the work of Thomson, Gray, Collins, Macpherson, and Chatterton we find, in varying degrees, the beginnings of a romantic revolt (cf. Vol. II). Against the insurgents stands the stolid figure of Samuel Johnson, acknowledged master of those men of his day who cherished the neoclassical ideal. With the exception of his widely-translated *Rasselas,* Johnson has been little known on the Continent; and although many of his contemporaries, like Thomson, Goldsmith, and Macpherson, had great influence on European literary history, his readers have been largely confined to the English-speaking world. He himself was completely unaffected by either the changing world about him or the progressive ideas being promulgated in France. His conservatism, political and religious, was clearly and rigidly demarcated. But, as Oliver Elton has said of his limitations, within them "his mind, indeed, works with wonderful freedom and acuteness . . . and he often surprises us by looking over the walls."

Undoubtedly the greatest of his works is the one Boswell wrote for him (cf. *below*) when he recorded in his biography of Johnson the latter's marvelous talk. The force, the interest, the variety, and the vivid revelation of personality in that talk have probably made ten readers of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* for every one of Johnson's own writings. It is unfortunate that so much of what he wrote remains known by title only, for although Johnson had very serious defects of judgment he is one of our soundest critics. If he made notorious blunders in evaluating some poets, he has said some of the wisest things about others. It is all too common, besides, to speak of his style as so heavily Latinized as to be cumbersome. That is a criticism which may indeed be made of a certain small portion of his work; but more often his prose suits perfectly the ruggedness of his character, has energy and humor, and is filled with happy phrases. In fact, the Johnson in Boswell's book is the same Johnson we meet in *The Rambler, The Idler,* the *Dictionary,* the notes on Shakespeare, *The Lives of the Poets,* and his letters. No personality in the eighteenth century is more fascinating than his.

He was born in Lichfield, the son of an elderly and poor bookseller. He studied at Lichfield Grammar School and entered Pembroke College, Oxford (1728), where he suffered much from the deprivations of poverty and ill-health. Boswell tells us how Johnson, admiring the lectures given at another college in Oxford, "used to come and get them at second-hand from Taylor, till his poverty being so extreme that his shoes were worn out, and his feet appeared through them, he saw that this humiliating circumstance was perceived by the Christ Church men, and he came no more. He was too proud to accept of money, and somebody having set a pair of new shoes at his door, he threw them away with indignation." During these years, too, he suffered his first attacks of that heavy melancholia which afflicted the rest of his days. "While he was at Lichfield," Boswell vividly reports, "in the college vacation of the year 1729, he felt himself overwhelmed with an horrible hypochondria, with perpetual irritation, fretfulness, and impatience; and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery. From this dismal malady he never afterwards was perfectly relieved; and all his labors, and all his enjoyments, were but temporary interruptions of its baleful influence. . . . He told Mr. Paradise that he was sometimes so languid and inefficient, that he could not distinguish the hour upon the town-clock."

His debts proved too much for him, and he left Oxford without taking his degree. A few years later he married the widowed Elizabeth Porter, his "dear Tetty," who was many years his senior, whom he loved devotedly, and whose death later was the deepest grief of his life. With her he tried for a while to run a private school, without success. In 1737 he came to London with his pupil, David Garrick, who was to become the greatest actor of his day. And now began years of privation, hunger, and distress, during which Johnson, afflicted with ill-health and melancholy, tried his hand at anything that could bring him a few coins. Most of his income, at this time, came from hack-work which he did for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. From notes supplied him he assembled what purported to be faithful reports of the parliamentary debates; in writing them up he was forced to rely much upon his own imagination, and they afforded him valuable exercise in shaping his prose style.

In all that Johnson wrote the influence of Latin is strong, both in the structure of the style and in the vocabulary. This is nowhere truer than in his verse. In his poem, *London* (1738), which evoked admiration from Pope, he imitated, in heroic couplets, Juvenal's third satire (cf. *above*). His only other celebrated poem, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), is in imitation of Juvenal's tenth satire. Both poems reveal the bent of Johnson's vigorous pessimism and dignified manliness. What he said of another poet's verses would apply very well to his own: "They are the forcible verses of a man of strong mind, who is not accustomed to write verse, for there is some uncouthness in the expression." In 1749, through the influence of his former pupil, Garrick, the tragedy, *Irene* (with three weakly-contrived acts of which he had first hopefully come to London), was produced and had some little success. Meanwhile he had written one of the best of those critical-biographical studies in which he was to excel, *The Life of Savage* (1744), wherein may be glimpsed the hunger-ridden days he spent in the obscurity of London's literary Bohemia in the companionship of that erratic poet.

In 1747, still impoverished and unknown to the general public, he issued the *Plan* to what is perhaps his most imposing accomplishment, the *Dictionary*, and addressed it, on the advice of the publisher, Dodsley, to Lord Chesterfield (cf. *below*), "a nobleman who was very ambitious of literary distinction." His purpose in undertaking this enormous task he stated to be the composition of a work "by which the pronunciation of our language may be fixed, and its attainment facilitated; by which its purity may be preserved, its use ascertained, and its duration lengthened." For the next eight years he spent most of his energies on an undertaking that no one tried to emulate for a long time; with some small clerical aid, he compiled by himself the basic *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755). The general reading public knows of the numerous eccentricities which Johnson allowed himself in his definitions and of the various prejudices which he took the opportunity of airing. But only a simpleton would imagine that Johnson did not know what he was doing. If he erred, it was in supposing that there was room for a sense of humor in a dictionary. Everyone knows, too, about some of the definitions which were so complicated as to be of little service to anybody seeking information. But Johnson forestalled such criticism by the sage observation that "the easiest word, whatever it be, can never be translated into one more easy." What fewer people know is that Johnson's *Dictionary* provided the solid foundations on which modern dictionaries have been built. The task of providing accurate definitions and illustrations to the vocabulary was one of gigantic proportions, and Johnson acquitted himself nobly. His keenness of intellect, his good judgment are everywhere patent. And no lexicographer has wielded such power as he. The spelling and usage ot many words were settled by Johnson, who for many decades was the last authority on such questions.

The stress of poverty, taxing labor, and loneliness amidst which he carried out his great work were expressed in the closing passage of the Preface, one of the noblest written by Johnson: "The English dictionary was written with little assistance of the learned, and without any patronage of the great; not in the soft obscurities of retirement, or under the shelter of academic bowers, but amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow. . . . I have protracted my work till most of those whom I wished to please have sunk into the grave, and success and miscarriage are empty sounds. I therefore dismiss it with frigid tranquility, having little to fear or hope from censure or from praise." The expected aid from Chesterfield had not been forthcoming. When, therefore, on the eve of the publication of the *Dictionary*, Chesterfield wrote two papers in *The World* commending Johnson, and hinting that his Lordship had provided him financial assistance, Johnson countered at once with a public *Letter to Lord Chesterfield* (cf. *below*), a spirited production in which he proudly disclaimed any obligation to "any favorer of learning."

With the appearance of the *Dictionary*, Johnson, though still in want, emerged as one of the chief literary figures of his day. During the years of its compiling, he had been writing more short biographies and various reviews, prefaces, and dedications. More important were the periodical essays he wrote twice a week in *The Rambler* (1750-52). Presumably in the Addisonian tradition, Johnson's essays follow the same general choice of topics as *The Spectator*: some are on moral subjects, others on literary, others on social matters; the Oriental fable makes its appearance now and then, as does the satirical "character" managed so ably by Addison. But Johnson had not Addison's grace; his style, probably as a result of his etymological researches, is encumbered with Latinisms that make his attempted humor too heavy-handed; it is here, if anywhere, that Johnson is chargeable with a ponderous prose. Once his *Dictionary* had appeared, he seems to have rid himself very rapidly of most of the excess vocabulary he had accumulated. In the essays he wrote for *The Universal Chronicle* some years later, under the title of *The Idler* (1758-60), there is much greater lightness and freshness. But the note of sadness is always the more insistent one in Johnson. He was convinced that the miseries of life exceed its pleasures. "Being pressed upon this subject," says Boswell, "and asked if he really was of opinion that though in general happiness was very rare in human life, a man was not sometimes happy in the moment that was present, he answered, 'Never but when he is drunk.'" In 1759, under the strain of his mother's severe illness which terminated in her death, he wrote in a short time his most widely read piece of prose, *Rasselas* (cf. *below*), to teach, as did Voltaire in *Candide* (cf. *below*), the futility of a search for happiness. Perhaps the rapidity with which he wrote it is responsible for the absence of his usual formality of language in this "Oriental" tale; but the close-thinking, powerful mind of its author is as manifest as ever.

By this time Johnson's reputation was very great, but his purse was still empty. In 1762, however, he was relieved of worry over acquiring the necessities of life by his being granted a pension, which he accepted on the condition that there be no services to perform in exchange for it. "It is not given you for anything you are to do," said Lord Bute, "but for what you have done." With bread and butter assured, Johnson was freer to indulge himself in his greatest talent—talking. The next year, 1763, he met Boswell (cf. *below*). In 1764 he founded, with his good friend, the great painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, the

"Club," which after 1779 was to be called the "Literary Club." Among the original members were Reynolds, Johnson, Goldsmith (cf. *below*), and Burke (cf. *below*). Later members included Garrick, Adam Smith, Boswell, Gibbon, Bishop Percy, Fox, Sheridan, Joseph Warton, Malone, the dramatist Colman, Dr. Burney, and Steevens—all leaders in English literary life and scholarship. By these men Johnson was granted first place for his brilliant and cogent conversation. Boswell has recorded for us his endless flow of ideas on every imaginable subject, and it is easy to understand why, when Johnson talked, the most gifted of his friends was glad to listen.

Though Johnson was often brusque in manner and uncompromising in his censure, he was the kindest of men. For years his home was a shelter to the needy and friendless. Dr. Levett (a paupers' doctor), Mrs. Desmoulins (a poverty-stricken daughter of a family friend), and Miss Carmichael occupied rooms with him. And for years he was careful not only to provide a home for the blind Miss Williams, but to spend time with her daily so that she would not be lonely.

After many delays, Johnson issued in 1765 his long-announced edition of Shakespeare, the Preface to which forms what is perhaps the finest criticism of the dramatist in the entire century. The errors in his comments and notes are those of the time; the merits excel those of any of his predecessors. To this day many of Johnson's observations remain the wisest and most penetrating on passages and characters in Shakespeare's plays.

From 1770 to the end of his life he was more active again with his pen. A series of political tracts, in which he stoutly maintained his firm Toryism, were written between 1770-1775. But it should be remembered that Johnson, though positive in his beliefs, was no fanatic. He accorded greater admiration to Burke during the latter's days of Whig leadership than to any other politician. And he himself never stated his real political convictions more precisely than when he said: "I would not give half a guinea to live under one form of government than another. It is of no moment to the happiness of an individual." In 1773 he undertook with Boswell a tour of Scotland, fruitful to both, and two years later published his experiences in his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.*

His last and richest work was the *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets, with Critical Observations on their Works* (1779-81). These were intended as a series of rather brief essays to form the prefaces to a collected edition of English poets. But as Johnson worked on them, and brought to them his mature and long-considered judgment, they grew in length until they became his major contribution (outside of his *Shakespeare*) to English criticism. He is at his best in his estimates of his favorites, Addison, Dryden, Pope, and the classicists, and it is doubtful whether they have ever had a better critic. It would, for instance, be hard to improve on his summation of Dryden's contribution: "To him we owe the improvement, perhaps the completion of our metre, the refinement of our language, and much of the correctness of our sentiments. By him we were taught . . . to think naturally and express forcibly." In the *Lives*, too, we see most clearly Johnson's unyielding opposition to the rising tide of romanticism. The splendid outpourings of romantic poetry in the nineteenth century have made his harsh strictures more celebrated than his keen judgments of Dryden and Pope (cf. *below*). His dislike of Gray's *The Bard* (cf. Vol. II), although once shocking, may now seem to have much good sense; "he has a kind of strutting dignity, and is tall by walking on tiptoe," will appear to modern readers as fair enough. Johnson's displeasure with romantic imaginings may be seen in what he said of Collins (cf. Vol. II): "He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the waterfalls of Elysian gardens. . . . As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure." Johnson's most famous misjudgment was his onslaught on Milton's *Lycidas* (cf. *below*); but it is generally forgotten that his objections proceeded not from a dislike of Milton, but of the pastoral form because of its artificial machinery. Here Johnson goes beyond neoclassicism, which was considerably addicted to the pastoral; he hated all kinds of artifice, and in his love of the natural is not distant from the creed of Wordsworth. It is generally forgotten, too, that if he disliked *The Bard,* he accorded the highest praise to Gray's *Elegy* (cf. Vol. II), and that if he attacked *Lycidas,* he was fond of *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,* and *Comus,* and said of *Paradise Lost* that it is "a poem, which, considered with respect to design, may claim the first place, and with respect to performance the second, among the productions of the human mind."

It was a long and arduous road that the poor bookseller's son had traveled from the time he rejected alms at Oxford till that university bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1775. The visitor to Westminster Abbey, viewing the many elaborate monuments erected to the famous and the forgotten, will feel that no memorial was more thoroughly earned in that honored place than the simple slab under which Johnson reposes next to Garrick. As with Byron and Wilde, it will be ever impossible to distinguish our interest in the man from our interest in his work. He is the best known of all figures connected with English literature, and his personality has probably afforded more delight and comfort to readers of English letters than that of any other man. Boswell's closing words on him are not exaggerated: "Such was Samuel Johnson, a man whose talents, acquirements, and virtues, were so extraordinary, that the more his character is considered, the more he will be regarded by the present age, and by posterity, with admiration and reverence."

Boswell's biography (cf. *below*) will probably disqualify all others written in the future. Of Johnson's works the best editions of his *Letters* (1892), *Rasselas* (1898), and *Lives of the Poets* (1905) have been made by G. B. Hill. R. W. Chapman has made critical editions of the *Journey to the Western Islands* (1924) and *Rasselas* (1927). An excellent volume of selections with a fine introduction was issued by C. G. Osgood (1909). Valuable studies of Johnson are: G. B. Hill, *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and Critics* (1878) and *Footsteps of Dr. Johnson* (1890); Sir W. Raleigh, *Six Essays on Johnson* (1910); P. H. Houston, *Dr. Johnson, a Study in Eighteenth Century Humanism* (1923); J. E. Brown, *The Critical Opinions of Dr. Johnson* (1926); and A. L. Reade, *Johnsonian Gleanings* (1909-30).

The Private Life of an Author

The Rambler, No. 14. *May 5, 1750*

—— Nil fuit unquam
Sic impar sibi —— Hor. *Sat.* 1, 3, 18, 19
Sure such a various creature ne'er was known.
Francis

Among the many inconsistencies which folly produces, or infirmity suffers in the human mind, there has often been observed a manifest and striking contrariety between the life of an author and his writings; and Milton, in a letter to a learned stranger, by whom he had been visited, with great reason congratulates himself upon the consciousness of being found equal to his own character, and having preserved, in a private and familiar interview, that reputation which his works had procured him.

Those whom the appearance of virtue, or the evidence of genius, have tempted to a nearer knowledge of the writer in whose performances they may be found, have indeed had frequent reason to repent their curiosity; the bubble that sparkled before them has become common water at the touch; the phantom of perfection has vanished when they wished to press it to their bosom. They have lost the pleasure of imagining how far humanity may be exalted, and, perhaps, felt themselves less inclined to toil up the steeps of virtue, when they observe those who seem best able to point the way loitering below, as either afraid of the labor, or doubtful of the reward.

It has been long the custom of the Oriental monarchs to hide themselves in gardens and palaces, to avoid the conversation of mankind, and to be known to their subjects only by their edicts. The same policy is no less necessary to him that writes, than to him that governs; for men would not more patiently submit to be taught, than commanded, by one known to have the same follies and weaknesses with themselves. A sudden intruder into the closet of an author would, perhaps, feel equal indignation with the officer who, having long solicited admission into the presence of Sardanapalus, saw him not consulting upon laws, inquiring into grievances, or modelling armies, but employed in feminine amusements, and directing the ladies in their work.

It is not difficult to conceive, however, that for many reasons a man writes much better than he lives. For without entering into refined speculations, it may be shown much easier to design than to perform. A man proposes his schemes of life in a state of abstraction and disengagement, exempt from the enticements of hope, the solicitations of affection, the importunities of appetite, or the depressions of fear, and is in the same state with him that teaches upon land the art of navigation, to whom the sea is always smooth, and the wind always prosperous.

The mathematicians are well acquainted with the difference between pure science, which has to do only with ideas, and the application of its laws to the use of life, in which they are constrained to submit to the imperfection of matter and the influence of accidents. Thus, in moral discussions, it is to be remembered that many impediments obstruct our practice, which very easily give way to theory. The speculatist is only in danger of erroneous reasoning; but the man involved in life has his own passions, and those of others, to encounter, and is embarrassed with a thousand inconveniencies, which confound him with variety of impulse, and either perplex or obstruct his way. He is forced to act without deliberation, and obliged to choose before he can examine; he is surprised by sudden alterations of the state of things, and changes his measures according to superficial appearances; he is led by others, either because he is indolent, or because he is timorous; he is sometimes afraid to know what is right, and sometimes finds friends or enemies diligent to deceive him.

We are, therefore, not to wonder that most fail, amidst tumult, and snares, and danger, in the observance of those precepts, which they lay down in solitude, safety, and tranquillity, with a mind unbiased, and with liberty unobstructed. It is the condition of our present state to see more than we can attain; the exactest vigilance and caution can never maintain a single day of unmingled innocence, much less can the utmost efforts of incorporated mind reach the summits of Cæsarean power.

It is, however, necessary for the idea of perfection to be proposed, that we may have some object to which our endeavors are to be directed; and he that is most deficient in the duties of life, makes some atonement for his faults, if he warns others against his own failings, and hinders, by the salubrity of his admonitions, the contagion of his example.

Nothing is more unjust, however common, than to charge with hypocrisy him that expresses zeal for those virtues which he neglects to practice since he may be sincerely convinced of the advantages of conquering his passions, without having yet obtained the victory, as a man may be confident of the advantages of a voyage, or a journey without having courage or industry to undertake it, and may honestly recommend to others those attempts which he neglects himself.

The interest which the corrupt part of mankind have in hardening themselves against every motive to amendment, has disposed them to give to these contradictions, when they can be produced against the cause of virtue, that weight which they will not allow them in any other case. They see men act in opposition to their interest, without supposing that they do not know it; those who give way to the sudden violence of passion, and forsake the most important pursuits for petty pleasures, are not supposed to have changed their opinions, or to approve their own conduct. In moral or religious questions alone, they determine the sentiments by the actions, and charge every man with endeavoring to impose upon the world, whose writings are not confirmed by his life. They never consider that themselves neglect or practise something every day inconsistently with their own settled judgment, nor discover that the conduct of the advocates for virtue can little increase, or lessen, the obligations of their dictates; argument is to be invalidated only by argument, and is in itself of the same force, whether or not it convinces him by whom it is proposed.

Yet since this prejudice, however unreasonable, is always likely to have some prevalence, it is the duty of every man to take care lest he should hinder the efficacy of his own instructions. When he desires to gain the belief of others, he should show that he believes himself; and when he teaches the fitness of virtue by his reasonings, he should, by his example, prove its possibility. Thus much at least may be required of him, that he shall not act worse than others because he writes better, nor imagine that, by the merit of his genius, he may claim indulgence beyond mortals of the lower classes, and be excused for want of prudence, or neglect of virtue.

Bacon, in his *History of the Winds*, after having offered something to the imagination as desirable, often proposes lower advantages in its place to the reason as attainable. The same method may be sometimes pursued in moral endeavors which this philosopher has observed in natural inquiries; having first set positive and absolute excellence before us, we may be pardoned though we sink down to humbler virtue, trying, however, to keep our point always in view, and struggling not to lose ground, though we cannot gain it.

It is recorded of Sir Matthew Hale,[1] that he for a long time concealed the consecration of himself to the stricter duties of religion, lest by some flagitious and shameful action he should bring piety into disgrace. For the same reason it may be prudent for a writer, who apprehends that he shall not enforce his own maxims by his domestic character to conceal his name, that he may not injure them.

There are, indeed, a great number whose curiosity to gain a more familiar knowledge of successful writers is not so much prompted by an opinion of their power to improve as to delight, and who expect from them not arguments against vice, or dissertations on temperance or justice, but flights of wit and sallies of pleasantry, or, at least, acute remarks, nice distinctions, justness of sentiment, and elegance of diction.

This expectation is, indeed, specious and probable, and yet, such is the fate of all human hopes, that it is very often frustrated, and those who raise admiration by their books, disgust by their company. A man of letters for the most part spends in the privacies of study that season of life in which the manners are to be softened into ease, and polished into elegance; and, when he has gained knowledge enough to be respected, has neglected the minuter acts by which he might have pleased. When he enters life, if his temper be soft and timorous, he is diffident and bashful, from the knowledge of his defects; or if he was born with spirit and resolution, he is ferocious and arrogant from the consciousness of his merit: he is either dissipated by the awe of company, and unable to recollect his reading and arrange his arguments; or he is hot and dogmatical, quick in opposition and tenacious in defense, disabled by his own violence, and confused by his haste to triumph.

The graces of writing and conversation are of different kinds, and though he who excels in one might have been, with opportunities and application, equally successful in the other, yet as many please by extemporary talk, though utterly unacquainted with the more accurate method and more labored beauties which composition requires; so it is very possible that men wholly accustomed to works of study may be without that readiness of conception and affluence of language always necessary to colloquial entertainment. They may want address to watch the hints which conversation offers for the display of their particular attainments, or they may be so much unfurnished with matter on common subjects that discourse not professedly literary glides over them as heterogeneous bodies, without admitting their conceptions to mix in the circulation.

A transition from an author's book to his conversation is too often like an entrance into a large city after a distant prospect. Remotely, we see nothing but spires of temples and turrets of palaces, and imagine it the residence of splendor, grandeur, and magnificence; but, when we have passed the gates, we find it perplexed with narrow passages, disgraced with despicable cottages, embarrassed with obstructions, and clouded with smoke.

A Young Lady's Perplexities

The Rambler, No. 191. *January 14, 1752*

> *Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper.*
> Hor. *Art of Poetry* 163
>
> The youth ——
> Yielding like wax, th' impressive folly bears;
> Rough to reproof, and slow to future cares.
> Francis

TO THE RAMBLER

Dear Mr. Rambler:

I have been four days confined to my chamber by a cold, which has already kept me from three plays, nine sales, five shows, and six card-tables, and put me seventeen visits behindhand; and the doctor tells my mamma, that if I fret and cry, it will settle in my head, and I shall not be fit to be seen these six weeks. But, dear Mr. Rambler, how can I help it? At this very time Melissa is dancing with the prettiest gentleman; she will breakfast with him to-morrow, and then run to two auctions, and hear compliments, and have presents; then she will be dressed, and visit, and get a ticket to the play; then go to cards and win, and come home with two flambeaux before her chair. Dear Mr. Rambler, who can bear it?

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[1] celebrated English jurist (1609-76).

My aunt has just brought me a bundle of your papers for my amusement. She says, you are a philosopher, and will teach me to moderate my desires, and look upon the world with indifference. But, dear sir, I do not wish, nor intend, to moderate my desires, nor can I think it proper to look upon the world with indifference, till the world looks with indifference on me. I have been forced, however, to sit this morning a whole quarter of an hour with your paper before my face; but just as my aunt came in, Phyllida had brought me a letter from Mr. Trip, which I put within the leaves; and read about "absence" and "inconsolableness," and "ardor," and "irresistible passion," and "eternal constancy," while my aunt imagined that I was puzzling myself with your philosophy, and often cried out, when she saw me look confused, "If there is any word that you do not understand, child, I will explain it."

Dear soul! How old people that think themselves wise may be imposed upon! But it is fit that they should take their turn, for I am sure, while they can keep poor girls close in the nursery, they tyrannize over us in a very shameful manner, and fill our imaginations with tales of terror, only to make us live in quiet subjection, and fancy that we can never be safe but by their protection.

I have a mamma and two aunts, who have all been formerly celebrated for wit and beauty, and are still generally admired by those that value themselves upon their understanding, and love to talk of vice and virtue, nature and simplicity, and beauty and propriety; but if there was not some hope of meeting me, scarcely a creature would come near them that wears a fashionable coat. These ladies, Mr. Rambler, have had me under their government fifteen years and a half, and have all that time been endeavoring to deceive me by such representations of life as I now find not to be true; but I know not whether I ought to impute them to ignorance or malice, as it is possible the world may be much changed since they mingled in general conversation.

Being desirous that I should love books, they told me that nothing but knowledge could make me an agreeable companion to men of sense, or qualify me to distinguish the superficial glitter of vanity from the solid merit of understanding; and that a habit of reading would enable me to fill up the vacuities of life without the help of silly or dangerous amusements, and preserve me from the snares of idleness and the inroads of temptation.

But their principal intention was to make me afraid of men; in which they succeeded so well for a time, that I durst not look in their faces, or be left alone with them in a parlor; for they made me fancy that no man ever spoke but to deceive, or looked but to allure; that the girl who suffered him that had once squeezed her hand, to approach her a second time, was on the brink of ruin; and that she who answered a billet, without consulting her relations, gave love such power over her, that she would certainly become either poor or infamous.

From the time that my leading-strings were taken off, I scarce heard any mention of my beauty but from the milliner, the mantua-maker, and my own maid; for my mamma never said more, when she heard me commended, but "The girl is very well," and then endeavored to divert my attention by some inquiry after my needle, or my book.

It is now three months since I have been suffered to pay and receive visits, to dance at public assemblies, to have a place kept for me in the boxes, and to play at Lady Racket's rout[1]; and you may easily imagine what I think of those who have so long cheated me with false expectations, disturbed me with fictitious terrors, and concealed from me all that I have found to make the happiness of woman.

I am so far from perceiving the usefulness or necessity of books, that if I had not dropped all pretensions to learning, I should have lost Mr. Trip, whom I once frighted into another box, by retailing some of Dryden's remarks upon a tragedy; for Mr. Trip declares that he hates nothing like hard words, and, I am sure, there is not a better partner to be found; his very walk is a dance. I have talked once or twice among ladies about principles and ideas, but they put their fans before their faces, and told me I was too wise for them, who for their part never pretended to read anything but the play-bill, and then asked me the price of my best head.[2]

Those vacancies of time which are to be filled up with books I have never yet obtained; for, consider, Mr. Rambler, I go to bed late, and therefore cannot rise early; as soon as I am up, I dress for the gardens; then walk in the park; then always go to some sale or show, or entertainment at the little theatre; then must be dressed for dinner; then must pay my visits; then walk in the park; then hurry to the play; and from thence to the card-table. This is the general course of the day, when there happens nothing extraordinary; but sometimes I ramble into the country, and come back again to a ball; sometimes I am engaged for a whole day and part of the night. If, at any time, I can gain an hour by not being at home, I have so many things to do, so many orders to give to the milliner, so many alterations to make in my clothes, so many visitants' names to read over, so many invitations to accept or refuse, so many cards to write, and so many fashions to consider, that I am lost in confusion, forced at last to let in company or step into my chair, and leave half my affairs to the direction of my maid.

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[1] large evening party.

[2] headdress.

This is the round of my day; and when shall I either stop my course, or so change it as to want a book? I suppose it cannot be imagined, that any of these diversions will soon be at an end. There will always be gardens, and a park, and auctions, and shows, and playhouses, and cards; visits will always be paid, and clothes always be worn; and how can I have time unemployed upon my hands?

But I am most at a loss to guess for what purpose they related such tragic stories of the cruelty, perfidy, and artifices of men, who, if they ever were so malicious and destructive, have certainly now reformed their manners. I have not, since my entrance into the world, found one who does not profess himself devoted to my service, and ready to live or die as I shall command him. They are so far from intending to hurt me, that their only contention is, who shall be allowed most closely to attend, and most frequently to treat me. When different places of entertainment or schemes of pleasure are mentioned, I can see the eye sparkle and the cheeks glow of him whose proposals obtain my approbation; he then leads me off in triumph, adores my condescension, and congratulates himself that he has lived to the hour of felicity. Are these, Mr. Rambler, creatures to be feared? Is it likely that an injury will be done me by those who can enjoy life only while I favour them with my presence?

As little reason can I yet find to suspect them of stratagems and fraud. When I play at cards, they never take advantage of my mistakes, nor exact from me a rigorous observation of the game. Even Mr. Shuffle, a grave gentleman, who has daughters older than myself, plays with me so negligently, that I am sometimes inclined to believe he loses his money by design, and yet he is so fond of play, that he says he will one day take me to his house in the country, that we may try by ourselves who can conquer. I have not yet promised him; but when the town grows a little empty, I shall think upon it, for I want some trinkets, like Letitia's, to my watch. I do not doubt my luck, but must study some means of amusing my relations.

For all these distinctions I find myself indebted to that beauty which I was never suffered to hear praised, and of which, therefore, I did not before know the full value. The concealment was certainly an intentional fraud, for my aunts have eyes like other people, and I am every day told that nothing but blindness can escape the influence of my charms. Their whole account of that world which they pretend to know so well, has been only one fiction entangled with another; and though the modes of life oblige me to continue some appearances of respect, I cannot think that they, who have been so clearly detected in ignorance or imposture, have any right to the esteem, veneration, or obedience of,

Sir, Yours,

BELLARIA.

The Decay of Friendship

The Idler, No. 23. *Saturday, September 23, 1758*

Life has no pleasure higher or nobler than that of friendship. It is painful to consider that this sublime enjoyment may be impaired or destroyed by innumerable causes, and that there is no human possession of which the duration is less certain.

Many have talked in very exalted language, of the perpetuity of friendship, of invincible constancy, and unalienable kindness; and some examples have been seen of men who have continued faithful to their earliest choice, and whose affection has predominated over changes of fortune, and contrariety of opinion.

But these instances are memorable, because they are rare. The friendship which is to be practised or expected by common mortals, must take its rise from mutual pleasure, and must end when the power ceases of delighting each other.

Many accidents therefore may happen by which the ardor of kindness will be abated, without criminal baseness or contemptible inconstancy on either part. To give pleasure is not always in our power; and little does he know himself who believes that he can be always able to receive it.

Those who would gladly pass their days together may be separated by the different course of their affairs; and friendship, like love, is destroyed by long absence, though it may be increased by short intermissions. What we have missed long enough to want it, we value more when it is regained; but that which has been lost till it is forgotten, will be found at last with little gladness, and with still less if a substitute has supplied the place. A man deprived of the companion to whom he used to open his bosom, and with whom he shared the hours of leisure and merriment, feels the day at first hanging heavy on him; his difficulties oppress, and his doubts distract him; he sees time come and go without his wonted gratification, and all is sadness within, and solitude about him. But this uneasiness never lasts long; necessity produces expedients, new amusements are discovered, and new conversation is admitted.

No expectation is more frequently disappointed, than that which naturally arises in the mind from the prospect of meeting an old friend after long separation. We expect the attraction to be revived, and the coalition to be renewed; no man considers how much alteration time has made in himself, and very few inquire what effect it has had upon others. The first hour convinces them that the pleasure which they have formerly enjoyed, is for ever at an end; different scenes have made different impressions; the opinions of both are changed; and that similitude of manners and sentiment is lost which confirmed them both in the approbation of themselves.

Friendship is often destroyed by opposition of interest, not only by the ponderous and visible interest which the desire of wealth and greatness forms and maintains, but by a thousand secret and slight competitions, scarcely known to the mind upon which they operate. There is scarcely any man without some favorite trifle which he values above greater attainments, some desire of petty praise which he cannot patiently suffer to be frustrated. This minute ambition is sometimes crossed before it is known, and sometimes defeated by wanton petulance; but such attacks are seldom made without the loss of friendship; for whoever has once found the vulnerable part will always be feared, and the resentment will burn on in secret, of which shame hinders the discovery.

This, however, is a slow malignity, which a wise man will obviate as inconsistent with quiet, and a good man will repress as contrary to virtue; but human happiness is sometimes violated by some more sudden strokes.

A dispute begun in jest upon a subject which a moment before was on both parts regarded with careless indifference, is continued by the desire of conquest, till vanity kindles into rage, and opposition rankles into enmity. Against this hasty mischief, I know not what security can be obtained; men will be sometimes surprised into quarrels; and though they might both haste into reconciliation, as soon as their tumult had subsided, yet two minds will seldom be found together, which can at once subdue their discontent, or immediately enjoy the sweets of peace without remembering the wounds of the conflict.

Friendship has other enemies. Suspicion is always hardening the cautious, and disgust repelling the delicate. Very slender differences will sometimes part those whom long reciprocation of civility or beneficence has united. Lonelove and Ranger retired into the country to enjoy the company of each other, and returned in six weeks, cold and petulant; Ranger's pleasure was to walk in the fields, and Lonelove's to sit in a bower; each had complied with the other in his turn, and each was angry that compliance had been exacted.

The most fatal disease of friendship is gradual decay, or dislike hourly increased by causes too slender for complaint, and too numerous for removal. Those who are angry may be reconciled; those who have been injured may receive a recompense: but when the desire of pleasing and willingness to be pleased is silently diminished, the renovation of friendship is hopeless; as, when the vital powers sink into languor, there is no longer any use of the physician.

Definitions from *The Dictionary*

blister: a pustule formed by raising the cuticle from the cutis and filled with serous blood.

cough: a convulsion of the lungs vellicated by some sharp serosity.

essay: a loose sally of the mind; an irregular indigested piece; not a regular and orderly composition.

excise: a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged, not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid.

Grub Street: the name of a street in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, *dictionaries,* and temporary poems; whence any mean production is called Grub Street.

job: a low word now much in use of which I cannot tell the etymology.
lexicographer: a writer of dictionaries, a harmless drudge that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the significance of words.
network: anything reticulated or decussated at equal distances with interstices between the intersections.
oats: a grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people.
patriotism: the last refuge of a scoundrel.
patron: one who countenances, supports, or protects. Commonly a wretch who supports with insolence, and is paid with flattery.
pension: an allowance made to anyone without an equivalent. In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.
pensioner: a slave of state, hired by a stipend to obey his master.
politician: a man of artifice; one deep of contrivance.
ruse: a French word neither elegant nor necessary.
stockjobber: a low wretch who gets money by buying and selling shares in the funds.
thunder: a most bright flame rising on a sudden, moving with great violence, and with a very rapid velocity, through the air, according to any determination, and commonly ending with a loud noise or rattling.
Tory: one who adheres to the ancient constitution of the state, and the apostolical hierarchy of the Church of England, opposed to a Whig.
transpire: to escape from secrecy to notice, a sense lately innovated from France without necessity.
Whig: the name of a faction.

(1755)

FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET, *called* VOLTAIRE (1694-1778)

The *philosophes* who in the eighteenth century prepared the French Revolution were all men of letters rather than philosophers. Of these none had the indomitable energy and literary versatility of François Marie Arouet, who early in life adopted the name of Voltaire. Born of a solid middle-class stock, Voltaire was educated by the Jesuits, from whom he learned the art of controversy. He started out in life as a poet. A lampoon which he wrote against the Regent was rewarded with eleven months' confinement in the Bastille in 1717, where he busied himself mastering the English language and in writing a tragedy that soon had a great success in Paris. On his release from prison, he began to establish himself in the intellectual world, but another unlucky incident cut short his advance. Because of a gibe at the stupid Chevalier de Rohan-Chabot he was beaten by the latter's lackeys; Voltaire forthwith challenged the nobleman to a duel, and for this insolence he was again shut up in the Bastille. But to spare the Chevalier's face, Voltaire was soon released on condition that he migrate.

At the age of thirty-two, Voltaire went to England, where he spent the three most formative years of his life. His mind had already been strongly impressed by the English achievements in political liberty and science (he called the seventeenth the "English" century), and by his friendship with Lord Bolingbroke, who then passed for a great philosopher. By this time Voltaire had become a complete skeptic; he had stigmatized the learning of the clergy as founded "on our credulity," and had decided that for the layman it was wise to "trust in ourselves alone. Let us view everything with our own eyes; 'tis they are our tripods, our oracles, our gods." Once in England, Voltaire rejoiced in what seemed to be a national spirit of liberal thinking. Welcomed as a guest by Bolingbroke, he made the acquaintance of Whigs, Tories, and middle-class society. He met Congreve, attended Newton's funeral, visited Pope at Twickenham, and was present at meetings of the Royal Society, of which he was elected a member. He read Bacon and Locke, and made friends with men who had been in Addison's circle. He came to know the language well enough to be able to think in it, and actually wrote several works in it. When he left England for his native country, his career as a champion of liberty and a leading skeptical philosopher was fixed. "He left France a poet, he returned to it a sage," says Lord Morley.

When the fruits of his sojourn, the *English Letters* (1734), were published, Voltaire was again in difficulty; this time, however, the publisher went to the Bastille, while Voltaire retired to the chateau of a fellow-Newtonian, Mme de Châtelet, at Cirey. Of the *English Letters* Condorcet later wrote: "This work was, with us, the starting-point of a revolution; it began to call into existence the taste for English philosophy and literature, to give us an interest in the manners, the politics, and the commercial knowledge of the English people." But the importance of the book was even greater. For, as M. Texte has said: "From its publication dates the commencement of that open campaign against the Christian religion which was destined to occupy the whole of the century; thence, also, and above all, the rise of that new spirit, contemptuous of questions of art, critical, eager for reform, combative and practical, which concerned itself rather with political and natural science than with poetry and eloquence, and was interested, before all things, in literature dealing with the active side of life and the diffusion of knowledge. The *Lettres anglaises* are the patent of majority of the eighteenth century."

Meanwhile Voltaire was busy writing a long epic, tragedies (some of which were based upon Shakespeare), clever comedies, history, and a satire inspired by Pope's *Dunciad*; work followed work without intermission despite his ailing constitution. In 1736 he began his famous correspondence with Frederick the Great. Soon after, one of his satires required his fleeing the police into Holland, where his cordial reception gave him freedom to write his *Elements of Newton's Philosophy* (1738). He was soon back again at Cirey, busy with friends and enemies. When his *Mahomet* (1742) was produced in Paris amidst great applause, his enemies pretended to find in its satire upon fanaticism an avowal of "infamous blasphemy." When the authorities stepped in again, Voltaire left the city in disgust. However, he was soon again enjoying success with another play, *Mérope*. All this time Voltaire could make no headway at court. At last, in 1745, a minor work evoked royal interest. Mme de Pompadour smiled, the Pope accepted the dedication to *Mahomet*, and Voltaire was elected to the French Academy (1746). It was not long, however, before he was in disgrace at court, had to flee overnight, and was forced to accept the hospitality of the King of Lorraine. The death of Mme de Châtelet at this period caused him the greatest bitterness he ever knew in life. Once more he was in Paris, seeking distraction by running his own theatre, and winning delighted acclaim from the readers of his tales which were now circulating widely. When Frederick the Great invited him to stay with him, Voltaire got the leave of Louis XV and went to Potsdam (1750). At first Frederick, who truly appreciated Voltaire's genius, heaped honors upon him. But his guest's embroilment with a usurer and his hilarious attack on the President of the Berlin Academy alienated Frederick, and Voltaire had to go. At the age of sixty, he found himself unwelcome in every Catholic country in Europe.

Retiring to Ferney, near the Swiss border, he began to produce some of his most enduring works. His *Epoch of Louis XIV* (1751), his *Essay on Manners* (1756), and his best-known work, *Candide* (1759), were published. The last twenty years of his long, fruitful life were devoted now to championing the oppressed. His interest in the famous Calas case resulted in his great *Treatise on Tolerance* (1763). He was no longer fighting alone, but in the company of such men as Diderot and D'Alembert. His influence on public opinion grew steadily. A few years before his death a statue was erected to him in Paris, the city of his vexations and triumphs. In 1778, he went back to Paris for the first time in many years, and was accorded great honors by the Academy and the public. An old man, he was too feeble to bear the excitement, and is said literally to have died from excess of glory. In 1791 the Revolutionists transferred his ashes to the Pantheon. Though no friend to revolution, Voltaire had contributed as much to it as any man of his century; his *Philosophical Dictionary*, first issued in 1764, had become a kind of revolutionist's handbook.

It would be impossible in any brief space to epitomize the achievement of his seventy-odd copious volumes of writings. His life-work, however, has with justice been popularly summarized in his attributed remark to his fellow *philosophe* Helvétius: "I wholly disapprove of your opinions and will fight to the death for your right to express them." Living in a society in which State and Church exercised the most rigid censorship on all writing and speaking, Voltaire, no matter what his personal defects, was an untiring fighter for the cause of freedom of thought. His remarks on Tolerance in his *Philosophical Dictionary* reveal issues cardinal to him:

"What is tolerance? It is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly. . . . It is clear that the individual who persecutes a man, his brother, because he is not of the same opinion, is a monster. . . . Of all the religions, the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men. . . ."

Egon Friedell has paid this great tribute to the spirit of Voltaire: "The root passion of his life was, indeed, a flaming desire for justice, a burning, consuming, almost drunken hatred of every kind of public despotism, stupidity, malice, or partisanship. And if our world of today consists of no more than two-fifths villains and three-eighths idiots, we have largely Voltaire to thank for it." The claim is, no doubt, extravagant. On the other hand, few readers who were anxious for the Revolution were unacquainted with his work; and few who remained faithful to its principles, after Napoleon's days of empire, failed to venerate him. Thus Voltaire must be counted as one of the contributing forces toward the greatest historical event of modern times, the French Revolution, and hence toward the Romantic Revolt of the nineteenth century.

His philosophic prose tales have remained the best liked of his works. The swiftness of their action, the brilliance of their style, and their never-failing laughter lessen the bitterness of their cynicism. The most masterful of them (*Candide,* 1759), has long been a world favorite. It is a satire against many things, but fundamentally against the optimism enunciated by the German philosopher, Leibnitz; it was natural that Voltaire's struggle for reform should have made him hostile to the doctrine (personified in Pangloss) that "this is the best of all possible worlds," and to Pope's variation of it that "Whatever is, is right." It is a coincidence truly remarkable that within a few weeks of *Candide*, Johnson's *Rasselas* (cf. *below*) should also have appeared, since both books are in the "Oriental" manner (cf. *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night, above*) and point the same moral: i.e. that the search for happiness in the world is vain, and that content may best be found in one's own back yard. Johnson was much struck at the accident: "If they had not been published so closely one after the other," he said, "it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other." But the similarities end there. For Voltaire's book is written in a flashing, buoyant manner, running over with high spirits, while Johnson's has hardly any modulation from its key of quiet melancholy reflection.

Candide is also an attack on war, on religious persecution, on every kind of social injustice and stupidity; in this same fashion Byron later wrote his *Don Juan* (cf. *below*). The story, which Voltaire is said to have written in three days, tells how Candide was born of doubtful parentage, how he lived in the castle of a baron of Westphalia, how he was taught by the wise Dr. Pangloss, how he fell in love with the baron's daughter Cunegonde, how he was therefore driven from the castle, how adventure brought him to Bulgaria and Portugal until he found Cunegonde again and also acquired a faithful valet (Cacambo), how the three of them sailed to Eldorado with a wise old woman, how they acquired wealth there, how Candide employed the philosophic Martin to be his guide back to Europe while Cacambo was sent to conduct Cunegonde to Venice where they were to be united, how they underwent many more adventures and separations until they all came together at Constantinople. Nowhere could Candide find happiness, contentment, or justice.

Worthy of consultation are: C. B. Chase, *The Young Voltaire* (1926); J. C. Collins, *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (1908); J. Morley, *Voltaire* (1871); J. M. Robertson, *Short History of Free Thought* (1906); and S. G. Tallentyre, *The Life of Voltaire* (1903).

From CANDIDE

V

TEMPEST, SHIPWRECK, EARTHQUAKE, AND WHAT BECAME OF DOCTOR PANGLOSS, CANDIDE, AND JAMES THE ANABAPTIST.

Half dead of that inconceivable anguish which the rolling of a ship produces, one-half of the passengers were not even sensible of the danger. The other half shrieked and prayed. The sheets were rent, the masts broken, the vessel gaped. Work who would, no one heard, no one commanded. The Anabaptist being upon deck bore a hand; when a brutish sailor struck him roughly and laid him sprawling; but with the violence of the blow he himself tumbled head foremost overboard, and stuck upon a piece of the broken mast. Honest James ran to his assistance, hauled him up, and from the effort he made was precipitated into the sea in sight of the sailor, who left him to perish, without deigning to look at him. Candide drew near and saw his benefactor, who rose above the water one moment and was then swallowed up forever. He was just going to jump after him, but was prevented by the philosopher Pangloss, who demonstrated to him that the Bay of Lisbon had been made on purpose for the Anabaptist to be drowned. While he was proving this *a priori*, the ship foundered; all perished except Pangloss, Candide, and that brutal sailor who had drowned the good Anabaptist. The villain swam safely to the shore, while Pangloss and Candide were borne thither upon a plank.

As soon as they recovered themselves a little they walked toward Lisbon. They had some money left, with which they hoped to save themselves from starving, after they had escaped drowning. Scarcely had they reached the city, lamenting the death of their benefactor, when they felt the earth tremble under their feet. The sea swelled and foamed in the harbor, and beat to pieces the vessels riding at anchor. Whirlwinds of fire and ashes covered the streets and public places; houses fell, roofs were flung upon the pavements, and the pavements were scattered. Thirty thousand inhabitants of all ages and sexes were crushed under the ruins. The sailor, whistling and swearing, said there was booty to be gained here.

"What can be the *sufficient reason* of this phenomenon?" said Pangloss.

"This is the Last Day!" cried Candide.

The sailor ran among the ruins, facing death to find money; finding it, he took it, got drunk, and having slept himself sober, purchased the favors of the first good-natured wench whom he met on the ruins of the destroyed houses, and in the midst of the dying and the dead. Pangloss pulled him by the sleeve.

"My friend," said he, "this is not right. You sin against the *universal reason*; you choose your time badly."

"S'blood and fury!" answered the other; "I am a sailor and born at Batavia. Four times have I trampled upon the crucifix in four voyages to Japan; a fig for thy universal reason."

Some falling stones had wounded Candide. He lay stretched in the street covered with rubbish.

"Alas!" said he to Pangloss, "get me a little wine and oil; I am dying."

"This concussion of the earth is no new thing," answered Pangloss. "The city of Lima, in America, experienced the same convulsions last year; the same cause, the same effects; there is certainly a train of sulphur under ground from Lima to Lisbon."

"Nothing more probable," said Candide; "but for the love of God a little oil and wine."

"How, probable?" replied the philosopher. "I maintain that the point is capable of being demonstrated."

Candide fainted away, and Pangloss fetched him some water from a neighboring fountain. The following day they rummaged among the ruins and found provisions, with which they repaired their exhausted strength. After this they joined with others in relieving those inhabitants who had escaped death. Some, whom they had succored, gave them as good a dinner as they could in such disastrous circumstances; true, the repast was mournful, and the company moistened their bread with tears; but Pangloss consoled them, assuring them that things could not be otherwise.

"For," said he, "all that is is for the best. If there is a volcano at Lisbon it cannot be elsewhere. It is impossible that things should be other than they are; for everything is right."

A little man dressed in black, Familiar of the Inquisition, who sat by him, politely took up his word and said:

"Apparently, then, sir, you do not believe in original sin; for if all is for the best there has then been neither Fall nor punishment."

"I humbly ask your Excellency's pardon," answered Pangloss, still more politely; "for the Fall and curse of man necessarily entered into the system of the best of worlds."

"Sir," said the Familiar, "you do not then believe in liberty?"

"Your Excellency will excuse me," said Pangloss; "liberty is consistent with absolute necessity, for it was necessary we should be free; for, in short, the determinate will—"

Pangloss was in the middle of his sentence, when the Familiar beckoned to his footman, who gave him a glass of wine from Porto or Opporto.

VI

HOW THE PORTUGUESE MADE A BEAUTIFUL AUTO-DA-FÉ, TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER EARTHQUAKES: AND HOW CANDIDE WAS PUBLICLY WHIPPED

After the earthquake had destroyed three-fourths of Lisbon, the sages of that country could think of no means more effectual to prevent utter ruin than to give the people a beautiful *auto-da-fé,* for it had been decided by the Universty of Coimbra, that the burning of a few people alive by a slow fire, and with great ceremony, is an infallible secret to hinder the earth from quaking.

In consequence hereof, they had seized on a Biscayner, convicted of having married his god-mother, and on two Portuguese, for rejecting the bacon which larded a chicken they were eating; after dinner, they came and secured Dr. Pangloss, and his disciple Candide, the one for speaking his mind, the other for having listened with an air of approbation. They were conducted to separate apartments, extremely cold, as they were never incommoded by the sun. Eight days after they were dressed in *san-benitos*[1] and their heads ornamented with paper miters. The miter and *san-benito* belonging to Candide were painted with reversed flames and with devils that had neither tails nor claws; but Pangloss's devils had claws and tails and the flames were upright. They marched in procession thus habited and heard a very pathetic sermon, followed by fine church music. Candide was whipped in cadence while they were singing; the Biscayner, and the two men who had refused to eat bacon, were burnt; and Pangloss was hanged, though that was not the custom. The same day the earth sustained a most violent concussion.

Candide, terrified, amazed, desperate, all bloody, all palpitating, said to himself:

"If this is the best of possible worlds, what then are the others? Well, if I had been only whipped I could put up with it, for I experienced that among the Bulgarians; but oh, my dear Pangloss! thou greatest of philosophers, that I should have seen you hanged, without knowing for what! Oh, my dear Anabaptist, thou best of men, that thou should'st have been drowned in the very harbor! Oh, Miss Cunegonde, thou pearl of girls! that thou should'st have had thy belly ripped open!"

Thus he was musing, scarce able to stand, preached at, whipped, absolved, and blessed, when an old woman accosted him saying:

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[1] a black garment painted with flames, the figures of devils, etc., worn by those punished at the *auto-da-fé.*

"My son, take courage and follow me."

XVIII

WHAT THEY SAW IN THE COUNTRY OF EL DORADO

Cacambo expressed his curiosity to the landlord, who made answer:

"I am very ignorant, but not the worse on that account. However, we have in this neighborhood an old man retired from the Court who is the most learned and most communicative person in the kingdom."

At once he took Cacambo to the old man. Candide acted now only a second character, and accompanied his valet. They entered a very plain house, for the door was only of silver, and the ceilings were only of gold, but wrought in so elegant a taste as to vie with the richest. The antechamber, indeed, was only encrusted with rubies and emeralds, but the order in which everything was arranged made amends for this great simplicity.

The old man received the strangers on his sofa, which was stuffed with humming-birds' feathers, and ordered his servants to present them with liqueurs in diamond goblets; after which he satisfied their curiosity in the following terms:

"I am now one hundred and seventy-two years old, and I learnt of my late father, Master of the Horse to the King, the amazing revolutions of Peru, of which he had been an eye-witness. The kingdom we now inhabit is the ancient country of the Incas, who quitted it very imprudently to conquer another part of the world, and were at length destroyed by the Spaniards.

"More wise by far were the princes of their family, who remained in their native country; and they ordained, with the consent of the whole nation, that none of the inhabitants should ever be permitted to quit this little kingdom; and this has preserved our innocence and happiness. The Spaniards have had a confused notion of this country, and have called it *El Dorado*; and an Englishman, whose name was Sir Walter Raleigh, came very near it about a hundred years ago; but being surrounded by inaccessible rocks and precipices, we have hitherto been sheltered from the rapaciousness of European nations, who have an inconceivable passion for the pebbles and dirt of our land, for the sake of which they would murder us to the last man."

The conversation was long: it turned chiefly on their form of government, their manners, their women, their public entertainments, and the arts. At length Candide, having always had a taste for metaphysics, made Cacambo ask whether there was any religion in that country.

The old man reddened a little.

"How then," said he, "can you doubt it? Do you take us for ungrateful wretches?"

Cacambo humbly asked, "What was the religion in El Dorado?"

The old man reddened again.

"Can there be two religions?" said he. "We have, I believe, the religion of all the world: we worship God night and morning."

"Do you worship but one God?" said Cacambo, who still acted as interpreter in representing Candide's doubts.

"Surely," said the old man, "there are not two, nor three, nor four. I must confess the people from your side of the world ask very extraordinary questions."

Candide was not yet tired of interrogating the good old man; he wanted to know in what manner they prayed to God in El Dorado.

"We do not pray to Him," said the worthy sage; "we have nothing to ask of Him; He has given us all we need, and we return Him thanks without ceasing."

Candide having a curiosity to see the priests asked where they were. The good old man smiled.

"My friend," said he, "we are all priests. The King and all the heads of families sing solemn canticles of thanksgiving every morning, accompanied by five or six thousand musicians."

"What! have you no monks who teach, who dispute, who govern, who cabal, and who burn people that are not of their opinion?"

"We must be mad, indeed, if that were the case," said the old man; "here we are all of one opinion, and we know not what you mean by monks."

During this whole discourse Candide was in raptures, and he said to himself:

"This is vastly different from Westphalia and the Baron's castle. Had our friend Pangloss seen El Dorado he would no longer have said that the castle of Thunder-ten-Tronckh was the finest upon earth. It is evident that one must travel."

After this long conversation the old man ordered a coach and six sheep to be got ready, and twelve of his domestics to conduct the travelers to Court.

"Excuse me," said he, "if my age deprives me of the honor of accompanying you. The King will receive you in a manner that cannot displease you; and no doubt you will make an allowance for the customs of the country, if some things should not be to your liking."

Candide and Cacambo got into the coach, the six sheep flew, and in less than four hours they reached the King's palace situated at the extremity of the capital. The portal was two hundred and twenty feet high, and one hundred wide; but words are wanting to express the materials of which it was built. It is plain such materials must have prodigious superiority over those pebbles and sand which we call gold and precious stones.

Twenty beautiful damsels of the King's guard received Candide and Cacambo as they alighted from the coach, conducted them to the bath, and dressed them in robes woven of the down of humming-birds; after which the great crown officers, of both sexes, led them to the King's apartment, between two files of musicians, a thousand on each side. When they drew near to the audience chamber Cacambo asked one of the great officers in what way he should pay his obeisance to his Majesty; whether they should throw themselves upon their knees or on their stomachs; whether they should put their hands upon their heads or behind their backs; whether they should lick the dust off the floor; in a word, what was the ceremony?

"The custom," said the great officer, "is to embrace the King, and to kiss him on each cheek."

Candide and Cacambo threw themselves round his Majesty's neck. He received them with all the goodness imaginable, and politely invited them to supper.

While waiting they were shown the city, and saw the public edifices raised as high as the clouds, the market places ornamented with a thousand columns, the fountains of spring water, those of rose water, those of liqueurs drawn from sugar-cane, incessantly flowing into the great squares, which were paved with a kind of precious stone, which gave off a delicious fragrance like that of cloves and cinnamon. Candide asked to see the court of justice, the parliament. They told him they had none, and that they were strangers to lawsuits. He asked if they had any prisons, and they answered no. But what surprised him most and gave him the greatest pleasure was the palace of sciences, where he saw a gallery two thousand feet long, and filled with instruments employed in mathematics and physics.

After rambling about the city the whole afternoon, and seeing but a thousandth part of it, they were reconducted to the royal palace, where Candide sat down to table with his Majesty, his valet Cacambo, and several ladies. Never was there a better entertainment, and never was more wit shown at a table than that which fell from his Majesty. Cacambo explained the King's *bon-mots* to Candide, and notwithstanding they were translated they still appeared to be *bon-mots*. Of all the things that surprised Candide this was not the least. . . .

XXX

THE CONCLUSION

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In the neighborhood there lived a very famous Dervish who was esteemed the best philosopher in all Turkey, and they went to consult him. Pangloss was the speaker.

"Master," said he, "we come to beg you to tell why so strange an animal as man was made."

"With what meddlest thou?" said the Dervish; "is it thy business?"

"But, reverend father," said Candide, "there is horrible evil in this world."

"What signifies it," said the Dervish, "whether there be evil or good? When his highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he trouble his head whether the mice on board are at their ease or not?"

"What, then, must we do?" said Pangloss.

"Hold your tongue," answered the Dervish.

"I was in hopes," said Pangloss, "that I should reason with you a little about causes and effects, about the best of possible worlds, the origin of evil, the nature of the soul, and the pre-established harmony."

At these words, the Dervish shut the door in their faces.

During this conversation, the news was spread that two Viziers and the Mufti had been strangled at Constantinople, and that several of their friends had been impaled. This catastrophe made a great noise for some hours. Pangloss, Candide, and Martin, returning to the little farm, saw a good old man taking the fresh air at his door under an orange bower. Pangloss, who was as inquisitive as he was argumentative, asked the old man what was the name of the strangled Mufti.

"I do not know," answered the worthy man, "and I have not known the name of any Mufti, nor of any Vizier. I am entirely ignorant of the event you mention; I presume in general that they who meddle with the administration of public affairs die sometimes miserably, and that they deserve it; but I never trouble my head about what is transacting at Constantinople; I content myself with sending there for sale the fruits of the garden which I cultivate."

Having said these words, he invited the strangers into his house; his two sons and two daughters presented them with several sorts of sherbet, which they made themselves, with Kaimak enriched with the candied-peel of citrons, with oranges, lemons, pineapples, pistachio-nuts, and Mocha coffee unadulterated with the bad coffee of Batavia or the American islands. After which the two daughters of the honest Mussulman perfumed the strangers' beards.

"You must have a vast and magnificent estate," said Candide to the Turk.

"I have only twenty acres," replied the old man; "I and my children cultivate them; our labor preserves us from three great evils—weariness, vice, and want."

Candide, on his way home, made profound reflections on the old man's conversation.

"This honest Turk," said he to Pangloss and Martin, "seems to be in a situation far preferable to that of the six kings with whom we had the honor of supping."

"Grandeur," said Pangloss, "is extremely dangerous according to the testimony of philosophers. For, in short, Eglon, King of Moab, was assassinated by Ehud; Absalom was hung by his hair, and pierced with three darts; King Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, was killed by Baasa; King Ela by Zimri; Ahaziah by Jehu; Athaliah by Jehoiada; the Kings Jehoiakim, Jaconiah, and Zedekiah, were led into captivity. You know how perished Crœsus, Astyages, Darius, Dionysius of Syracuse, Pyrrhus, Perseus, Hannibal, Jugurtha, Ariovistus, Cæsar, Pompey, Nero, Otho, Vitellius, Domitian, Richard II of England, Edward II, Henry VI, Richard III, Mary Stuart, Charles I, the three Henrys of France, the Emperor Henry IV! You know—"

"I know also," said Candide, "that we must cultivate our garden."

"You are right," said Pangloss, "for when man was first placed in the Garden of Eden, he was put there *ut operaretur eum*, that he might cultivate it; which shows that man was not born to be idle."

"Let us work," said Martin, "without disputing; it is the only way to render life tolerable."

The whole little society entered into this laudable design, according to their different abilities. Their little plot of land produced plentiful crops. Cunegonde was, indeed, very ugly, but she became an excellent pastry cook; Paquette worked at embroidery; the old woman looked after the linen. They were all, not excepting Friar Giroflée, of some service or other; for he made a good joiner, and became a very honest man.

Pangloss sometimes said to Candide:

"There is a concatenation of events in this best of all possible worlds: for, if you had not been kicked out of a magnificent castle for love of Miss Cunegonde: if you had not walked over America: if you had not stabbed the Baron: if you had not lost all your sheep from the fine country of El Dorado: you would not be here eating preserved citrons and pistachio-nuts."

"All that is very well," answered Candide, "but let us cultivate our garden."

From *Rasselas*

Johnson wrote *Rasselas* at great speed, some time between January 13, 1759, when he heard that his mother was critically ill, and January 23, when she was buried. Pressed by concern for her and a complete shortage of funds, he wrote, understandably enough, in no happy frame of mind. (There was for a long time current the opinion that he wrote the book to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral; that story has been proved untrue, though the error is chiefly one of detail.)

Voltaire's *Candide* (cf. *above*) and *Rasselas* appeared within a few weeks of each other, both teaching that the search for happiness in this world is futile. But Voltaire's book was written in his best vein of irony, while the occasional lightness of tone in Johnson's is unmirthful. The pessimism of Voltaire is born of his alert critical spirit; that of Johnson proceeds from his innate melancholy. The Orientalism which Johnson employs is all on the surface, and we never have any illusion of being in Eastern lands. But the writing is Johnson's at its best: clear, forceful, and dignified without ostentation. The wanderings of the princely travelers from their peaceful valley in Abyssinia in their search for happiness are recounted with tranquil direction: and always we are aware of the author's disenchanted sanity and reliance on the wisdom of daily experience.

Of the chapters we print, the opening one contains an admirable summation of neoclassical poetical ideals, and the last closes with the somber faith that was ever present to Johnson's mind.

CHAPTER X

IMLAC'S HISTORY CONTINUED. A DISSERTATION UPON POETRY

"Wherever I went I found that poetry was considered as the highest learning, and regarded with a veneration somewhat approaching to that which man would pay to the angelic nature. And yet it fills me with wonder that, in almost all countries, the most ancient poets are considered as the best; whether it be that every other kind of knowledge is an acquisition gradually attained, and poetry is a gift conferred at once; or that the first poetry of every nation surprised them as a novelty, and retained the credit by consent which it received by accident at first; or whether, as the province of poetry is to describe nature and passion, which are always the same, the first writers took possession of the most striking objects for description and the most probable occurrences for fiction, and left nothing to those that followed them but transcription of the same events and new combinations of the same images. Whatever be the reason, it is commonly observed that the early writers are in possession of nature, and their followers of art; that the first excel in strength and invention, and the latter in elegance and refinement.

"I was desirous to add my name to this illustrious fraternity. I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia, and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended[1] in the mosque of Mecca. But I soon found that no man was ever great by imitation. My desire of excellence impelled me to transfer my attention to nature and to life. Nature was to be my subject, and men to be my auditors: I could never describe what I had not seen; I could not hope to move those with delight or terror whose interests and opinions I did not understand.

"Being now resolved to be a poet, I saw everything with a new purpose; my sphere of attention was suddenly magnified: no kind of knowledge was to be overlooked. I ranged mountains and deserts for images and resemblances, and pictured upon my mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley. I observed with equal care the crags of the rock and the pinnacles of the palace. Sometimes I wandered along the mazes of the rivulet, and sometimes watched the changes of the summer clouds. To a poet nothing can be useless. Whatever is beautiful and whatever is dreadful must be familiar to his imagination; he must be conversant with all that is awfully vast or elegantly little. The plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and meteors of the sky, must all concur to store his mind with inexhaustible variety; for every idea is useful for the enforcement or decoration of moral or religious truth, and he who knows most will have most power of diversifying his scenes, and of gratifying his reader with remote allusions and unexpected instruction.

"All the appearances of nature I was therefore careful to study, and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers."

"In so wide a survey," said the prince, "you must surely have left much unobserved. I have lived till now within the circuit of these mountains, and yet cannot walk abroad without the sight of something which I had never beheld before, or never heeded."

"The business of a poet," said Imlac, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip, or describe the different shades in the verdure of the forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features as recall the original to every mind, and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked and another have neglected, for those characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.

"But the knowledge of nature is only half the task of a poet; he must be acquainted likewise with all the modes of life. His character requires that he estimate the happiness and misery of every condition, observe the power of all the passions in all their combinations, and trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by various institutions and accidental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude. He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age or country; he must consider right and wrong in their abstracted and invariable state; he must disregard present laws and opinions, and rise to general and transcendental truths, which will always be the same. He must therefore content himself with the slow progress of his name, contemn the applause of his own time, and commit his claims to the justice of posterity. He must write as the interpreter of nature and the legislator of mankind, and consider himself as presiding over the thoughts and manners of future generations, as a being superior to time and place.

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[1] Volumes winning the highest praise at a festival were thus hung up in a mosque.

"His labor is not yet at an end; he must know many languages and many sciences, and, that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must by incessant practice familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PRINCE FINDS A WISE AND HAPPY MAN

As he was one day walking in the street, he saw a spacious building which all were, by the open doors, invited to enter. He followed the stream of people, and found it a hall or school of declamation, in which professors read lectures to their auditory. He fixed his eye upon a sage raised above the rest, who discoursed with great energy on the government of the passions. His look was venerable, his action graceful, his pronunciation clear, and his diction elegant. He showed, with great strength of sentiment and variety of illustration, that human nature is degraded and debased when the lower faculties predominate over the higher; that when fancy, the parent of passion, usurps the dominion of the mind, nothing ensues but the natural effect of unlawful government, perturbation, and confusion; that she betrays the fortresses of the intellect to rebels, and excites her children to sedition against reason, their lawful sovereign. He compared reason to the sun, of which the light is constant, uniform, and lasting; and fancy to a meteor, of bright but transitory lustre, irregular in its motion and delusive in its direction.

He then communicated the various precepts given from time to time for the conquest of passion, and displayed the happiness of those who had obtained the important victory, after which man is no longer the slave of fear nor the fool of hope; is no more emaciated by envy, inflamed by anger, emasculated by tenderness, or depressed by grief, but walks on calmly through the tumults or privacies of life, as the sun pursues alike his course through the calm or the stormy sky.

He enumerated many examples of heroes immovable by pain or pleasure, who looked with indifference on those modes or accidents to which the vulgar give the names of good and evil. He exhorted his hearers to lay aside their prejudices, and arm themselves against the shafts of malice or misfortune, by invulnerable patience; concluding that this state only was happiness, and that this happiness was in everyone's power.

Rasselas listened to him with the veneration due to the instructions of a superior being, and, waiting for him at the door, humbly implored the liberty of visiting so great a master of true wisdom. The lecturer hesitated a moment, when Rasselas put a purse of gold into his hand, which he received with a mixture of joy and wonder.

"I have found," said the prince at his return to Imlac, "a man who can teach all that is necessary to be known; who, from the unshaken throne of rational fortitude, looks down on the scenes of life changing beneath him. He speaks, and attention watches his lips. He reasons, and conviction closes his periods. This man shall be my future guide; I will learn his doctrines and imitate his life."

"Be not too hasty," said Imlac, "to trust or to admire the teachers of morality: they discourse like angels, but they live like men."

Rasselas, who could not conceive how any man could reason so forcibly without feeling the cogency of his own arguments, paid his visit in a few days, and was denied admission. He had now learned the power of money, and made his way by a piece of gold to the inner apartment, where he found the philosopher in a room half darkened, with his eyes misty and his face pale. "Sir," said he, "you are come at a time when all human friendship is useless; what I suffer cannot be remedied, what I have lost cannot be supplied. My daughter, my only daughter, from whose tenderness I expected all the comforts of my age, died last night of a fever. My views, my purposes, my hopes are at an end; I am now a lonely being, disunited from society."

"Sir," said the prince, "mortality is an event by which a wise man can never be surprised; we know that death is always near, and it should therefore always be expected." "Young man," answered the philosopher, "you speak like one that has never felt the pangs of separation." "Have you then forgot the precepts," said Rasselas, "which you so powerfully enforced? Has wisdom no strength to arm the heart against calamity? Consider that external things are naturally variable, but truth and reason are always the same." "What comfort," said the mourner, "can truth and reason afford me? Of what effect are they now, but to tell me that my daughter will not be restored?"

The prince, whose humanity would not suffer him to insult misery with reproof, went away convinced of the emptiness of rhetorical sound and the inefficacy of polished periods and studied sentences.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HAPPINESS OF A LIFE LED ACCORDING TO NATURE

Rasselas went often to an assembly of learned men, who met at stated times to unbend their minds and compare their opinions. Their manners were somewhat coarse, but their conversation was instructive, and their disputations acute, though sometimes too violent, and often continued till neither controvertist remembered upon what question they began. Some faults were almost general among them; everyone was desirous to dictate to the rest, and everyone was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated.

In this assembly Rasselas was relating his interview with the hermit, and the wonder with which he heard him censure a course of life which he had so deliberately chosen, and so laudably followed. The sentiments of the hearers were various. Some were of opinion that the folly of his choice had been justly punished by condemnation to perpetual perseverance. One of the youngest among them, with great vehemence, pronounced him an hypocrite. Some talked of the right of society to the labor of individuals, and considered retirement as a desertion of duty. Others readily allowed that there was a time when the claims of the public were satisfied, and when a man might properly sequester himself, to review his life and purify his heart.

One, who appeared more affected with the narrative than the rest, thought it likely that the hermit would in a few years go back to his retreat, and perhaps, if shame did not restrain or death intercept him, return once more from his retreat into the world. "For the hope of happiness," said he, "is so strongly impressed that the longest experience is not able to efface it. Of the present state, whatever it be, we feel and are forced to confess the misery; yet when the same state is again at a distance, imagination paints it as desirable. But the time will surely come when desire will be no longer our torment, and no man shall be wretched but by his own fault."

"This," said a philosopher who had heard him with tokens of great impatience, "is the present condition of a wise man. The time is already come when none are wretched but by their own fault. Nothing is more idle than to inquire after happiness, which Nature has kindly placed within our reach. The way to be happy is to live according to Nature, in obedience to that universal and unalterable law with which every heart is originally impressed; which is not written on it by precept, but engraven by destiny, not instilled by education, but infused at our nativity. He that lives according to Nature will suffer nothing from the delusions of hope or importunities of desire; he will receive and reject with equability of temper, and act or suffer as the reason of things shall alternately prescribe. Other men may amuse themselves with subtle definitions or intricate ratiocinations. Let them learn to be wise by easier means: let them observe the hind of the forest and the linnet of the grove: let them consider the life of animals, whose motions are regulated by instinct; they obey their guide and are happy. Let us therefore, at length, cease to dispute, and learn to live; throw away the encumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim, that deviation from Nature is deviation from happiness."

When he had spoken, he looked round him with a placid air, and enjoyed the consciousness of his own beneficence. "Sir," said the prince, with great modesty, "as I, like all the rest of mankind, am desirous of felicity, my closest attention has been fixed upon your discourse. I doubt not the truth of a position which a man so learned has so confidently advanced; let me only know what it is to live according to Nature."

"When I find young men so humble and so docile," said the philosopher, "I can deny them no information which my studies have enabled me to afford. To live according to Nature is to act always with due regard to the fitness arising from the relations and qualities of causes and effects; to concur with the great and unchangeable scheme of universal felicity; to co-operate with the general disposition and tendency of the present system of things."

The prince soon found that this was one of the sages whom he should understand less as he heard him longer. He therefore bowed and was silent, and the philosopher, supposing him satisfied and the rest vanquished, rose up and departed with the air of a man that had co-operated with the present system.

CHAPTER XLVIII

(Rasselas, the princess and friends have been visiting the catacombs.)

. . . . .

The whole assembly stood awhile silent and collected. "Let us return," said Rasselas, "from this scene of mortality. How gloomy would be these mansions of the dead to him who did not know that he shall never die; that what now acts shall continue its agency, and what now thinks shall think on forever. Those that lie here stretched before us, the wise and the powerful of ancient times, warn us to remember the shortness of our present state; they were perhaps snatched away while they were busy, like us, in the choice of life."

"To me," said the princess, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity." (1759)

The Lives of the English Poets

From *Milton*

This passage from the *Lives of the Poets* contains Johnson's notorious attack on *Lycidas*. It is true that Johnson was deaf to the subtler harmonies of verse, and that the exquisite music of that great poem fell on deaf ears. The even march of well-managed heroic couplets provided the "numbers" most pleasing to Johnson. But his real objection to *Lycidas* was on the grounds of its being a pastoral. Inimical to any kind of artifice, Johnson was always hostile to the pretenses of this kind of poetical composition. His attitude toward it may be seen in what he has to say of Pope's early work: "It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by Pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience, and . . . admit no subtle reasoning or deep enquiry." Again, in his life of Gay, he says: "A Pastoral of an hundred lines may be *endured*; but who will hear of sheep and goats, and myrtle bowers and purling rivulets, through five acts? Such scenes please Barbarians in the dawn of literature, and children in the dawn of life; but will be for the most part thrown away, as men grow wise, and nations grow learned."

In short, Johnson's sturdy good sense was offended at what is most intolerable in the usual pastoral. He was, unfortunately, too limited in the appreciation of the lyric art to understand how the formulae of pastoralism had been transmuted, by the magic of Milton's genius, into something fresh and wonderful.

Those who admire the beauties of this great poet, sometimes force their own judgment into false approbation of his little pieces, and prevail upon themselves to think that admirable which is only singular. All that short compositions can commonly attain is neatness and elegance. Milton never learned the art of doing little things with grace; he overlooked the milder excellence of suavity and softness: he was a "lion" that had no skill "in dandling the kid."

One of the poems upon which most praise has been bestowed is *Lycidas*; of which the diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain, and the numbers unpleasing. What beauty there is we must therefore seek in the sentiments and images. It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of "rough satyrs and fauns with cloven heel." Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.

In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting: whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labors, and the partner of his discoveries; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines!

"We drove afield, and both together heard
What time the grey fly winds her sultry horn,
Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night."

We know that they never drove afield, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought because it cannot be known when it is found.

Among the flocks and copses and flowers appear the heathen deities, Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what has become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honor.

This poem has yet a grosser fault. With these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverent combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which, however, I believe the writer not to have been conscious.

Such is the power of reputation justly acquired, that its blaze drives away the eye from nice examination. Surely no man could have fancied that he read *Lycidas* with pleasure, had he not known its author.

From *Pope*

Although the texture of Johnson's prose is much more like Sir Thomas Browne's (cf. pp. 404-5, *above*) than like that of Dryden, Addison, or Pope, he never failed to give his critical allegiance to the neoclassicists, and hence wrote his best *Lives* on them. His understanding of Pope's excellences and limitations is perfect, and the whole essay is a masterpiece of critical writing.

Inevitably Pope was (and still is) compared with his master, Dryden. One of the favorite neoclassical discussions was to debate the superiority of one or the other. In this passage, with wonderful good sense, Johnson apportions to each his particular powers.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastic, and who before he became an author had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either, for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied, that of Pope is cautious and uniform; Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind, Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the scythe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigor Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestic necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden therefore are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and if the reader should suspect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry may, perhaps, shew him the reasonableness of my determination. (1779-81)

James Boswell

(1740-1795)

It is only within our own time that Boswell has come to be appreciated for the charming and gifted man he was. The nineteenth-century critics granted that he had written the greatest of English biographies, but their view of Boswell's character and genius was utterly distorted. Macaulay was the chief sinner (cf. Vol. II for Macaulay on Boswell). With his fondness for paradox, the Victorian essayist said: "Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all." And this was but the beginning of Macaulay's indictment of Boswell; he declared him a "bore," "the laughing stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to him the greater part of its fame," "servile and impertinent, shallow and pedantic, a bigot and a sot, bloated with family pride," and generally an officious fool. Not content with this outrageous libel, Macaulay, perhaps exhilarated by his own brilliance, capped his contradictions by adding: "If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer." It was this clever, if false, estimate of Boswell, which writers until recently have recapitulated. Boswell's putative servility and effrontery were held responsible for his having made Johnson live and breathe in his book.

Carlyle's greater spiritual insight made him come much closer to the truth in his picture of Boswell (cf. Vol. II for Carlyle on Boswell), though he lacked the information we now possess to give a truly accurate account. He was too willing, no doubt, to admit the personal failings which Macaulay attributed to Boswell, but he was indignant at the notion that "his being among the worst men in this world . . . enabled him to write one of the best books therein! Falser hypothesis, we may venture to say, never rose in human soul. . . . Boswell wrote a good book because he had a heart and an eye to discern wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talent—above all, of his love and open-mindedness." Carlyle, in short, believed that Boswell had overcome inherent weakness by the great faculty of being able to worship the genius in Johnson. But Carlyle's well-meant allowances for Boswell are uncalled for, as we now know. It is to Prof. C. B. Tinker that thanks are due for renewed interest in Boswellian research. Through his efforts an invaluable treasure was unearthed in the residence of a descendant of Boswell at Malahide Castle, near Dublin. The now famous "black box" there discovered contained a large assortment of letters and journals belonging to Johnson's biographer. Since their purchase by Col. Isham, these papers have been appearing for the first time in print, and a new Boswell has emerged.

James Boswell was the son of a prominent Scotch judge of ancient family with property in Ayrshire. At Edinburgh University the young man became acquainted with the philosopher, David Hume. On his way to continue his studies of law in Holland, he stopped for a while in London during the year 1763 with the purpose of acquiring the friendship of Samuel Johnson, of whom he was a profound admirer. "At last, on Monday the 16th of May," a lucky accident brought them face to face. Johnson, "great bear" that he was, did little to encourage the young Scot, but Boswell, undaunted, succeeded in winning his regard after a few meetings. Thereafter a deep and abiding friendship existed between the two. When he was to meet Boswell in Scotland in 1773, Johnson wrote to him: "Think only when you see me, that you see a man who loves you, and is proud and glad that you love him." And just before his death in 1784, Johnson wrote to him: "Write to me often. . . . I consider your fidelity and tenderness as a greater part of the comforts which are yet left me, and sincerely wish we could be nearer to each other." From Johnson such words meant a great deal.

To imagine, as both Macaulay and Carlyle did, that Boswell was a mere hanger-on to a celebrity is entirely erroneous. When he was on the Continent, soon after cementing his friendship with Johnson, Boswell added to his list of friends four of the most distinguished men of his time, Rousseau, Voltaire, John Wilkes, and General Paoli. His intimacy with the last-named, a courageous Corsican patriot, resulted in his interesting himself in the affairs of the little island and its struggles; and in 1768 he published his *Account of Corsica, The Journal of a Tour to That Island: and Memoirs of Pascal Paoli.* In the *Journal,* Boswell already demonstrates his gift for biography. When he had met Paoli, he tells us, "I so far presumed upon his goodness to me as to take the liberty of asking him a thousand questions with regard to the most minute and private circumstances of his life." Here is the characteristic Boswellian genius for collecting materials for biography, and what he says of his behavior with Paoli is true, as the recently recovered papers prove, of his dealings with many men. In the meantime he had been admitted to the Scottish bar, published *Dorando, a Spanish Tale* and the *Essence of the Douglas Case.* In 1760 the *British Essays in Favor of the Brave Corsicans,* which he supervised, showed his constant interest in the Corsican fight for liberty. His election in 1773 to Johnson's "Club" brought him the friendship of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Edmund Malone, the scholar. His legal practice kept him busy and his personal affairs required his presence in Scotland, but London was the paradise he longed for, and to it he came as often as he could manage. From 1777 to 1783 he contributed a monthly essay, under the heading of "The Hypochondriack," to the *London Magazine.* A glance at F. A. Pottle's *The Literary Career of James Boswell* (1929) would astonish many with the productivity of Boswell's pen, although writing was for him but an avocation.

Thus, if one wished to be perverse, one could convert the nineteenth century's Boswell into a Boswell who, scion of a noble house and literary man as he was, *condescended* to know Johnson. But that, too, would be a false picture, for Boswell's veneration for Johnson is patent on every page of his great book. Differences in rank still enabled a man of family to behave with superiority toward impoverished literary genius; but Boswell approached Johnson with willing submission to the latter's powerful mind. Moreover, Boswell had the kind of conscience which literary folk will understand: he saw in his friend the materials for a great book. Johnson, well aware of Boswell's purpose, thoroughly approved. The biographer, therefore, could permit nothing to stand in the way of fulfilling this important end—not Johnson's fits of ill-temper, nor his gruffness, nor his occasional unreasonableness. His love for his friend was as ardent as his faithfulness to his intended biography was steady.

Having persuaded Johnson in 1773 to visit with him the Hebrides and the Highlands of Scotland, Boswell published the year after his friend's death his *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1785), as a kind of test for how the public would receive a larger biography. As printed, the *Journal of a Tour* was an enormous success, for it is likely that nowhere before had such a vivid portrait of a literary man been made. In the "black box" at Malahide Castle was found the original version of this book, and it proves to be even fuller and racier than Boswell's generation ever could have guessed it to be. Thus encouraged, Boswell began to assemble his notes, to correspond with Johnson's other friends, and to gather all available material for his *magnum opus.* In 1791 the *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* appeared. Its undiminished popularity since then has assured immortality to both Boswell and Johnson.

Boswell did not overstate the case when he complacently said of the *Life*, "I flatter myself it will exhibit him more completely than any person, ancient or modern." Certainly, in consequence of Boswell's genius and labors, no man is better known to readers of English literature than Samuel Johnson. We can agree with Macaulay in one particular: Boswell's is certainly the first of the world's biographies. He was born to the task, and it is safe to say that no matter who his subject had been, Boswell's biography would have been fascinating. But Johnson was one of the most interesting men who ever lived—or, at least, Boswell has made him so. His greatest talent was as a conversationalist, and no one, in the whole brilliant circle of his acquaintance, could draw him out as could Boswell. Almost from the beginning Boswell was careful to keep notes in his journal, and devised various means of retaining in his memory the exact words of his friend. The style of Johnson's conversation, as he records it, is unfailingly consistent, and of a very different order from Boswell's own prose. But the biography contains more than the conversation, more than the full records of his subject. Boswell, as Mr. Oliver Elton fittingly puts it, "inserts all the gestures, and grunts, and blowings of his hero, and conveys the *sound* of his silences while at his food, and also the silence of the company, or of the victim, after a point has been made."

The most completely annotated edition of the *Life* was made by G. B. Hill (1887) and revised by L. F. Powell (1934). Few pieces of scholarship will be found more enjoyable than C. B. Tinker's *Young Boswell* (1922), which ushered in a new era in the appreciation of Boswell. C. B. Tinker's edition of Boswell's frank *Letters* (1924) will provide much information and entertainment. G. Scott and F. A. Pottle have been editing for a limited edition the papers found in the "black box" (1928—); eighteen volumes have appeared. From the same collection, F. A. Pottle and C. H. Bennett edited the original version of the *Tour to the Hebrides* (1936). *The Hypochrondriack* was edited in two volumes by M. Bailey (1928).

The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.

From *The Year 1763*

This is to me a memorable year; for in it I had the happiness to obtain the acquaintance of that extraordinary man whose memoirs I am now writing; an acquaintance which I shall ever esteem as one of the most fortunate circumstances in my life. Though then but two-and-twenty, I had for several years read his works with delight and instruction, and had the highest reverence for their author, which had grown up in my fancy into a kind of mysterious veneration, by figuring to myself a state of solemn elevated abstraction, in which I supposed him to live in the immense metropolis of London. Mr. Gentleman, a native of Ireland, who passed some years in Scotland as a player, and as an instructor in the English language, a man whose talents and worth were depressed by misfortunes, had given me a representation of the figure and manner of DICTIONARY JOHNSON! as he was then generally called; and during my first visit to London, which was for three months in 1760, Mr. Derrick the poet, who was Gentleman's friend and countryman, flattered me with hopes that he would introduce me to Johnson, an honor of which I was very ambitious. But he never found an opportunity; which made me doubt that he had promised to do what was not in his power; till Johnson some years afterwards told me, "Derrick, Sir, might very well have introduced you. I had a kindness for Derrick, and am sorry he is dead."

In the summer of 1761 Mr. Thomas Sheridan was at Edinburgh, and delivered lectures upon the English Language and Public Speaking to large and respectable audiences. I was often in his company, and heard him frequently expatiate upon Johnson's extraordinary knowledge, talents, and virtues, repeat his pointed sayings, describe his particularities, and boast of his being his guest sometimes till two or three in the morning. At his house I hoped to have many opportunities of seeing the sage, as Mr. Sheridan obligingly assured me I should not be disappointed.

When I returned to London in the end of 1762, to my surprise and regret I found an irreconcilable difference had taken place between Johnson and Sheridan. A pension of two hundred pounds a year had been given to Sheridan. Johnson, who, as has been already mentioned, thought slightingly of Sheridan's art, upon hearing that he was also pensioned, exclaimed, "What! have they given *him* a pension? Then it is time for me to give up mine." Whether this proceeded from a momentary indignation, as if it were an affront to his exalted merit that a player should be rewarded in the same manner with him, or was the sudden effect of a fit of peevishness, it was unluckily said, and, indeed, cannot be justified. Mr. Sheridan's pension was granted to him not as a player, but as a sufferer in the cause of government, when he was manager of the Theatre Royal in Ireland, when parties ran high in 1753. And it must also be allowed that he was a man of literature, and had considerably improved the arts of reading and speaking with distinctness and propriety.

Besides, Johnson should have recollected that Mr. Sheridan taught pronunciation to Mr. Alexander Wedderburne, whose sister was married to Sir Harry Erskine, an intimate friend of Lord Bute, who was the favorite of the king; and surely the most outrageous Whig will not maintain that, whatever ought to be the principle in the disposal of offices, a pension ought never to be granted from any bias of court connection. Mr. Macklin, indeed, shared with Mr. Sheridan the honor of instructing Mr. Wedderburne; and though it was too late in life for a Caledonian to acquire the genuine English cadence, yet so successful were Mr. Wedderburne's instructors, and his own unabating endeavors, that he got rid of the coarse part of his Scotch accent, retaining only as much of the "native woodnote wild," as to mark his country; which, if any Scotchman should affect to forget, I should heartily despise him. Notwithstanding the difficulties which are to be encountered by those who have not had the advantage of an English education, he by degrees formed a mode of speaking to which Englishmen do not deny the praise of elegance. Hence his distinguished oratory, which he exerted in his own country as an advocate in the Court of Session, and a ruling elder of the Kirk,[1] has had its fame and ample reward in much higher spheres. When I look back on this noble person at Edinburgh, in situations so unworthy of his brilliant powers, and behold Lord Loughborough at London, the change seems almost like one of the metamorphoses in Ovid; and as his two preceptors, by refining his utterance, gave currency to his talents, we may say in the words of that poet, *Nam vos mutastis*.[2]

I have dwelt the longer upon this remarkable instance of successful parts and assiduity, because it affords animating encouragement to other gentlemen of North Britain to try their fortunes in the southern part of the island, where they may hope to gratify their utmost ambition; and, now that we are one people by the Union,[3] it would surely be illiberal to maintain that they have not an equal title with the natives of any other part of his Majesty's dominions.

Johnson complained that a man who disliked him repeated his sarcasm to Mr. Sheridan, without telling him what followed, which was that, after a pause, he added, "However, I am glad that Mr. Sheridan has a pension, for he is a very good man." Sheridan could never forgive this hasty contemptuous expression. It rankled in his mind; and though I informed him of all that Johnson said, and that he would be very glad to meet him amicably, he positively declined repeated offers which I made, and once went off abruptly from a house where he and I were engaged to dine, because he was told that Dr. Johnson was to be there. I have no sympathetic feeling with such persevering resentment. It is painful when there is a breach between those who have lived together socially and cordially; and I wonder that there is not, in all such cases, a mutual wish that it should be healed. I could perceive that Mr. Sheridan was by no means satisfied with Johnson's acknowledging him to be a good man. That could not soothe his injured vanity. I could not but smile, at the same time that I was offended, to observe Sheridan in the *Life of Swift*, which he afterwards published, attempting, in the writhings of his resentment, to depreciate Johnson by characterising him as "a writer of gigantic fame, in these days of little men"; that very Johnson whom he once so highly admired and venerated.

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[1] the Church of Scotland.

[2] For you have been transformed.

[3] The Union of England and Scotland was effected in 1707.

This rupture with Sheridan deprived Johnson of one of his most agreeable resources for amusement in his lonely evenings; for Sheridan's well-informed, animated, and bustling mind never suffered conversation to stagnate; and Mrs. Sheridan was a most agreeable companion to an intellectual man. She was sensible, ingenious, unassuming, yet communicative. I recollect with satisfaction many pleasing hours which I passed with her under the hospitable roof of her husband, who was to me a very kind friend. Her novel, entitled *Memoirs of Miss Sydney Biddulph*, contains an excellent moral, while it inculcates a future state of retribution; and what it teaches is impressed upon the mind by a series of as deep distress as can affect humanity, in the amiable and pious heroine who goes to her grave unrelieved, but resigned, and full of hope of "Heaven's mercy." Johnson paid her this high compliment upon it: "I know not, madam, that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much."

Mr. Thomas Davies, the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him: but by some unlucky accident or other he was prevented from coming to us.

Mr. Thomas Davies was a man of good understanding and talents, with the advantage of a liberal education. Though somewhat pompous, he was an entertaining companion; and his literary performances have no inconsiderable share of merit. He was a friendly and very hospitable man. Both he and his wife (who has been celebrated for her beauty), though upon the stage for many years, maintained an uniform decency of character; and Johnson esteemed them, and lived in as easy an intimacy with them as with any family which he used to visit. Mr. Davies recollected several of Johnson's remarkable sayings, and was one of the best of the many imitators of his voice and manner, while relating them. He increased my impatience more and more to see the extraordinary man whose works I highly valued, and whose conversation was reported to be so peculiarly excellent.

At last, on Monday the 16th of May, when I was sitting in Mr. Davies's back-parlor, after having drunk tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop; and Mr. Davies having perceived him through the glass-door in the room in which we were sitting, advancing towards us—he announced his awful approach to me, somewhat in the manner of an actor in the part of Horatio, when he addresses Hamlet on the appearance of his father's ghost, "Look, my Lord, it comes." I found that I had a very perfect idea of Johnson's figure, from the portrait of him painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds soon after he had published his *Dictionary*, in the attitude of sitting in his easy chair in deep meditation; which was the first picture his friend did for him, which Sir Joshua very kindly presented to me, and from which an engraving has been made for this work. Mr. Davies mentioned my name, and respectfully introduced me to him. I was much agitated; and recollecting his prejudice against the Scotch, of which I had heard much, I said to Davies, "Don't tell where I come from."—"From Scotland," cried Davies, roguishly. "Mr. Johnson," said I, "I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it." I am willing to flatter myself that I meant this as light pleasantry to soothe and conciliate him, and not as an humiliating abasement at the expense of my country. But however that might be, this speech was somewhat unlucky; for with that quickness of wit for which he was so remarkable, he seized the expression "come from Scotland," which I used in the sense of being of that country; and, as if I had said that I had come away from it, or left it, retorted, "That, sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help." This stroke stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed, and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick?[4] He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams,[5] because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "Oh, sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir," said he, with a stern look, "I have known David Garrick longer than you have done, and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject." Perhaps I deserved this check; for it was rather presumptuous in me, an entire stranger, to express any doubt of the justice of his animadversion upon his old acquaintance and pupil. I now felt myself much mortified, and began to think that the hope which I had long indulged of obtaining his acquaintance was blasted. And, in truth, had not my ardor been uncommonly strong, and my resolution uncommonly persevering, so rough a reception might have deterred me forever from making any further attempts. Fortunately, however, I remained upon the field not wholly discomfited; and was soon rewarded by hearing some of his conversation, of which I preserved the following short minute, without remarking the questions and observations by which it was produced.

"People," he remarked, "may be taken in once, who imagine that an author is greater in private life than other men. Uncommon parts require uncommon opportunities, for their exertion.

"In barbarous society, superiority of parts is of real consequence. Great strength or great wisdom is of much value to an individual. But in more polished times there are people to do everything for money; and then there are a number of other superiorities, such as those of birth, and fortune, and rank, that dissipate men's attention, and leave no extraordinary share of respect for personal and intellectual superiority. This is wisely ordered by Providence, to preserve some equality among mankind."

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I was highly pleased with the extraordinary vigor of his conversation, and regretted that I was drawn away from it by an engagement at another place. I had, for a part of the evening, been left alone with him, and had ventured to make an observation now and then, which he received very civilly; so that I was satisfied that, though there was a roughness in his manner, there was no ill-nature in his disposition. Davies followed me to the door, and when I complained to him a little of the hard blows which the great man had given me, he kindly took upon him to console me by saying, "Don't be uneasy. I can see he likes you very well."

A few days afterwards I called on Davies, and asked him if he thought I might take the liberty of waiting on Mr. Johnson at his chambers in the Temple. He said I certainly might, and that Mr. Johnson would take it as a compliment. So on Tuesday the 24th of May, after having been enlivened by the witty sallies of Messieurs Thornton, Wilkes, Churchill, and Lloyd, with whom I had passed the morning, I boldly repaired to Johnson. His chambers were on the first floor of No. 1, Inner-Temple-lane, and I entered them with an impression given me by the Reverend Dr. Blair, of Edinburgh, who had been introduced to him not long before, and described his having "found the Giant in his den"; an expression which, when I came to be pretty well acquainted with Johnson, I repeated to him, and he was diverted at this picturesque account of himself. Dr. Blair had been presented to him by Dr. James Fordyce. At this time the controversy concerning the pieces published by Mr. James Macpherson, as translations of Ossian,[6] was at its height. Johnson had all along denied their authenticity; and, what was still more provoking to their admirers, maintained that they had no merit. The subject having been introduced by Dr. Fordyce, Dr. Blair, relying on the internal evidence of their antiquity, asked Dr. Johnson whether he thought any man of a modern age could have written such poems? Johnson replied, "Yes, Sir, many men, many women, and many children." Johnson at this time, did not know that Dr. Blair had just published a Dissertation, not only defending their authenticity, but seriously ranking them with the poems of Homer and Virgil; and when he was afterwards informed of this circumstance, he expressed some displeasure at Dr. Fordyce's having suggested the topic, and said, "I am not sorry that they got thus much for their pains. Sir, it was like leading one to talk of a book, when the author is concealed behind the door."

He received me very courteously: but, it must be confessed, that his apartment, and furniture, and morning dress, were sufficiently uncouth. His brown suit of clothes looked very rusty: he had on a little old shrivelled unpowdered wig, which was too small for his head; his shirt-neck and knees of his breeches were loose; his black worsted stockings ill drawn up; and he had a pair of unbuckled shoes by way of slippers. But all these slovenly particularities were forgotten the moment that he began to talk. Some gentlemen, whom I do not recollect, were sitting with him; and when they went away, I also rose; but he said to me, "Nay, don't go."—"Sir, (said I,) I am afraid that I intrude upon you. It is benevolent to allow me to sit and hear you." He seemed pleased with this compliment, which I sincerely paid him, and answered, "Sir, I am obliged to any man who visits me." I have preserved the following short minute of what passed this day.

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[4] David Garrick, famous English Actor (1717-1779).

[5] the blind lady for whom Dr. Johnson made a home.

[6] Cf. Vol. II.

"Madness frequently discovers itself merely by unnecessary deviation from the usual modes of the world. My poor friend Smart showed the disturbance of his mind, by falling upon his knees, and saying his prayers in the street, or in any other unusual place. Now although, rationally speaking, it is greater madness not to pray at all than to pray as Smart did, I am afraid there are so many who do not pray that their understanding is not called in question."

Concerning this unfortunate poet, Christopher Smart, who was confined in a madhouse, he had, at another time, the following conversation with Dr. Burney.[7]—Burney. "How does poor Smart do, sir? is he likely to recover?" Johnson. "It seems as if his mind had ceased to struggle with the disease, for he grows fat upon it." Burney. "Perhaps, sir, that may be from want of exercise." Johnson. "No, sir; he has partly as much exercise as he used to have, for he digs in the garden. Indeed, before his confinement, he used for exercise to walk to the alehouse; but he was carried back again. I did not think he ought to be shut up. His infirmities were not noxious to society. He insisted on people praying with him; and I'd as lief pray with Kit Smart as any one else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it." Johnson continued. "Mankind have a great aversion to intellectual labor; but even supposing knowledge to be easily attainable, more people would be content to be ignorant than would take even a little trouble to acquire it."

"The morality of an action depends on the motive from which we act. If I fling half a crown to a beggar with intention to break his head, and he picks it up and buys victuals with it, the physical effect is good; but, with respect to me, the action is very wrong. So, religious exercises, if not performed with an intention to please God, avail us nothing. As our Saviour says of those who perform them from other motives, 'Verily they have their reward.'"

"The Christian religion has very strong evidences. It, indeed, appears in some degree strange to reason; but in history we have undoubted facts, against which, reasoning *a priori*, we have more arguments than we have for them; but then, testimony has great weight, and casts the balance. I would recommend to every man whose faith is yet unsettled, Grotius, Dr. Pearson, and Dr. Clarke."

Talking of Garrick, he said, "He is the first man in the world for sprightly conversation."

When I rose a second time, he again pressed me to stay, which I did.

He told me that he generally went abroad at four in the afternoon, and seldom came home till two in the morning. I took the liberty to ask if he did not think it wrong to live thus, and not make more use of his great talents. He owned it was a bad habit. On reviewing, at the distance of many years, my journal of this period, I wonder how, at my first visit, I ventured to talk to him so freely, and that he bore it with so much indulgence.

Before we parted, he was so good as to promise to favor me with his company one evening at my lodgings; and, as I took my leave, shook me cordially by the hand. It is almost needless to add that I felt no little elation at having now so happily established an acquaintance of which I had been so long ambitious.

My readers will, I trust, excuse me for being thus minutely circumstantial, when it is considered that the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson was to me a most valuable acquisition, and laid the foundation of whatever instruction and entertainment they may receive from my collections concerning the great subject of the work which they are now perusing.

I did not visit him again till Monday, June 13, at which time I recollect no part of his conversation, except, that when I told him I had been to see Johnson ride upon three horses, he said, "Such a man, sir, should be encouraged; for his performances show the extent of the human powers in one instance, and thus tend to raise our opinion of the faculties of man. He shows what may be attained by persevering application; so that every man may hope, that by giving as much application, although, perhaps, he may never ride three horses at a time, or dance upon a wire, yet he may be equally expert in whatever profession he has chosen to pursue."

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[7] Dr. Charles Burney, English composer and historian of music (1726-1814), father of Fanny Burney, Madame d'Arblay, noted novelist.

He again shook me by the hand at parting, and asked me why I did not come oftener to him. Trusting that I was now in his good graces, I answered, that he had not given me much encouragement, and reminded him of the check I had received from him at our first interview. "Poh, poh!" said he, with a complacent smile, "never mind these things. Come to me as often as you can. I shall be glad to see you."

I had learnt that his place of frequent resort was the Mitre tavern in Fleet street, where he loved to sit up late, and I begged I might be allowed to pass an evening with him there soon, which he promised I should. A few days afterwards, I met him near Temple-bar about one o'clock in the morning, and asked if he would then go to the Mitre. "Sir," said he, "it is too late, they won't let us in. But I'll go with you another night, with all my heart."

A revolution of some importance in my plan of life had just taken place: for instead of procuring a commission in the foot guards, which was my own inclination, I had, in compliance with my father's wishes, agreed to study the law, and was soon to set out for Utrecht,[9] to hear the lectures of an excellent civilian in that University, and then to proceed on my travels. Though very desirous of obtaining Dr. Johnson's advice and instructions on the mode of pursuing my studies, I was at this time so occupied, shall I call it? or so dissipated by the amusements of London, that our next meeting was not till Saturday, June 25, when, happening to dine at Clifton's eating-house, in Butcher-row, I was surprised to perceive Johnson come in and take his seat at another table. The mode of dining, or rather being fed, at such houses in London, is well known to many to be particularly unsocial, as there is no Ordinary, or united company, but each person has his own mess, and is under no obligation to hold any intercourse with any one. A liberal and full-minded man, however, who loves to talk, will break through this churlish and unsocial restraint. Johnson and an Irish gentleman got into a dispute concerning the cause of some part of mankind being black. "Why, Sir, (said Johnson,) it has been accounted for in three ways: either by supposing that they are the posterity of Ham, who was cursed; or that GOD at first created two kinds of men, one black and another white; or that by the heat of the sun the skin is scorched, and so acquires a sooty hue. This matter has been much canvassed among naturalists, but has never been brought to any certain issue." What the Irishman said is totally obliterated from my mind; but I remember that he became very warm and intemperate in his expressions; upon which Johnson rose, and quietly walked away. When he had retired, his antagonist took his revenge, as he thought, by saying, "He has a most ungainly figure, and an affectation of pomposity, unworthy of a man of genius."

Johnson had not observed that I was in the room. I followed him, however, and he agreed to meet me in the evening at the Mitre. I called on him, and we went thither at nine. We had a good supper, and port wine, of which he then sometimes drank a bottle. The orthodox high-church sound of the MITRE,—the figure and manner of the celebrated SAMUEL JOHNSON,—the extraordinary power and precision of his conversation, and the pride arising from finding myself admitted as his companion, produced a variety of sensations, and a pleasing elevation of mind beyond what I had ever before experienced. I find in my journal the following minute of our conversation, which, though it will give but a very faint notion of what passed, is in some degree a valuable record; and it will be curious in this view, as shewing how habitual to his mind were some opinions which appear in his works.

"Colley Cibber,[10] Sir, was by no means a blockhead; but by arrogating to himself too much, he was in danger of losing that degree of estimation to which he was entitled. His friends gave out that he *intended* his birthday *Odes* should be bad: but that was not the case, Sir; for he kept them many months by him, and a few years before he died he showed me one of them, with great solicitude to render it as perfect as might be, and I made some corrections, to which he was not very willing to submit. I remember the following couplet in allusion to the King and himself:—

> 'Perched on the eagle's soaring wing,
> The lowly linnet loves to sing.'

Sir, he had heard something of the fabulous tale of the wren sitting upon the eagle's wing, and he had applied it to a linnet. Cibber's familiar style, however, was better than that which Whitehead[11] had assumed. *Grand* nonsense is insupportable. Whitehead is but a little man to inscribe verses to players."

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[9] a university in Holland.

[10] English actor and dramatist (1671-1757).

[11] William Whitehead (1715-1785), poet laureate.

I did not presume to controvert this censure, which was tinctured with his prejudice against players; but I could not help thinking that a dramatic poet might with propriety pay a compliment to an eminent performer, as Whitehead has very happily done in his verses to Mr. Garrick.

"Sir, I do not think Gray[12] a first-rate poet. He has not a bold imagination, nor much command of words. The obscurity in which he has involved himself will not persuade us that he is sublime. His *Elegy in a Churchyard* has a happy selection of images, but I don't like what are called his great things. His Ode which begins

> 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.
> Confusion on thy banners wait!'

has been celebrated for its abruptness and plunging into the subject all at once. But such arts as these have no merit, unless when they are original. We admire them only once; and this abruptness has nothing new in it. We have had it often before. Nay, we have it in the old song of Johnny Armstrong:

> 'Is there ever a man in all Scotland,
> From the highest estate to the lowest degree.'

And then, sir,

> 'Yes, there is a man in Westmoreland
> And Johnny Armstrong they do him call.'

There, now, you plunge at once into the subject. You have no previous narration to lead you to it. The two next lines in that ode are, I think, very good:

> 'Though fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing,
> They mock the air with idle state.' "

Here let it be observed that although his opinion of Gray's poetry was widely different from mine, and I believe from that of most men of taste, by whom it is with justice highly admired, there is certainly much absurdity in the clamor which has been raised, as if he had been culpably injurious to the merit of that bard, and had been actuated by envy. Alas! ye little short-sighted critics, could Johnson be envious of the talents of any of his contemporaries? That his opinion on this subject was what in private and in public he uniformly expressed, regardless of what others might think, we may wonder, and perhaps regret; but it is shallow and unjust to charge him with expressing what he did not think.

Finding him in a placid humor, and wishing to avail myself of the opportunity which I fortunately had of consulting a sage, to hear whose wisdom, I conceived, in the ardor of youthful imagination, that men filled with a noble enthusiasm for intellectual improvement would gladly have resorted from distant lands;—I opened my mind to him ingenuously, and gave him a little sketch of my life, to which he was pleased to listen with great attention.

I acknowledged that, though educated very strictly in the principles of religion, I had for some time been misled into a certain degree of infidelity; but that I was come now to a better way of thinking, and was fully satisfied of the truth of the Christian revelation, though I was not clear as to every point considered to be orthodox. Being at all times a curious examiner of the human mind, and pleased with an undisguised display of what had passed in it, he called to me with warmth, "Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you." He then began to descant upon the force of testimony, and the little we could know of final causes; so that the objections of, why was it so? or why was it not so? ought not to disturb us: adding, that he himself had at one period been guilty of a temporary neglect of religion, but that it was not the result of argument, but mere absence of thought.

After having given credit to reports of his bigotry, I was agreeably surprised when he expressed the following very liberal sentiment, which has the additional value of obviating an objection to our holy religion, founded upon the discordant tenets of Christians themselves: "For my part, sir, I think all Christians, whether Papists or Protestants, agree in the essential articles, and that their differences are trivial, and rather political than religious."

We talked of belief in ghosts. He said, "Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice cry, 'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished'; my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind, that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact, with all its circumstances, should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural intelligence imparted to me."

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[12] Cf. Vol. II.

Here it is proper, once for all, to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question, whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so foolish a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet, as I find it has gained ground, it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith, that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he had discovered it. Churchill,[13] in his poem entitled *The Ghost*, availed himself of the absurd credulity imputed to Johnson, and drew a caricature of him under the name of "POMPOSO," representing him as one of the believers of the story of a Ghost in Cocklane, which, in the year 1762, had gained very general credit in London. Many of my readers, I am convinced, are to this hour under an impression that Johnson was thus foolishly deceived. It will therefore surprise them a good deal when they are informed upon undoubted authority, that Johnson was one of those by whom the imposture was detected. The story had become so popular, that he thought it should be investigated; and in this research he was assisted by the Reverend Dr. Douglas, now Bishop of Salisbury, the great detector of impostures; who informs me, that after the gentlemen who went and examined into the evidence were satisfied of its falsity, Johnson wrote in their presence an account of it, which was published in the newspapers and *Gentleman's Magazine*, and undeceived the world.

Our conversation proceeded. "Sir, (said he) I am a friend to subordination, as most conducive to the happiness of society. There is a reciprocal pleasure in governing and being governed."

"Dr. Goldsmith is one of the first men we now have as an author, and he is a very worthy man too. He has been loose in his principles, but he is coming right."

I mentioned Mallet's[14] tragedy of *Elvira*, which had been acted the preceding winter at Drury Lane, and that the Honourable Andrew Erskine, Mr. Dempster, and myself, had joined in writing a pamphlet, entitled *Critical Strictures* against it. That the mildness of Dempster's disposition had, however, relented; and he had candidly said, "We have hardly a right to abuse this tragedy; for bad as it is, how vain should either of us be to write one not near so good." JOHNSON: "Why no, sir; this is not just reasoning. You *may* abuse a tragedy, though you cannot write one. You may scold a carpenter who has made you a bad table, though you cannot make a table. It is not your trade to make tables."

When I talked to him of the paternal estate[15] to which I was heir, he said, "Sir, let me tell you that to be a Scotch landlord, where you have a number of families dependent upon you, and attached to you, is, perhaps, as high a situation as humanity can arrive at. A merchant upon the 'Change of London, with a hundred thousand pounds, is nothing; an English Duke, with an immense fortune, is nothing; he has no tenants who consider themselves as under his patriarchal care, and who will follow him to the field upon an emergency."

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I complained to him that I had not yet acquired much knowledge, and asked his advice as to my studies. He said, "Don't talk of study, now. I will give you a plan; but it will require some time to consider of it." "It is very good of you," I replied, "to allow me to be with you thus. Had it been foretold to me some years ago that I should pass an evening with the author of the *Rambler*, how should I have exulted!" What I then expressed was sincerely from my heart. He was satisfied that it was, and cordially answered, "Sir, I am glad we have met. I hope we shall pass many evenings, and mornings too, together." We finished a couple of bottles of port, and sat till between one and two in the morning.

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[13] Charles Churchill (1731-1764), a voluminous poet.

[14] David Mallet (1700?-1765), a Scottish poet.

[15] Auchinleck, about twenty-eight miles south of Glasgow.

He wrote this year, in the *Critical Review*, the account of *Telemachus, a Mask*, by the Rev. George Graham, of Eton College. The subject of this beautiful poem was particularly interesting to Johnson, who had much experience of "the conflict of opposite principles," which he describes as "the contention between pleasure and virtue, a struggle which will always be continued while the present system of nature shall subsist; nor can history or poetry exhibit more than pleasure triumphing over virtue, and virtue subjugating pleasure."

As Dr. Oliver Goldsmith will frequently appear in this narrative, I shall endeavor to make my readers in some degree acquainted with his singular character. He was a native of Ireland, and a contemporary with Mr. Burke,[16] at Trinity College, Dublin, but did not then give much promise of future celebrity. He, however, observed to Mr. Malone,[17] that "though he made no great figure in mathematics, which was a study in much repute there, he could turn an Ode of Horace into English better than any of them." He afterwards studied physic in Edinburgh, and upon the Continent: and, I have been informed, was enabled to pursue his travels on foot, partly by demanding, at Universities, to enter the lists as a disputant, by which, according to the custom of many of them, he was entitled to the premium of a crown, when, luckily for him, his challenge was not accepted so that, as I once observed to Johnson, he *disputed* his passage through Europe. He then came to England, and was employed successively in the capacities of an usher[18] to an academy, a corrector of the press, a reviewer, and a writer for a newspaper. He had sagacity enough to cultivate assiduously the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were gradually enlarged by the contemplation of such a model. To me and many others it appeared that he studiously copied the manner of Johnson, though, indeed, upon a smaller scale.

At this time I think he had published nothing with his name, though it was pretty generally known that *one Dr. Goldsmith* was the author of *An Inquiry into the present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, and of *The Citizen of the World*,[19] a series of letters supposed to be written from London by a Chinese. No man had the art of displaying with more advantage, as a writer, whatever literary acquisitions he made. *Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit.*[20] His mind resembled a fertile but thin soil. There was a quick, but not a strong, vegetation, of whatever chanced to be thrown upon it. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there; but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre appeared in gay succession. It has been generally circulated and believed that he was a mere fool in conversation; but, in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated. He had, no doubt, a more than common share of that hurry of ideas which we often find in his countrymen, and which sometimes produces a laughable confusion in expressing them. He was very much what the French call *un étourdi*,[21] and from vanity and an eager desire of being conspicuous wherever he was, he frequently talked carelessly without knowledge of the subject, or even without thought. His person was short, his countenance coarse and vulgar, his deportment that of a scholar awkwardly affecting the easy gentleman. Those who were in any way distinguished, excited envy in him to so ridiculous an excess, that the instances of it are hardly credible. When accompanying two beautiful young ladies,[22] with their mother, on a tour in France, he was seriously angry that more attention was paid to them than to him; and once at the exhibition of the *Fantoccini* in London, when those who sat next to him observed with what dexterity a puppet was made to toss a pike, he could not bear that it should have such praise, and exclaimed, with some warmth, "Pshaw! I can do it better myself."[23]

He, I am afraid, had no settled system of any sort, so that his conduct must not be strictly scrutinized; but his affections were social and generous, and when he had money he gave it away very liberally. His desire of imaginary consequence predominated over his attention to truth. When he began to rise into notice, he said he had a brother who was dean of Durham, a fiction so easily detected, that it is wonderful how he should have been so inconsiderate as to hazard it. He boasted to me at this time of the power of his pen in commanding money, which I believe was true in a certain degree, though in the instance he gave he was by no means correct. He told me that he had sold a novel for four hundred pounds. This was his *Vicar of Wakefield.* But Johnson informed me that he had made the bargain for Goldsmith, and the price was sixty pounds. "And, sir," said he, "a sufficient price too, when it was sold; for then the fame of Goldsmith had not been elevated, as it afterwards was, by his *Traveller*; and the bookseller had such faint hopes of profit by his bargain, that he kept the manuscript by him a long time, and did not publish it till after *The Traveller* had appeared. Then, to be sure, it was accidentally worth more money."

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[16] Cf. p. 807.

[17] Edmund Malone (1741-1812), Irish literary critic and Shakespearean scholar.

[18] assistant teacher.

[19] Cf. p. 801.

[20] There was nothing he touched he did not adorn. See his epitaph in Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson (p. 791, *below*).

[21] a foolish blunderer.

[22] Miss Hornecks, one of whom is now married to Henry Bunbury, Esq., and the other to Colonel Gwyn. —Boswell.

[23] He went home with Mr. Burke to supper; and broke his shin by attempting to exhibit to the company how much better he could jump over a stick than the puppets.—Boswell.

Mrs. Piozzi[24] and Sir John Hawkins[25] have strangely misstated the history of Goldsmith's situation and Johnson's friendly interference, when this novel was sold. I shall give it authentically from Johnson's own exact narration:

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return; and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

My next meeting with Johnson was on Friday the 1st of July, when he and I and Dr. Goldsmith supped together at the Mitre. I was before this time pretty well acquainted with Goldsmith, who was one of the brightest ornaments of the Johnsonian school. Goldsmith's respectful attachment to Johnson was then at its height, for his own literary reputation had not yet distinguished him so much as to excite a vain desire of competition with his great master. He had increased my admiration of the goodness of Johnson's heart, by incidental remarks in the course of conversation, such as, when I mentioned Mr. Levet, whom he entertained under his roof, "He is poor and honest, which is recommendation enough to Johnson"; and when I wondered that he was very kind to a man of whom I had heard a very bad character, "He is now become miserable, and that insures the protection of Johnson."

Goldsmith attempted this evening to maintain, I suppose from an affectation of paradox, "that knowledge was not desirable on its own account, for it often was a source of unhappiness." Johnson. "Why, sir, that knowledge may in some cases produce unhappiness, I allow. But, upon the whole, knowledge, *per se,*[26] is certainly an object which every man would wish to attain, although, perhaps, he may not take the trouble necessary for attaining it."

Dr. John Campbell, the celebrated political and biographical writer, being mentioned, Johnson said, "Campbell is a man of much knowledge, and has a good share of imagination. His *Hermippus Redivivus* is very entertaining, as an account of the Hermetic[27] philosophy, and as furnishing a curious history of the extravagancies of the human mind. If it were merely imaginary, it would be nothing at all. Campbell is not always rigidly careful of truth in his conversation; but I do not believe there is anything of this carelessness in his books. Campbell is a good man, a pious man. I am afraid he has not been in the inside of a church for many years; but he never passes a church without pulling off his hat. This shows that he has good principles. I used to go pretty often to Campbell's on a Sunday evening till I began to consider that the shoals of Scotchmen who flocked about him might probably say, when anything of mine was well done, 'Ay, ay, he has learned this of Cawmell!'"

He talked very contemptuously of Churchill's poetry, observing, that "it had a temporary currency, only from its audacity of abuse, and being filled with living names, and that it would sink into oblivion." I ventured to hint that he was not quite a fair judge, as Churchill had attacked him violently. Johnson. "Nay, sir, I am a very fair judge. He did not attack me violently till he found I did not like his poetry; and his attack on me shall not prevent me from continuing to say what I think of him, from an apprehension that it may be ascribed to resentment. No, sir, I called the fellow a blockhead at first, and I will call him a blockhead still. However, I will acknowledge that I have a better opinion of him now than I once had; for he has shown more fertility than I expected. To be sure, he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few."

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[24] As Mrs. Thrale she was for a long time a close friend of Dr. Johnson. After her husband's death she married Piozzi, an Italian musician. The work referred to is her *Anecdotes of Johnson.*

[25] English author, and editor of Johnson's works (1719-1789).

[26] for its own sake.

[27] concerning alchemy and magic.

In this depreciation of Churchill's poetry I could not agree with him. It is very true that the greatest part of it is upon the topics of the day, on which account, as it brought him great fame and profit at the time, it must proportionally slide out of the public attention as other occasional objects succeed. But Churchill had extraordinary vigor both of thought and expression. His portraits of the players will ever be valuable to the true lovers of the drama; and his strong caricatures of several eminent men of his age will not be forgotten by the curious. Let me add that there are in his works many passages which are of a general nature; and his *Prophecy of Famine* is a poem of no ordinary merit. It is, indeed, falsely injurious to Scotland, but therefore may be allowed a greater share of invention.

Bonnell Thornton had just published a burlesque *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, "adapted to the ancient British music, viz. the salt-box, the jew's-harp, the marrow-bones and cleaver, the hum-strum or hurdy-gurdy, &c." Johnson praised its humor, and seemed much diverted with it. He repeated the following passage:

In strains more exalted the salt-box shall join,
And clattering and battering and clapping combine;
With a rap and a tap while the hollow side sounds,
Up and down leaps the flap, and with rattling rebounds.

I mentioned the periodical paper called the *Connoisseur*. He said it wanted matter. No doubt it has not the deep thinking of Johnson's writings. But surely it has just views of the surface of life, and a very sprightly manner. His opinion of the *World* was not much higher than of the *Connoisseur*.

Let me here apologize for the imperfect manner in which I am obliged to exhibit Johnson's conversation at this period. In the early part of my acquaintance with him, I was so wrapt in admiration of his extraordinary colloquial talents, and so little accustomed to his peculiar mode of expression that I found it extremely difficult to recollect and record his conversation with its genuine vigor and vivacity. In progress of time, when my mind was, as it were, strongly impregnated with the Johnsonian æther, I could with much more facility and exactness carry in my memory and commit to paper the exuberant variety of his wisdom and wit.

At this time *Miss* Williams, as she was then called, though she did not reside with him in the Temple under his roof, but had lodgings in Bolt Court, Fleet Street, had so much of his attention that he every night drank tea with her before he went home, however late it might be, and she always sat up for him. This, it may be fairly conjectured, was not alone a proof of his regard for *her*, but of his own unwillingness to go into solitude, before that unseasonable hour at which he had habituated himself to expect the oblivion of repose. Dr. Goldsmith, being a privileged man, went with him this night, strutting away, and calling to me with an air of superiority, like that of an esoteric over an exoteric disciple of a sage of antiquity, "I go to Miss Williams." I confess, I then envied him this mighty privilege, of which he seemed so proud; but it was not long before I obtained the same mark of distinction.

On Tuesday the 5th of July, I again visited Johnson. . . .

Talking of London, he observed, "Sir, if you wish to have a just notion of the magnitude of this city, you must not be satisfied with seeing its great streets and squares, but must survey the innumerable little lanes and courts. It is not in the showy evolutions of buildings, but in the multiplicity of human habitations which are crowded together, that the wonderful immensity of London consists." . . .

On Wednesday, July 6, he was engaged to sup with me at my lodgings in Downing-street, Westminster. But on the preceding night my landlord having behaved very rudely to me and some company who were with me, I had resolved not to remain another night in his house. I was exceedingly uneasy at the awkward appearance I supposed I should make to Johnson and the other gentlemen whom I had invited, not being able to receive them at home, and being obliged to order supper at the Mitre. I went to Johnson in the morning, and talked of it as a serious distress. He laughed, and said, "Consider, Sir, how insignificant this will appear a twelvemonth hence."—Were this consideration to be applied to most of the little vexatious incidents of life, by which our quiet is too often disturbed, it would prevent many painful sensations. I have tried it frequently, with good effect. "There is nothing," continued he, "in this mighty misfortune; nay, we shall be better at the Mitre." I told him that I had been at Sir John Fielding's[28] office, complaining of my landlord, and had been informed that though I had taken my lodgings for a year, I might, upon proof of his bad behavior, quit them when I pleased, without being under an obligation to pay rent for any longer time than while I possessed them. The fertility of Johnson's mind could show itself even upon so small a matter as this. "Why, sir," said he, "I suppose this must be the law, since you have been told so in Bow-street. But if your landlord could hold you to your bargain, and the lodgings should be yours for a year, you may certainly use them as you think fit. So, sir, you may quarter two lifeguardsmen upon him; or you may send the greatest scoundrel you can find into your apartments; or you may say that you want to make some experiments in natural philosophy, and may burn a large quantity of assafoetida in his house."

I had as my guests this evening at the Mitre Tavern, Dr. Johnson, Dr. Goldsmith, Mr. Thomas Davies, Mr. Eccles, an Irish gentleman for whose agreeable company I was obliged to Mr. Davies, and the Rev. Mr. John Ogilvie, who was desirous of being in company with my illustrious friend, while I, in my turn, was proud to have the honor of showing one of my countrymen upon what easy terms Johnson permitted me to live with him.

Goldsmith, as usual, endeavored with too much eagerness to *shine*, and disputed very warmly with Johnson against the well-known maxim of the British constitution, "the king can do no wrong"; affirming that "what was morally false could not be politically true; and as the king might, in the exercise of his regal power, command and cause the doing of what was wrong, it certainly might be said, in sense and in reason, that he could do wrong." JOHNSON: "Sir, you are to consider that in our constitution, according to its true principles, the king is the head, he is supreme; he is above everything, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore, it is, sir, that we hold the king can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in government, may not be above our reach by being ascribed to majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression by punishing the immediate agents. The king, though he should command, cannot force a judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, sir, there is this consideration, that *if the abuse be enormous, nature will rise up, and claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system*." I mark this animated sentence with peculiar pleasure, as a noble instance of that truly dignified spirit of freedom which ever glowed in his heart, though he was charged with slavish tenets by superficial observers; because he was at all times indignant against that false patriotism, that pretended love of freedom, that unruly restlessness, which is inconsistent with the stable authority of any good government. This generous sentiment, which he uttered with great fervor, struck me exceedingly, and stirred my blood to that pitch of fancied resistance, the possibility of which I am glad to keep in mind, but to which I trust I never shall be forced.

"Great abilities," said he, "are not requisite for an historian; for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree, only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry. Some penetration, accuracy, and coloring, will fit a man for the task, if he can give the application which is necessary."

"Bayle's *Dictionary*[29] is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most."

Talking of the eminent writers in Queen Anne's reign, he observed, "I think Dr. Arbuthnot[30] the first man among them. He was the most universal genius, being an excellent physician, a man of deep learning, and a man of much humor. Mr. Addison was, to be sure, a great man; his learning was not profound; but his morality, his humor, and his elegance of writing, set him very high."

Mr. Ogilvie was unlucky enough to choose for the topic of his conversation the praises of his native country. He began with saying that there was very rich land round Edinburgh. Goldsmith, who had studied physic there, contradicted this, very untruly, with a sneering laugh. Disconcerted a little by this, Mr. Ogilvie then took new ground, where, I suppose, he thought himself perfectly safe; for he observed that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects. JOHNSON. "I believe, sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects; and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the high road that leads him to England!" This unexpected and pointed sally produced a roar of applause. After all, however, those who admire the rude grandeur of nature, cannot deny it to Caledonia.

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[28] a famous judge of the period.

[29] the *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique*, by Pierre Bayle (1647-1706).

[30] Cf. p. 670.

On Saturday, July 9, I found Johnson surrounded with a numerous levee, but have not preserved any part of his conversation. On the 14th we had another evening by ourselves at the Mitre. It happening to be a very rainy night, I made some commonplace observations on the relaxation of nerves and depression of spirits which such weather occasioned, adding, however, that it was good for the vegetable creation. Johnson, who, as we have already seen, denied that the temperature of the air had any influence on the human frame, answered, with a smile of ridicule, "Why, yes, sir, it is good for vegetables, and for the animals who eat those vegetables, and for the animals who eat those animals." This observation of his aptly enough introduced a good supper; and I soon forgot, in Johnson's company, the influence of a moist atmosphere.

Feeling myself now quite at ease as his companion, though I had all possible reverence for him, I expressed a regret that I could not be so easy with my father, though he was not much older than Johnson, and certainly however respectable had not more learning and greater abilities to depress me. I asked him the reason of this. JOHNSON. "Why, Sir, I am a man of the world. I live in the world, and I take, in some degree, the color of the world as it moves along. Your father is a Judge in a remote part of the island, and all his notions are taken from the old world. Besides, Sir, there must always be a struggle between a father and son, while one aims at power and the other at independence." . . .

He enlarged very convincingly upon the excellence of rhyme over blank verse in English poetry. I mentioned to him that Dr. Adam Smith, in his lectures upon composition, when I studied under him in the College of Glasgow, had maintained the same opinion strenuously, and I repeated some of his arguments. JOHNSON. "Sir, I was once in company with Smith, and we did not take to each other; but had I known that he loved rhyme as much as you tell me he does, I should have HUGGED him." . . .

"Idleness is a disease which must be combated; but I would not advise a rigid adherence to a particular plan of study. I myself have never persisted in any plan for two days together. A man ought to read just as inclination leads him, for what he reads as a task will do him little good. A young man should read five hours in a day, and so may acquire a great deal of knowledge."

To a man of vigorous intellect and ardent curiosity like his own, reading without a regular plan may be beneficial; though even such a man must submit to it, if he would attain a full understanding of any of the sciences.

To such a degree of unrestrained frankness had he now accustomed me that in the course of this evening I talked of the numerous reflections which had been thrown out against him, on account of his having accepted a pension from his present Majesty. "Why, sir," said he, with a hearty laugh, "it is a mighty foolish noise that they make. I have accepted of a pension as a reward which has been thought due to my literary merit; and now that I have this pension, I am the same man in every respect that I have ever been; I retain the same principles. It is true, that I cannot now curse (smiling) the house of Hanover; nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me money to pay for. But, sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the house of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year." . . .

He recommended to me to keep a journal of my life, full and unreserved. He said it would be a very good exercise, and would yield me great satisfaction when the particulars were faded from my remembrance. I was uncommonly fortunate in having had a previous coincidence of opinion with him upon this subject, for I had kept such a journal for some time; and it was no small pleasure to me to have this to tell him, and to receive his approbation. He counseled me to keep it private, and said I might surely have a friend who would burn it in case of my death. From this habit I have been enabled to give the world so many anecdotes, which would otherwise have been lost to posterity. I mentioned that I was afraid I put into my journal too many little incidents. JOHNSON: "There is nothing, sir, too little for so little a creature as man. It is by studying little things that we attain the great art of having as little misery, and as much happiness as possible."

Next morning Mr. Dempster happened to call on me, and was so much struck even with the imperfect account which I gave him of Dr. Johnson's conversation, that to his honor be it recorded, when I complained that drinking port and sitting up late with him, affected my nerves for some time after, he said, "One had better be palsied at eighteen, than not keep company with such a man."

On Tuesday, July 18, I found tall Sir Thomas Robinson[31] sitting with Johnson. Sir Thomas said that the King of Prussia[32] valued himself upon three things: upon being a hero, a musician, and an author. JOHNSON. "Pretty well, sir, for one man. As to his being an author, I have not looked at his poetry; but his prose is poor stuff. He writes just as you might suppose Voltaire's[33] footboy to do, who has been his amanuensis. He has such parts as the valet might have, and about as much of the coloring of the style as might be got by transcribing his works." When I was at Ferney, I repeated this to Voltaire, in order to reconcile him somewhat to Johnson, whom he, in affecting the English mode of expression, had previously characterised as "a superstitious dog"; but after hearing such a criticism on Frederick the Great, with whom he was then on bad terms, he exclaimed, "An honest fellow!"

But I think the criticism much too severe; For the *Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh* are written as well as many works of that kind. His poetry, for the style of which he himself makes a frank apology, *"jargonnant un François barbare,"*[34] though fraught with pernicious ravings of infidelity, has, in many places, great animation, and in some a pathetic tenderness.

Upon this contemptuous animadversion on the King of Prussia, I observed to Johnson, "It would seem then, sir, that much less parts are necessary to make a king, than to make an author: for the King of Prussia is confessedly the greatest king now in Europe, yet you think he makes a very poor figure as an author."

Mr. Levet this day showed me Dr. Johnson's library, which was contained in two garrets over his chambers, where Lintot, son of the celebrated bookseller of that name,[35] had formerly his warehouse. I found a number of good books, but very dusty and in great confusion. The floor was strewed with manuscript leaves, in Johnson's own handwriting, which I beheld with a degree of veneration, supposing they perhaps might contain portions of the *Rambler*, or of *Rasselas*. I observed an apparatus for chemical experiments, of which Johnson was all his life very fond. The place seemed to be very favorable for retirement and meditation. Johnson told me that he went up thither without mentioning it to his servant when he wanted to study secure from interruption; for he would not allow his servant to say he was not at home when he really was. "A servant's strict regard for truth," said he, "must be weakened by such a practice. A philosopher may know that it is merely a form of denial; but few servants are such nice distinguishers. If I accustom a servant to tell a lie for *me*, have I not reason to apprehend that he will tell many lies for *himself*?" I am, however, satisfied that every servant, of any degree of intelligence, understands saying his master is not at home, not at all as the affirmation of a fact, but as customary words intimating that his master wishes not to be seen, so that there can be no bad effect from it.

Mr. Temple, now vicar of St. Gluvias, Cornwall, who had been my intimate friend for many years, had at this time chambers in Farrar's Buildings, at the bottom of Inner Temple Lane, which he kindly lent me upon my quitting my lodgings, he being to return to Trinity Hall, Cambridge. I found them particularly convenient for me, as they were so near Dr. Johnson's.

On Wednesday, July 20, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Dempster, and my uncle, Dr. Boswell, who happened to be now in London, supped with me at these chambers. JOHNSON. "Pity is not natural to man. Children are always cruel. Savages are always cruel. Pity is acquired and improved by the cultivation of reason. We may have uneasy sensations from seeing a creature in distress, without pity; for we have not pity unless we wish to relieve them. When I am on my way to dine with a friend, and finding it late, have bid the coachman make haste, if I happen to attend when he whips his horses, I may feel unpleasantly that the animals are put to pain, but I do not wish him to desist. No, sir, I wish him to drive on."

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[31] so called to distinguish him from Sir Thomas Robinson, Lord Granthan.

[32] Frederick the Great.

[33] Cf. p. 755.

[34] writing in a barbarous French jargon.

[35] Cf. Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, note 13, p. 671.

Mr. Alexander Donaldson, bookseller, of Edinburgh, had for some time opened a shop in London, and sold his cheap editions of the most popular English books, in defiance of the supposed common-law right of literary property. Johnson, though he concurred in the opinion which was afterwards sanctioned by a judgment of the House of Lords, that there was no such right, was at this time very angry that the booksellers of London, for whom he uniformly professed much regard, should suffer from an invasion of what they had ever considered to be secure; and he was loud and violent against Mr. Donaldson. "He is a fellow who takes advantage of the law to injure his brethren; for nothwithstanding that the statute secures only fourteen years of exclusive right, it has always been understood by the trade, that he, who buys the copyright of a book from the author, obtains a perpetual property; and upon that belief, numberless bargains are made to transfer that property after the expiration of the statutory term. Now Donaldson, I say, takes advantage here, of people who have really an equitable title from usage; and if we consider how few of the books, of which they buy the property, succeed so well as to bring profit, we should be of opinion that the term of fourteen years is too short; it should be sixty years." DEMPSTER. "Donaldson, sir, is anxious for the encouragement of literature. He reduces the price of books so that poor students may buy them." JOHNSON, (laughing). "Well, sir, allowing that to be his motive, he is no better than Robin Hood, who robbed the rich in order to give to the poor."

It is remarkable that when the great question concerning literary property came to be ultimately tried before the supreme tribunal of this country in consequence of the very spirited exertions of Mr. Donaldson, Dr. Johnson was zealous against a perpetuity; but he thought that the term of the exclusive right of authors should be considerably enlarged. He was then for granting a hundred years.

The conversation now turned upon Mr. David Hume's[36] style. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, his style is not English; the structure of his sentences is French. Now the French structure and the English structure may, in the nature of things, be equally good. But if you allow that the English language is established, he is wrong. My name might originally have been Nicholson, as well as Johnson; but were you to call me Nicholson now, you would call me very absurdly."

Rousseau's[37] treatise on the inequality of mankind was at this time a fashionable topic. It gave rise to an observation by Mr. Dempster that the advantages of fortune and rank were nothing to a wise man, who ought to value only merit. JOHNSON. "If man were a savage, living in the woods by himself, this might be true; but in civilized society we all depend upon each other, and our happiness is very much owing to the good opinion of mankind. Now, sir, in civilized society, external advantages make us more respected. A man with a good coat upon his back meets with a better reception than he who has a bad one. Sir, you may analyse this, and say, 'What is there in it?' But that will avail you nothing, for it is a part of a general system. Pound St. Paul's Church into atoms, and consider any single atom; it is, to be sure, good for nothing: but, put all these atoms together, and you have St. Paul's Church. So it is with human felicity, which is made up of many ingredients, each of which may be shown to be very insignificant. In civilized society, personal merit will not serve you so much as money will. Sir, you may make the experiment. Go into the street, and give one man a lecture on morality, and another a shilling, and see which will respect you most. If you wish only to support nature, Sir William Petty[38] fixes your allowance at three pounds a year; but as times are much altered, let us call it six pounds. This sum will fill your belly, shelter you from the weather, and even get you a strong lasting coat, supposing it to be made of good bull's hide. Now, Sir, all beyond this is artificial, and is desired in order to obtain a greater degree of respect from our fellow-creatures. And, Sir, if six hundred pounds a year procure a man more consequence, and, of course, more happiness than six pounds a year, the same proportion will hold as to six thousand, and so on as far as opulence can be carried. Perhaps he who has a large fortune may not be so happy as he who has a small one; but that must proceed from other causes than from his having the large fortune: for, *cæteris paribus,*[39] he who is rich in a civilized society, must be happier than he who is poor; as riches, if properly used, (and it is a man's own fault if they are not,) must be productive of the highest advantages. Money, to be sure, of itself is of no use; for its only use is to part with it. Rousseau, and all those who deal in paradoxes, are led away by a childish desire of novelty. When I was a boy, I used always to choose the wrong side of a debate, because most ingenious things, that is to say, most new things, could be said upon it. Sir, there is nothing for which you may not muster up more plausible arguments, than those which are urged against wealth and other external advantages. Why, now, there is stealing; why should it be thought a crime? When we consider by what unjust methods property has been often acquired, and that what was unjustly got it must be unjust to keep, where is the harm in one man's taking the property of another from him? Besides, Sir, when we consider the bad use that many people make of their property, and how much better use the thief may make of it, it may be defended as a very allowable practice. Yet, Sir, the experience of mankind has discovered stealing to be so very bad a thing, that they make no scruple to hang a man for it. When I was running about this town a very poor fellow, I was a great arguer for the advantages of poverty; but I was, at the same time, very sorry to be poor. Sir, all the arguments which are brought to represent poverty as no evil, show it to be evidently a great evil. You never find people laboring to convince you that you may live very happily upon a plentiful fortune.—So you hear people talking how miserable a King must be; and yet they all wish to be in his place." . . .

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[36] Scottish historian and philosopher (1711-1776).

[37] Cf. Vol. II.

[38] English statistician and political economist (1623-1687).

[39] other things being equal.

Mr. Dempster having endeavored to maintain that intrinsic merit *ought* to make the only distinction amongst mankind. Johnson. "Why, Sir, mankind have found that this cannot be. How shall we determine the proportion of intrinsic merit? Were that to be the only distinction amongst mankind, we should soon quarrel about the degrees of it. Were all distinctions abolished, the strongest would not long acquiesce, but would endeavor to obtain a superiority by their bodily strength. But, Sir, as subordination is very necessary for society, and contentions for superiority very dangerous, mankind, that is to say, all civilized nations, have settled it upon a plain invariable principle. A man is born to hereditary rank; or his being appointed to certain offices, gives him a certain rank. Subordination tends greatly to human happiness. Were we all upon an equality, we should have no other enjoyment than mere animal pleasure."

I said, I considered distinction of rank to be of so much importance in civilized society, that if I were asked on the same day to dine with the first Duke of England, and with the first man in Britain for genius, I should hesitate which to prefer. Johnson. "To be sure, Sir, if you were to dine only once, and it were never to be known where you dined, you would choose rather to dine with the first man for genius; but to gain most respect, you should dine with the first Duke in England. For nine people in ten that you meet with, would have a higher opinion of you for having dined with a Duke; and the great genius himself would receive you better, because you had been with the great Duke." . . .

He again insisted on the duty of maintaining subordination of rank. "Sir, I would no more deprive a nobleman of his respect, than of his money. I consider myself as acting a part in the great system of society, and I do to others as I would have them to do to me. I would behave to a nobleman as I should expect he would behave to me, were I a nobleman and he Sam Johnson. Sir, there is one Mrs. Macaulay in this town, a great republican. One day when I was at her house, I put on a very grave countenance, and said to her, 'Madam, I am now become a convert to your way of thinking. I am convinced that all mankind are upon an equal footing; and to give you an unquestionable proof, Madam, that I am in earnest, here is a very sensible, civil, well-behaved fellow-citizen, your footman; I desire that he may be allowed to sit down and dine with us.' I thus, Sir, showed her the absurdity of the levelling doctrine. She has never liked me since. Sir, your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves; but they cannot bear levelling up to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" I mentioned a certain author who disgusted me by his forwardness, and by showing no deference to noblemen into whose company he was admitted. Johnson. "Suppose a shoemaker should claim an equality with him, as he does with a lord: how he would stare! 'Why, sir, do you stare?' says the shoemaker, 'I do great service to society. 'Tis true, I am paid for doing it; but so are you, sir, and I am sorry to say it, paid better than I am, for doing something not so necessary. For mankind could do better without your books than without my shoes.' Thus, sir, there would be a perpetual struggle for precedence, were there no fixed invariable rules for the distinction of rank, which creates no jealousy, as it is allowed to be accidental."

He said Dr. Joseph Warton was a very agreeable man, and his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, a very pleasing book. I wondered that he delayed so long to give us the continuation of it. JOHNSON. "Why, sir, I suppose he finds himself a little disappointed, in not having been able to persuade the world to be of his opinion as to Pope."

We have now been favored with the concluding volume, in which, to use a parliamentary expression, he has *explained*, so as not to appear quite so adverse to the opinion of the world, concerning Pope, as was at first thought; and we must all agree that his work is a most valuable accession to English literature.

A writer of deserved eminence being mentioned, Johnson said, "Why, sir, he is a man of good parts, but being originally poor, he has got a love of mean company and low jocularity, a very bad thing, sir. To laugh is good, and to talk is good. But you ought no more to think it enough if you laugh, than you are to think it enough if you talk. You may laugh in as many ways as you talk; and surely *every* way of talking that is practised cannot be esteemed."

I spoke of Sir James Macdonald as a young man of most distinguished merit, who united the highest reputation at Eton and Oxford, with the patriarchal spirit of a great Highland chieftain. I mentioned that Sir James had said to me, that he had never seen Mr. Johnson, but he had a great respect for him, though at the same time it was mixed with some degree of terror. JOHNSON. "Sir, if he were to be acquainted with me, it might lessen both."

The mention of this gentleman led us to talk of the Western Islands of Scotland, to visit which he expressed a wish that then appeared to be a very romantic fancy, which I little thought would be afterwards realised. He told me that his father had put Martin's account of those islands into his hands when he was very young, and that he was highly pleased with it; that he was particularly struck with the St. Kilda man's notion that the high church of Glasgow had been hollowed out of a rock, a circumstance to which old Mr. Johnson had directed his attention. He said he would go to the Hebrides with me, when I returned from my travels, unless some very good companion should offer when I was absent, which he did not think probable, adding, "There are few people whom I take so much to, as you." And when I talked of my leaving England, he said with a very affectionate air, "My dear Boswell, I should be very unhappy at parting, did I think we were not to meet again." I cannot too often remind my readers that, although such instances of his kindness are doubtless very flattering to me, yet I hope my recording them will be ascribed to a better motive than to vanity; for they afford unquestionable evidence of his tenderness and complacency, which some, while they were forced to acknowledge his great powers, have been so strenuous to deny.

He maintained that a boy at school was the happiest of human beings. I supported a different opinion, from which I have never yet varied, that a man is happier; and I enlarged upon the anxiety and suffering which are endured at school. JOHNSON. "Ah! sir, a boy's being flogged is not so severe as a man's having the hiss of the world against him. Men have a solicitude about fame; and the greater share they have of it, the more afraid they are of losing it." I silently asked myself, "Is it possible that the great Samuel Johnson really entertains any such apprehension, and is not confident that his exalted fame is established upon a foundation never to be shaken?"

He this evening drank a bumper to Sir David Dalrymple, "as a man of worth, a scholar, and a wit." "I have," said he, "never heard of him, except from you, but let him know my opinion of him: for as he does not show himself much in the world, he should have the praise of the few who hear of him."

On Tuesday, July 26, I found Mr. Johnson alone. It was a very wet day, and I again complained of the disagreeable effects of such weather. JOHNSON. "Sir, this is all imagination, which physicians encourage; for man lives in air, as a fish lives in water, so that if the atmosphere press heavy from above, there is an equal resistance from below. To be sure, bad weather is hard upon people who are obliged to be abroad, and men cannot labor so well in the open air in bad weather, as in good: but, sir, a smith or a tailor, whose work is within doors, will surely do as much in rainy weather, as in fair. Some very delicate frames, indeed, may be affected by wet weather; but not common constitutions."

We talked of the education of children, and I asked him what he thought was best to teach them first. JOHNSON. "Sir, it is no matter what you teach them first, any more than what leg you shall put into your breeches first. Sir, you may stand disputing which is best to put in first, but in the mean time your breech is bare. Sir, while you are considering which of two things you should teach your child first, another boy has learnt them both."

On Thursday, July 28, we again supped in private at the Turk's Head Coffee-house. JOHNSON. "Swift has a higher reputation than he deserves. His excellence is strong sense; for his humor, though very well, is not remarkably good. I doubt whether the *Tale of a Tub* be his; for he never owned it, and it is much above his usual manner."

"Thomson,[40] I think, had as much of the poet about him as most writers. Everything appeared to him through the medium of his favorite pursuit. He could not have viewed those two candles burning but with a poetical eye." . . .

"As to the Christian religion, Sir, besides the strong evidence which we have for it, there is a balance in its favor from the number of great men who have been convinced of its truth, after a serious consideration of the question. Grotius[41] was an acute man, a lawyer, a man accustomed to examine evidence, and he was convinced. Grotius was not a recluse, but a man of the world, who certainly had no bias to the side of religion. Sir Isaac Newton[42] set out an infidel, and came to be a very firm believer."

He this evening recommended to me to perambulate Spain. I said it would amuse him to get a letter from me dated at Salamancha. JOHNSON. "I love the University of Salamancha; for when the Spaniards were in doubt as to the lawfulness of their conquering America, the University of Salamancha gave it as their opinion that it was not lawful." He spoke this with great emotion, and with that generous warmth which dictated the lines in his *London*, against Spanish encroachment.

I expressed my opinion of my friend Derrick as but a poor writer. JOHNSON. "To be sure, Sir, he is; but you are to consider that his being a literary man has got for him all that he has. It has made him King of Bath. Sir, he has nothing to say for himself but that he is a writer. Had he not been a writer, he must have been sweeping the crossing in the streets, and asking halfpence from every body that past."

In justice, however, to the memory of Mr. Derrick, who was my first tutor in the ways of London, and showed me the town in all its variety of departments, both literary and sportive, the particulars of which Dr. Johnson advised me to put in writing, it is proper to mention what Johnson, at a subsequent period, said of him both as a writer and an editor: "Sir, I have often said, that if Derrick's letters had been written by one of a more established name, they would have been thought very pretty letters." And, "I sent Derrick to Dryden's relations to gather materials for his life; and I believe he got all that I myself should have got." . . .

I again begged his advice as to my method of study at Utrecht. "Come," said he, "let us make a day of it. Let us go down to Greenwich and dine, and talk of it there." The following Saturday was fixed for this excursion.

As we walked along the Strand tonight, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us, in the usual enticing manner. "No, no, my girl," said Johnson, "it won't do." He, however, did not treat her with harshness; and we talked of the wretched life of such women, and agreed that much more misery than happiness, upon the whole, is produced by illicit commerce between the sexes.

On Saturday, July 30, Dr. Johnson and I took a sculler at the Temple Stairs, and set out for Greenwich. I asked him if he really thought a knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages an essential requisite to a good education. JOHNSON. "Most certainly, sir, for those who know them have a very great advantage over those who do not. Nay, sir, it is wonderful what a difference learning makes upon people even in the common intercourse of life, which does not appear to be much connected with it." "And yet," said I, "people go through the world very well, and carry on the business of life to good advantage, without learning." JOHNSON. "Why, sir, that may be true in cases where learning cannot possibly be of any use; for instance, this boy rows us as well without learning, as if he could sing the song of Orpheus to the Argonauts,[43] who were the first sailors." He then called to the boy, "What would you give, ny lad, to know about the Argonauts?" "Sir," said he boy, "I would give what I have." Johnson was nuch pleased with his answer, and we gave him ı double fare. Dr. Johnson then turning to me, 'Sir," said he, "a desire of knowledge is the natıral feeling of mankind; and every human beng, whose mind is not debauched, will be willing o give all that he has, to get knowledge."

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[40] Cf. Vol. II.

[41] Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), Dutch theologian; founder of the science of international law.

[42] the famous English mathematician (1642-1727).

[43] Orpheus was a mythical musician and son of Apollo. He had the power of charming all nature with his music. The Argonauts were those who accompanied Jason on his search for the Golden Fleece.

We landed at the Old Swan, and walked to 3illingsgate, where we took oars and moved moothly along the silver Thames. It was a very ine day. We were entertained with the immense ıumber and variety of ships that were lying at nchor, and with the beautiful country on each ide of the river.

I talked of preaching, and of the great success vhich those called Methodists have. JOHNSON. Sir, it is owing to their expressing themselves in plain and familiar manner, which is the only vay to do good to the common people, and which lergymen of genius and learning ought to do from principle of duty, when it is suited to their con;regations, a practice, for which they will be ›raised by men of sense. To insist against drunknness as a crime, because it debases reason, the ıoblest faculty of man, would be of no service to he common people, but to tell them that they ıay die in a fit of drunkenness, and show them .ow dreadful that would be, cannot fail to make deep impression. Sir, when your Scotch clergy ive up their homely manner, religion will soon ecay in that country." Let this observation, as ohnson meant it, be ever remembered.

I was much pleased to find myself with Johnɔn at Greenwich, which he celebrates in his *Lon'on* as a favorite scene. I had the poem in my ocket, and read the lines aloud with enthusiasm:

On Thames's banks in silent thought we stood,
Where Greenwich smiles upon the silver flood:
Pleas'd with the seat which gave ELIZA[44] birth,
We kneel, and kiss the consecrated earth.

Afterwards he entered upon the business of the ay, which was to give me his advice as to a ourse of study. And here I am to mention with ıuch regret that my record of what he said is ıiserably scanty. I recollect with admiration an nimating blaze of eloquence, which roused every ıtellectual power in me to the highest pitch, but ıust have dazzled me so much that my memory ould not preserve the substance of his discourse; ɔr the note which I find of it is no more than this:—"He ran over the grand scale of human knowledge; advised me to select some particular branch to excel in, but to acquire a little of every kind." The defect of my minutes will be fully supplied by a long letter upon the subject, which he favored me with after I had been some time at Utrecht, and which my readers will have the pleasure to peruse in its proper place.

We walked in the evening, in Greenwich Park. He asked me, I suppose, by way of trying my disposition, "Is not this very fine?" Having no exquisite relish of the beauties of nature, and being more delighted with "the busy hum of men," I answered, "Yes, sir, but not equal to Fleet-street." JOHNSON. "You are right, sir."

I am aware that many of my readers may censure my want of taste. Let me, however, shelter myself under the authority of a very fashionable baronet in the brilliant world, who, on his attention being called to the fragrance of a May evening in the country, observed, "This may be very well, but, for my part, I prefer the smell of a flambeau at the play-house."

We stayed so long at Greenwich, that our sail up the river, in our return to London, was by no means so pleasant as in the morning; for the night air was so cold that it made me shiver. I was the more sensible of it from having sat up all the night before recollecting and writing in my journal what I thought worthy of preservation; an exertion which during the first part of my acquaintance with Johnson, I frequently made. I remember having sat up four nights in one week, without being much incommoded in the daytime.

Johnson, whose robust frame was not in the least affected by the cold, scolded me, as if my shivering had been a paltry effeminacy, saying, "Why do you shiver?" Sir William Scott, of the Commons, told me that when he complained of a headache in the post-chaise, as they were traveling together to Scotland, Johnson treated him in the same manner: "At your age, sir, I had no headache." It is not easy to make allowance for sensations in others, which we ourselves have not at the time.

We concluded the day at the Turk's Head coffee-house very socially. He was pleased to listen to a particular account which I gave him of my family, and of its hereditary estate, as to the extent and population of which he asked questions, and made calculations; recommending, at the same time, a liberal kindness to the tenantry, as people over whom the proprietor was placed by Providence. He took delight in hearing my description of the romantic seat of my ancestors. "I must be there, sir," said he, "and we will live in the old castle; and if there is not a room in it remaining, we will build one." I was highly flattered, but could scarcely indulge a hope that Auchinleck would indeed be honored by his presence, and celebrated by a description, as it afterward was, in his *Journey to the Western Islands.*

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[44] Queen Elizabeth.

After we had again talked of my setting out for Holland, he said, "I must see thee out of England; I will accompany you to Harwich." I could not find words to express what I felt upon this unexpected and very great mark of his affectionate regard.

Next day, Sunday, July 31, I told him I had been that morning at a meeting of the people called Quakers, where I had heard a woman preach. JOHNSON. "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

On Tuesday, August 2, (the day of my departure from London having been fixed for the 5th) Dr. Johnson did me the honor to pass a part of the morning with me at my chambers. He said that "he always felt an inclination to do nothing." I observed that it was strange to think that the most indolent man in Britain had written the most laborious work, *The English Dictionary.*

I mentioned an imprudent publication, by a certain friend of his, at an early period of life, and asked him if he thought it would hurt him. JOHNSON. "No, sir; not much. It may, perhaps, be mentioned at an election."

I had now made good my title to be a privileged man, and was carried by him in the evening to drink tea with Miss Williams, whom, though under the misfortune of having lost her sight, I found to be agreeable in conversation; for she had a variety of literature, and expressed herself well; but her peculiar value was the intimacy in which she had long lived with Johnson, by which she was well acquainted with his habits, and knew how to lead him on to talk.

After tea he carried me to what he called his walk, which was a long narrow paved court in the neighborhood, overshadowed by some trees. There we sauntered a considerable time; and I complained to him that my love of London and his company was such that I shrunk almost from the thought of going away even to travel, which is generally so much desired by young men. He roused me by manly and spirited conversation. He advised me, when settled in any place abroad, to study with an eagerness after knowledge, and to apply to Greek an hour every day; and when I was moving about, to read diligently the great book of mankind.

On Wednesday, August 3, we had our last social evening at the Turk's Head Coffee-house, before my setting out for foreign parts. I had the misfortune, before we parted, to irritate him unintentionally. I mentioned to him how common it was in the world to tell absurd stories of him, and to ascribe to him very strange sayings. JOHNSON. "What do they make me say, sir?" BOSWELL. "Why, sir, as an instance very strange indeed," laughing heartily as I spoke, "David Hume told me you said that you would stand before a battery of cannon to restore the Convocation to its full powers." Little did I apprehend that he had actually said this: but I was soon convinced of my error; for, with a determined look, he thundered out, "And would I not, sir? Shall the Presbyterian *Kirk* of Scotland have its General Assembly, and the Church of England be denied its Convocation?" He was walking up and down the room, while I told him the anecdote; but when he uttered this explosion of High Church zeal, he had come close to my chair, and his eyes flashed with indignation. I bowed to the storm, and diverted the force of it, by leading him to expatiate on the influence which religion derived from maintaining the church with great external respectability.

I must not omit to mention that he this year wrote *The Life of Ascham,* and the Dedication to the Earl of Shaftesbury, prefixed to the edition of that writer's English works, published by Mr. Bennet.

On Friday, August 5, we set out early in the morning in the Harwich stage-coach. A fat elderly gentlewoman and a young Dutchman seemed the most inclined among us to conversation. At the inn where we dined, the gentlewoman said that she had done her best to educate her children; and, particularly, that she had never suffered them to be a moment idle. JOHNSON. "I wish, madam, you would educate me too; for I have been an idle fellow all my life." "I am sure, sir," said she, "you have not been idle." JOHNSON. "Nay, madam, it is very true; and that gentleman there," pointing to me, "has been idle. He was idle at Edinburgh. His father sent him to Glasgow, where he continued to be idle. He then came to London, where he has been very idle; and now he is going to Utrecht, where he will be as idle as ever." I asked him privately how he could expose me so. OHNSON. "Poh, poh!" said he, "they knew nothing about you, and will think of it no more." In the afternoon the gentlewoman talked violently against he Roman Catholics, and of the horrors of the nquisition. To the utter astonishment of all the passengers but myself, who knew that he could alk upon any side of a question, he defended the Inquisition, and maintained that "false doctrine should be checked on its first appearance; that he civil power should unite with the church in punishing those who dare to attack the established religion, and that such only were punished by the nquisition." He had in his pocket, *Pomponius Mela*[45] *de Situ Orbis,* in which he read occasionally, and seemed very intent upon ancient geography. Though by no means niggardly, his attention to what was generally right was so minute, that having observed at one of the stages that I ostentatiously gave a shilling to the coachman, when he custom was for each passenger to give only sixpence, he took me aside and scolded me, saying that what I had done would make the coachman dissatisfied with all the rest of the passengers, who gave him no more than his due.

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Having stopped a night at Colchester, Johnson talked of that town with veneration, for having stood a siege for Charles the First. The Dutchman alone now remained with us. He spoke English olerably well; and thinking to recommend himself to us by expatiating on the superiority of the criminal jurisprudence of this country over that of Holland, he inveighed against the barbarity of putting an accused person to the torture, in order to force a confession. But Johnson was as ready for this as for the Inquisition. "Why, sir, you do not, I find, understand the law of your own country. To torture in Holland is considered as a favor to an accused person; for no man is put to the torture there, unless there is as much evidence against him as would amount to conviction in England. An accused person, among you, therefore, has one chance more to escape punishment than those who are tried among us."

At supper this night he talked of good eating with uncommon satisfaction. "Some people," said he, "have a foolish way of not minding, or pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully; for I look upon it, that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else." He now appeared to me *Jean Bull philosophe,*[46] and he was for the moment not only serious, but vehement, yet I have heard him, upon other occasions, talk with great contempt of people who were anxious to gratify their palates: and the 206th number of his *Rambler* is a masterly essay against gulosity. His practice, indeed, I must acknowledge, may be considered as casting the balance of his different opinions upon this subject; for I never knew any man who relished good eating more than he did. When at table he was totally absorbed in the business of the moment: his looks seemed riveted to his plate; nor would he, unless when in very high company, say one word, or even pay the least attention to what was said by others, till he had satisfied his appetite, which was so fierce, and indulged with such intenseness, that while in the act of eating, the veins of his forehead swelled, and generally a strong perspiration was visible. To those whose sensations were delicate, this could not but be disgusting; and it was doubtless not very suitable to the character of a philosopher, who should be distinguished by self-command. But it must be owned that Johnson, though he could be rigidly *abstemious,* was not a *temperate* man either in eating or drinking. He could refrain, but he could not use moderately. He told me that he had fasted two days without inconvenience, and that he had never been hungry but once. They who beheld with wonder how much he ate upon all occasions, when his dinner was to his taste, could not easily conceive what he must have meant by hunger; and not only was he remarkable for the extraordinary quantity which he ate, but he was, or affected to be, a man of very nice discernment in the science of cookery. He used to descant critically on the dishes which had been at table where he had dined or supped, and to recollect very minutely what he had liked. I remember when he was in Scotland, his praising *"Gordon's palates"* (a dish of palates at the Honorable Alexander Gordon's) with a warmth of expression which might have done honor to more important subjects. "As for Maclaurin's imitation of a *made dish,* it was a wretched attempt." He about the same time was so much displeased with the performances of a nobleman's French cook that he exclaimed with vehemence, "I'd throw such a rascal into the river"; and he then proceeded to alarm a lady at whose house he was to sup, by the following manifesto of his skill: "I, madam, who live at a variety of good tables, am a much better judge of cookery than any person who has a very tolerable cook but lives much at home; for his palate is gradually adapted to the taste of his cook: whereas, madam, in trying by a wider range, I can more exquisitely judge." When invited to dine, even with an intimate friend, he was not pleased if something better than a plain dinner was not prepared for him. I have heard him say on such an occasion, "This was a good dinner enough, to be sure, but it was not a dinner to *ask* a man to." On the other hand, he was wont to express, with great glee, his satisfaction when he had been entertained quite to his mind. One day when we had dined with his neighbor and landlord, in Bolt Court, Mr. Allen, the printer, whose old housekeeper had studied his taste, in everything, he pronounced this eulogy: "Sir, we could not have had a better dinner, had there been a *Synod of Cooks*."

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[45] Roman geographer of the first century A.D.

[46] John Bull as philosopher.

While we were left by ourselves, after the Dutchman had gone to bed, Dr. Johnson talked of that studied behavior which many have recommended and practised. He disapproved of it; and said, "I never considered whether I should be a grave man, or a merry man, but just let inclination, for the time, have its course."

He flattered me with some hopes that he would, in the course of the following summer, come over to Holland, and accompany me in a tour through the Netherlands.

I teased him with fanciful apprehensions of unhappiness. A moth having fluttered round the candle, and burnt itself, he laid hold of this little incident to admonish me; saying, with a sly look, and in a solemn but a quiet tone, "That creature was its own tormentor, and I believe its name was Boswell."

Next day we got to Harwich to dinner; and my passage in the packet boat to Helvoetsluys being secured, and my baggage put on board, we dined at our inn by ourselves. I happened to say it would be terrible if he should not find a speedy opportunity of returning to London, and be confined in so dull a place. Johnson. "Don't, sir, accustom yourself to use big words for little matters. It would *not* be *terrible*, though I *were* to be detained some time here." The practice of using words of disproportionate magnitude, is, no doubt, too frequent everywhere; but, I think, most remarkable among the French, of which, all who have travelled in France must have been struck with innumerable instances.

We went and looked at the church, and having gone into it, and walked up to the altar, Johnson, whose piety was constant and fervent, sent me to my knees, saying, "Now that you are going to leave your native country, recommend yourself to the protection of your Creator and Redeemer."

After we came out of the church, we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's[47] ingenious sophistry to prove the non-existence of matter, and that everything in the universe is merely ideal. I observed that though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone, till he rebounded from it,—"I refute it *thus*." This was a stout exemplification of the *first truths* of Père Bouffier, or the *original principles* of Reid and of Beattie;[48] without admitting which, we can no more argue in metaphysics than we can argue in mathematics without axioms. To me it is not conceivable how Berkeley can be answered by pure reasoning; but I know that the nice and difficult task was to have been undertaken by one of the most luminous minds of the present age,[49] had not politics "turned him from calm philosophy aside." What an admirable display of subtilty, united with brilliance, might his contending with Berkeley have afforded us! How must we, when we reflect on the loss of such an intellectual feast. . . .

My revered friend walked down with me to the beach, where we embraced and parted with tenderness, and engaged to correspond by letters. I said, "I hope, Sir, you will not forget me in my absence." Johnson. "Nay, Sir, it is more likely you should forget me, than that I should forget you." As the vessel put out to sea, I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner: and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared.

[47] George Berkeley (1685-1753), bishop and philosopher.

[48] contemporary philosophers.

[49] Edmund Burke; cf. p. 807.

Oliver Goldsmith

(1730?-1774)

If one is to judge by performance—and there are few better criteria—Goldsmith was the most versatile literary genius of his age. He was the best essayist of his generation, and he wrote one of the best novels, one of the finest comedies, and one of the greatest poems of his time. *Nullum quod tetigit non ornavit* (Nothing did he touch without adorning it) was Johnson's fitting epitaph for him. Yet while he lived it seems unlikely that the gifted men of his acquaintance were quite aware that the irresponsible, awkward, and unprepossessing Irishman was the most talented of them. And, what is more remarkable, Goldsmith apparently came to the profession of author when all other ways of earning a living had failed him.

He was born in Ireland, the son of a poor Protestant vicar (whom he has immortalized *con amore* in *The Deserted Village*) and spent his boyhood in the quaint village of Lissoy. Even then he was considered "little better than a fool" because of his homely face and ingenuous ways, though he won affection from all for his gentleness and gaiety. He made a clumsy playmate and poor student; but his uncle's insistence caused the lad to be sent to Trinity College, Dublin. For five years he remained there on a wretched allowance, and his father's death made him utterly dependent on his affectionate uncle. Funds were scarce from that quarter as well, and so Oliver earned, when he could, a chance coin by writing popular penny-ballads. He studied very little, and when he got his degree at last his name was inscribed near the bottom of the class. For a while he went back to live in idleness with his mother at Lissoy; by the time he was twenty-one he seemed well on the way to becoming a ne'er-do-well. Persuaded to try the Church as a profession, he found his application rejected; for a short time he had a position as a tutor, but a quarrel with his employer shortly ended it. He was soon back in Lissoy, presently starting out again to make his fortune, and quickly home again with no funds. His good uncle now provided him with fifty pounds to go to London for the law. But Goldsmith got as far as Dublin, where he gambled away the sum, and had no choice but to return repentant. Again aided by his uncle, he left for Edinburgh in 1752, this time to become a doctor, and quitted Ireland forever. After a year and a half at Edinburgh, he convinced his uncle of the wisdom of studying at Paris, received more money from him, left for the Continent, but went instead to Leyden to study under a famous lecturer. Dissatisfied with the professor, he left Leyden to tour Europe on one guinea. If we are to judge from *The Vicar of Wakefield*, into which Goldsmith later incorporated many of his own youthful follies, he made his way through Europe by singing and playing on the flute. He visited Antwerp, Brussels, and other Flemish towns, Switzerland, Italy, and France. In February 1756 he landed penniless at Dover, somehow managed to reach London, and by his own admission "lived among the beggars in Axe Lane." He found employment in a chemist's shop, and presently had set himself up as a physician among the poor. His next venture was in Richardson's printing-house, but he failed to interest the novelist in a tragedy he had written. Soon he was employed in a school, where a bookseller decided, from his conversation, that Goldsmith had some literary ability. He persuaded him to try his hand at hack-writing. For a miserable salary he was employed to write, during regular office hours, articles for the *Monthly Review*, which his discoverer, Griffiths, owned. In this haphazard manner Goldsmith stumbled upon his true vocation.

But, even here, it took some time for him to discover himself. In a few months he had quarreled with Griffiths, and was living in a garret in Fleet Street, where, except for an interim back at the school, he did all kinds of hack-writing. He was nearing thirty, still had no settled plans for a livelihood, and had exhausted the patience of his long-suffering friends. At last he applied himself to serious study, and produced his first important work, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe* (1759), a lively examination of contemporary literature, in which his unfitness to discuss such a subject is as apparent as that particular freshness and humanity which are his unique contribution to the literature of his day. For a while during the same year he wrote a series of periodical essays for the short-lived *Bee*, which he edited, and showed himself to be a worthy successor to Addison. His reputation was now on the increase, and he was able to move to better lodgings. He continued with his hack-work which was providing him with a comfortable livelihood. By 1761 he had become a close friend of Johnson's.

A warmer friendship probably never existed between two men of more opposite natures. Goldsmith had suffered in London's Grub Street quite as much as Johnson, but while the latter's days were forever after tinged with somber recollections of hunger and want, Goldsmith was always carefree, winning in his kindly simplicity, and spendthrift. Johnson was often piqued at what he considered to be Goldsmith's lightheadedness and pitiful ignorance, and said of him: "He goes on without knowing how he is to get off. His genius is great, but his knowledge is small." At another time the "great bear," in a fit of impatience said of "Goldy": "Sir, he knows nothing; he has made up his mind about nothing." And Goldsmith alone, apparently, of the illustrious company surrounding Johnson, was so simple as to be not at all frighted by Johnson's thunder; while others, crushed, maintained silence before one of Johnson's stormy verbal attacks, he cheerfully would continue in the contest without realizing that he had been annihilated. Once, indeed, he stung Johnson very ably, when he put a stop to the mockery of the burly literary potentate over some of his own fancies as to how, in a fable, one ought to make little fishes talk: "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like *whales*." But these frictions meant little to the regard in which each held the other. In fact, the genuineness of Johnson's affection for Goldsmith is attested, if by nothing else, by the difficulty with which Boswell in his *Life of Johnson* tries to conceal his jealousy over the partiality of his idol for the "short" man of "coarse and vulgar" countenance. But everyone liked "Goldy"—even Boswell in his own despite. His faults were obvious and pardonable: vanity, awkwardness, and financial incompetence. But his friends soon came to realize with Garrick that if he "talked like poor Poll," he "wrote like an angel." That they did not regard him as an "inspired idiot" is proved by the fact that he was enough respected to be a charter member of Johnson's Club.

Between January 24, 1760, and August 14, 1761, there appeared in the *Public Ledger* his most important series of essays, under the title of *Chinese Letters.* When they were collected in two volumes in 1762 they were given the name of *The Citizen of the World: or Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East.* The translation, earlier in the century, of *The Thousand Nights and a Night* (cf. *above*) had made Orientalism the fashion, particularly in essays that commented on social life. Of the latter no book was more popular than Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) which (cf. *below*) particularly influenced Goldsmith in his composition of *The Citizen of the World* (cf. *below*). Borrowing blandly, even directly translating from the French without quotation marks, Goldsmith none the less brings to his essays the quintessence of one of the most charming personalities in our literature. Between the essays of Addison and those of Lamb, his are the choicest. One is conscious of less finish than Addison's in Goldsmith's prose, but the question is not one of merit. His grace is of a different kind—easy, genial, warmhearted, and gay. Some of his portraits, like that of Beau Tibbs (cf. *below*), have never been surpassed for their unmalicious fun and intelligent criticism.

He was now earning enough to live without worries, but his freedom in giving his money away and in spending it on clothes and trifles left him always entangled in debt, and forced him to disappear for short intervals to escape angry creditors. Johnson's account of his own experience is worth repeating in its entirety: "I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me, begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I should soon return, and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for £60. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

This novel was *The Vicar of Wakefield,* and the publisher was in no haste to issue it. Indeed, before it appeared Goldsmith became the talk of the town with a poem, *The Traveller or, A Prospect of Society* (1764). Most of the characteristics of *The Traveller* are what might have been expected from a neoclassicist: the rhymed couplets, the didactic purpose, the stock phrases, and the generalized diction. Such surveys of society were common among Pope's successors. "I have endeavored to show," he announces in the dedication to his brother, "that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess." Many of the meditations on his travels through Europe which constitute the subject matter of the poem had already appeared in *The Citizen of the World* and were to be found in the still unprinted *Vicar of Wakefield.* From these considerations it is possible to think of Goldsmith as completely satisfying Johnson's rigid code of what a poet should write. But from another point of view we should be quite justified in placing Goldsmith with Gray, Collins, and Cowper as a precursor of romanticism in poetry. For the music of his verse is new. Although writing in Pope's metre, Goldsmith, abandoning the hard brilliance which was traditional in the heroic couplet, injects an ease and a freshness, a softness and a fluidity into his verse, all of which qualities must be accounted as preparing the way for the metrical emancipation and the free music of the Romantic poets.

The Vicar of Wakefield (1766) was now published. It won the hearts of its readers, and has ever been the best-loved novel of the century. The sweet humanity of Dr. Primrose, whose simple benevolence and impracticality have endeared him to all, and the interestingly varied characters in his family lend a note of everyday reality and kindliness unknown before to the English novel. Once more the unscholarly Goldsmith, by virtue of the charm of his own nature, was able to make a notable contribution to the course of English literature. Of the poems interspersed in the novel, the sentimental ballad of *Edwin and Angelina* had a great vogue in Europe, and no less a man than Goethe was powerfully influenced by it.

In 1770 appeared Goldsmith's best-known poem, *The Deserted Village* (cf. *below*), which has had few competitors in public appeal. Like *The Traveller,* it is a didactic poem in heroic couplets. But few of its readers—and who has not read it?—will pause to consider Goldsmith's argument against the depredations caused by the new industrial order. And few will admire Goldsmith's unsustained attempt to be a good neoclassicist in diction and epithet. What has made this poem loved are just such characteristics as have since become familiar in Wordsworth and his followers: the deep humanity, the unaffected pictures of rural life, the natural depiction of country folk, and the realism of the portraiture. For this poem Goldsmith drew upon his childhood memories of Lissoy, for which he seems always to have been homesick; and the simple, kindly folk he speaks of with such tenderness are people he knew and loved. *The Deserted Village* is, then, a curious contradiction: in its outwardness it is a neoclassical didactic poem, while in all its intrinsic qualities it is romantic.

Goldsmith was yet to achieve triumph in another medium, the drama. His first attempt at comedy, *The Good-Natured Man* (1768), was not entirely successful. But the preface he wrote for it indicated his purpose: "The French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humor and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too." Goldsmith's own steady cheerfulness, in the face of much hardship and disappointment, had naturally led him to be entirely impatient with the sentimental comedies popularized by Steele (cf. *above*). Since Congreve, Farquhar, and Vanbrugh, there had been no comedies on the English stage worthy of preservation, and Goldsmith had decided to bring back laughter to the drama. In his plays, therefore, he recaptures the sprightliness and wit of Restoration drama, but omits the licentiousness which debased it. *She Stoops to Conquer: Or The Mistakes of a Night* (1771), his second comedy, is one of the great plays of our language. As ever, in Goldsmith, the fun is softened by the kindliness of spirit in which the play is conceived. The solid health, the merry spirits, the sparkling dialogue returned to English drama for a brief while its heritage of authentic comedy; the brilliant plays of Sheridan were to follow, within a few years, those of Goldsmith.

When it is considered that Goldsmith wasted many years of his short life before he discovered his bent for writing, it may be indeed an object of wonder that in four distinct fields—the essay, the drama, the novel, and poetry—he should now stand at the head of his times. Had he lived longer, he undoubtedly would have added to our delight. For once he had found his manner, he was able to infuse into his writings one of the most charming and ingratiating personalities in our literature.

The standard collected edition of his works is that of J. W. M. Gibbs, in five volumes (1884-86); R. S. Crane's edition of *New Essays by Oliver Goldsmith* (1927) is supplementary. Among good biographies of Goldsmith are John Forster's (1854), Austin Dobson's (1888), and Stephen Gwynn's (1935). K. C. Balderston has edited Goldsmith's correspondence (1928).

The Deserted Village

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheer'd the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delay'd:
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please:
How often have I loiter'd o'er thy green
Where humble happiness endear'd each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The shelter'd cot, the cultivated farm,
The never failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topp'd the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I bless'd the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree:
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old survey'd;
And many a gambol frolick'd o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter titter'd round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession taught e'en toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed,
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.
  Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,

And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain;
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But choked with sedges works its weedy way;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries.
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the moldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.
A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintain'd its man;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more:
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.
But times are alter'd; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scatter'd hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth, and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that ask'd but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brighten'd all the green;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.
Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds,
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruin'd grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learn'd skill,
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations pass'd,
Here to return—and die at home at last.
O bless'd retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How bless'd is he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labor with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands, in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending virtue's friend;
Sinks to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be pass'd.
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I pass'd with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came soften'd from below;
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that low'd to meet their young;
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind;
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And fill'd each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
But all the bloomy flush of life is fled;
All but yon widow'd, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced, in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.
Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wish'd to change his place;
Unskillful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashion'd to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learn'd to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain;
The long remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruin'd spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claim'd kindred there, and had his claims allow'd;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learn'd to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
  Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings lean'd to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt, at every call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all:
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
  Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whisper'd praise.
  At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorn'd the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remain'd to pray.
The service pass'd, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran:
E'en children follow'd, with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distress'd:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
  Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossom'd furze, unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school:
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd;
Yet he was kind, or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault;
The village all declared how much he knew,
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge:
In arguing, too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquish'd, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
  But pass'd is all his fame. The very spot,
Where many a time he triumph'd, is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the signpost caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nutbrown draughts inspired,
Where graybeard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talk'd with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place;
The whitewash'd wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnish'd clock that click'd behind the door:
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;
The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs, and flowers, and fennel gay;
While broken teacups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.
  Vain transitory splendors! could not all

Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart;
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be press'd,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.
Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their firstborn sway;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth array'd,
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks, if this be joy?
Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robb'd the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorn'd for pleasure all,
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.
As some fair female, unadorn'd and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrow'd charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are pass'd, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land, by luxury betray'd,
In nature's simplest charms at first array'd:
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise;
While, scourged by famine, from the smiling land
The mournful peasant leads his humble band;
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave.
Where then, ah! where shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits stray'd,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And e'en the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped—What waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind:
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know,
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woe.
Here, while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here, while the proud their long-drawn pomp display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way;
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign,
Here, richly deck'd, admits the gorgeous train;
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square.
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies:
She once, perhaps, in village plenty bless'd,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress'd;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn;
Now lost to all; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart, deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, thine, the loveliest train,

Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
E'en now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no. To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama[1] murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crown'd,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around:
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they:
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only shelter'd thefts of harmless love.
Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That call'd them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure pass'd,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly look'd their last,
And took a long farewell, and wish'd in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And, shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Return'd and wept, and still return'd to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go,
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wish'd for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for her father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And bless'd the cot where every pleasure rose;
And kiss'd her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasp'd them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.
O luxury! thou cursed by heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own:
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapp'd their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
E'en now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
E'en now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness are there:
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well;
Farewell! and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's[2] cliffs, or Pambamarca's[3] side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voïce, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of th' inclement clime;
Aid slighted Truth with thy persuasive train;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possess'd,
Though very poor, may still be very bless'd;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labor'd mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.[4]

(1770)

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[1] a river in Georgia.

[2] in Sweden.

[3] in Ecuador.

[4] Dr. Johnson wrote these last four lines.

From *The Vicar of Wakefield*

When lovely Woman stoops to folly,
  And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
  What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover
  To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
  And wring his bosom—is, to die.

(1776)

CHARLES-LOUIS DE SECONDAT,

called MONTESQUIEU (1689-1755)

Montesquieu came of a Gascon family with long traditions as leaders of the legal profession, and the young man was educated to follow in their footsteps. Eventually he became President of the Parliament of Bordeaux. His profoundest work is *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), on which he spent some twenty years and by virtue of which he has been called the father of comparative ethics. He maintained that all ideas of good and evil arise from the conditions obtaining in any given society. Climate and geography are the chief factors, he taught, in conditioning a society. Like Voltaire (cf. *above*), he looked upon England's as the ideal government, though it would appear that during his visit to that country, crucial in forming his ideas, he had seen less of what was actually there than of what he had wished to be there. The powers of the English legislative and executive are interlocked, but Montesquieu, nevertheless, held up England as the shining example of his favorite political theory: that the judicial, legislative, and executive powers of a government are best kept independent of one another. This conception of a functioning democratic government, through the prestige of Montesquieu's name, impressed the founding fathers of the United States as being correct; it was uppermost in their minds when they were framing the American Constitution. In England, Burke (cf. *below*) was greatly influenced by Montesquieu's political ideas. The great French theorist revealed himself as a champion of tolerance, humanitarianism, and representative government.

Many of the ideas that were elaborated in *The Spirit of Laws* were earlier expressed, through the medium of satire, in his first literary triumph, *The Persian Letters* (1721), the inspiration for Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World* (cf. *below*). At the time of their composition Montesquieu had been mingling with the leaders of the *salons*, where he was much admired for his aristocratic bearing, cogent observation, and fine irony. Because of its daring, he published *The Persian Letters* anonymously, though he could not long conceal his authorship. Its satire mirrored perfectly the follies of the age, and the book was enormously popular. But its mockery of the Church party that wielded vast power in France of his day evoked the animosity of the officials who, in revenge, caused Montesquieu's election to the Academy to be delayed for many years. Undoubtedly influenced by Addison's social satire in *The Spectator*, *The Persian Letters* also employ the Orientalism which had been popular since Galland's translation of *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night* (cf. *above*). The plan of the work is very simple: three Persians, Rica, Usbeck, and Rhedi, set out for Europe to study its manners; Rhedi stops at Venice while the other two go on to Paris. The *Letters* consist of a brisk correspondence exchanged between the visitors at Paris and the one at Venice, and from Paris and Venice to Usbeck's harem at home. This apparatus enabled Montesquieu to capitalize on all the lively criticism and revolt which the best minds of the time were expressing against the existing order of French society. The naïve logic and unsophisticated wonder of the Persian visitors hold up glaringly the oppressions and injustices of the times. Considering the speed with which books were suppressed, we may well wonder that *The Persian Letters* was tolerated. Such a portrait as he here draws of Louis XIV is bold enough: "The King of France is old. We have no instance in our history of a monarch who reigned so long. . . . He likes to gratify those who serve him, but he pays as liberally for the attentions, or, rather, the idleness of his courtiers as for the toilsome campaigns of his captains; often he prefers a man who attends upon his toilet or who hands him his napkin when he sits at table to some other who captures cities or gains battles for him."

Perhaps the trenchant wit of the satire or its popularity saved the book. At any rate, it has had many imitators. D'Argens's *Chinese Letters* and D'Ancourt's *Turkish Memoirs* followed upon it; and Diderot and Voltaire did not scorn imitating it. But none of its progeny is of greater interest than *The Citizen of the World*.

Montesquieu's style is brilliant, often startling in its very simplicity. It lacks, however, the easy grace of Voltaire's.

Standard works on Montesquieu are: J. Dedieu, *Montesquieu* (1913); and J. C. Collins, *Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Rousseau in England* (1908).

THE PERSIAN LETTERS

(*Translated by Bernard D. N. Grebanier*)

LETTER XXIV

We have been at Paris a month now, and have been in perpetual motion. Plenty of negotiations are necessary before one can find lodgings, the people recommended to one, and the necessities of life,—all of which are lacking.

Paris is as large as Ispahan:[1] the houses are so high that you would swear that they are inhabited only by astrologers. You reason well that a city built in the air, which has six or seven houses on top of one another, must be crowded; and that, when everybody comes into the street, there's enough disorder.

Perhaps you won't believe it: in the month I've been here, I haven't yet seen anybody walking. There are no people in the world who rely more on their carriages than the French: they run, they fly; the slow vehicles of Asia, the measured step of our camels, would throw them into a coma. As for me, who am not at all made for such speed, and who often go on foot without changing my pace, I sometimes get as angry as a Christian: for, let alone that they splash me with mud from head to foot, I cannot forgive the jostling to which I am regularly, periodically subjected. One man behind me who passes by me makes me execute an about-face; another who brushes by me from the other side, sets me spinning back from where the first one turned me; and I can't take a hundred steps without being more exhausted than if I had done ten miles.

Don't think that I am able at present to tell you fully of European manners and customs; I've only a slight idea of them myself, and I've had time to do hardly more than wonder at them.

The king of France is the most powerful prince in Europe. He hasn't any gold-mines like his neighbor the king of Spain; but he has greater riches than he, because he draws them from the vanity of his subjects, more inexhaustible than mines. He has undertaken and kept up great wars without any other resources than the titles of honor which are for sale; and by such prodigy of human pride are his troops paid, his towns fortified, and his fleet equipped.

Besides, this king is a great magician; he holds sway even over the minds of his subjects; he makes them think what he wishes them to think. If he has only a thousand crowns in his treasury, and he needs two, he has only to tell them that one crown is worth two, and they believe him. If a war is difficult to keep going, and there's no money, he has only to suggest to them that a piece of paper is money, and they're convinced. He has even made them believe that he can cure them of all sorts of ills just by touching them,[2] such is the great power and strength he has over their minds!

What I say of this prince ought not astonish you; there is another magician stronger than he, who has not less control over the king's mind, than the king himself has over his subjects. This magician is called the Pope: he makes him believe that three are only one; that the bread he eats isn't bread, or the wine he drinks wine; and a thousand other such things.

To keep him up to the mark, and not let him lose the habit of believing, he gives the king, from time to time, certain articles of faith. Two years ago he sent him a long piece of writing called "Constitution," and required, under the heaviest penalties, this prince and his subjects to believe everything in it. He succeeded at once with the prince, who submitted immediately, giving the example to his subjects; but some of these revolted, saying they refused to believe anything in that document. It is the women who have instigated this revolt that has divided court, kingdom, and family. This Constitution prohibits reading a book that all Christians maintain was brought them from heaven: it's really their Koran. The women, indignant at this outrage to their sex, are inciting everyone against this Constitution: they have won over the men to their side, though the men are not anxious about their prerogatives in this instance. You must admit that this Mufti argues well; and, by great Allah! he must have learned some of the principles of our holy law; for, since women are of inferior creation to us, and our prophets tell us they'll never enter paradise, why need they bother to read a book that was written only to teach them the road to paradise?

I've heard tell incredible stories of the king, and I do not doubt you will hesitate to believe them.

They say that while he was warring against his neighbors, who were allied against him, he had in his kingdom numberless invisible enemies surrounding him; they add that he has sought them out for thirty years; and that despite the indefatigable efforts of certain dervishes in his confidence, he can't find one of them. They live with him, they are at his court, in his capital, in his troops, in his tribunals; nonetheless it is thought he will die without finding them. You would say they existed in the general, not as particular persons,—a body without members. Doubtless Heaven wanted to punish this prince for being immoderate towards his vanquished enemies, since it has given him invisible ones, with genius and destiny superior to his own.

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[1] a city of Persia, very flourishing in the seventeenth century.

[2] i.e. "the king's touch," held for centuries to be a cure for disease.

I shall continue to write you, and inform you of matters very remote from the Persian character and temper. It is indeed the same earth that carries us both; but the men in the country I inhabit and those where you are, are very different men.

From Paris, the 4th of the
moon of Rebiab, 2, 1711.

(1721)

The Citizen of the World

While borrowing freely from his predecessors in the Oriental tradition, notably Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (cf. *above*) and D'Argens's *Chinese Letters*, Goldsmith remains the chief periodical essayist of his day in direct line from Addison. *The Citizen of the World,* containing the best of his essays, was begun as a bi-weekly contribution to a newspaper, the *Public Ledger*, on January 24, 1760. Two years later the essays were collected in two volumes. Like Montesquieu's Persians, Goldsmith's Chinese philosopher is a highly cultivated representative of a sophisticated but alien culture. He thus makes an ideal spectator of the incongruities of English life. Without Addison's perfection of style, Swift's sharpness, or Burke's magnificence, Goldsmith is yet one of the most delightful of our essayists, because, as everywhere, what he has to say is irradiated by personal charm. For colloquial ease he has never been surpassed. And some of his portraits (e.g. Beau Tibbs) are among the most vivid in English prose. The slight story which connects the letters in the series exhibits the relationship of the periodical essay to the embryonic novel.

LETTER LI

The Bookseller

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast, over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect, and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge, whether he had lately published any thing new? I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, Sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer, than I would sell pork in the dog-days. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a sessions' paper, may amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of value we reserve for a spring and winter trade." "I must confess, Sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal." "Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade: my books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar: I always let the vulgar direct me; wherever popular clamor arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say, that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected." "But, Sir," interupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you published; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world?"

"As to that, Sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself; and though I am very cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favor to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, Sir, here they are; diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis* a translation of several medical precepts for the use of such physicians as do not understand Latin. *Item,* the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manners of smiling without distorting the face. *Item,* the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of 'Change Alley. *Item,* the proper manner of cutting black-lead pencils, and making crayons; by the Right Hon. the Earl of* * *. *Item,* the muster-master-general, or the review of reviews — " "Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity, with regard to title-pages, is satisfied; I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history or an epic poem." "Bless me," cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humor. Strokes, Sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line." "Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes," replied I, "for I must confess I can see no other?" "And pray, Sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see any thing good now-a-days, that is not filled with strokes — and dashes?—Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humor. I bought a piece last season that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha ha's, three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a fine work." "I fancy, then, Sir, you were a considerable gainer?" "It must be owned the piece did pay; but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last winter's success; I gained by two murders; but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my Direct Road to an Estate, but the Infernal Guide brought me up again. Ah, Sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master; filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humor; he wisely considered, that moral and humor at the same time were quite overdoing the business." "To what purpose was the book then published?" cried I. "Sir, the book was published in order to be sold; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after: of all kinds of writing, that goes off best at present; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics; close was the word, always very right, and very dull — ever on the safe side of an argument; yet, with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favor. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him at the beginning of every month as a censor on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure; no merit could escape him: but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk." "But are there not some works," interrupted I, "that from the very manner of their composition must be exempt from criticism, particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?" "There is no work whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller, "even though you wrote in Chinese he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese Letters, for instance; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come — should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple and perfectly natural— he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may, with a sneer, send you back to China for readers. He may observe that after the first or second letter the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious; but the worst of all is the public in such a case will anticipate his censures, and leave you with all your instructive simplicity to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation and, what I should fear more, that of the public, I would in such a case write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had; nor would I appear more stupid than nature has made me." "Here, then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power: unnatural, uneastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible would be the whole cry; sir, we should then hunt you down like a rat." "Head of my father!" said I, "sure there are but two ways: the door must either be shut or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural." "Be what you will, we shall criticise you," returned the bookseller, "and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall repay the obligation with gratitude." "What, sir," replied I, "put my name to a work which I have not written! Never, while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself." The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardor of the bookseller's conversation; and, after about half an hour's disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew. Adieu.

LETTER LIV

The Character of an Important Trifler

Though naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive I am often found in the centre of a crowd; and wherever pleasure is to be sold am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward, work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigor.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed: we now turned to the right, then to the left; as we went forward, he still went faster, but in vain; the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment; so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone," cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone down to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country."

During the reply I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion: his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt; and his stockings of silk, though, newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes and the bloom in his countenance.

"Pshaw, pshaw, Will," cried the figure, "no more of that, if you love me. You know I hate flattery,—on my soul I do; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten; and yet, faith, I despise the great as much as you do: but there are a great many damned honest fellows among them, and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants breeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. 'Ned,' says he to me, 'Ned,' says he, 'I'll hold gold to silver I can tell where you were poaching last night.' 'Poaching, my lord?' says I; 'faith, you have missed already; for I stayed at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way; I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey—stand still, and, swoop, they fall into my mouth.'"

"Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow," cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity; "I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company"—"Improved," replied the other; "You shall know,—but let it go no farther—a great secret—five hundred a-year to begin with.—My lord's word of honor for it—his lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a tête-à-tête dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else."—"I fancy you forget, Sir," cried I, "you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town."—"Did I say so?" replied he coolly; "to be sure if I said so, it was so—dined in town; egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town; but I dined in the country too; for you must know, my boys, I eat two dinners. By the by, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that:—We were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's—an affected piece, but let it go no farther—a secret—Well, there happened to be no asafœtida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, 'I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that—' But, dear Drybone, you are an honest creature, lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till —— but harkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you."

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. "His very dress," cries my friend, "is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day you find him in rags; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction of whom he talks so familiarly, he has scarce a coffee-house acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor, and while all the world perceive his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence; but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bug-bear to fright the children into obedience." Adieu.

LETTER LV

The Character of the Trifler Continued: With That of His Wife, His House, and Furniture

I am apt to fancy I have contracted a new acquaintance whom it will be no easy matter to shake off. My little Beau yesterday overtook me again in one of the public walks, and slapping me on the shoulder, saluted me with an air of the most perfect familiarity. His dress was the same as usual, except that he had more powder in his hair, wore a dirtier shirt, a pair of temple spectacles, and his hat under his arm.

As I knew him to be a harmless, amusing little thing, I could not return his smiles with any degree of severity; so we walked forward on terms of the utmost intimacy, and in a few minutes discussed all the usual topics preliminary to particular conversation.

The oddities, that marked his character, however, soon began to appear; he bowed to several well-dressed persons, who, by their manner of returning the compliment, appeared perfect strangers. At intervals he drew out a pocket-book, seeming to take memorandums before all the company, with much importance and assiduity. In this manner he led me through the length of the whole walk, fretting at his absurdities, and fancying myself laughed at not less than him by every spectator.

When we were got to the end of our procession, "Blast me," cries he, with an air of vivacity, "I never saw the park so thin in my life before? there's no company at all to-day; not a single face to be seen." "No company!" interrupted I peevishly; "no company where there is such a crowd? why, man, there's too much. What are the thousands that have been laughing at us but company?" "Lord, my dear," returned he, with the utmost good humor, "you seem immensely chagrined: but blast me, when the world laughs at me, I laugh at the world, and so we are even. My Lord Trip, Bill Squash the Creolian, and I, sometimes make a party at being ridiculous; and so we say and do a thousand things for the joke's sake. But I see you are grave, and if you are for a fine grave sentimental companion, you shall dine with me and my wife to-day; I must insist on't: I'll introduce you to Mrs. Tibbs, a lady of as elegant qualifications as any in nature; she was bred, but that's between ourselves, under the inspection of the Countess of Allnight. A charming body of voice; but no more of that, she will give us a song. You shall see my little girl too, Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Tibbs, a sweet pretty creature! I design her for my Lord Drumstick's eldest son; but that's in friendship, let it go no farther; she's but six years old, and yet she walks a minuet, and plays on the guitar immensely already. I intend she shall be as perfect as possible in every accomplishment. In the first place, I'll make her a scholar: I'll teach her Greek myself, and learn that language purposely to instruct her; but let that be a secret."

Thus saying, without waiting for a reply, he took me by the arm, and hauled me along. We passed through many dark alleys and winding ways; for, from some motives to me unknown, he seemed to have a particular aversion to every frequented street; at last, however, we got to the door of a dismal-looking house in the outlets of the town, where he informed me he chose to reside for the benefit of the air.

We entered the lower door, which ever seemed to lie most hospitably open; and I began to ascend an old and creaking staircase, when, as he mounted to show me the way, he demanded, whether I delighted in prospects; to which answering in the affirmative, "Then," says he, "I shall show you one of the most charming in the world, out of my window: we shall see the ships sailing, and the whole country for twenty miles round, tip-top, quite high. My Lord Swamp would give ten thousand guineas for such a one; but as I sometimes pleasantly tell him, I always love to keep my prospects at home, that my friends may visit me the oftener."

By this time we were arrived as high as the stairs would permit us to ascend, till we came to what he was facetiously pleased to call the first floor down the chimney; and knocking at the door, a voice from within demanded, who's there? My conductor answered that it was him. But this not satisfying the querist, the voice again repeated the demand; to which he answered louder than before; and now the door was opened by an old woman with cautious reluctance.

When we were got in, he welcomed me to his house with great ceremony, and turning to the old woman, asked where was her lady? "Good troth," replied she in a peculiar dialect, "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because they have taken an oath against lending out the tub any longer." "My two shirts," cried he in a tone that faltered with confusion, "what does the idiot mean?" "I ken what I mean weel enough," replied the other: "she's washing your twa shirts at the next door, because—" "Fire and fury, no more of thy stupid explanations," cried he; "go and inform her we have got company. Were that Scotch hag to be for ever in my family, she would never learn politeness, nor forget that absurd poisonous accent of hers, or testify the smallest specimen of breeding or high life; and yet it is very surprising too, as I had her from a parliament man, a friend of mine from the Highlands, one of the politest men in the world; but that's a secret."

We waited some time for Mrs. Tibbs's arrival, during which interval I had a full opportunity of surveying the chamber and all its furniture; which consisted of four chairs with old wrought bottoms, that he assured me were his wife's embroidery; a square table that had been once japanned; a cradle in one corner, a lumbering cabinet in the other; a broken shepherdess, and a mandarin without a head, were stuck over the chimney; and round the walls several paltry unframed pictures, which, he observed, were all his own drawing. "What do you think, Sir, of that head in the corner, done in the manner of Grisoni? there's the true keeping in it; it is my own face, and though there happens to be no likeness, a Countess offered me a hundred for its fellow; I refused her, for, hang it, that would be mechanical[1] you know."

The wife at last made her appearance, at once a slattern and a coquette; much emaciated, but still carrying the remains of beauty. She made twenty apologies for being seen in such odious dishabille, but hoped to be excused, as she had stayed all night at the Gardens[2] with the Countess, who was excessively fond of the horns. "And, indeed, my dear," added she, turning to her husband, "his lordship drank your health in a bumper."—"Poor Jack," cries he, "a dear good-natured creature, I know he loves me. But I hope, my dear, you have given orders for dinner; you need make no great preparations neither, there are but three of us; something elegant, and little will do; a turbot, an ortolan, a—" "Or what do you think, my dear," interrupts the wife, "of a nice pretty bit of ox-cheek, piping hot, and dressed with a little of my own sauce?"—"The very thing," replies he, "it will eat best with some smart bottled beer: but be sure to let us have the sauce his Grace was so fond of. I hate your immense loads of meat, that is country all over; extremely disgusting to those who are in the least acquainted with high life."

By this time my curiosity began to abate, and my appetite to increase: the company of fools may at first make us smile, but at last never fails of rendering us melancholy; I therefore pretended to recollect a prior engagement, and, after having shown my respect to the house, according to the fashion of the English, by giving the old servant a piece of money at the door, I took my leave; Mr. Tibbs assuring me, that dinner, if I stayed, would be ready at least in less than two hours.

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[1] mercenary. [2] Vauxhall.

LETTER LXXVII

The London Shop-keeper

The shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door; informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intention to cheat him.

I was this morning to buy silk for a nightcap; immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civilest people alive; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for nightcaps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, "you must not pretend to instruct me in silks; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy Bungees."—"That may be," cried the mercer, who I afterwards found had never contradicted a man in his life; "I cannot pretend to say but they may; but I can assure you, my lady Trail has had a sack from this piece this very morning."—"But friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sack from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a nightcap."—"That may be," returned he again, "yet what becomes a pretty lady, will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face, that even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a nightcap.

While this business was consigned to his journeymen, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, "There," cries he, "there's beauty; My Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birth-night[1] this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats."—"But I don't want a waistcoat," replied I.—"Not want a waistcoat!" returned the mercer, "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice, that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was a really good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving company in their morning gowns; "Perhaps, sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn." Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honorable, I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing."—"I am no lord," interrupted I.—"I beg pardon," cried he; "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Conscience, sir, conscience is my way of dealing; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting, with some astonishment, how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper, and molding me to his inclinations! I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine: yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigor, uniformity, and success.

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[1] i.e. the night of the King's birthday.

Edmund Burke

(1729-1797)

Burke, the greatest master of English political eloquence, was a man of endless intellectual energy. Johnson, in whose club he was a prominent member, singled him out as a truly extraordinary man—a compliment which he seemed unwilling to extend to anyone else. "His stream of mind is perpetual," he once said of Burke; and at another time he averred: "I can live very well with Burke. I love his knowledge, his genius, his diffusion, and affluence of conversation." Boswell reports that when Johnson was ill, "Mr. Burke having been mentioned, he said, 'That fellow calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now it would kill me.' So much was he accustomed to consider conversation as a contest, and such was his notion of Burke as an opponent." Admiration such as that won from the pugnacious Johnson must have been well earned, particularly so when Burke was a leader of the Whigs, whom Johnson detested. Boswell, who was easily moved to jealousy of his beloved Johnson's friends, is free in his praise of Burke; "while he is equal to the greatest things, [Burke] can adorn the least, can with equal facility embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation."

Though he devoted all his powers to politics (for which he has not been the less liked by the political-minded English), Burke seemed destined to be on the losing side of most of his public arguments, though time has justified many of his opinions. To lovers of literature it has often seemed a tragic waste that Burke should have consecrated the splendor of his style to matters of state instead of employing it on subjects less ephemeral. His oratory has proved great in print, but his inadequacy of voice and awkwardness of gesture left his hearers in Parliament cold. In fact, he was mercilessly nicknamed the "Dinner Bell" in the Commons, because when he rose to speak most of the members were inclined to leave. The pathetic failure of his career was best understood by the seemingly naïve Goldsmith, who in a mock-epitaph wrote:

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind:
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit;
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;
For a patriot too cool; for a drudge disobedient;
And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Burke was born in Dublin of a Protestant father and Catholic mother, was educated at Trinity College in his native city, where he founded the earliest student debating society on record (1747), and entered the Middle Temple in London in 1750. He won a considerable amount of respect in the world of letters with his *Philosophic Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756), a valuable contribution to aesthetics. In the same year he published the satirical *Vindication of Natural Society* (1756), in which he already demonstrated his opposition to any Rousseauistic conception of a society without the restraint of law. In 1764 he was made a member of Dr. Johnson's club, and two years later began his career in Parliament (1766). At once he began to espouse the cause of the American colonists. In 1774 his speech *On American Taxation* was an impassioned plea to the Government to abolish the duty on tea in America; in 1775 came his famous *On Conciliation with America*, in which he urged the necessity of granting the colonists their just demands as free Englishmen. It has been said that had Burke's counsel been heeded instead of the pragmatic policies of the governmental leaders, England might have avoided the American Revolution. His devotion to the rights of colonies was further exhibited in his long indictment of Warren Hastings for gross crimes and mismanagement in India (1788-1794). All his life, too, Protestant though he was, he fought for Catholic Emancipation and for the rights of the Irish people. He was also one of the earliest promoters of the abolition of the slave-trade.

In all these noble endeavors, to which he gave his genius in vain, his principles were constant. Advocate, as he was throughout, of political liberty, his arguments in its behalf were always on a strictly conservative plane. The English people had, by their long struggles, won to a constitutional right of freedom and Parliamentary representation. If society were to be preserved this right must be safeguarded and assured to all Englishmen, whether in Britain, America, Ireland, or India, and to Catholic and Protestant alike.

When the French Revolution occurred, therefore, the liberals may well have expected him to defend it. If so, they were to be sorely disappointed. For Burke's was almost the first voice raised against it. When his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) appeared, the Revolution was in its early stages. No violence had been committed, the Terror was yet undreamt of, and the King and Queen of France were still perfectly safe, and seemed, at the worst, faced with the possibility of having to submit to a constitutional monarchy such as England had. On November 4, 1789, at the annual meeting of a society that met to celebrate the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the Reverend Dr. Price, a Nonconformist minister, hailed the French Revolution for achieving the aims of the English and as ushering in an era of liberty to Europe. Burke's famous *Reflections* was written in answer to Dr. Price's speech, in alarm at what he thought a confusion of principles. Among Dr. Price's observations were some which dealt with "the right to choose our own governors" and to "cashier them for misconduct." To Burke such opinions spelled possible revolution in England, if what he considered the anarchical ideas of Voltaire and Rousseau should gain any foothold. He rejected comparison with the English Revolution of 1688. That, he insisted, had been the signing of a free contract between the English people and the monarchs they chose; Englishmen have since then been bound, he reasoned, to abide by their agreement, and possessed no right to "choose" and "cashier." To admit that right, Burke thought, was to open the door to social chaos.

When the *Reflections* appeared Burke seemed an apostate to his fellow Whigs. Even the conservative newspapers were looking with friendliness on the efforts of Frenchmen to free themselves of despotism. Burke had to break with the party of which he had been a leader. Everywhere abuse was heaped upon him, and he was labeled a turncoat. Premature though his apprehensions actually were, he could not really have been accused of changing his principles if the grounds of his former battles for liberty had been understood. He had always distrusted abstract theories, had always been an advocate of precedent and order; precedent had noved him to befriend the rights of all Englishmen. But though there was yet no harm done in France, he was convinced that because the French were proceeding on new political theories, they would bring anarchy and irreligion into Europe. Later, when the king and queen were executed, and the Terror was instituted, many liberals in England were alienated from the French Revolution. And then it was that Burke stood out as having been a prophet preaching to deaf ears.

Among the many answers which were immediately penned to Burke, the most important was Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (cf. *below*). In it Paine effectively demolished Burke's arguments. For it must be remembered that although the actual course of the

French Revolution may seem to have justified Burke's predictions, the arguments he brought forth have little logical weight. The conception of an unbreakable contract between the English people and their rulers in 1688 was a pure fiction of his imagination, and the right of one country to bind another is intolerable to right thinking, as Paine well proved. In the general horror with which Englishmen reacted to the excesses of the Revolution, the unsoundness of Burke's reasoning, however, was forgotten—so much so that the celebrated passage on Marie Antoinette (cf. *below*) has been hailed as a piece of sublimity instead of a specimen of autointoxicated sentimentality. Paine's grim "He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird," should have been enough to dispel the rosy vapors with which Burke dimmed the hideous injustices of the old régime.

Burke followed up his attack on the Revolution with *Letters on a Regicide Peace* (1796, 1797). In 1794 he retired from Parliament in order to make way for his son Richard. But the same year Burke was plunged in misery by the death of his beloved son, for whom he had expected great things. As a reward for his services, the Crown granted Burke a pension, which was opposed in the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford, who had remained a constant friend of the French Revolution. In answer to him, Burke wrote his last work, *A Letter to a Noble Lord* (1796), in which, in his finest manner, the veteran politician defended his public conduct and career. Morley has described this as "the most splendid repartee in the English language."

As a stylist, Burke has often been called one of the greatest in our prose. In nobility of utterance, in richness of vocabulary he has not been excelled. Perhaps the most just estimate of him as a stylist has been made by Edmund Gosse: "The prose of Burke may be felt to be the finest expression of a particular phase of the eighteenth-century mind—a phase from which all the coarse fibre of the Renaissance . . . had been extracted, where all is civilized, earnest, competent, and refined."

The best study of Burke remains John Morley's biography (1879). J. MacCunn's *The Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke* (1913) is an admirable analysis of his ideas. There are recent biographies by B. Newman (1927) and R. H. Murray (1931). A good annotated edition of Burke's selected works was edited by E. J. Payne (1866) in three volumes.

From *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

This king, to say no more of him, and this queen,[1] and their infant children (who once would have been the pride and hope of a great and generous people) were then forced to abandon the sanctuary of the most splendid palace[2] in the world, which they left swimming in blood, polluted by massacre, and strewed with scattered limbs and mutilated carcases. Thence they were conducted into the capital of their kingdom. Two had been selected from the unprovoked, unresisted, promiscuous slaughter, which was made of the gentlemen of birth and family who composed the king's body guard. These two gentlemen, with all the parade of an execution of justice, were cruelly and publicly dragged to the block, and beheaded in the great court of the palace. Their heads were stuck upon spears, and led the procession; whilst the royal captives who followed in the train were slowly moved along, amidst the horrid yells, and shrilling screams, and frantic dances, and infamous contumelies, and all the unutterable abominations of the furies of hell, in the abused shape of the vilest of women. After they had been made to taste, drop by drop, more than the bitterness of death, in the slow torture of a journey of twelve miles, protracted to six hours, they were, under a guard, composed of those very soldiers who had thus conducted them through this famous triumph, lodged in one of the old palaces of Paris now converted into a bastile for kings.

Is this a triumph to be consecrated at altars? to be commemorated with grateful thanksgiving? to be offered to the divine humanity with fervent prayer and enthusiastic ejaculation?—These Theban and Thracian orgies,[3] acted in France, and applauded only in the Old Jewry,[4] I assure you, kindle prophetic enthusiasm in the minds but of very few people in this kingdom: although a saint and apostle, who may have revelations of his own, and who has so completely vanquished all the mean superstitions of the heart, may incline to think it pious and decorous to compare it with the entrance into the world of the Prince of Peace, proclaimed in a holy temple by a venerable sage, and not long before not worse announced by the voice of angels to the quiet innocence of shepherds.

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[1] Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette.

[2] Versailles.

[3] The Thebans and Thracians were famous for the extravagance of their religious orgies.

At first I was at a loss to account for this fit of unguarded transport. I knew, indeed, that the sufferings of monarchs make a delicious repast to some sort of palates. There were reflections which might serve to keep this appetite within some bounds of temperance. But when I took one circumstance into my consideration, I was obliged to confess, that much allowance ought to be made for the society, and that the temptation was too strong for common discretion; I mean, the circumstance of the Io Pæan of the triumph, the animating cry which called "for *all* the Bishops to be hanged on the lamp-posts," might well have brought forth a burst of enthusiasm on the foreseen consequences of this happy day. I allow to so much enthusiasm some little deviation from prudence. I allow this prophet to break forth into hymns of joy and thanksgiving on an event which appears like the precursor of the Millennium, and the projected fifth monarchy,[5] in the destruction of all church establishments. There was, however, (as in all human affairs there is,) in the midst of this joy, something to exercise the patience of these worthy gentlemen, and to try the long-suffering of their faith. The actual murder of the king and queen, and their child, was wanting to the other auspicious circumstances of this "*beautiful day.*" The actual murder of the bishops, though called for by so many holy ejaculations, was also wanting. A group of regicide and sacrilegious slaughter, was indeed boldly sketched, but it was only sketched. It unhappily was left unfinished, in this great history-piece of the massacre of innocents. What hardy pencil of a great master, from the school of the rights of men, will finish it, is to be seen hereafter. The age has not yet the complete benefit of that diffusion of knowledge that has undermined superstition and error; and the king of France wants another object or two to consign to oblivion, in consideration of all the good which is to arise from his own sufferings, and the patriotic crimes of an enlightened age.

Although this work of our new light and knowledge did not go to the length that in all probability it was intended it should be carried, yet I must think that such treatment of any human creatures must be shocking to any but those who are made for accomplishing revolutions. But I cannot stop here. Influenced by the inborn feelings of my nature, and not being illuminated by a single ray of this new-sprung modern light, I confess to you, Sir, that the exalted rank of the persons suffering, and particularly the sex, the beauty, and the amiable qualities of the descendant of so many kings and emperors, with the tender age of royal infants, insensible only through infancy and innocence of the cruel outrages to which their parents were exposed, instead of being a subject of exultation, adds not a little to my sensibility on that most melancholy occasion.

I hear that the august person,[6] who was the principal object of our preacher's triumph, though he supported himself, felt much on that shameful occasion. As a man, it became him to feel for his wife and his children, and the faithful guards of his person, that were massacred in cold blood about him; as a prince, it became him to feel for the strange and frightful transformation of his civilized subjects, and to be more grieved for them than solicitous for himself. It derogates little from his fortitude, while it adds infinitely to the honor of his humanity. I am very sorry to say it, very sorry indeed, that such personages are in a situation in which it is not becoming in us to praise the virtues of the great.

I hear, and I rejoice to hear, that the great lady,[7] the other object of the triumph, has borne that day, (one is interested that beings made for suffering should suffer well,) and that she bears all the succeeding days, that she bears the imprisonment of her husband, and her captivity, and the exile of her friends, and the insulting adulation of addresses, and the whole weight of her accumulated wrongs, with a serene patience, in a manner suited to her rank and race, and becoming the offspring of a sovereign[8] distinguished for her piety and her courage; that, like her, she has lofty sentiments; that she feels with the dignity of a Roman matron; that in the last extremity she will save herself from the last disgrace; and that, if she must fall, she will fall by no ignoble hand.[9]

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[4] This refers to an address by Dr. Richard Price in praise of the French Revolution at a meeting held in the Old Jewry.

[5] A seventeenth-century sect, the Fifth Monarchy Men, believed that it was their duty to prepare for the second coming of Christ by the use of force. Their Monarchy was to be the fifth, succeeding Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome.

[6] the king.

[7] the queen.

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the queen of France, then the dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning-star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defense of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honor, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a dominating vanquisher of laws to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

On this scheme of things, a king is but a man, a queen is but a woman; a woman is but an animal, and an animal not of the highest order. All homage paid to the sex in general as such, and without distinct views, is to be regarded as romance and folly. Regicide and parricide and sacrilege are but fictions of superstition, corrupting jurisprudence by destroying its simplicity. The murder of a king, or a queen, or a bishop, or a father are only common homicide; and if the people are by any chance, or in any way, gainers by it, a sort of homicide much the most pardonable, and into which we ought not to make too severe a scrutiny.

On the scheme of this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors, and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations, or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of *their* academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons, so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law. The precept given by a wise man, as well as a great critic, for the construction of poems, is equally true as to states:—*Non satis est pulchra esse poemata, dulcia sunto.*[10] There ought to be a system of manners in every nation, which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely.

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[8] Maria Theresa, Archduchess of Austria and wife of the Emperor Francis I, was the mother of Marie Antoinette.

[9] Marie Antoinette is said to have carried poison on her person.

(1790)

Thomas Paine

(1737-1809)

Tom Paine figures so prominently in American history that it is usually forgotten that he played a leading role in the affairs of his native England and of France as well. Few men have ever been more unjustly dealt with or more misrepresented than he. For his republicanism he was anathematized in England, for his moderation he was imprisoned in France, and for his deism he was shamefully abandoned in those United States for whose independence he had fought so ably. Although he believed in the immortality of the soul, his name has been usually associated with atheism, and Theodore Roosevelt's unworthy stigma of him as a "dirty little atheist" is typical of the injustice to which, even after death, he has been subject. Because he dared to attack the eloquence of Burke, many scholars have been content to repeat the untruth that he had no ability as a writer, whereas the fact is that he wrote with uncommon power, directness, and clarity. The time is not yet when the English-speaking world has realized that he was indeed what his biographer, Conway, has called him, "the Great Commoner of Mankind, founder of the Republic of the World, and emancipator of the human heart and mind."

He had come from the ranks of the humble and tried his hand at various manual trades before he emigrated to America in 1774. Making the acquaintance of Franklin in Philadelphia, he became editor of the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and developed a vital interest in the struggle of the colonists against the injustices of the mother country. On January 10, 1776, he published his historic pamphlet, *Common Sense,* in which he urged that the American colonies assert their independence. Nothing that had been done or said so clarified public opinion in behalf of a revolution, and Paine assumed his place at once as a leader in the fight for independence. Some of his admirers today are even of the opinion that Paine was largely responsible for the Declaration of Independence. When the war broke out, Quaker though he was, Paine joined the Revolutionary army, affirming that with the very principle of liberty at stake it was a man's duty to fight. His series of papers, *The Crisis,* was of supreme importance in adding support to Washington's forces.

When the war was over, Paine, honored as a great republican, returned to England, became friendly with Burke, whom he had admired, and particularly intimate with Godwin (cf. *below*) and his circle as well as with Blake (cf. Vol. II). Upon the appearance of Burke's *Reflections* (cf. *above*), Paine at once replied with the several parts of his *Rights of Man* (1791-2). With simple power he demolished the bases of Burke's splendid rhetoric, and boldly supported the principles of the French Revolution. The book became so popular among the liberals of the day that the government indicted him for high treason (1792). It said that a warning from Blake deterred Paine from returning to his lodgings where officers were waiting to arrest him. He fled to France, where he was made a citizen of the country and elected to its National Convention. Because he dared to advocate the king's banishment against those who were urging execution, Paine was one of the early prisoners of the Terror. It is said that only the mistake of a jailer helped him escape the guillotine. In the meantime *The Age of Reason* (1792-5) had been published, a book more often quoted against him than read. It is a strong deistic attack on orthodox Christianity, and is made up chiefly of disputations against the literal acceptance of the miracles related in the Bible. Like his predecessors, the French *philosophes*, Paine argued for a "rational" religion; his objections were not to the ethics but to the theology of Christianity, and particularly to the influence of the clergy. The book was greeted everywhere with horror. Although many clergymen today preach from their pulpits allegorical interpretations similar to Paine's of events in the Bible, in his own day Paine was considered as a kind of devil. Actually he was the kindest and most moral of men.

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[10] It is not enough that poems be beautiful; they should also be pleasing.—Horace, *The Art of Poetry.*

He was back in the United States in 1802, but none of his former comrades in the Revolutionary War would have anything to do with him. His last years were spent in poverty and neglect, and the men who had been proud to be his associates in the crucial days were now busy trying to obliterate any possible connection in people's minds between themselves and the despised "atheist." He died in 1809. Ten years later, Cobbett, who had once been a savage opponent and had come to repent his unjust attacks on Paine, carried his bones back to England. But a threatening mob awaited him when the ship arrived. Nobody knows today where Paine is buried.

Paine's thinking was formed by his readings in the French revolutionary philosophers and by the great events in America. His conceptions of the rights of man can be found in Rousseau (cf. Vol. II) and were basic to the French Revolution. Although he was deemed a firebrand in his own day, his conviction that every man had inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness would be accepted today by every rational person as axiomatic. As a writer he took no interest, like Burke, in rhetorical beauty. He was interested in convincing the common reader, and this he ably succeeded in doing by the unpretentious force of his style. There is often a rugged beauty in his lines, though most critics deny him any literary quality, and the straightforward clearheadedness of many of his observations cannot fail to be stimulating to the unprejudiced.

M. D. Conway has edited Paine's works (1894-96) in four volumes, and written a full biography of him (1892). More recent biographies are by F. J. Gould (1925), M. A. Best (1927), and H. Pearson (1937).

From *The Rights of Man*

But Mr. Burke appears to have no idea of principles when he is contemplating governments. "Ten years ago," says he, "I could have felicitated France on her having a government, without inquiring what the nature of that government was or how it was administered." Is this the language of a rational man? Is it the language of a heart feeling as it ought to feel for the rights and happiness of the human race? On this ground, Mr. Burke must compliment all the governments in the world, while the victims who suffer under them, whether sold into slavery or tortured out of existence, are wholly forgotten. It is power, and not principles, that Mr. Burke venerates; and under this abominable depravity, he is disqualified to judge between them. Thus much for his opinion as to the occasions of the French Revolution. I now proceed to other considerations.

I know a place in America called Point-no-Point because, as you proceed along the shore, gay and flowery as Mr. Burke's language, it continually recedes, and presents itself at a distance before you; but when you have got as far as you can go, there is no point at all. Just thus it is with Mr. Burke's three hundred and fifty-six pages. It is therefore difficult to reply to him. But as the points he wishes to establish may be inferred from what he abuses, it is in his paradoxes that we must look for his arguments.

As to the tragic paintings by which Mr. Burke has outraged his own imagination, and seeks to work upon that of his readers, they are very well calculated for theatrical representation, where facts are manufactured for the sake of show, and accommodated to produce, through the weakness of sympathy, a weeping effect. But Mr. Burke should recollect that he is writing history, and not plays, and that his readers will expect truth, and not the spouting rant of high-toned exclamation.

When we see a man dramatically lamenting, in a publication intended to be believed, that "the age of chivalry is gone!" that "the glory of Europe is extinguished forever!" that "the unbought grace of life [if any one knows what it is], the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone!" and all this because the Quixote age of chivalry nonsense is gone, what opinion can we form of his judgment, or what regard can we pay to his facts? In the rhapsody of his imagination he has discovered a world of windmills,[1] and his sorrows are that there are no Quixotes to attack them. But if the age of aristocracy, like that of chivalry, should fall (and they had originally some connection), Mr. Burke, the trumpeter of the order, may continue his parody to the end, and finish with exclaiming, "Othello's occupation's gone!"[2]

Notwithstanding Mr. Burke's horrid paintings, when the French Revolution is compared with the revolutions of other countries, the astonishment will be that it is marked with so few sacrifices; but this astonishment will cease when we reflect that *principles*, and not *persons*, were the meditated objects of destruction. The mind of the nation was acted upon by a higher stimulus than what the consideration of persons could inspire, and sought a higher conquest than could be produced by the downfall of an enemy. Among the few who fell, there do not appear to be any that were intentionally singled out. They all of them had their fate in the circumstances of the moment, and were not pursued with that long, cold-blooded, unabated revenge which pursued the unfortunate Scotch in the affair of 1745.[3]

Through the whole of Mr. Burke's book I do not observe that the Bastille[4] is mentioned more than once, and that with a kind of implication as if he were sorry it was pulled down, and wished it were built up again. "We have rebuilt Newgate," says he, "and tenanted the mansion; and we have prisons almost as strong as the Bastille for those who dare to libel the queens of France." As for what a madman, like the person called Lord G[eorge] G[ordon],[5] might say, to whom Newgate is rather a bedlam than a prison, it is unworthy of rational consideration. It was a madman that libelled, and that is sufficient apology; and it afforded an opportunity for confining him, which was the thing that was wished for. But certain it is that Mr. Burke, who does not call himself a madman, whatever other people may do, has libelled, in the most unprovoked manner and in the grossest style of the most vulgar abuse, the whole representative authority of France; and yet Mr. Burke takes his seat in the British House of Commons! From his violence and his grief, his silence on some points and his excess on others, it is difficult not to believe that Mr. Burke is sorry, extremely sorry, that arbitrary power, the power of the Pope and the Bastille, are pulled down.

Not one glance of compassion, not one commiserating reflection, that I can find throughout his book, has he bestowed on those who lingered out the most wretched of lives, a life without hope in the most miserable of prisons. It is painful to behold a man employing his talents to corrupt himself. Nature has been kinder to Mr. Burke than he is to her. He is not affected by the reality of distress touching his heart, but by the showy resemblance of it striking his imagination. He pities the plumage, but forgets the dying bird. Accustomed to kiss the aristocratical hand that hath purloined him from himself, he degenerates into a composition of art, and the genuine soul of nature forsakes him. His hero or his heroine must be a tragedy-victim, expiring in show, and not the real prisoner of misery, sliding into death in the silence of a dungeon.

As Mr. Burke has passed over the whole transaction of the Bastille (and his silence is nothing in his favor), and has entertained his readers with reflections on supposed facts distorted into real falsehoods, I will give, since he has not, some account of the circumstances which preceded that transaction. They will serve to show that less mischief could scarcely have accompanied such an event when considered with the treacherous and hostile aggravations of the enemies of the revolution. . . .

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[1] This refers to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, in which the hero attacks windmills, thinking they are warriors.

[2] a reference to the famous speech in Shakespeare's *Othello*, III, iii, 347-357.

[3] the uprising for the Young Pretender, Prince Charles Stuart, who attempted to capture the English throne.

[4] the notorious prison in Paris, destroyed on July 14, 1789.

[5] the leader of a London riot in 1780 directed against Roman Catholics.

I have now to follow Mr. Burke through a pathless wilderness of rhapsodies, and a sort of descant upon governments, in which he asserts whatever he pleases, on the presumption of its being believed, without offering either evidence or reasons for so doing.

Before anything can be reasoned upon to a conclusion, certain facts, principles, or data to reason from, must be established, admitted, or denied. Mr. Burke, with his usual outrage, abused the "Declaration of the Rights of Man," published by the National Assembly of France, as the basis on which the constitution of France is built. This he calls "paltry and blurred sheets of paper about the rights of man." Does Mr. Burke mean to deny that man has any rights? If he does, then he must mean that there are no such things as rights anywhere, and that he has none himself; for who is there in the world but man? But if Mr. Burke means to admit that man has rights, the question then will be: What are those rights, and how man came by them originally?

The error of those who reason by precedents drawn from antiquity, respecting the rights of man, is that they do not go far enough into antiquity. They do not go the whole way. They stop in some of the intermediate stages of an hundred or a thousand years, and produce what was then done, as a rule for the present day. This is no authority at all. If we travel still farther into antiquity, we shall find a direct contrary opinion and practice prevailing; and, if antiquity is to be authority, a thousand such authorities may be produced, successively contradicting each other; but if we proceed on, we shall at last come out right; we shall come to the time when man came from the hand of his Maker. What was he then? Man. Man was his high and only title, and a higher cannot be given him. But of titles I shall speak hereafter.

We are now got at the origin of man, and at the origin of his rights. As to the manner in which the world has been governed from that day to this, it is no farther any concern of ours than to make a proper use of the errors or the improvements which the history of it presents. Those who lived a hundred or a thousand years ago were then moderns, as we are now. They had *their* ancients, and those ancients had others, and we also shall be ancients in our turn. If the mere name of antiquity is to govern in the affairs of life, the people who are to live an hundred or a thousand years hence may as well take us for a precedent, as we make a precedent of those who lived an hundred or a thousand years ago. The fact is that portions of antiquity, by proving everything, establish nothing. It is authority against authority all the way, till we come to the divine origin of the rights of man, at the creation. Here our enquiries find a resting-place, and our reason finds a home. If a dispute about the rights of man had arisen at the distance of an hundred years from the creation, it is to this source of authority they must have referred, and it is to this same source of authority that we must now refer.

Though I mean not to touch upon any sectarian principle of religion, yet it may be worth observing that the genealogy of Christ is traced to Adam. Why, then, not trace the rights of man to the creation of man? I will answer the question. Because there have been upstart governments, thrusting themselves between, and presumptuously working to unmake man.

If any generation of men ever possessed the right of dictating the mode by which the world should be governed forever, it was the first generation that existed; and if that generation did it not, no succeeding generation can show any authority for doing it, nor can set any up. The illuminating and divine principle of the equal rights of man (for it has its origin from the Maker of man) relates not only to the living individuals, but to generations of men succeeding each other. Every generation is equal in rights to generations which preceded it, by the same rule that every individual is born equal in rights with his contemporary.

Every history of the creation, and every traditionary account, whether from the lettered or unlettered world, however they may vary in their opinion or belief of certain particulars, all agree in establishing one point, the unity of man; by which I mean that men are all of one degree, and consequently that all men are born equal, and with equal natural right, in the same manner as if posterity had been continued by creation instead of generation, the latter being the only mode by which the former is carried forward; and consequently, every child born into the world must be considered as deriving its existence from God. The world is as new to him as it was to the first man that existed, and his natural right in it is of the same kind.

The Mosaic account of the creation, whether taken as divine authority or merely historical, is full to this point, the unity or equality of man. The expression admits of no controversy. "And God said, let us make man in our own image. In the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The distinction of sexes is pointed out, but no other distinction is even implied. If this be not divine authority, it is at least historical authority, and shows that the equality of man, so far from being a modern doctrine, is the oldest upon record.

It is also to be observed that all the religions known in the world are founded, so far as they relate to man, on the unity of man, as being all of one degree. Whether in heaven or in hell, or in whatever state man may be supposed to exist hereafter, the good and the bad are the only distinctions. Nay, even the laws of governments are obliged to slide into this principle, by making degrees to consist in crimes, and not in persons.

It is one of the greatest of all truths, and of the highest advantage to cultivate. By considering man in this light, and by instructing him to consider himself in this light, it places him in a close connection with all his duties, whether to his Creator, or to the creation of which he is a part; and it is only when he forgets his origin, or, to use a more fashionable phrase, his birth and family, that he becomes dissolute. It is not among the least of the evils of the present existing governments in all parts of Europe that man, considered as man, is thrown back to a vast distance from his Maker, and the artificial chasm filled up with a succession of barriers, or sort of turn-pike gates, through which he has to pass. I will quote Mr. Burke's catalogue of barriers that he has set up between man and his Maker. Putting himself in the character of a herald, he says: "We fear God—we look with awe to kings—with affection to Parliaments—with duty to magistrates—with reverence to priests—and with respect to nobility." Mr. Burke has forgotten to put in "chivalry." He has also forgotten to put in Peter.

The duty of man is not a wilderness of turnpike gates, through which he is to pass by tickets from one to the other. It is plain and simple, and consists but of two points: his duty to God, which every man must feel, and, with respect to his neighbor, to do as he would be done by. If those to whom power is delegated do well, they will be respected: if not, they will be despised; and with regard to those to whom no power is delegated, but who assume it, the rational world can know nothing of them.

(1791)

William Godwin

(1756-1836)

A sobering lesson in the relativity of literary values is the case of William Godwin. Today the nobility of ideal in his "philosophic" pages is hardly more patent than the absurdity of many of his ideas. He was very much of a pedant, rather defective in feeling, and later in life succeeded in being both arrogant and parasitic in his dealings with his great son-in-law, the poet Shelley. Yet it was his good fortune to sum up so completely the tendencies of radical thought in his day, that in the last decade of the eighteenth century he was the acknowledged leader of some of the most talented writers of the time. He made a profound impression on young Wordsworth and Coleridge; the latter, Hazlitt, and Lamb were among his friends; and the most remarkable Englishwoman of the age, Mary Wollstonecraft, became his wife. Shelley, who married their daughter, was proud to acknowledge his discipleship to Godwin. But the most amazing of all paradoxes is that Godwin's *Political Justice*, which contains a sufficient proportion of sheer nonsense, afforded inspiration for some of the most wonderful creations of Shelley; perhaps no better instance of the inexplicable ways of genius can be cited than the manner in which the sophistry of Godwin's work was transmuted into the sublimities of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (cf. Vol. II).

The son of a rigid Calvinist dissenting minister, William Godwin was educated to follow in his father's profession. For a while he was a practicing Nonconformist clergyman, until his arrival at London in 1782. By then his study of the French *philosophes* had turned him away from the church, and the passage of years made him an atheist. Resolved to reform the world by his philosophic system, he published in 1793 his curious synthesis of the speculations of his revolutionary predecessors, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Political Justice,* which may be said to be the first book ever written on philosophical anarchism. In order to understand the sensation it caused, it is necessary to know something of its antecedents.

Many of the French thinkers who paved the way for the French Revolution accepted the doctrine of Hobbes that man was by nature selfish, but, they believed, could be taught by the exercise of reason to co-operate in behalf of a better society. This was the position of Voltaire and most of the Encyclopedists. Others, like Rousseau, believed that man was by nature benevolent and moved to acts of evil only by the conditions of society. Both schools of thought, however, agreed in this: that man could achieve a better life than was to be found in the eighteenth century. This idea, the idea of progress, was one of the by-products of French revolutionary thought. It seems to have first emerged out of the old quarrel of the Ancients versus the Moderns. In order to show the superiority of the latter, Fontenelle, a disciple of Descartes, insisted upon the cumulative nature of advance in science and industry; he reasoned that if the moderns were merely equal to the ancients it "would mean necessarily that we were of a nature vastly inferior to theirs." Perrault continued the discussion by pointing out that all knowledge is accumulative; each generation inherits the knowledge of its predecessors and adds further to the sum. It was, however, the Abbé de St. Pierre (1658-1753) who was the most enthusiastic of the early teachers of progress; he worked out innumerable *Projects* for the immediate improvement of society, among them a plan for perpetual peace through arbitration. He was confident that the exercise of human reason would eventually bring about the millennium of perfect social accord. This conviction that the world was always improving is implicit (and often explicit) in the work of Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, D'Alembert, and the Encyclopedists, who strove so valiantly to bring about reform. The most extravagant optimist of all these men, however, was Condorcet (1743-1794) who, in the shadow of the guillotine, wrote his *Sketch of an Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind,* a glowing picture of that perfect society on whose threshold he believed himself to be standing. "The perfectibility of man," he said, "is truly indefinite," and he added: "the progress of this perfectibility, henceforth independent of any power which might wish to arrest it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe on which nature has placed us. . . . Never will men retrograde."

It is this doctrine of the perfectibility of the human race and of the inevitability of its attaining perfection that Godwin accepted *in toto.* From rationalists like Voltaire he accepted his faith in the power of reason to lead mankind to truth; and from the opposing Rousseauistic school he accepted the axiom that man is by nature benevolent. Laws and governments have conspired, he thought, to deprive man of rational action (i.e. benevolent action) by imposing restraints upon him. Hence, he said, all governments are evil. Marriage, being a restraint, is an evil. (Godwin married twice, and made a considerable to-do when Shelley ran off with his daughter!) Family ties are formed without reason, and hence are evil. The age of perfection which is sure to come will see a society of free and equal men and women, living only by their reason. Reason, as taught through literature and political justice, will lead men to conquer their emotional nature, to banish disease, and even to banish death. There will be no problem of excess population in that golden age because by then men will have so overcome their passions, which being irrational are evil, that they will cease to reproduce. This progress will take place of necessity, and cannot be brought about by force. It is only as men learn more and more to live by their reasons that the millennium can be made to come.

Undoubtedly only an unemotional hair-splitter like Godwin could have written in such elaborate absurdity. The extent to which he could be ludicrous may be glimpsed from a passage in which he poses the situation where the philosopher Fénelon and a chambermaid were in a burning house and there was time to rescue only one of the two: "Supposing I had been myself the chambermaid, I ought to have chosen to die, rather than that Fénelon should have died. The life of Fénelon was really preferable to that of the chambermaid. . . . Supposing the chambermaid had been my wife, my mother, or my benefactor, this would not alter the truth of the proposition. The life of Fénelon would still be more valuable than that of the chambermaid; and justice, pure, unadulterated justice, would still have preferred that which was most valuable. . . . My wife or my mother may be a fool or a prostitute, malicious, lying, or dishonest. If they be, what consequence is it that they are mine?"

But the book appeared at a crucial time, when the minds of Englishmen were in a ferment about the issues of the French Revolution. Wordsworth advised a young student to burn his chemistry books and read Godwin. The astute Crabb Robinson, Wordsworth's friend, said that the book "gave a turn to my mind, and in effect directed the whole course of my life. . . . It made me feel more *generously*. I had never before, nor, I am afraid, have I ever since felt so strongly the duty of not living to one's self, but of having for one's sole object the good of the community." While books far less hostile were being suppressed, *Political Justice* was left in peace by the government because it sold in a very expensive edition, and also because Godwin made a strong issue of the uselessness of violence in bringing about the millennium. In the disillusionment of the English radicals over the French Revolution, after Napoleon started his campaign of European conquest, Godwin's position as a leading philosopher suffered a complete eclipse. In 1825 Hazlitt could look back upon the decade of Godwin's popularity and say: "He blazed as a sun in the firmament of reputation; no one was more talked of, more looked up to, more sought after, and wherever truth, liberty, justice was the theme, his name was not far off. Now he has sunk below the horizon, and enjoys the serene twilight of a doubtful immortality." His loss of prestige was inevitable. For, although he wrote with clarity and even a certain charm, his most serious pages now read too much like passages of farce in Molière when the French master is at his most hilarious. Only the high-minded and humorless Shelley, in the next generation, was able to accord Godwin the worship he liked to receive. And for that reason, if for no other, Godwin is likely to be remembered. It must be admitted, in all fairness, that the *general effect* of Godwin's *Political Justice* was both lasting and beneficial. For the book turned men's minds more strongly than any other to man's obligation to his fellows in the community, and was instrumental in bringing about a growing realization that the betterment of the community is the soundest method of bettering the individual.

Among a mass of other writings by Godwin, one novel stands out as admirable for its intrinsic merit. *Things As They Are, or the Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) was the first detective novel written in our language, and the first novel to study the criminal mind. It is a well-contrived piece of fiction and will still prove interesting to the reader, particularly because of the excellence with which Godwin managed the character of the criminal Falkland. An early example of the propaganda novel, it was used by Godwin to interpret various of the doctrines in *Political Justice*; it presents an indictment of England's penal system and of the unjust power that affluence can wield over poverty.

A full edition of *Political Justice* has not appeared since 1842. R. A. Preston edited an abridged two-volume version in 1926. The standard biography of Godwin is F. K. Brown's (1926). Two valuable studies are: C. K. Paul, *William Godwin: His Friends and Contemporaries,* two volumes (1876), and H. N. Brailsford, *Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle* (1913).

From *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*

BOOK II

Chapter IV

OF THE EQUALITY OF MANKIND

The equality of mankind is either physical or moral. Their physical equality may be considered either as it relates to the strength of the body or the faculties of the mind.

This part of the subject has been exposed to cavil and objection. It has been said "that the reverse of this equality is the result of our experience. Among the individuals of our species we actually find that there are not two alike. One man is strong and another weak. One man is wise and another foolish. All that exists in the world of the inequality of conditions is to be traced to this as their source. The strong man possesses power to subdue, and the weak stands in need of an ally to protect. The consequence is inevitable: the equality of conditions is a chimerical assumption, neither possible to be reduced into practice nor desirable if it could be so reduced."

Upon this statement two observations are to be made. First, this inequality was in its origin infinitely less than it is at present. In the uncultivated state of man diseases, effeminacy, and luxury were little known; and of consequence the strength of every one much more nearly approached to the strength of his neighbor. In the uncultivated state of man the understandings of all were limited, their wants, their ideas, and their views nearly upon a level. It was to be expected that in their first departure from this state great irregularities would introduce themselves, and it is the object of subsequent wisdom and improvement to mitigate these irregularities.

Secondly, notwithstanding the encroachments that have been made upon the equality of mankind, a great and substantial equality remains. There is no such disparity among the human race as to enable one man to hold several other men in subjection, except so far as they are willing to be subject. All government is founded in opinion. Men at present live under any particular form because they conceive it their interest to do so. One part indeed of a community or empire may be held in subjection by force; but this cannot be the personal force of their despot; it must be the force of another part of the community who are of opinion that it is their interest to support his authority. Destroy this opinion, and the fabric which is built upon it falls to the ground. It follows, therefore, that all men are essentially independent. So much for the physical equality.

The moral equality is still less open to reasonable exception. By moral equality I understand the propriety of applying one unalterable rule of justice to every case that may arise. This cannot be questioned but upon arguments that would subvert the very nature of virtue. "Equality," it has been affirmed, "will always be an unintelligible fiction so long as the capacities of men shall be unequal and their pretended claims have neither guarantee nor sanction by which they can be enforced." But surely justice is sufficiently intelligible in its own nature, abstracted from the consideration whether it be or be not reduced into practice. Justice has relation to beings endowed with perception and capable of pleasure and pain. Now it immediately results from the nature of such beings, independently of any arbitrary constitution, that pleasure is agreeable and pain odious, pleasure to be desired and pain to be obviated. It is therefore just and reasonable that such beings should contribute, so far as it lies in their power, to the pleasure and benefit of each other. Among pleasures some are more exquisite, more unalloyed, and less precarious than others. It is just that these should be preferred.

From these simple principles we may deduce the moral equality of mankind. We are partakers of a common nature, and the same causes that contribute to the benefit of one contribute to the benefit of another. Our senses and faculties are of the same denomination. Our pleasures and pains will therefore be the same. We are all of us endowed with reason, able to compare, to judge and to infer. The improvement, therefore, which is to be desired for the one is to be desired for the other. We shall be provident for ourselves and useful to each other in proportion as we rise above the atmosphere of prejudice. The same independence, the same freedom from any such restraint as should prevent us from giving the reins to our own understanding or from uttering upon all occasions whatever we think to be true, will conduce to the improvement of all. There are certain opportunities and a certain situation most advantageous to every human being, and it is just that these should be communicated to all, as nearly at least as the general economy will permit.

There is indeed one species of moral inequality parallel to the physical inequality that has been already described. The treatment to which men are entitled is to be measured by their merits and their virtues. That country would not be the seat of wisdom and reason where the benefactor of his species was considered in the same point of view as their enemy. But in reality this distinction, so far from being adverse to equality in any tenable sense, is friendly to it and is accordingly known by the appellation of equity, a term derived from the same origin. Though in some sense an exception, it tends to the same purpose to which the principle itself is indebted for its value. It is calculated to infuse into every bosom an emulation of excellence. The thing really to be desired is the removing as much as possible arbitrary distinctions and leaving to talents and virtue the field of exertion unimpaired. We should endeavor to afford to all the same opportunities and the same encouragement, and to render justice the common interest and choice.

CHAPTER V

RIGHTS OF MAN

There is no subject that has been discussed with more eagerness and pertinacity than the rights of man. Has he any rights or has he none? Much may plausibly be alleged on both sides of this question, and in the conclusion those reasoners appear to express themselves with the greatest accuracy who embrace the negative. There is nothing that has been of greater disservice to the cause of truth than the hasty and unguarded manner in which its advocates have sometimes defended it; and it will be admitted to be peculiarly unfortunate if the advocates on one side of this question should be found to have the greatest quantity of truth while their adversaries have expressed themselves in a manner more consonant to reason and the nature of things. Where the question has been so extremely darkened by an ambiguous use of terms, it may at any rate be desirable to try whether by a patient and severe investigation of the first principles of political society it may be placed in a light considerably different from the views of both parties.

Political society, as has already been observed, is founded in the principles of morality and justice. It is impossible for intellectual beings to be brought into coalition and intercourse without a certain mode of conduct, adapted to their nature and connection, immediately becoming a duty incumbent on the parties concerned. Men would never have associated if they had not imagined that in consequence of that association they would mutually conduce to the advantage and happiness of each other. This is the real purpose, the genuine basis of their intercourse; and as far as this purpose is answered, so far does society answer the end of its institution.

There is only one postulate more that is necessary to bring us to a conclusive mode of reasoning upon this subject. Whatever is meant by the term "right"—for it will presently appear that the sense of the term itself has never been clearly understood—there can neither be opposite rights, nor rights and duties hostile to each other. The rights of one man cannot clash with or be destructive of the rights of another; for this, instead of rendering the subject an important branch of truth and morality, as the advocates of the rights of man certainly understand it to be, would be to reduce it to a heap of unintelligible jargon and inconsistency. If one man have a right to be free, another man cannot have a right to make him a slave; if one man have a right to inflict chastisement upon me, I cannot have a right to withdraw myself from chastisement; if my neighbor have a right to a sum of money in my possession, I cannot have a right to retain it in my pocket. It cannot be less incontrovertible that I have no right to omit what my duty prescribes.

From hence it inevitably follows that men have no rights. By right, as the word is employed in this subject, has always been understood discretion; that is, a full and complete power of either doing a thing or omitting it without the person's becoming liable to animadversion or censure from another; that is, in other words, without his incurring any degree of turpitude or guilt. Now in this sense I affirm that man has no rights, no discretionary power whatever.

It is commonly said that a man has a right to the disposal of his fortune, a right to the employment of his time, a right to the uncontrolled choice of his profession or pusuits. But this can never be consistently affirmed till it can be shown that he has no duties prescribing and limiting his mode of proceeding in all these respects. My neighbor has just as much right to put an end to my existence with dagger or poison as to deny me that pecuniary assistance without which I must starve, or as to deny me that assistance without which my intellectual attainments or my moral exertions will be materially injured. He has just as much right to amuse himself with burning my house or torturing my children upon the rack as to shut himself up in a cell careless about his fellow men and to hide his talent in a napkin.

If men have any rights, any discretionary powers, they must be in things of total indifference, as whether I sit on the right or on the left side of my fire, or dine on beef today or tomorrow. Even these rights are much fewer than we are apt to imagine, since before they can be completely established, it must be proved that my choice on one side or the other can in no possible way contribute to the benefit or injury of myself or of any other person in the world. Those must indeed be rights well worth the contending for, the very essence of which consists in their absolute nugatoriness and inutility.

In reality nothing can appear more wonderful to a careful enquirer than that two ideas so incompatible as man and rights should ever have been associated together. Certain it is that one of them must be utterly exclusive and annihilatory of the other. Before we ascribe rights to man, we must conceive of him as a being endowed with intellect and capable of discerning the differences and tendencies of things. But a being endowed with intellect and capable of discerning the differences and tendencies of things instantly becomes a moral being and has duties incumbent on him to discharge; and duties and rights, as has already been shown, are absolutely exclusive of each other.

It has been affirmed by the zealous advocates of liberty that princes and magistrates have no rights, and no position can be more incontrovertible. There is no situation of their lives that has not its correspondent duties. There is no power entrusted to them that they are not bound to exercise exclusively for the public good. It is strange that persons adopting this principle did not go a step farther and perceive that the same restrictions were applicable to subjects and citizens.

Nor is the fallacy of this language more conspicuous than its immoral tendency. To this inaccurate and unjust use of the term "right" we owe it that the miser, who accumulates to no end that which diffused would have conduced to the welfare of thousands, that the luxurious man, who wallows in indulgence and sees numerous families around him pining in beggary, never fail to tell us of their rights, and to silence animadversion and quiet the censure of their own mind by reminding us that they came fairly into possession of their wealth, that they owe no debts, and that of consequence no man has authority to enquire into their private manner of disposing of that which is their own. A great majority of mankind are conscious that they stand in need of this sort of defence, and are therefore very ready to combine against the insolent intruder who ventures to enquire into "things that do not concern him" They forget that the wise man and the honest man, the friend of his country and his kind, is concerned for everything by which they may be affected and carries about with him a diploma constituting him inquisitor general of the moral conduct of his neighbors, with a duty annexed to recall them to virtue by every lesson that truth can enable him to read and every punishment that plain speaking is competent to inflict.

It is scarcely necessary to add that if individuals have no rights, neither has society, which possesses nothing but what individuals have brought into a common stock. The absurdity of the common opinion, as applied to this subject, is still more glaring, if possible, than in the view in which we have already considered it. According to the usual sentiment every club assembling for any civil purpose, every congregation of religionists assembling for the worship of God, has a right to establish any provisions or ceremonies, no matter how ridiculous or detestable, provided they do not interfere with the freedom of others. Reason lies prostrate under their feet. They have a right to trample upon and insult her as they please. It is in the same spirit we have been told that every nation has a right to choose its form of government. A most acute, original, and inestimable author was probably misled by the vulgar phraseology on this subject when he asserted that "at a time when neither the people of France nor the national assembly were troubling themselves about the affairs of England or the English Parliament, Mr. Burke's conduct was unpardonable in commencing an unprovoked attack upon them."

There are various objections that suggest themselves to the theory which subverts the rights of men; and if the theory be true, they will probably appear in the result to be so far from really hostile to it as to be found more fairly deducible from and consistent with its principles than with any of those with which they have inadvertently been connected.

In the first place it has sometimes been alleged, and seems to result from the reasonings already adduced under the head of justice, that men have a right to the assistance and co-operation of their fellows in every honest pursuit. But when we assert this proposition, we mean something by the word "right" exceedingly different from what is commonly understood by the term. We do not understand something discretionary, which, if not voluntarily fulfilled, cannot be considered as a matter of claim. On the contrary everything adduced upon that occasion was calculated to show that it was a matter of strict claim; and perhaps something would be gained with respect to perspicuity if we rather chose to distinguish it by that appellation than by a name so much abused and so ambiguous in its application as the term "right."

The true origin of this latter term is relative to the present state of political government, in which many of those actions which moral duty most strictly enjoins us are in no degree brought within the sphere of legislative sanction. Men uninfluenced by comprehensive principles of justice commit every species of intemperance, are selfish, hard-hearted, licentious and cruel, and maintain their right to all these caprices because the laws of their country are silent with regard to them. Philosophers and political enquirers have too frequently adopted the same principles with a certain degree of accommodation, though in fact men have no more right to these erroneous propensities in their most qualified sense than they had to them originally in all their extravagance. It is true that under the forms of society now existing in the world intemperance and the caprices of personal intercourse too frequently escape without animadversion. But in a more perfect form, though they may not fall under the cognisance of law, the offender will probably be so unequivocally reminded by the sincerity of his neighbors of the error he has committed as to be in no danger of running away with the opinion that he had a right to commit it.

A second and more important objection to the doctrine I am maintaining is derived from the rights, as they are called, of private judgment and the liberty of the press. But it may easily be shown that these, no more than the articles already mentioned, are rights of discretion. If they were, they would prove that a man was strictly justifiable in publishing what he believed to be pernicious or false and that it was a matter of perfect moral indifference whether he conformed to the religious rites of Confucius, of Mahomet, or of Christ. The political freedom of conscience and of the press, so far from being as it is commonly supposed an extension, is a new case of the limitation of rights and discretion. Conscience and the press ought to be unrestrained, not because men have a right to deviate from the exact line that duty prescribes, but because society, the aggregate of individuals, has no right to assume the prerogative of an infallible judge and to undertake authoritatively to prescribe to its members in matters of pure speculation.

One obvious reason against this assumption on the part of the society is the impossibility by any compulsatory method of bringing men to uniformity of opinion. The judgment we form upon topics of general truth is or is imagined to be founded upon evidence; and however it may be soothed by gentle applications to the betraying its impartiality, it is apt to repel with no little pertinacity whatever comes under the form of compulsion. Persecution cannot persuade the understanding, even when it subdues our resolution. It may make us hypocrites, but cannot make us converts. The government, therefore, which is anxious above all things to imbue its subjects with integrity and virtue will be the farthest in the world from discouraging them in the explicit avowal of their sentiments.

But there is another reason of a higher order. Man is not, as has been already shown, a perfect being, but perfectible. No government that has yet existed or is likely presently to exist upon the face of the earth is faultless. No government ought, therefore, pertinaciously to resist the change of its own institutions; and still less ought it to set up a standard upon the various topics of human speculation, to restrain the excursions of an inventive mind. It is only by giving a free scope to these excursions that science, philosophy, and morals have arrived at their present degree of perfection or are capable of going on to that still greater perfection in comparison of which all that has been already done will perhaps appear childish. But a proceeding absolutely necessary for the purpose of exciting the mind to these salutary excursions, and still more necessary in order to give them their proper operation, consists in the unrestrained communication of men's thought and discoveries to each other. If every man have to begin again at the point from which his neighbor set out, the labor will be endless and the progress in an unvarying circle. There is nothing that more eminently contributes to intellectual energy than for every man to be habituated to follow without alarm the train of his speculations and to utter without fear the conclusions that have suggested themselves to him. But does all this imply that men have a right to act anything but virtue, and to utter anything but truth? Certainly not. It implies, indeed, that there are points with which society has no right to interfere, not that discretion and caprice are more free or duty less strict upon these points than upon any others with which human action is conversant. (1793)

Eighteenth-Century Letters

One of the prices paid for the modern conveniences of journalism, speedy post-delivery, telegraph, wireless, and telephone has been the decline of the noble art of letter-writing. When means of communication were slow in their functioning, the composition of a letter was an opportunity to combine many purposes at once, and therefore often called for as much care as literary men put into their published works. The eighteenth century had developed an easy, lucid prose style, and it has been hyperbolically observed that "no one wrote a bad prose then." The letters of the century partake of this general excellence, and have been celebrated as among the best written in English. The example of what could be done with the letter had again come from France's golden age of classicism in the wonderful correspondence of Mme de Sévigné. In England the best came from the pens of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), Lord Chesterfield (1694-1773), Edward Gibbon (1737-1794), Horace Walpole (1717-1797), David Hume (1711-1776), Thomas Gray (1716-1771), and William Cowper (1731-1800). The two last-mentioned, because of their association with the beginnings of the new romanticism, will be found represented in Volume II; it is worth remarking here, however, that they wrote the best letters of the century. The correspondence of Johnson and Boswell has a personal, rather than a literary, interest because of the revelation their letters afford of the characters of these two interesting men.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

(1689-1762)

Most celebrated woman of letters in her day, and not a little vain of her reputation, Lady Mary is now best remembered for her quarrel with Alexander Pope. At first she was a close friend of the poet, but like many others of his intimates she became the victim of his sharp satire. Rumor has it that he made personal addresses to her, and that although she was flattered by the friendship of the great man, she laughed in his face when the protestations of the "dwarf" seemed to be in earnest. Clever woman though she was, she could be no match for his genius in the exchange of satire which followed. Pope's sarcastic references to her as "Sappho" were so well aimed that she came to find his very name intolerable. And whereas she had once recognized him as the first poet of the day, she now professed to find his work even "unintelligible."

With her husband, the English ambassador to the Porte, she traveled to Constantinople and her correspondence is full of sprightly observations. Of all her writings, in fact, only her letters are still read. They are intelligent and bright, clear-headed though not profound.

Many of them are addressed to her daughter, the Countess of Bute. In the one we print, written when Lady Mary was a grandmother in her sixties, there is still pride in her reputation, her old anger against Pope, and her characteristic cynicism. It is significant to note, in these reflections on a girl's education, her acceptance of the limited sphere allotted to women, as well as her determination that the most be made of the limitations. Above all, her sincere love of books is unmistakable; and for that, if for nothing else, she will always be liked.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu to the Countess of Bute

Jan. 28, N.S. [1753][1]

DEAR CHILD,

You have given me a great deal of satisfaction by your account of your eldest daughter. I am particularly pleased to hear she is a good arithmetician; it is the best proof of understanding; the knowledge of numbers is one of the chief distinctions between us and the brutes. If there is anything n blood, you may reasonably expect your children should be endowed with an uncommon share of good sense. Mr. Wortley's family and mine have both produced some of the greatest men that have been born in England: I mean Admiral Sandwich, and my grandfather, who was distinguished by the name of Wise William. I have heard Lord Bute's father mentioned as an extraordinary genius, hough he had not many opportunities of showing t; and his uncle, the present Duke of Argyll, has one of the best heads I ever knew. I will therefore speak to you as supposing Lady Mary not only capable, but desirous of learning: in that case by all means let her be indulged in it. You will tell me I did not make it a part of your education: your prospect was very different from hers. As you had no defect either in mind or person to hinder, and much in your circumstances to attract, the highest offers, it seemed your business to learn how to live in the world, as it is hers to know how o be easy out of it. It is the common error of builders and parents to follow some plan they think beautiful (and perhaps is so), without considering hat nothing is beautiful that is displaced. Hence we see so many edifices raised that the raisers can never inhabit, being too large for their fortunes. Vistas are laid open over barren heaths, and apartments contrived for a coolness very agreeable in Italy, but killing in the north of Britain: thus every woman endeavors to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author in her closet. To render this amusement extensive, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in mere learning of words; this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious: she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned when she can read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would wish her no further a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and always injured, by translations. Two hours' application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough besides to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller.[2] I remember, when I was a girl, I saved one of my companions from destruction, who communicated to me an epistle she was quite charmed with. As she had a natural good taste, she observed the lines were not so smooth as Prior's or Pope's, but had more thought and spirit than any of theirs. She was wonderfully delighted with such a demonstration of her lover's sense and passion, and not a little pleased with her own charms, that had force enough to inspire such elegancies. In the midst of this triumph I showed her that they were taken from Randolph's[3] poems, and the unfortunate transcriber was dismissed with the scorn he deserved. To say truth, the poor plagiary was very unlucky to fall into my hands; that author, being no longer in fashion, would have escaped any one of less universal reading than myself. You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and, as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humor, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. The second caution to be given her (and which is most absolutely necessary) is to conceal whatever learning she attains, with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness; the parade of it can only serve to draw on her the envy, and consequently the most inveterate hatred, of all he and she fools, which will certainly be at least three parts in four of all her acquaintance. The use of knowledge in our sex, besides the amusement of solitude, is to moderate the passions, and learn to be contented with a small expense, which are the certain effects of a studious life; and it may be preferable even to that fame which men have engrossed to themselves, and will not suffer us to share. You will tell me I have not observed this rule myself; but you are mistaken: it is only inevitable accident that has given me any reputation that way. I have always carefully avoided it, and ever thought it a misfortune. The explanation of this paragraph would occasion a long digression, which I will not trouble you with, it being my present design only to say what I think useful for the instruction of my granddaughter, which I have much at heart. If she has the same inclination (I should say passion) for learning that I was born with, history, geography, and philosophy will furnish her with materials to pass away cheerfully a longer life than is allotted to mortals. I believe there are few heads capable of making Sir I. Newton's[4] calculations, but the result of them is not difficult to be understood by a moderate capacity. Do not fear this should make her affect the character of Lady ——, or Lady ——, or Mrs. ——: those women are ridiculous, not because they have learning, but because they have it not. One thinks herself a complete historian, after reading Echard's *Roman History*; another a profound philosopher, having got by heart some of Pope's unintelligible essays;[5] and a third an able divine, on the strength of Whitefield's[6] sermons: thus you hear them screaming politics and controversy.

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[1] In 1752 the English adopted the Gregorian calendar, or "New Style" (abbreviated, N.S.).

[2] Cf. p. 390.

[3] Thomas Randolph (1605-1634).

It is a saying of Thucydides,[7] ignorance is bold, and knowledge reserved. Indeed, it is impossible to be far advanced in it without being more humbled by a conviction of human ignorance, than elated by learning. At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword. I was once extreme fond of my pencil, and it was a great mortification to me when my father turned off my master, having made a considerable progress for a short time I learnt. My over-eagerness in the pursuit of it had brought a weakness on my eyes, that made it necessary to leave it off; and all the advantage I got was the improvement of my hand. I see, by hers, that practice will make her a ready writer: she may attain it by serving you for a secretary, when your health or affairs make it troublesome to you to write yourself; and custom will make it an agreeable amusement to her. She cannot have too many for that station of life which will probably be her fate. The ultimate end of your education was to make you a good wife (and I have the comfort to hear that you are one): hers ought to be, to make her happy in a virgin state. I will not say it is happier; but it is undoubtedly safer than any marriage. In a lottery, where there are (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the most prudent choice not to venture. I have always been so thoroughly persuaded of this truth, that, notwithstanding the flattering views I had for you (as I never intended you a sacrifice to my vanity), I thought I owed you the justice to lay before you all the hazards attending matrimony; you may recollect I did so in the strongest manner. Perhaps you may have more success in the instructing your daughter: she has so much company at home, she will not need seeking it abroad, and will more readily take the notions you think fit to give her. As you were alone in my family, it would have been thought a great cruelty to suffer you no companions of your own age, especially having so many near relations, and I do not wonder their opinions influenced yours. I was not sorry to see you not determined on a single life, knowing it was not your father's intention, and contented myself with endeavoring to make your home so easy that you might not be in haste to leave it.

I am afraid you will think this a very long and insignificant letter. I hope the kindness of the design will excuse it, being willing to give you every proof in my power that I am

Your most affectionate mother.

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[4] the famous mathematician.

[5] Cf. pp. 636, 659.

[6] George Whitefield (1714-1770), one of the founders of Methodism.

[7] Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.

Philip Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield

(1694-1773)

Although Lord Chesterfield seems to have been an able diplomatist, he retired from state affairs in his fifty-third year. In an era when taste and wit were at a premium, he had made a reputation for himself as distinguished in both.

In consequence of an affair with Mlle du Bouchet while he was ambassador at The Hague, he had an illegitimate son to whom he gave his own name, Philip Stanhope. Having no other children when he was married later, Lord Chesterfield spared no expense in giving his son the best of educations, not omitting the grand tour of the Continent.

Beginning with his fifth year until his death at thirty-six, young Stanhope received a series of letters from Lord Chesterfield, perhaps the most remarkable that son ever received from father. Never intended for publication, they contain the fruit of the older man's experience in the world of fashion and politics. With typically English distaste for a "system," Lord Chesterfield was concerned to give his son practical precepts in how to be a man of the world. Ironically enough, that son, for all his father's care, turned out to be a thoroughly undistinguished man, not even remotely attaining the elegance patterned for him. After young Stanhope died in 1768, and immediately after the earl's death, the young man's widow, whom he had secretly married, sold the letters. When they appeared in 1774, they won an enormous success.

Samuel Johnson, who was not the man to resist a grudge, was entirely unfair to Chesterfield's letters when he declared that "they teach the morals of a whore and the manners of a dancing-master." In a juster frame of mind he said of the book: "Take out the immorality, and it should be put into the hands of every young gentleman."

If immorality there indeed be in the advice, it was not deliberate. At the most it can be said that Chesterfield was no more interested in the morals of Christianity than was the rest of the fashionable world of his time. His counsel is frankly pragmatical, unpedantic, and cynical. If he accepted the principle of using other people to help one's own advance in life, his recommendations on conduct are such as, if followed, tend to make any man a more agreeable and charming companion. His standards may have too much of the artificial, but nothing could be freer of artifice than the brilliant, easy style of his letters.

Lord Chesterfield to His Son

London, October 16, O.S. 1747

Dear Boy,

The art of pleasing is a very necessary one to possess; but a very difficult one to acquire. It can hardly be reduced to rules; and your own good sense and observation will teach you more of it than I can. Do as you would be done by is the surest method that I know of pleasing. Observe carefully what pleases you in others, and probably the same things in you will please others. If you are pleased with the complaisance and attention of others to your humors, your tastes, or your weaknesses, depend upon it the same complaisance and attention on your part to theirs will equally please them. Take the tone of the company that you are in, and do not pretend to give it; be serious, gay, or even trifling, as you find the present humor of the company; this is an attention due from every individual to the majority. Do not tell stories in company; there is nothing more tedious and disagreeable; if by chance you know a very short story, and exceedingly applicable to the present subject of conversation, tell it in as few words as possible; and even then throw out that you do not love to tell stories, but that the shortness of it tempted you.

Of all things, banish the egotism out of your conversation, and never think of entertaining people with your own personal concerns or private affairs; though they are interesting to you, they are tedious and impertinent to everybody else; besides that, one cannot keep one's own private affairs too secret. Whatever you think your own excellencies may be, do not affectedly display them in company; nor labor, as many people do, to give that turn to the conversation which may supply you with an opportunity of exhibiting them. If they are real, they will infallibly be discovered, without your pointing them out yourself, and with much more advantage. Never maintain an argument with heat and clamor, though you think or know yourself to be in the right; but give your opinion modestly and coolly, which is the only way to convince; and, if that does not do, try to change the conversation, by saying, with good-humor, "We shall hardly convince one another; nor is it necessary that we should, so let us talk of something else."

Remember that there is a local propriety to be observed in all companies; and that what is extremely proper in one company may be, and often is, highly improper in another.

The jokes, the *bons mots*,[1] the little adventures, which may do very well in one company, will seem flat and tedious when related in another. The particular characters, the habits, the cant of one company may give credit to a word or a gesture which would have none at all if divested of those accidental circumstances. Here people very commonly err; and fond of something that has entertained them in one company and in certain circumstances, repeat it with emphasis in another, where it is either insipid or, it may be, offensive, by being ill-timed or misplaced. Nay, they often do it with this silly preamble: "I will tell you an excellent thing"; or "the best thing in the world." This raises expectations, which, when absolutely disappointed, make the relator of this excellent thing look, very deservedly, like a fool.

If you would particularly gain the affection and friendship of particular people, whether men or women, endeavor to find out their predominant excellency, if they have one, and their prevailing weakness, which everybody has; and do justice to the one and something more than justice to the other. Men have various objects in which they may excel, or at least would be thought to excel; and, though they love to hear justice done to them where they know that they excel, yet they are most and best flattered upon those points where they wish to excel and yet are doubtful whether they do or not. As, for example: Cardinal Richlieu,[2] who was undoubtedly the ablest statesman of his time or perhaps of any other, had the idle vanity of being thought the best poet too: he envied the great Corneille[3] his reputation, and ordered a criticism to be written upon the *Cid*. Those, therefore, who flattered skilfully said little to him of his abilities in state affairs, or at least but *en passant*,[4] and as it might naturally occur. But the incense which they gave him, the smoke of which they knew would turn his head in their favor, was as a *bel esprit*[5] and a poet. Why? Because he was sure of one excellency and distrustful as to the other. You will easily discover every man's prevailing vanity by observing his favorite topic of conversation; for every man talks most of what he has most a mind to be thought to excel in. Touch him but there, and you touch him to the quick. The late Sir Robert Walpole[6] (who was certainly an able man) was little open to flattery upon that head; for he was in no doubt himself about it; but his prevailing weakness was to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry —of which he had undoubtedly less than any man living: it was his favorite and frequent subject of conversation; which proved, to those who had any penetration, that it was his prevailing weakness. And they applied to it with success.

Women have, in general, but one object, which is their beauty; upon which, scarce any flattery is too gross for them to swallow. Nature has hardly formed a woman ugly enough to be insensible to flattery upon her person; if her face is so shocking that she must in some degree be conscious of it, her figure and air, she trusts, make ample amends for it. If her figure is deformed, her face, she thinks, counterbalances it. If they are both bad, she comforts herself that she has grace; a certain manner, a *je ne sçais quoi*,[7] still more engaging than beauty. This truth is evident from the studied and elaborate dress of the ugliest women in the world. An undoubted, uncontested, conscious beauty is, of all women, the least sensible of flattery upon that head; she knows that it is her due and is therefore obliged to nobody for giving it her. She must be flattered upon her understanding, which, though she may possibly not doubt of herself, yet she suspects that men may distrust.

Do not mistake me and think that I mean to recommend to you abject and criminal flattery: no; flatter nobody's vices or crimes: on the contrary, abhor and discourage them. But there is no living in the world without a complaisant indulgence for people's weaknesses and innocent, though ridiculous, vanities. If a man has a mind to be thought wiser, and a woman handsomer, than they really are, their error is a comfortable one to themselves and an innocent one with regard to other people; and I would rather make them my friends by indulging them in it than my enemies by endeavoring (and that to no purpose) to undeceive them.

There are little attentions likewise which are infinitely engaging, and which sensibly affect that degree of pride and self-love which is inseparable from human nature; as they are unquestionable proofs of the regard and consideration which we have for the persons to whom we pay them. As, for example, to observe the little habits, the likings, the antipathies, and the tastes of those whom we would gain; and then take care to provide them with the one, and to secure them from the other; giving them, genteelly, to understand that you had observed they liked such a dish or such a room; for which reason you had prepared it: or, on the contrary, that having observed they had an aversion to such a dish, a dislike to such a person, etc., you had taken care to avoid presenting them. Such attention to such trifles flatters self-love much more than greater things, as it makes people think themselves almost the only objects of your thoughts and care.

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[1] clever sayings.

[2] French statesman and minister of Louis XIII (1585-1642).

[3] Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), French tragic dramatist.

[4] in passing.

[5] a witty person.

[6] Prime Minister under George II.

[7] something or other.

These are some of the *arcana*[8] necessary for your initiation in the great society of the world. I wish I had known them better at your age; I have paid the price of three-and-fifty years for them, and shall not grudge it if you reap the advantage. Adieu.

Samuel Johnson

(1709-1784)

When Johnson drew up a draft of his prospectus for the *Dictionary* in 1747, Chesterfield gave it his approval. The meeting which was thereafter arranged between the two seems to have been entirely successful. Then, when the *Plan* for the *Dictionary* was published, it was, at the suggestion of the publisher Dodsley, dedicated to Chesterfield, who promptly sent Johnson a gift of ten pounds. Busy with public life and the world of affairs, Chesterfield apparently for a time forgot the hard-pressed lexicographer. But as the date for the great work's appearance drew near, Chesterfield wrote two papers for *The World*, in which, in his light manner, he highly praised the work. Johnson, who had carried on his task through all kinds of difficulties, could not tolerate this belated condescension. This manly letter, one of the best pieces of writing he ever achieved, has been called "the declaration of independence of English writers" because of its rejection of the whole system of patronage. It is to Chesterfield's credit that he professed to be delighted with it as a piece of style and pointed out felicitous passages in it to his friends.

When James Macpherson brought out his volume of *Fragments of Ancient Poetry* in 1760, there began a furious controversy as to whether the poems were the translations they pretended to be or, as now seems likely, pieces of primitivism manufactured to suit the taste of the time. (Cf. Vol. II.) Johnson, uncompromising defender of neoclassical taste that he was, detested anything undisciplined and romantic, and made up his mind at once that Macpherson was a fraud. As Macpherson continued to publish other "translations," Johnson spoke his mind freely in his usual pontifical manner. Macpherson, angered, wrote him a theatening letter. Johnson's reply shows the powerful scorn he could vent when aroused.

Samuel Johnson to the Earl of Chesterfield

February 7, 1755.

My Lord:

I have lately been informed by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my *Dictionary* is recommended to the public, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honor which, being very little accustomed to favors from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address; and I could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *"Le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre"*;[1] that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When I had once addressed your lordship in public, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

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[8] secrets.

[1] Conqueror of the conqueror of the earth.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favorer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have been long wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation,

My Lord,
Your Lordship's most humble,
Most obedient servant,
SAM. JOHNSON.

Samuel Johnson to James Macpherson

MR. JAMES MACPHERSON:

I received your foolish and impudent letter. Any violence offered me I shall do my best to repel; and what I cannot do for myself the law shall do for me. I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat, by the menaces of a ruffian.

What would you have me retract? I thought your book an imposture; I think it an imposture still. For this opinion I have given my reasons to the public, which I here dare you to refute. Your rage I defy. Your abilities, since your *Homer*, are not so formidable; and what I hear of your morals, inclines me to pay regard not to what you shall say, but to what you shall prove. You may print this if you will.

SAM. JOHNSON.
(1775)

James Boswell

(1740-1795)

For the sociable, pleasure-loving Boswell, London always remained an earthly paradise. His father, who never understood him, had determined that his son be a great lawyer and shape a great career in Parliament, as befitted the son of an old house. Somehow or other, Boswell managed to try to be what his father expected of him, but failed conspicuously. He was a born biographer and reporter, but was able to indulge his genius only as a recreation. Sentimental, easygoing, ever getting into scrapes, ever repenting, Boswell made his friend Temple his confidant. From his letters to him we get a full picture of a weak-willed, good-intentioned, unheroic but likable man. This letter, written soon after he had gained his great objective of knowing Johnson, shows his innocent vanity in being a friend of the great man.

James Boswell to William Johnson Temple

Inner Temple, 14 July 1763.

My dear Temple,

When my last letter was written (or rather a-writing) I was exceedingly dull, not melancholy but merely stupid. I dare say my letter would show that plainly; and I dare say you have expected an atonement for it before now.

Well can I imagine the feelings which you describe, upon your returning to Cambridge. Mine were very similar when I found myself in the country, after being in London. The animal spirits, accustomed to be put in motion by the variety of bustling life, must be flat and torpid in the stillness of retirement. Habit, to be sure, is of great influence. But our minds are surely somewhat different in their original composition. Some people can support retirement, and others are miserable without society; and yet the minds of these people have been cultivated, or lain uncultivated, in the same degree. For my own share, retirement has always sunk my spirits; and I cannot say that I ever had any uneasy sensations upon coming to town, altho I had not been accustomed to a town for some time. What is remarkable in my case is that I am not fond of much society, but, on the contrary, choose to live a good deal by myself. But then in London you can either have or want company just as you please, so that you enjoy perfect freedom; and if any style of living you may be in is disagreeable to you, you have the comfort to think that it will not be long ere you get rid of it, and pursue any other plan which you may find to be most agreeable.

Your portrait of a Fellow of College is certainly just. However, there are no doubt exceptions. There are many of them, I suppose, men of genius and elegance. You surprise me a good deal when you tell me that Mr. Gray says he never saw Mr. Ogilvie. There must be some strange mistake. I fancy Mr. Gray has either said so, a good time ago, before Mr. Ogilvie was at Cambridge; or perhaps there may be another Mr. Gray whom he has been introduced to, instead of the Pensive Gray. I asked Ogilvie yesterday; and he is positive he was introduced to Mr. Gray by a Fellow of King's, whose name he has forgot. He says he never doubted his being the author of the Elegy in a Country Churchyard; altho he owns that they did not speak a word about poetry. He says they were some hours together in the best inn at Cambridge. I wish you would take the trouble to find out how the affair has really happened, and let me know.

I have been much in my dissipated way since you went away. I have only finished Hume, and read Harris on Happiness, which is very sensible and accurate. But I cannot help thinking that he had better have given us it in the form of an Essay, as he has treated of Poetry, Painting, and Music. The Dialogue which he has chosen is, in my opinion, a disadvantage. A young lady who looked at it said, "If this man had all the sense in the world, it would do me no good; for I could not attend to it for laughing"; and, indeed, a frequent repetition of "said he" and "I replied," is somewhat awkward and ludicrous. You must excuse this critical pleasantry on one of your favorite writers. I must say this for him, that I rose from reading his Dialogue happier and more disposed to follow virtue.

July 15th.—I began this letter yesterday, but was prevented from finishing it, by some little accidents. The longer I talk to you in this way, so much the better will it be for me. I have had a long letter from my father, full of affection and good counsel. Honest man! he is now very happy. It is amazing to think how much he has had at heart my pursuing the road of civil life. He is anxious for fear I should fall off from my prudent system, and return to my dissipated unsettled way of thinking; and in order to make him easy, he insists on having my solemn promise that I will persist in the scheme on which he is so earnestly bent. He knows my fidelity, and he concludes that my promise will fix me. Indeed he is much in the right. The only question is how much I am to I shall from this time study propriety of conduct, and to be a man of knowledge and prudence as far as I can. That I shall make as much improvement as possible, while I am abroad, and when I return I shall put on the gown as a Member of the Faculty of Advocates, and be upon the footing of a gentleman of business, with a view to my getting into Parliament. My father talks of my setting out soon; but says he will soon write to me, fixing my allowance. I imagine, therefore, that I shall go week after next. I feel no small reluctance at leaving this great metropolis, which, I heartily agree with you, is the best place in the world to live in. My dear friend, I find that London must be the place where I shall pass a great part of my life, if I wish to pass it with satisfaction. I hope we shall pass many happy years there, when we are both settled as to views of life and habits of living. In the mean time, let me endeavor to acquire steadiness and constant propriety of conduct, without which we never can enjoy what I fondly hope for.

The great Robert continues as great as ever. He displays that vigor of genius and intense application, for which he is so famous, in washing his face and brushing his hat, which he will execute in a few hours; and he has lately shown a *coup de maître*[1] in washing some old ribbands so as to make them look every bit as well as when they were new. Poor Bob is a pretty genteel lively boy. But you must make him acquire some more knowledge, else his stock will soon be exhausted. I find it somewhat inconvenient to have anybody in chambers with me. I wish you had him down at Cambridge. However, we are very good friends, only I have unluckily allowed him to be too free with me; and I own it hurts me when I find my folly bringing me into the situation of being upon an equality with if not below the young man. However, when I return from abroad you shall see a change for the better.

I had the honor of supping tête-à-tête with Mr. Johnson last night. By the by, I need not have used a French phrase. We sat till between two and three. He took me by the hand cordially and said, "My dear Boswell! I love you very much." Now, Temple, can I help indulging vanity? Sir David Dalrymple says to me in his last letter, "It gives me pleasure to think that you have obtained the friendship of Mr. Samuel Johnson. He is one of the best moral writers which England has produced. At the same time I envy you the free and undisguised converse with such a man. I beg you to present my best respects to him, and to assure him of the veneration which I entertain for the author of the Rambler and of Rasselas. In Rasselas you will see a tender-hearted operator who probes the wound only to heal it. Swift, on the contrary, mangles human nature. He cuts and slashes as if he took a pleasure in the operation; like the tyrant who said *"ita feri, ut se sciat emori."*[2]

Mr. Johnson was in vast good humor, and we had much conversation. I mentioned Fresnoy[3] to him. But he advised me not to follow a plan and he declared that he himself never followed one above two days. He advised me to read just as inclination prompted me which alone, he said, would do me any good; for I had better go into company, than read a set task. Let us study ever so much, we must still be ignorant of a great deal. Therefore, the question is, what parts of science do we want to know? He said, too, that idleness was a distemper which I ought to combat against, and that I should prescribe to myself five hours a day for study, and in these hours gratify whatever literary desires may spring up. He is to give me his advice as to what books I should take with me from England. I told him that the Rambler shall accompany me round Europe, and so be a Rambler indeed. He gave me a smile of complacency.

My dear friend, I ever am
Yours most sincerely,
James Boswell

Horace Walpole

(1717-1797)

Son of the great Prime Minister but unlike him, of a delicate, ailing constitution, Horace Walpole spent his long lifetime as a close observer of Augustan manners and literature. A man of a hard, brilliant mind, he delighted to record, in many hundreds of letters to his friends, his caustic comments on the contemporary scene. As collected, his correspondence affords a complete picture of aristocratic eighteenth-century society. He had an eye for fascinating detail, an ear for spicy gossip, and a ready epigrammatic wit. He traveled much in France and Italy, and was an accomplished dilettante in painting, politics, and literature. He had opinions on everything and everybody, and was a very river of sparkling commentary. His letters are the gayest and cleverest, as well as the most mordant, of the century.

Paradoxically enough, in his day his name was more associated with the Romantic revival than with the classical elegance to which his temperament was so well attuned. In 1748 he purchased the Strawberry Hill estate, which rapidly became a kind of neo-Gothic museum. There in 1757 he set up a private press from which the first works to issue were two unpublished odes of Gray. His interest in his absurd Strawberry Hill "castle" led him to write a "Gothic" novel, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which did much to foster the development of taste for the medieval.

Walpole's bent for the medieval aroused the hope of the boy-poet Chatterton (cf. Vol. II) who wrote to him. Chatterton, too, in an escape from his squalid surroundings, had developed a love for the medieval. Half-educated, the young poet had evolved a ridiculous vocabulary which he fancied as Chaucerian, and began to pass off his amazingly gifted creations as the work of a fifteenth-century priest, one Thomas Rowley, whose manuscripts he pretended to have discovered. He sent some of these poems to Walpole, but the older man's interest was short-lived. Walpole's good sense saw quickly through the hoax and when he was pressed for the return of the verses, answered Chatterton with brutal directness. His quickness to guess the fact, when many of his contemporaries could not, does Walpole's taste credit. But his blindness to the boy's genius is a testimony to his being more intelligent than generous.

Horace Walpole to Thomas Chatterton

[August, 1769]

Sir,—I do not see, I must own, how those precious MSS., of which you have sent me a few extracts, should be lost to the world by my detaining your letters. Do the originals not exist, from whence you say you copied your extracts, and from which you offered me more extracts? In truth, by your first letter I understood that the originals themselves were in your possession by the free and voluntary offer you made me of them, and which you know I did not choose to accept. If Mr. Barrett (who, give me leave to say, cannot know much of antiquity if he believes in the authenticity of those papers) intends to make use of them, would he not do better to have recourse to the originals than to the slight fragments you have sent me? You say, sir, you know them to be genuine; pray let me ask again, of what age are they? and how have they been transmitted? In what book of any age is there mention made either of Rowley or of the poetical monk, his ancient predecessor in such pure poetry? poetry so resembling both Spenser and the moderns, and written in metre invented long since Rowley, and longer since the monk wrote. I doubt Mr. Barrett himself will find it difficult to solve these doubts.

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[2] strike in such a way that he knows he is going to die.

[3] French painter (1611-1665) and author of a popular treatise on neoclassical aesthetics.

For myself, I undoubtedly will never print those extracts as genuine, which I am far from believing they are. If you want them, sir, I will have them copied, and will send you the copy. But having a little suspicion that your letters may have been designed to laugh at me, if I had fallen into the snare, you will allow me to preserve your original letters, as an ingenious contrivance, however unsuccessful. This seems the more probable, as any man would understand by your first letter that you either was possessed of the original MSS. or had taken copies of them; whereas now you talk as if you had no copy but those written at the bottom of the very letters I have received from you.

I own I should be better diverted if it proved that you have chosen to entertain yourself at my expense than if you really thought these pieces ancient. The former would show you had little opinion of my judgment; the latter, that you ought not to trust too much to your own. I should not at all take the former ill, as I am not vain of it; I should be sorry for the latter, as you say, sir, that you are very young, and it would be pity an ingenious young man should be too early prejudiced in his own favor.

Horace Walpole to Miss Mary Berry

Berkeley Square
May 26, 1791

I am rich in letters from you: I received that by Lord Elgin's courier first, as you expected, and its elder the next day. You tell me mine entertain you; *tant mieux.*[1] It is my wish, but my wonder; for I live so very little in the world that I do not know the present generation by sight: for, though I pass by them in the streets, the hats with valances, the folds above the chin of the ladies, and the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men, who have *levelled nobility* almost as much as the *mobility*[2] in France have, have confounded all individuality. Besides, if I did go to public places and assemblies, which my going to roost earlier prevents, the bats and owls do not begin to fly abroad till far in the night, when they begin to see and be seen. However, one of the empresses of fashion, the Duchess of Gordon, uses fifteen or sixteen hours of her four-and-twenty. I heard her journal of last Monday. She first went to Handel's[3] music in the Abbey; she then clambered over the benches, and went to Hastings's[4] trial in the Hall; after dinner, to the play; then to Lady Lucan's assembly; after that to Ranelagh,[5] and returned to Mrs. Hobart's faro-table; gave a ball herself in the evening of that morning, into which she must have got a good way; and set out for Scotland the next day. Hercules could not have achieved a quarter of her labors in the same space of time. What will the Great Duke think of our Amazons, if he has letters opened, as the Emperor was wont! One of our Camillas,[6] but in a freer style, I hear, he saw (I fancy, just before your arrival); and he must have wondered at the familiarity of the dame, and the nincompoophood of her Prince. Sir W.H. is arrived—his Nymph of the Attitudes was too prudish to visit the rambling peeress.

Mrs. Cholmeley was so very good as to call on me again yesterday; Mr. French was with me, and fell in love with her understanding, and probably with her face too—but with that he did not trust me. He says we shall have Dr. Darwin's stupendous poem[7] in a fortnight, of which you saw parts. Geo. Cholmondeley's wife, after a dreadful labor, is delivered of a dead child.

The rest of my letter must be literary; for we have no news. Boswell's book is gossiping; but, having numbers of proper names, would be more readable, at least by me, were it reduced from two volumes to one: but there are woeful *longueurs*,[8] both about his hero and himself, the *fidus Acha-*

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[1] so much the better.

[2] a play upon the word "mob."

[3] the celebrated German composer.

[4] the impeachment of Warren Hastings at which Burke made one of his famous speeches.

[5] famous amusement gardens located in Chelsea.

[6] Cf. Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, note 17, p. 641.

[7] Erasmus Darwin's *The Economy of Vegetation*, Part I of *The Botanic Garden*.

[8] tedious passages.

tes;[9] about whom one has not the smallest curiosity. But I wrong the original Achates: one is satisfied with his fidelity in keeping his master's secrets and weaknesses, which modern led-captains betray for their patron's glory and to hurt their own enemies: which Boswell has done shamefully, particularly against Mrs. Piozzi,[10] and Mrs. Montague,[11] and Bishop Percy.[12] Dr. Blagden says justly that it is a new kind of libel, by which you may abuse anybody, by saying some dead person said so-and-so of somebody alive. Often, indeed, Johnson made the most brutal speeches to living persons; for though he was good-natured at bottom, he was very ill-natured at top. He loved to dispute to show his superiority. If his opponents were weak, he told them they were fools; if they vanquished him, he was scurrilous—to nobody more than to Boswell himself, who was contemptible for flattering him so grossly, and for enduring the coarse things he was continually vomiting on Boswell's own country, Scotland. I expected, amongst the excommunicated, to find myself, but am very gently treated. I never would be in the least acquainted with Johnson; or, as Boswell calls it, had not a just value for him; which the biographer imputes to my resentment for the Doctor's putting bad arguments (purposely, out of Jacobitism)[13] into the speeches which he wrote fifty years ago for my father[14] in the *Gentleman's Magazine*; which I did not read then, or ever knew Johnson wrote till Johnson died, nor have looked at since. Johnson's blind Toryism and known brutality kept me aloof; nor did I ever exchange a syllable with him: nay, I do not think I ever was in a room with him six times in my days. The first time I think was at the Royal Academy. Sir Joshua[15] said, "Let me present Dr. Goldsmith to you"; he did. "Now I will present Dr. Johnson to you." "No," said I, "Sir Joshua, for Dr. Goldsmith, pass—but you shall *not* present Dr. Johnson to me." Some time after Boswell came to me, said Dr. J. was writing *The Lives of the Poets*, and wished I would give him anecdotes of Mr. Gray.[16] I said, very coldly, I had given what I knew to Mr. Mason.[17] B. hummed and hawed, and then dropped, "I suppose you know Dr. J. does not admire Mr. Gray." Putting as much contempt as I could into my look and tone, I said, "Dr. Johnson don't!—humph!"—and with that monosyllable ended our interview. After the Doctor's death, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell sent an ambling circular-letter to me, begging subscriptions for a monument for him—the two last, I think, impertinently; as they could not but know my opinion, and could not suppose I would contribute to a monument for one who had endeavored, poor soul! to degrade my friend's superlative poetry. I would not deign to write an answer; but sent down word by my footman, as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe. In the two new volumes Johnson says, and very probably did, or is made to say, that Gray's poetry is *dull*, and that he was a *dull* man! The same oracle dislikes Prior,[18] Swift, and Fielding.[19] If an elephant could write a book, perhaps one that had read a great deal would say that an Arabian horse is a very clumsy, ungraceful animal. Pass to a better chapter!

Burke has published another pamphlet[20] against the French Revolution, in which he attacks it still more grievously. The beginning is very good; but it is not equal, nor quite so injudicious as parts of its predecessor; is far less brilliant, as well as much shorter: but, were it ever so long, his mind overflows with such a torrent of images that he cannot be tedious. His invective against Rousseau is admirable, just, and new. Voltaire he passes almost contemptuously. I wish he had dissected Mirabeau[21] too; and I grieve that he has omitted the violation of the consciences of the clergy, nor stigmatized those universal plunderers, the National Assembly, who gorge themselves with eighteen livres a day; which to many of them would, three years ago, have been astonishing opulence.

When you return I shall lend you three volumes in quarto of another work, with which you will be delighted. They are state letters in the reigns of

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[9] "Faithful Achates," and companion of Aeneas, in the *Aenid*.

[10] Cf. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, note 24, p. 778.

[11] Mrs. Elizabeth Montague (1720-1800), an English author and social leader, founder of the "blue stockings."

[12] Thomas Percy (1729-1811), author of *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*.

[13] because of his Jacobitism, i.e., his partiality for the House of Stuart.

[14] Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister.

[15] Sir Joshua Reynolds, the painter.

[16] Cf. Vol II.

[17] William Mason (1724-1797), a poet and friend of Gray's.

[18] Matthew Prior (1668-1721).

[19] Henry Fielding (1707-1754), English playwright and novelist.

[20] *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.*

[21] the great orator of the French Revolution (1749-1791)

Henry the Eighth, Mary, Elizabeth, and James; being the correspondence of the Talbot and Howard families, given by a Duke of Norfolk to the Heralds' office; where they have lain for a century neglected, buried under dust, and unknown, till discovered by a Mr. Lodge, a genealogist, who, to gratify his passion, procured to be made a Pursuivant. Oh, how curious they are! Henry seizes an alderman who refused to contribute to a benevolence; sends him to the army on the Borders; orders him to be exposed in the front line; and if that does not do, to be treated with the utmost rigor of military discipline. His daughter Bess is not less a Tudor. The mean, unworthy treatment of the Queen of Scots is striking; and you will find how Elizabeth's jealousy of her crown and her avarice were at war, and how the more ignoble passion predominated. But the most amusing passage is one in a private letter, as it paints the awe of children for their parents as *little* differently from modern habitudes. Mr. Talbot, second son of the Earl of Shrewsbury, was a member of the House of Commons, and was married. He writes to the Earl his father, and tells him that a young woman of a very good character has been recommended to him for chamber-maid to his wife, and if his lordship does not disapprove of it, he will hire her. There are many letters of news, that are very entertaining too—but it is nine o'clock, and I must go to Lady Cecilia's.

Friday

The Conways, Mrs. Damer, the Farrens, and Lord Mount-Edgcumbe supped at the Johnstones'. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe said excellently, that "Mademoiselle D'Eon is her own widow." I wish I had seen you both in your court-*plis,* at your presentation; but that is only one wish amongst a thousand.

East winds and blights have succeeded our April spring, as you guessed, but though I have been at Strawberry[22] every week, I have caught no cold, I kindly thank you. Adieu!

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

(1751-1816)

Sheridan was born in Dublin of a family that had produced a number of writers. His parents were intimately connected with the theatre, his father having been an actor-manager in Dublin for a number of years. In his ninth year the boy was taken to England, and sent to Harrow in 1762. Later he studied law in London at the Middle Temple, but cut short his career there by his elopement and marriage to a famous beauty, Elizabeth Linley, for whose sake he fought two romantic duels. His devotion to playwriting occupied only a small portion of his life, from 1773, the year of his marriage, until 1780, when he entered Parliament. Although in this half-dozen years he proved himself to be the most able dramatist since the days of Shakespeare, he spent most of the rest of his life as a leading, and highly admirable, statesman. His speeches in Parliament won him the esteem of all, and his indictment of Warren Hastings (1788-1794) occasioned some of the finest examples of English oratory. With Burke and Fox he championed the rights of the American colonists, and with the latter remained a staunch defender of the principles of the French Revolution. He was, in short, one of the greatest progressives of his day. But he had no talent for managing his own finances. He became so involved in debt that he was forced to give up his seat in Parliament, and in 1813 was sent to debtors' prison. When he died four years later there was a sheriff waiting at his bedside. His country honored him, however, with a splendid funeral and burial in Westminster Abbey.

To the generally depressing condition of eighteenth-century drama, brought about by the sentimental comedies which had won over the public (cf. Introduction to Steele, *above*), the only exceptions are Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*, and four comedies of

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[22] Strawberry Hill, Walpole's famous house.

Sheridan: *The Duenna* (1775), *The Rivals* (1775), *The School for Scandal* (1777), and *The Critic* (1779); but these are of such excellence as atones for the dreariness of their contemporaries. Goldsmith had written his masterpiece as a protest against the "weeping comedies" popularized by Steele, and Sheridan followed with the same objective. But unlike Goldsmith, Sheridan had no desire to modify his comedy with touches of sentiment. His interest is not in the individual traits of human beings, but in the social conduct of men and women. A true son of Congreve, Sheridan is the last of the wits, and with him the comedy of manners disappears until the end of the nineteenth century.

The School for Scandal remains one of the favorite English comedies, and the screen scene in Act IV is perhaps the most famous single scene in our drama. The play consists of two distinct themes, the story of the Teazles and that of the "scandal school," so closely knit as to be actually inseparable. Lady Teazle is a worthy successor to Congreve's Millamant; she is a delightful portrait of a charming but exasperated woman. The other characters are sharply etched, in the manner of Ben Jonson's "humors." Throughout, the dialogue flows with rapidity, brilliance, and polish.

A comparison of this play with Molière's *The Misanthrope* (cf. *above*) affords an extraordinary opportunity to study the manner in which a genius can employ materials from another writer and yet convert them into something entirely original. How far Sheridan was consciously influenced by Molière's play no one, of course, can say. But the resemblances are sufficiently impressive to make clear that there was indebtedness on the Englishman's part, conscious or unconscious. Maria is assigned sentiments which have the effect of being echoes of those expressed by Alceste, the misanthrope, himself. Lady Teazle, though not so much of a real coquette, plays very much the part of Célimène. The "school" of scandalmongers indulge in the same kind of talk, and often with similar phraseology, as do the suitors of Célimène. One of them, also, writes and recites wretched verses. Mrs. Candour has somewhat remoter affinities to Arsinoë. And even the great screen scene may have been suggested by the passage wherein Alceste is an unintended auditor of Célimène's perfidy.

Sheridan's plays have been edited by W. F. Rae (1902) and J. Knight (1906). Good biographies are those by W. F. Rae (1906) and L. C. Sanders (1890).

The School for Scandal

Dramatis Personae

Sir Peter Teazle
Sir Oliver Surface
Joseph Surface
Crabtree
Sir Benjamin Backbite
Rowley
Moses
Trip
Snake
Careless
Sir Toby Bumper
Lady Teazle
Maria
Lady Sneerwell
Mrs. Candour

PROLOGUE

Written by Mr. Garrick

A School for Scandal! Tell me, I beseech you,
Needs there a school—this modish art to teach you?
No need of lessons now;—the knowing think—
We might as well be taught to eat and drink;
Caus'd by a dearth of scandal, should the vapors
Distress our fair ones—let 'em read the papers;
Their powerful mixtures such disorders hit;
Crave what you will—there's *quantum sufficit.*[1]
"Lord!" cries my Lady *Wormwood* (who loves tattle,
And puts much salt and pepper in her prattle),

[1] as much as is necessary.

Just ris'n at noon, all night at cards, when threshing
Strong tea and scandal—"Bless me, how refreshing!
"Give me the papers, *Lisp*—how bold and free! (*sips*)
"Last night Lord L. (*sips*) was caught with Lady D.
"For aching heads what charming *sal volatile*![2] (*sips*)
"If Mrs. B. will still continue flirting,
"We hope she'll *draw*, or we'll *undraw* the curtain.
"Fine satire, poz—in public all abuse it,
"But, by ourselves, (*sips*) our praise we can't refuse it.
'Now, *Lisp*, read you—there, at that dash and star."
"Yes, ma'am—A certain Lord had best beware,
"Who lives not twenty miles from Grosv'nor Square;
"For should he Lady W.—find willing,—
"*Wormwood* is bitter"—"Oh! that's me, the villain!
"Throw it behind the fire, and never more
"Let that vile paper *come within my door*."
Thus at our friends we laugh, who feel the dart;
To reach *our* feelings, we ourselves must smart.
Is our young bard so young—to think that he
Can stop the full spring-tide of calumny?
Knows he the world so little, and its trade?
Alas! the devil's sooner *rais'd* than *laid*.
So strong, so swift, the monster there's no gagging:
Cut Scandal's head off, still the tongue is wagging.
Proud of your smiles once lavishly bestow'd,
Again our young Don Quixote takes the road;
To show his gratitude he draws his pen,
And seeks this Hydra, Scandal, in his den,
(From his fell gripe the frighted fair to save—
Tho' he should fall th' attempt must please the brave.)
For your applause all perils he would through—
He'll fight—that's write—a cavaliero true,
Till every drop of blood—that's ink—is spilt for you.

ACT THE FIRST

Scene I—Lady Sneerwell's House

Lady Sneerwell *at the dressing-table;* Mr. Snake *drinking chocolate.*

Lady Sneer. The paragraphs, you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?

Snake. They were, madam; and as I copied them myself in a feigned hand, there can be no suspicion whence they came.

Lady Sneer. Did you circulate the report of Lady Brittle's intrigue with Captain Boastall?

Snake. That's in as fine a train as your ladyship could wish. In the common course of things, I think it must reach Mrs. Clackit's ears within four and twenty hours; and then, you know, the business is as good as done.

Lady Sneer. Why, truly, Mrs. Clackit has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry.

Snake. True, madam, and has been tolerably successful in her day. To my knowledge she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons disinherited; of four forced elopements, and as many close confinements; nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. Nay, I have more than once traced her causing a *tête-à-tête* in the *Town and Country Magazine,* when the parties, perhaps, had never seen each other's face before in the course of their lives.

Lady Sneer. She certainly has talents, but her manner is gross.

Snake. 'Tis very true.—She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her coloring is too dark, and her outlines often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint, and mellowness of sneer, which distinguishes your ladyship's scandal.

Lady Sneer. You are partial, Snake.

Snake. Not in the least—everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look, than many can with the most labored detail, even when they happen to have a little truth on their side to support it.

Lady Sneer. Yes, my dear Snake; and I am no hypocrite to deny the satisfaction I reap from the success of my efforts. Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation.

Snake. Nothing can be more natural. But, Lady

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[2] smelling salts.

Sneerwell, there is one affair in which you have lately employed me, wherein, I confess, I am at a loss to guess your motives.

Lady Sneer. I conceive you mean with respect to my neighbor, Sir Peter Teazle, and his family?

Snake. I do. Here are two young men, to whom Sir Peter has acted as a kind of guardian since their father's death; the eldest possessing the most amiable character, and universally well spoken of; the youngest, the most dissipated and extravagant young fellow in the kingdom, without friends or character: the former an avowed admirer of your ladyship's, and apparently your favorite; the latter attached to Maria, Sir Peter's ward, and confessedly beloved by her. Now, on the face of these circumstances, it is utterly unaccountable to me, why you, the widow of a City knight, with a good jointure, should not close with the passion of a man of such character and expectations as Mr. Surface; and more so why you should be so uncommonly earnest to destroy the mutual attachment subsisting between his brother Charles and Maria.

Lady Sneer. Then at once to unravel this mystery, I must inform you, that love has no share whatever in the intercourse between Mr. Surface and me.

Snake. No!

Lady Sneer. His real attachment is to Maria, or her fortune; but finding in his brother a favored rival, he has been obliged to mask his pretensions, and profit by my assistance.

Snake. Yet still I am more puzzled why you should interest yourself in his success.

Lady Sneer. How dull you are! Cannot you surmise the weakness which I hitherto, through shame, have concealed even from you? Must I confess, that Charles, that libertine, that extravagant, that bankrupt in fortune and reputation, that he it is for whom I'm thus anxious and malicious, and to gain whom I would sacrifice every thing?

Snake. Now, indeed, your conduct appears consistent: but how came you and Mr. Surface so confidential?

Lady Sneer. For our mutual interest. I have found him out a long time since. I know him to be artful, selfish, and malicious—in short, a sentimental knave while with Sir Peter, and indeed with all his acquaintance, he passes for a miracle of prudence, good sense, and benevolence.

Snake. Yes; yet Sir Peter vows he has not his equal in England—and above all, he praises him as a man of sentiment.

Lady Sneer. True—and with the assistance of his sentiment and hypocrisy, he has brought Sir Peter entirely into his interest with regard to Maria while poor Charles has no friend in the house, though, I fear, he has a powerful one in Maria's heart, against whom we must direct our schemes.

Enter Servant.

Servant. Mr. Surface.

Lady Sneer. Show him up. [*Exit* Servant.] He generally calls about this time. I don't wonder at people giving him to me for a lover.

Enter Joseph Surface.

Joseph S. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how do you do to-day? Mr. Snake, your most obedient.

Lady Sneer. Snake has just been rallying me on our mutual attachment; but I have informed him of our real views. You know how useful he has been to us, and, believe me, the confidence is not ill placed.

Joseph S. Madam, it is impossible for me to suspect a man of Mr. Snake's sensibility and discernment.

Lady Sneer. Well, well, no compliments now; but tell me when you saw your mistress, Maria—or, what is more material to me, your brother.

Joseph S. I have not seen either since I left you; but I can inform you that they never meet. Some of your stories have taken a good effect on Maria.

Lady Sneer. Ah! my dear Snake! the merit of this belongs to you: but do your brother's distresses increase?

Joseph S. Every hour. I am told he has had another execution in the house yesterday. In short, his dissipation and extravagance exceed anything I have ever heard of.

Lady Sneer. Poor Charles!

Joseph S. True, madam; notwithstanding his vices, one cannot help feeling for him. Aye, Poor Charles, indeed! I'm sure I wish it were in my power to be of any essential service to him; for the man who does not share in the distresses of a brother, even though merited by his own misconduct, deserves——

Lady Sneer. O Lud! you are going to be moral, and forget that you are among friends.

Joseph S. Egad, that's true!—I'll keep that sentiment till I see Sir Peter;—however, it is certainly a charity to rescue Maria from such a libertine. who, if he is to be reclaimed, can be so only by a person of your ladyship's superior accomplishments and understanding.

Snake. I believe, Lady Sneerwell, here's company coming: I'll go and copy the letter I mentioned to you.—Mr. Surface, your most obedient.

[*Exit* Snake.

Joseph S. Sir, your very devoted.—Lady Sneerwell, I am very sorry you have put any farther confidence in that fellow.

Lady Sneer. Why so?

Joseph S. I have lately detected him in frequent conference with old Rowley, who was formerly my father's steward, and has never, you know, been a friend of mine.

Lady Sneer. And do you think he would betray us?

Joseph S. Nothing more likely:—take my word for't, Lady Sneerwell, that fellow hasn't virtue enough to be faithful even to his own villainy.—Ah! Maria!

Enter Maria.

Lady Sneer. Maria, my dear, how do you do?—What's the matter?

Maria. O there's that disagreeable lover of mine, Sir Benjamin Backbite, has just called at my guardian's, with his odious uncle, Crabtree; so I slipt out, and ran hither to avoid them.

Lady Sneer. Is that all?

Joseph S. If my brother Charles had been of the party, madam, perhaps you would have not been so much alarmed.

Lady Sneer. Nay, now you are severe; for I dare swear the truth of the matter is, Maria heard *you* were here.—But, my dear, what has Sir Benjamin done, that you would avoid him?

Maria. O, he has done nothing—but 'tis for what he has said: His conversation is a perpetual libel on all his acquaintance.

Joseph S. Aye, and the worst of it is, there is no advantage in not knowing him—for he'll abuse a stranger just as soon as his best friend; and his uncle is as bad.

Lady Sneer. Nay, but we should make allowance—Sir Benjamin is a wit and a poet.

Maria. For my part, I confess, madam, wit loses its respect with me, when I see it in company with malice.—What do you think, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. Certainly, madam; to smile at the jest which plants a thorn in another's breast is to become a principal in the mischief.

Lady Sneer. Pshaw!—there's no possibility of being witty without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick.—What's your opinion, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. To be sure, madam; that conversation, where the spirit of raillery is suppressed, will ever appear tedious and insipid.

Maria. Well, I'll not debate how far scandal may be allowable; but in a man, I am sure, it is always contemptible. We have pride, envy, rivalship, and a thousand little motives to depreciate each other; but the male slanderer must have the cowardice of a woman before he can traduce one.

Enter Servant.

Servant. Madam, Mrs. Candour is below, and if your ladyship's at leisure, will leave her carriage.

Lady Sneer. Beg her to walk in.—[*Exit* Servant.]—Now, Maria, here is a character to your taste; for though Mrs. Candour is a little talkative, everybody allows her to be the best natured and best sort of woman.

Maria. Yet with a very gross affectation of good nature and benevolence, she does more mischief than the direct malice of old Crabtree.

Joseph S. I'faith 'tis true, Lady Sneerwell: whenever I hear the current running against the characters of my friends, I never think them in such danger as when Candour undertakes their defence.

Lady Sneer. Hush!—here she is!——

Enter Mrs. Candour.

Mrs. Can. My dear Lady Sneerwell, how have you been this century?—Mr. Surface, what news do you hear?—though indeed it is no matter, for I think one hears nothing else but scandal.

Joseph S. Just so, indeed, madam.

Mrs. Can. Ah! Maria, child,—what, is the whole affair off between you and Charles?—His extravagance, I presume—the town talks of nothing else.

Maria. I am very sorry, ma'am, the town has so little to do.

Mrs. Can. True, true, child: but there's no stopping people's tongues. I own I was hurt to hear it, as I indeed was to learn, from the same quarter, that your guardian, Sir Peter, and Lady Teazle have not agreed lately as well as could be wished.

Maria. 'Tis strangely impertinent for people to busy themselves so.

Mrs. Can. Very true, child:—but what's to be done? People will talk—there's no preventing it. Why, it was but yesterday I was told that Miss Gadabout had eloped with Sir Filigree Flirt.—But, Lord! there is no minding what one hears; though, to be sure, I had this from very good authority.

MARIA. Such reports are highly scandalous.

MRS. CAN. So they are, child—shameful! shameful! But the world is so censorious, no character escapes.—Lord now! who would have suspected your friend, Miss Prim, of an indiscretion? Yet such is the ill-nature of people, that they say her uncle stopt her last week, just as she was stepping into the York diligence with her dancing-master.

MARIA. I'll answer for't there are no grounds for the report.

MRS. CAN. O, no foundation in the world, I dare swear; no more, probably, than for the story circulated last month, of Mrs. Festino's affair with Colonel Cassino;—though, to be sure, that matter was never rightly cleared up.

JOSEPH S. The licence of invention some people take is monstrous indeed.

MARIA. 'Tis so—but, in my opinion, those who report such things are equally culpable.

MRS. CAN. To be sure they are; tale-bearers are as bad as the tale-makers—'tis an old observation, and a very true one: but what's to be done, as I said before? how will you prevent people from talking? To-day, Mrs. Clackit assured me, Mr. and Mrs. Honeymoon were at last become mere man and wife, like the rest of their acquaintance. She likewise hinted that a certain widow, in the next street, had got rid of her dropsy and recovered her shape in a most surprising manner. And at the same time, Miss Tattle, who was by, affirmed that Lord Buffalo had discovered his lady at a house of no extraordinary fame; and that Sir Harry Boquet and Tom Saunter were to measure swords on a similar provocation.—But, Lord, do you think I would report these things?—No, no! tale-bearers, as I said before, are just as bad as the tale-makers.

JOSEPH S. Ah! Mrs. Candour, if everybody had your forbearance and good-nature! ——

MRS. CAN. I confess, Mr. Surface, I cannot bear to hear people attacked behind their backs; and when ugly circumstances come out against our acquaintance, I own I always love to think the best.—By-the-by, I hope 'tis not true that your brother is absolutely ruined.

JOSEPH S. I am afraid his circumstances are very bad indeed, madam.

MRS. CAN. Ah! I heard so—but you must tell him to keep up his spirits; everybody almost is in the same way—Lord Spindle, Sir Thomas Splint, Captain Quinze, and Mr. Nickit—all up, I hear, within this week; so if Charles is undone, he'll find half his acquaintance ruined too, and that, you know, is a consolation.

JOSEPH S. Doubtless, ma'am—a very great one.

Enter SERVANT.

SERVANT. Mr. Crabtree and Sir Benjamin Backbite. [*Exit* SERVANT.

LADY SNEER. So, Maria, you see your lover pursues you; positively you shan't escape.

Enter CRABTREE *and* SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

CRABTREE. Lady Sneerwell, I kiss your hand—Mrs. Candour, I don't believe you are acquainted with my nephew, Sir Benjamin Backbite? Egad! ma'am, he has a pretty wit, and is a pretty poet too; isn't he, Lady Sneerwell?

SIR. BENJ. B. Oh, fie, uncle!

CRABTREE. Nay, egad, it's true; I back him at a rebus or a charade against the best rhymer in the kingdom.—Has your ladyship heard the epigram he wrote last week on Lady Frizzle's feather catching fire?—Do, Benjamin, repeat it, or the charade you made last night extempore at Mrs. Drowzie's conversazione.[3] Come now;—your first is the name of a fish, your second a great naval commander, and ——

SIR BENJ. B. Uncle, now—prythee ——

CRABTREE. I'faith, ma'am, 'twould surprise you to hear how ready he is at all these things.

LADY SNEER. I wonder, Sir Benjamin, you never publish anything.

SIR BENJ. B. To say truth, ma'am, 'tis very vulgar to print; and as my little productions are mostly satires and lampoons on particular people, I find they circulate more by giving copies in confidence to the friends of the parties. However, I have some love elegies, which, when favored with this lady's smiles, I mean to give the public.

CRABTREE. 'Fore Heaven, ma'am, they'll immortalize you!—you will be handed down to posterity, like Petrarch's Laura,[4] or Waller's Sacharissa.[5]

SIR BENJ. B. Yes, madam, I think you will like them, when you shall see them on a beautiful quarto page, where a neat rivulet of text shall murmur through a meadow of margin. 'Foregad, they will be the most elegant things of their kind!

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[3] a meeting where art and literature are discussed.

[4] the lady to whom Petrarch's sonnets are addressed; cf. p. 238.

[5] Lady Dorothy Sidney, to whom Edmund Waller (cf. p. 390) wrote poems.

Crabtree. But, ladies, that's true—have you heard the news?

Mrs. Can. What, sir, do you mean the report of ——

Crabtree. No, ma'am that's not it—Miss Nicely is going to be married to her own footman.

Mrs. Can. Impossible!

Crabtree. Ask Sir Benjamin.

Sir Benj. B. 'Tis very true, ma'am; everything is fixed, and the wedding liveries bespoke.

Crabtree. Yes—and they do say there were pressing reasons for it.

Lady Sneer. Why, I have heard something of this before.

Mrs. Can. It can't be—and I wonder any one should believe such a story, of so prudent a lady as Miss Nicely.

Sir. Benj. B. O Lud! ma'am, that's the very reason 'twas believed at once. She has always been so cautious and so reserved, that everybody was sure there was some reason for it at bottom.

Mrs. Can. Why, to be sure, a tale of scandal is as fatal to the credit of a prudent lady of her stamp, as a fever is generally to those of the strongest constitutions. But there is a sort of puny sickly reputation, that is always ailing, yet will outlive the robuster characters of a hundred prudes.

Sir Benj. B. True, madam,—there are valetudinarians in reputation as well as constitution; who, being conscious of their weak part, avoid the least breath of air, and supply their want of stamina by care and circumspection.

Mrs. Can. Well, but this may be all a mistake. You know, Sir Benjamin, very trifling circumstances often give rise to the most injurious tales.

Crabtree. That they do, I'll be sworn, ma'am.—Did you ever hear how Miss Piper came to lose her lover and her character last summer at Tunbridge?[6]—Sir Benjamin, you remember it?

Sir Benj. B. Oh, to be sure!—the most whimsical circumstance.

Lady Sneer. How was it, pray?

Crabtree. Why, one evening, at Mrs. Ponto's assembly, the conversation happened to turn on the difficulty of breeding Nova Scotia sheep in this country. Says a young lady in company, I have known instances of it—for Miss Letitia Piper, a first cousin of mine, had a Nova Scotia sheep that produced her twins.—What! cries the Lady Dowager Dundizzy (who you know is as deaf as a post), has Miss Piper had twins?—This mistake, as you may imagine, threw the whole company into a fit of laughing. However, 'twas the next day everywhere reported, and in a few days believed by the whole town, that Miss Letitia Piper had actually been brought to bed of a fine boy and a girl; and in less than a week there were some people who could name the father, and the farmhouse where the babies were put out to nurse.

Lady Sneer. Strange, indeed!

Crabtree. Matter of fact, I assure you.—O Lud! Mr. Surface, pray is it true that your uncle, Sir Oliver, is coming home?

Joseph S. Not that I know of, indeed, sir.

Crabtree. He has been in the East Indies a long time. You can scarcely remember him, I believe—Sad comfort whenever he returns, to hear how your brother has gone on!

Joseph S. Charles has been imprudent, sir, to be sure; but I hope no busy people have already prejudiced Sir Oliver against him—he may reform.

Sir Benj. B. To be sure he may: for my part, I never believed him to be so utterly void of principle as people say; and though he has lost all his friends, I am told nobody is better spoken of by the Jews.

Crabtree. That's true, egad, nephew. If the Old Jewry[7] was a ward, I believe Charles would be an alderman:—no man more popular there, 'foregad! I hear he pays as many annuities as the Irish tontine;[8] and that whenever he is sick, they have prayers for the recovery of his health in all the synagogues.

Sir Benj. B. Yet no man lives in greater splendor. They tell me, when he entertains his friends he will sit down to dinner with a dozen of his own securities; have a score of tradesmen waiting in the antechamber, and an officer behind every guest's chair.

Joseph S. This may be entertainment to you, gentlemen, but you pay very little regard to the feelings of a brother.

Maria. Their malice is intolerable.—Lady Sneerwell, I must wish you a good morning: I'm not very well. [*Exit* Maria.

Mrs. Can. O dear! she changes color very much.

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[6] a watering place near London.

[7] a Jewish section in London.

[8] an arrangement whereby a number of people contribute a certain sum towards an annuity, the dividends increasing as the members die off.

Lady Sneer. Do, Mrs. Candour, follow her: she may want assistance.

Mrs. Can. That I will, with all my soul, ma'am. —Poor dear creature, who knows what her situation may be! [*Exit.*

Lady Sneer. 'Twas nothing but that she could not bear to hear Charles reflected on, notwithstanding their difference.

Sir Benj. B. The young lady's *penchant*[9] is obvious.

Crabtree. But, Benjamin, you must not give up the pursuit for that:—follow her, and put her into good humor. Repeat her some of your own verses. Come, I'll assist you.

Sir Benj. B. Mr. Surface, I did not mean to hurt you; but depend on't your brother is utterly undone.

Crabtree. O Lud, ay! undone as ever man was. Can't raise a guinea!

Sir Benj. B. Everything sold, I am told, that was movable.

Crabtree. I have seen one that was at his house. Not a thing left but some empty bottles that were overlooked, and the family pictures, which I believe are framed in the wainscot——

Sir Benj. B. And I'm very sorry, also, to hear some bad stories against him. [*Going.*

Crabtree. O! he has done many mean things, that's certain.

Sir Benj. B. But, however, as he's your brother—— [*Going.*

Crabtree. We'll tell you all another opportunity. [*Exeunt.*

Lady Sneer. Ha! ha! 'tis very hard for them to leave a subject they have not quite run down.

Joseph S. And I believe the abuse was not more acceptable to your ladyship than to Maria.

Lady Sneer. I doubt her affections are farther engaged than we imagine. But the family are to be here this evening, so you may as well dine where you are, and we shall have an opportunity of observing farther; in the meantime, I'll go and plot mischief, and you shall study sentiment. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II—SIR PETER TEAZLE'S HOUSE

Enter Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. When an old bachelor marries a young wife, what is he to expect? 'Tis now six months since Lady Teazle made me the happiest of men—and I have been the most miserable dog ever since that ever committed wedlock! We tift a little going to church, and came to a quarrel before the bells had done ringing. I was more than once nearly choked with gall during the honeymoon, and had lost all comfort in life before my friends had done wishing me joy. Yet I chose with caution—a girl bred wholly in the country, who never knew luxury beyond one silk gown, nor dissipation beyond the annual gala of a race ball. Yet now she plays her part in all the extravagant fopperies of the fashion and the town, with as ready a grace as if she had never seen a bush or a grass-plot out of Grosvenor Square! I am sneered at by all my acquaintance, and paragraphed in the newspapers. She dissipates my fortune, and contradicts all my humors; yet, the worst of it is, I doubt I love her, or I should never bear all this. However, I'll never be weak enough to own it.

Enter Rowley.

Rowley. O Sir Peter, your servant: how is it with you, sir?

Sir Peter T. Very bad, Master Rowley, very bad. I meet with nothing but crosses and vexations.

Rowley. What can have happened to trouble you since yesterday?

Sir Peter T. A good question to a married man!

Rowley. Nay, I'm sure Sir Peter, your lady can't be the cause of your uneasiness.

Sir Peter T. Why, has anyone told she was dead?

Rowley. Come, come, Sir Peter, you love her, notwithstanding your tempers don't exactly agree

Sir Peter T. But the fault is entirely hers, Master Rowley. I am, myself, the sweetest-tempered man alive, and hate a teasing temper; and so I tell her a hundred times a day.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Peter T. Aye; and what is very extraordinary, in all our disputes she is always in the wrong! But Lady Sneerwell, and the set she meets at her house, encourage the perverseness of her disposition.—Then, to complete my vexation, Maria, my ward, whom I ought to have the power of a father over, is determined to turn rebel too, and absolutely refuses the man whom I have long resolved on for her husband; meaning, I suppose, to bestow herself on his profligate brother.

Rowley. You know, Sir Peter, I have always taken the liberty to differ with you on the subject of these two young gentlemen. I only wish you may not be deceived in your opinion of the elder. For Charles, my life on't! he will retrieve his errors yet. Their worthy father, once my honored master, was at his years, nearly as wild a spark; yet, when he died, he did not leave a more benevolent heart to lament his loss.

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[9] leaning.

SIR PETER T. You are wrong, Master Rowley. On their father's death, you know, I acted as a kind of guardian to them both till their uncle Sir Oliver's eastern liberality gave them an early independence. Of course, no person could have more opportunities of judging of their hearts, and I was never mistaken in my life. Joseph is indeed a model for the young men of the age. He is a man of sentiment, and acts up to the sentiments he professes, but for the other, take my word for't, if he had any grain of virtue by descent, he has dissipated it with the rest of his inheritance. Ah! my old friend, Sir Oliver, will be deeply mortified when he finds how part of his bounty has been misapplied.

ROWLEY. I am sorry to find you so violent against the young man, because this may be the most critical period of his fortune. I came hither with news that will surprise you.

SIR PETER T. What! let me hear.

ROWLEY. Sir Oliver *is* arrived, and at this moment in town.

SIR PETER T. How! you astonish me! I thought you did not expect him this month.

ROWLEY. I did not; but his passage has been remarkably quick.

SIR PETER T. Egad, I shall rejoice to see my old friend. 'Tis sixteen years since we met.—We have had many a day together:—but does he still enjoin us not to inform his nephews of his arrival?

ROWLEY. Most strictly. He means, before it is known, to make some trial of their dispositions.

SIR PETER T. Ah! there needs no art to discover their merits—he shall have his way: but, pray, does he know I am married?

ROWLEY. Yes, and will soon wish you joy.

SIR PETER T. What, as we drink health to a friend in a consumption? Ah! Oliver will laugh at me. We used to rail at matrimony together, and he has been steady to his text.—Well, he must lie at my house, though!—I'll instantly give orders for his reception.—But Master Rowley, don't drop a word that Lady Teazle and I ever disagree.

ROWLEY. By no means.

SIR PETER T. For I should never be able to stand Noll's jokes; so I'd have him think, Lord forgive me! that we are a very happy couple.

ROWLEY. I understand you:—but then you must be very careful not to differ while he is in the house with you.

SIR PETER T. Egad, and so we must—and that's impossible. Ah! Master Rowley, when an old bachelor marries a young wife, he deserves—no—the crime carries the punishment along with it. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE I—SIR PETER TEAZLE'S HOUSE

Enter SIR PETER *and* LADY TEAZLE.

SIR PETER T. Lady Teazle, Lady Teazle, I'll not bear it!

LADY T. Sir Peter, Sir Peter, you may bear it or not, as you please; but I ought to have my own way in everything, and what's more, I will, too. What! though I was educated in the country, I know very well that women of fashion in London are accountable to nobody after they are married.

SIR PETER T. Very well, ma'am, very well;— so a husband is to have no influence, no authority?

LADY T. Authority! No, to be sure:—if you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me, and not married me: I am sure you were old enough.

SIR PETER T. Old enough!—aye—there it is. Well, well, Lady Teazle, though my life may be made unhappy by your temper, I'll not be ruined by your extravagance.

LADY T. My extravagance? I'm sure I'm not more extravagant than a woman of fashion ought to be.

SIR PETER T. No, no, madam, you shall throw away no more sums on such unmeaning luxury. 'Slife! to spend as much to furnish your dressing-room with flowers in winter as would suffice to turn the Pantheon[9a] into a greenhouse, and give a *fête champêtre*[10] at Christmas.

LADY T. Lord, Sir Peter, am I to blame because flowers are dear in cold weather? You should find fault with the climate, and not with me. For my part, I'm sure, I wish it was spring all the year round, and that roses grew under one's feet!

SIR PETER T. Oons! madam—if you had been born to this, I shouldn't wonder at your talking

[9a] a concert hall in Oxford Street, London.

[10] garden party.

thus; but you forget what your situation was when I married you.

Lady T. No, no, I don't; 'twas a very disagreeable one, or I never should have married you.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, madam, you were then in somewhat an humbler style:—the daughter of a plain country squire. Recollect, Lady Teazle, when I saw you first, sitting at your tambour,[11] in a pretty figured linen gown, with a bunch of keys by your side; your hair combed smooth over a roll, and your apartment hung round with fruits in worsted, of your own working.

Lady T. Oh, yes! I remember it very well, and a curious life I led! my daily occupation to inspect the dairy, superintend the poultry, make extracts from the family receipt-book; and comb my aunt Deborah's lap-dog.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, madam, 'twas so indeed.

Lady T. And then, you know, my evening amusements! To draw patterns for ruffles, which I had not materials to make up; to play Pope Joan[12] with the curate; to read a sermon to my aunt; or to be stuck down to an old spinet to strum my father to sleep after a fox-chase.

Sir Peter T. I am glad you have so good a memory. Yes, madam, these were the recreations I took you from; but now you must have your coach,—*vis-à-vis,*[13]—and three powdered footmen before your chair; and, in the summer, a pair of white cats[14] to draw you to Kensington Gardens. No recollection, I suppose, when you were content to ride double, behind the butler, or a dock'd coach-horse?

Lady T. No—I swear I never did that: I deny the butler and the coach-horse.

Sir Peter T. This, madam, was your situation; and what have I done for you? I have made you a woman of fashion, of fortune, of rank; in short, I have made you *my wife.*

Lady T. Well, then,—and there is but one thing more you can make me to add to the obligation, and that is——

Sir Peter T. My widow, I suppose?

Lady T. Hem! hem!

Sir Peter T. I thank you, madam—but don't flatter yourself; for though your ill conduct may disturb my peace, it shall never break my heart, I promise you: however, I am equally obliged to you for the hint.

Lady T. Then why will you endeavor to make yourself so disagreeable to me, and thwart me in every little elegant expense?

Sir Peter T. 'Slife, madam, I say, had you any of these little elegant expenses when you married me?

Lady T. Lud, Sir Peter! would you have me be out of the fashion?

Sir Peter T. The fashion, indeed! what had you to do with the fashion when you married me?

Lady T. For my part, I should think you would like to have your wife thought a woman of taste.

Sir Peter T. Aye—there again—taste—Zounds! madam, you had no taste when you married me!

Lady T. That's very true indeed, Sir Peter; and after having married you, I am sure I should never pretend to taste again. But now, Sir Peter, if we have finished our daily jangle, I presume I may go to my engagement at Lady Sneerwell's.

Sir Peter T. Aye, there's another precious circumstance—a charming set of acquaintance you have made there.

Lady T. Nay, Sir Peter, they are all people of rank and fortune, and remarkably tenacious of reputation.

Sir Peter T. Yes, egad, they are tenacious of reputation with a vengeance; for they don't choose anybody should have a character but themselves!—Such a crew! Ah! many a wretch has rid on a hurdle[15] who has done less mischief than these utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, and clippers of reputation.

Lady T. What! would you restrain the freedom of speech?

Sir Peter T. Oh! they have made you just as bad as any one of the society.

Lady T. Why, I believe I do bear a part with a tolerable grace. But I vow I bear no malice against the people I abuse. When I say an ill-natured thing, 'tis out of pure good humor; and I take it for granted, they deal exactly in the same manner with me. But, Sir Peter, you know you promised to come to Lady Sneerwell's too.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, I'll call in just to look after my own character.

Lady T. Then indeed you must haste after me, or you'll be too late. So, good-bye to you.

[*Exit* Lady Teazle.

Sir Peter T. Soh!—I have gained much by my intended expostulation: yet, with what a charming air she contradicts everything I say, and how pleasingly she shows her contempt for my authority! Well, though I can't make her love me, there is great satisfaction in quarrelling with her; and I think she never appears to such advantage as when she is doing everything in her power to plague me.

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[11] embroidery frame.

[12] a simple card game.

[13] with the occupants facing each other.

[14] horses.

[15] a cart to carry criminals to execution.

SCENE II—LADY SNEERWELL'S HOUSE

LADY SNEERWELL, MRS. CANDOUR, CRABTREE, SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE, and JOSEPH SURFACE *discovered, servants attending with tea.*

LADY SNEER. Nay, positively, we will hear it.

JOSEPH S. Yes, yes, the epigram, by all means.

SIR BENJ. B. Oh, plague on't, uncle! 'tis mere nonsense.

CRABTREE. No. no; 'foregad, very clever for an extempore!

SIR BENJ. B. But, ladies, you should be acquainted with the circumstance. You must know, that one day last week, as Lady Betty Curricle was taking the dust in Hyde Park, in a sort of a duodecimo[16] phaeton, she desired me to write some verses on her ponies; upon which I took out my pocket-book, and in one moment produced the following:

Sure never were seen two such beautiful ponies;
Other horses are clowns, but these macaronies:[17]
To give 'em this title I'm sure isn't wrong,
Their legs are so slim, and their tails are so long.

CRABTREE. There, ladies, done in the smack of a whip, and on horseback too.

JOSEPH S. A very Phoebus, mounted—indeed, Sir Benjamin.

SIR BENJ. B. O dear sir,—trifles—trifles.

Enter LADY TEAZLE *and* MARIA.

MRS. CAN. I must have a copy.

LADY SNEER. Lady Teazle, I hope we shall see Sir Peter?

LADY T. I believe he'll wait on your ladyship presently.

LADY SNEER. Maria, my love, you look grave. Come, you shall sit down to cards with Mr. Surface.

MARIA. I take very little pleasure in cards—however, I'll do as your ladyship pleases.

LADY T. I am surprised Mr. Surface should sit down with her; I thought he would have embraced this opportunity of speaking to me, before Sir Peter came. [*Aside.*]

MRS. CAN. Now, I'll die, but you are so scandalous, I'll forswear your society.

LADY T. What's the matter, Mrs. Candour?

MRS. CAN. They'll not allow our friend Miss Vermillion to be handsome.

LADY SNEER. O, surely she's a pretty woman.

CRABTREE. I am very glad you think so, madam.

MRS. CAN. She has a charming fresh color.

LADY T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.

MRS. CAN. O, fie! I'll swear her color is natural: I have seen it come and go.

LADY T. I dare swear you have, ma'am; it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.

SIR BENJ. B. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes, but, what's more—egad, her maid can fetch and carry it!

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! how I hate to hear you talk so! But surely now, her sister *is*, or *was*, very handsome.

CRABTREE. Who? Mrs. Evergreen? O Lord! She's six and fifty if she's an hour!

MRS. CAN. Now positively you wrong her; fifty-two or fifty-three is the utmost—and I don't think she looks more.

SIR BENJ. B. Ah! there's no judging by her looks, unless one could see her face.

LADY SNEER. Well, well, if Mrs. Evergreen *does* take some pains to repair the ravages of time, you must allow she effects it with great ingenuity; and surely that's better than the careless manner in which the widow Ochre caulks her wrinkles.

SIR BENJ. B. Nay now, Lady Sneerwell, you are severe upon the widow. Come, come, 'tis not that she paints so ill—but when she has finished her face, she joins it so badly to her neck, that she looks like a mended statue, in which the connoisseur sees at once that the head's modern, though the trunk's antique.

CRABTREE. Ha! ha! ha! Well said, nephew!

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha! Well, you make me laugh; but I vow I hate you for it.—What do you think of Miss Simper?

SIR BENJ. B. Why, she has very pretty teeth.

LADY T. Yes, and on that account, when she is neither speaking nor laughing (which very seldom happens), she never absolutely shuts her mouth, but leaves it always on a jar, as it were, thus—— [*Shows her teeth.*]

MRS. CAN. How can you be so ill-natured?

LADY T. Nay, I'll allow even that's better than the pains Mrs. Prim takes to conceal her losses in front. She draws her mouth till it positively resembles the aperture of a poor's box, and all her words appear to slide out edgewise. As it were thus: *How do you do, madam. Yes, madam.*

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[16] small, normally applied to the size of books.

[17] dandies.

LADY SNEER. Very well, Lady Teazle; I see you can be a little severe.

LADY T. In defense of a friend it is but justice.—But here comes Sir Peter to spoil our pleasantry.

Enter SIR PETER TEAZLE.

SIR PETER T. Ladies, your most obedient.—Mercy on me! here is the whole set! a character dead at every word, I suppose. [*Aside.*]

MRS. CAN. I am rejoiced you are come, Sir Peter. They have been so censorious—they will allow good qualities to nobody; not even good nature to our friend Mrs. Pursy.

LADY T. What, the fat dowager who was at Mrs. Codrille's last night?

MRS. CAN. Nay, her bulk is her misfortune; and when she takes such pains to get rid of it, you ought not to reflect on her.

LADY SNEER. That's very true, indeed.

LADY T. Yes, I know she almost lives on acids and small[18] whey; laces herself by pulleys; and often in the hottest noon in summer, you may see her on a little squat pony, with her hair plaited up behind like a drummer's, and puffing round the Ring on a full trot.

MRS. CAN. I thank you, Lady Teazle, for defending her.

SIR PETER T. Yes, a good defense, truly!

MRS. CAN. But Sir Benjamin is as censorious as Miss Sallow.

CRABTREE. Yes, and she is a curious being to pretend to be censorious—an awkward gawky, without any one good point under heaven.

MRS. CAN. Positively you shall not be so very severe. Miss Sallow is a relation of mine by marriage, and as for her person, great allowance is to be made; for, let me tell you, a woman labors under many disadvantages who tries to pass for a girl at six and thirty.

LADY SNEER. Though, surely, she is handsome still—and for the weakness in her eyes, considering how much she reads by candle-light, it is not to be wondered at.

MRS. CAN. True, and then as to her manner; upon my word I think it is particularly graceful, considering she never had the least education: for you know her mother was a Welsh milliner, and her father a sugar-baker at Bristol.

SIR BENJ. B. Ah! you are both of you too good-natured!

SIR PETER T. Yes, damned good-natured! This their own relation! mercy on me! [*Aside.*]

MRS. CAN. For my part, I own I cannot bear to hear a friend ill spoken of.

SIR PETER T. No, to be sure!

SIR BENJ. B. And Mrs. Candour is of so moral a turn, she can sit for an hour and hear Lady Stucco talk sentiments.

LADY T. Nay, I vow Lady Stucco is very well with the dessert after dinner; for she's just like the French fruit one cracks for mottoes—made up of paint and proverb.

MRS. CAN. Well, I never will join in ridiculing a friend; and so I constantly tell my cousin Ogle, and you all know what pretensions she has to be critical on beauty.

CRABTREE. Oh, to be sure! she has herself the oddest countenance that ever was seen; 'tis a collection of features from all the different countries of the globe.

SIR BENJ. B. So she has, indeed—an Irish front——

CRABTREE. Caledonian locks——

SIR BENJ. B. Dutch nose——

CRABTREE. Austrian lips——

SIR BENJ. B. Complexion of a Spaniard.—

CRABTREE. And teeth *à la Chinois*——[19]

SIR BENJ. B. In short, her face resembles a *table d'hôte* at Spa—where no two guests are of a nation——

CRABTREE. Or a congress at the close of a general war—wherein all the members, even to her eyes, appear to have a different interest, and her nose and chin are the only parties likely to join issue.

MRS. CAN. Ha! ha! ha!

SIR PETER T. Mercy on my life!—a person they dine with twice a week. [*Aside.*]

LADY SNEER. Go, go; you are a couple of provoking toads.

MRS. CAN. Nay, but I vow you shall not carry the laugh off so—for give me leave to say, that Mrs. Ogle——

SIR PETER T. Madam, madam, I beg your pardon—there's no stopping these good gentlemen's tongues.—But when I tell you, Mrs. Candour, that the lady they are abusing is a particular friend of mine, I hope you'll not take her part.

LADY SNEER. Well said, Sir Peter! but you are a cruel creature,—too phlegmatic yourself for a jest, and too peevish to allow wit in others.

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[18] weak.

[19] in the manner of the Chinese.

Sir Peter T. Ah! madam, true wit is more nearly allied to good-nature than your ladyship is aware of.

Lady T. True, Sir Peter: I believe they are so near akin that they can never be united.

Sir Benj. B. Or rather, madam, suppose them to be man and wife, because one seldom sees them together.

Lady T. But Sir Peter is such an enemy to scandal, I believe he would have it put down by Parliament.

Sir Peter T. 'Fore Heaven, madam, if they were to consider the sporting with reputation of as much importance as the poaching on manors, and pass an Act for the Preservation of Fame, I believe there are many would thank for them the bill.

Lady Sneer. O Lud! Sir Peter; would you deprive us of our privileges?

Sir Peter T. Aye, madam; and then no person should be permitted to kill characters and run down reputations, but qualified old maids and disappointed widows.

Lady Sneer. Go, you monster.

Mrs. Can. But, surely, you would not be quite so severe on those who only report what they hear?

Sir Peter T. Yes, madam, I would have Law-Merchant for them too; and in all cases of slander currency, whenever the drawer of the lie was not to be found, the injured party should have a right to come on any of the indorsers.

Crabtree. Well, for my part, I believe there never was a scandalous tale without some foundation.

Lady Sneer. Come, ladies, shall we sit down to cards in the next room?

Enter a Servant, *who whispers* Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. I'll be with them directly.—I'll get away unperceived. [*Apart.*]

Lady Sneer. Sir Peter, you are not leaving us?

Sir Peter T. Your ladyship must excuse me; I'm called away by particular business. But I leave my character behind me. [*Exit* Sir Peter.

Sir Benj. B. Well—certainly, Lady Teazle, that lord of yours is a strange being: I could tell you some stories of him would make you laugh heartily,—if he were not your husband.

Lady T. Oh, pray don't mind that;—come, do let's hear them.

Lady T. *joins the rest of the company going into the next room.*

Joseph S. Maria, I see you have no satisfaction in this society.

Maria. How is it possible I should? If to raise malicious smiles at the infirmities or misfortunes of those who have never injured us be the province of wit or humor, Heaven grant me a double portion of dullness!

Joseph S. Yet they appear more ill-natured than they are—they have no malice at heart.

Maria. Then is their conduct still more contemptible; for, in my opinion, nothing could excuse the intemperance of their tongues, but a natural and ungovernable bitterness of mind.

Joseph S. But can you, Maria, feel thus for others, and be unkind to me alone? Is hope to be denied the tenderest passion?

Maria. Why will you distress me by renewing the subject?

Joseph S. Ah! Maria! you would not treat me thus, and oppose your guardian, Sir Peter's will, but that I see that profligate Charles is still a favored rival.

Maria. Ungenerously urged!—But what ever my sentiments are for that unfortunate young man, be assured I shall not feel more bound to give him up, because his distresses have lost him the regard even of a brother.

Enter Lady Teazle *and comes forward.*

Joseph S. Nay, but Maria, do not leave me with a frown: by all that's honest, I swear—Gad's life, here's Lady Teazle!—[*Aside.*]—You must not—no, you shall not—for, though I have the greatest regard for Lady Teazle——

Maria. Lady Teazle!

Joseph S. Yet were Sir Peter once to suspect——

Lady T. What is this, pray? Do you take her for me?—Child, you are wanted in the next room. —[*Exit* Maria.]—What is all this, pray?

Joseph S. O the most unlucky circumstance in nature! Maria has somehow suspected the tender concern I have for your happiness, and threatened to acquaint Sir Peter with her suspicions, and I was just endeavoring to reason with her when you came in.

Lady T. Indeed! but you seemed to adopt a very tender mode of reasoning—do you usually argue on your knees?

Joseph S. Oh, she's a child, and I thought a little bombast—But Lady Teazle, when are you to give me your judgment on my library, as you promised?

Lady T. No, no; I begin to think it would be imprudent, and you know I admit you as a lover no farther than fashion requires.

Joseph S. True—a mere platonic cicisbeo[20]—what every London wife is entitled to.

Lady T. Certainly, one must not be out of the fashion. However, I have so much of my country prejudices left, that, though Sir Peter's ill-humor may vex me ever so, it never shall provoke me to——

Joseph S. The only revenge in your power. Well—I applaud your moderation.

Lady T. Go—you are an insinuating wretch.—But we shall be missed—let us join the company.

Joseph S. But we had best not return together.

Lady T. Well—don't stay; for Maria shan't come to hear any more of your reasoning, I promise you. [*Exit* Lady Teazle.

Joseph S. A curious dilemma, truly, my politics have run me into! I wanted, at first, only to ingratiate myself with Lady Teazle, that she might not be my enemy with Maria; and I have, I don't know how, become her serious lover. Sincerely I begin to wish I had never made such a point of gaining so very good a character, for it has led me into so many cursed rogueries that I doubt I shall be exposed at last. [*Exit.*

Scene III—Sir Peter Teazle's

Enter Rowley *and* Sir Oliver Surface.

Sir Oliver S. Ha! ha! ha! So my old friend is married, hey?—a young wife out of the country.—Ha! ha! ha! that he should have stood bluff to old bachelor so long, and sink into husband at last.

Rowley. But you must not rally him on the subject, Sir Oliver: 'tis a tender point, I assure you, though he has been married only seven months.

Sir Oliver S. Then he has been just half a year on the stool of repentance!—Poor Peter!—But you say he has entirely given up Charles,—never sees him, hey?

Rowley. His prejudice against him is astonishing, and I am sure, greatly increased by a jealousy of him with Lady Teazle, which he has been industriously led into by a scandalous society in the neighborhood, who have contributed not a little to Charles's ill name. Whereas the truth is, I believe, if the lady is partial to either of them, his brother is the favorite.

Sir Oliver S. Aye, I know there are a set of malicious, prating, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder characters to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name, before he has years to know the value of it.—But I am not to be prejudiced against my nephew by such, I promise you.—No, no,—if Charles has done nothing false or mean, I shall compound for his extravagance.

Rowley. Then, my life on't, you will reclaim him.—Ah, sir! it gives me new life to find that *your* heart is not turned against him; and that the son of my good old master has one friend, however, left.

Sir Oliver S. What, shall I forget, Master Rowley, when I was at his years myself? Egad, my brother and I were neither of us very prudent youths; and yet, I believe, you have not seen many better men than your old master was.

Rowley. Sir, 'tis this reflection gives me assurance that Charles may yet be a credit to his family.—But here comes Sir Peter.

Sir Oliver S. Egad, so he does.—Mercy on me!—he's greatly altered—and seems to have a settled married look! One may read *husband* in his face at this distance!

Enter Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. Hah! Sir Oliver—my old friend! Welcome to England a thousand times!

Sir Oliver S. Thank you—thank you, Sir Peter! and i'faith I am glad to find you well, believe me.

Sir Peter T. Oh! 'tis a long time since we met—sixteen years, I doubt, Sir Oliver, and many a cross accident in the time.

Sir Oliver S. Aye, I have had my share.—But, what! I find you are married, hey my old boy? Well, well—it can't be helped—and so—I wish you joy with all my heart.

Sir Peter T. Thank you, thank you, Sir Oliver.—Yes, I have entered into—the happy state;—but we'll not talk of that now.

Sir Oliver S. True, true, Sir Peter: old friends should not begin on grievances at first meeting—no, no, no.

Rowley. Take care, pray, sir. [*To* Sir Oliver.]

Sir Oliver S. Well—so one of my nephews is a wild young rogue, hey?

Sir Peter T. Wild!—Ah! my old friend, I grieve for your disappointment there; he's a lost young man, indeed. However, his brother will make you amends; Joseph is, indeed, what a youth should be. Everybody in the world speaks well of him.

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[20] lover.

SIR OLIVER S. I am sorry to hear it; he has too good a character to be an honest fellow. Everybody speaks well of him!—Pshaw! then he has bowed as low to knaves and fools as to the honest dignity of genius and virtue.

SIR PETER T. What, Sir Oliver! do you blame him for not making enemies?

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, if he has merit enough to deserve them.

SIR PETER T. Well, well—you'll be convinced when you know him. 'Tis edification to hear him converse; he professes the noblest sentiments.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh! plague of his sentiments! If he salutes me with a scrap of morality in his mouth, I shall be sick directly.—But, however, don't mistake me, Sir Peter; I don't mean to defend Charles's errors: but before I form my judgment of either of them, I intend to make a trial of their hearts; and my friend Rowley and I have planned something for the purpose.

ROWLEY. And Sir Peter shall own he has been for once mistaken.

SIR PETER T. Oh! my life on Joseph's honor.

SIR OLIVER S. Well—come, give us a bottle of good wine, and we'll drink your lady's health, and tell you our scheme.

SIR PETER T. *Allons*[21] then!

SIR OLIVER S. And don't, Sir Peter, be so severe against your old friend's son. Odds my life! I am not sorry that he has run out of the course a little: for my part, I hate to see prudence clinging to the green suckers of youth; 'tis like ivy round a sapling, and spoils the growth of the tree.

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE I—SIR PETER TEAZLE'S HOUSE

Enter SIR PETER, SIR OLIVER *and* ROWLEY.

SIR PETER T. Well, then, we will see this fellow first, and have our wine afterwards:—but how is this, master Rowley? I don't see the jet of your scheme.

ROWLEY. Why, sir, this Mr. Stanley, whom I was speaking of, is nearly related to them by their mother. He was a merchant in Dublin, but has been ruined by a series of undeserved misfortunes. He has applied, by letter, since his confinement, both to Mr. Surface and Charles: from the former he has received nothing but evasive promises of future service, while Charles has done all that his extravagance has left him power to do; and he is, at this time, endeavoring to raise a sum of money, part of which, in the midst of his own distresses, I know he intends for the service of poor Stanley.

SIR OLIVER S. Ah!—he is my brother's son.

SIR PETER T. Well, but how is Sir Oliver personally to——

ROWLEY. Why, sir, I will inform Charles and his brother, that Stanley has obtained permission to apply in person to his friends, and as they have neither of them ever seen him, let Sir Oliver assume his character, and he will have a fair opportunity of judging, at least, of the benevolence of their dispositions; and believe me, sir, you will find in the youngest brother one who, in the midst of folly and dissipation, has still, as our immortal bard[22] expresses it,

A tear, for pity, and a hand, Open as day, for
melting charity.

SIR PETER T. Pshaw! What signifies his having an open hand or purse either, when he has nothing left to give? Well, well—make the trial, if you please. But where is the fellow whom you brought for Sir Oliver to examine, relative to Charles's affairs?

ROWLEY. Below, waiting his commands, and no one can give him better intelligence. This, Sir Oliver, is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance.

SIR PETER T. Pray let us have him in.

ROWLEY. Desire Mr. Moses to walk upstairs.

[*Calls to* SERVANT.]

SIR PETER T. But, pray, why should you suppose he will speak the truth?

ROWLEY. Oh! I have convinced him that he has no chance of recovering certain sums advanced to Charles, but through the bounty of Sir Oliver, who he knows is arrived; so that you may depend on his fidelity to his own interests: I have also another evidence in my power, one Snake, whom I have detected in a matter little short of forgery, and shall shortly produce him to remove some of your prejudices, Sir Peter, relative to Charles and Lady Teazle.

SIR PETER T. I have heard too much on that subject.

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[21] Let us go.

[22] Shakespeare, *2 Henry IV*, IV iv, 31-2.

Rowley. Here comes the honest Israelite.—[*Enter* Moses.]—This is Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I understand you have lately had great dealings with my nephew, Charles.

Moses. Yes, Sir Oliver, I have done all I could for him; but he was ruined before he came to me for assistance.

Sir Oliver S. That was unlucky for, truly you have had no opportunity of showing your talents.

Moses. None at all; I hadn't the pleasure of knowing his distresses till he was some thousands worse than nothing.

Sir Oliver S. Unfortunate, indeed!—But I suppose you have done all in your power for him, honest Moses?

Moses. Yes, he owns that;—this very evening I was to have brought him a gentleman from the city, who does not know him, and will, I believe, advance him some money.

Sir Peter T. What,—one Charles has never had money from before?

Moses. Yes,—Mr. Premium, of Crutched Friars,[22a] formerly a broker.

Sir Peter T. Egad, Sir Oliver, a thought strikes me!—Charles, you say, does not know Mr. Premium?

Moses. Not at all.

Sir Peter T. Now then, Sir Oliver, you may have a better opportunity of satisfying yourself than by an old romancing tale of a poor relation: go with my friend Moses, and represent Premium, and then, I'll answer for it, you'll see your nephew in all his glory.

Sir Oliver S. Egad, I like this idea better than the other, and I may visit Joseph afterwards as Old Stanley.

Sir Peter T. True—so you may.

Rowley. Well, this is taking Charles rather at a disadvantage, to be sure;—however, Moses, you understand Sir Peter, and will be faithful?

Moses. You may depend upon me;—this is near the time I was to have gone.

Sir Oliver S. I'll accompany you as soon as you please, Moses,—But hold! I forgot one thing—how the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?

Moses. There is no need—the principal is Christian.

Sir Oliver S. Is he? I am very sorry to hear it. But then again, a'n't I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?

Sir Peter T. Not at all; 'twould not be out of character, if you went in your own carriage—would it, Moses?

Moses. Not in the least.

Sir Oliver S. Well—but how must I talk?—there's certainly some cant of usury and mode of treating that I ought to know.

Sir Peter T. Oh! there's not much to learn. The great point, as I take it, is to be exorbitant enough in your demands—hey, Moses?

Moses. Yes, that's a very great point.

Sir Oliver S. I'll answer for't I'll not be wanting in that. I'll ask him eight or ten per cent. on the loan, at least.

Moses. If you ask him no more than that, you'll be discovered immediately.

Sir Oliver S. Hey!—what the plague!—how much then?

Moses. That depends upon circumstances. If he appears not very anxious for the supply, you should require only forty or fifty per cent.; but if you find him in great distress, and want the moneys very bad, you must ask double.

Sir Peter T. A good honest trade you're learning, Sir Oliver!

Sir Oliver S. Truly, I think so—and not unprofitable.

Moses. Then, you know, you haven't the moneys yourself, but are forced to borrow them for him of an old friend.

Sir Oliver S. Oh! I borrow it of a friend, do I?

Moses. And your friend is an unconscionable dog: but you can't help it!

Sir Oliver S. My friend an unconscionable dog, is he?

Moses. Yes, and he himself has not the moneys by him, but is forced to sell stock at a great loss

Sir Oliver S. He is forced to sell stock at a great loss, is he? Well, that's very kind of him.

Sir Peter T. I'faith, Sir Oliver—Mr. Premium, I mean, you'll soon be master of the trade. But, Moses! would not you have him run out a little against the Annuity Bill?[23] That would be in character, I should think.

Moses. Very much.

Rowley. And lament that a young man now must be at years of discretion before he is suffered to ruin himself?

Moses. Aye, great pity!

Sir Peter T. And abuse the public for allowing merit to an Act, whose only object is to snatch misfortune and imprudence from the rapacious relief of usury, and give the minor a chance of inheriting his estate without being undone by coming into possession.

[22a] street near the Tower of London, named after a convent.

[23] a law protecting minors against schemes to dissipate their annuities.

Sir Oliver S. So—So—Moses shall give me further instructions as we go together.

Sir Peter T. You will not have much time, for your nephew lives hard by.

Sir Oliver S. Oh! never fear: my tutor appears so able, that though Charles lived in the next street, it must be my own fault if I am not a complete rogue before I turn the corner.

[*Exeunt* Sir Oliver *and* Moses.

Sir Peter T. So, now, I think Sir Oliver will be convinced:—you are partial, Rowley, and would have prepared Charles for the other plot.

Rowley. No, upon my word, Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. Well, go bring me this Snake, and I'll hear what he has to say, presently.—I see Maria, and want to speak with her. [*Exit* Rowley.] I should be glad to be convinced my suspicions of Lady Teazle and Charles were unjust. I have never yet opened my mind on this subject to my friend Joseph—I am determined I will do it—he will give me his opinion sincerely.

Enter Maria.

So, child, has Mr. Surface returned with you?

Maria. No, sir; he was engaged.

Sir Peter T. Well, Maria, do you not reflect, the more you converse with that amiable young man, what return his partiality for you deserves?

Maria. Indeed, Sir Peter, your frequent importunity on this subject distresses me extremely—you compel me to declare, that I know no man who has ever paid me a particular attention, whom I would not prefer to Mr. Surface.

Sir Peter T. So—here's perverseness!—No, no, Maria, 'tis Charles only whom you would prefer. 'Tis evident his vices and follies have won your heart.

Maria. This is unkind, sir. You know I have obeyed you in neither seeing nor corresponding with him: I have heard enough to convince me that he is unworthy my regard. Yet I cannot think it culpable, if, while my understanding severely condemns his vices, my heart suggests some pity for his distresses.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, pity him as much as you please; but give your heart and hand to a worthier object.

Maria. Never to his brother!

Sir Peter T. Go—perverse and obstinate! but take care, madam; you have never yet known what the authority of a guardian is: don't compel me to inform you of it.

Maria. I can only say, you shall not have a just reason. 'Tis true, by my father's will, I am for a short period bound to regard you as his substitute; but must cease to think you so, when you would compel me to be miserable. [*Exit* Maria.

Sir Peter T. Was ever man so crossed as I am? everything conspiring to fret me! I had not been involved in matrimony a fortnight, before her father, a hale and hearty man, died, on purpose, I believe, for the pleasure of plaguing me with the care of his daughter. But here comes my helpmate—She appears in great good humor. How happy I should be if I could tease her into loving me, though but a little.

Enter Lady Teazle.

Lady T. Lud! Sir Peter, I hope you haven't been quarrelling with Maria? It is not using me well to be ill-humored when I am not by.

Sir Peter T. Ah! Lady Teazle, you might have the power to make me good-humored at all times.

Lady T. I am sure I wish I had; for I want you to be in a charming sweet temper at this moment. Do be good-humored now, and let me have two hundred pounds, will you?

Sir Peter T. Two hundred pounds! what, an't I to be in a good humor without paying for it? But speak to me thus, and i'faith there's nothing I could refuse you. You shall have it; but seal me a bond for the repayment.

Lady T. Oh, no—there—my note of hand will do as well. [*Offering her hand.*]

Sir Peter T. And you shall no longer reproach me with not giving you an independent settlement. I mean shortly to surprise you:—but shall we always live thus, hey?

Lady T. If you please. I'm sure I don't care how soon we leave off quarrelling, provided you'll own you were tired first.

Sir Peter T. Well—then let our future contest be, who shall be most obliging.

Lady T. I assure you, Sir Peter, good nature becomes you—you look now as you did before we were married, when you used to walk with me under the elms, and tell me stories of what a gallant you were in your youth, and chuck me under the chin, you would; and ask me if I thought I could love an old fellow, who would deny me nothing—didn't you?

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, and you were as kind and attentive——

Lady T. Aye—so I was, and would always take your part, when my acquaintance used to abuse you, and turn you into ridicule.

Sir Peter T. Indeed!

Lady T. Aye, and when my cousin Sophy has called you a stiff, peevish old bachelor, and laughed at me for thinking of marrying one who might be my father, I have always defended you, and said, I didn't think you so ugly by any means.

Sir Peter T. Thank you.

Lady T. And I dared say you'd make a very good sort of a husband.

Sir Peter T. And you prophesied right; and we shall certainly now be the happiest couple——

Lady T. And never differ again?

Sir Peter T. No, never!—though at the same time, indeed, my dear Lady Teazle, you must watch your temper very narrowly; for in all our little quarrels, my dear, if you recollect, my love, you always began first.

Lady T. I beg your pardon, my dear Sir Peter: indeed, you always gave the provocation.

Sir Peter T. Now see, my angel! take care—contradicting isn't the way to keep friends.

Lady T. Then don't you begin it, my love!

Sir Peter T. There, now! you—you are going on. You don't perceive, my life, that you are just doing the very thing which you know always makes me angry.

Lady T. Nay, you know if you will be angry without any reason—my dear——

Sir Peter T. There! now you want to quarrel again.

Lady T. No, I am sure I don't. But if you will be so peevish——

Sir Peter T. There now, who begins first?

Lady T. Why you, to be sure. I said nothing—but there's no bearing your temper.

Sir Peter T. No, no, madam: the fault's in your own temper.

Lady T. Aye, you are just what my cousin Sophy said you would be.

Sir Peter T. Your cousin Sophy is a forward, impertinent gipsy.

Lady T. You are a great bear, to abuse my relations. How dare you abuse my relations?

Sir Peter T. Now may all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!

Lady T. So much the better.

Sir Peter T. No, no madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you—a pert, rural coquette, that had refused half the honest 'squires in the neighborhood.

Lady T. And I am sure I was a fool to marry you—an old dangling bachelor, who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with any one who would have him.

Sir Peter T. Aye, aye, madam; but you were pleased enough to listen to me: you never had such an offer before.

Lady T. No! didn't I refuse Sir Tivy Terrier, who everybody said would have been a better match? for his estate is just as good as yours, and he has broken his neck since we have been married.

Sir Peter T. I have done with you, madam! You are an unfeeling, ungrateful—but there's an end of everything. I believe you capable of anything that is bad.—Yes, madam, I now believe the reports relative to you and Charles, madam.—Yes, madam, *you* and Charles are—not without grounds——

Lady. T. Take care, Sir Peter! you had better not insinuate any such thing! I'll not be suspected without cause, I promise you.

Sir Peter T. Very well, madam, very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce! I'll make an example of myself for the benefit of all old bachelors.—Let us separate, madam.

Lady T. Agreed! agreed!—And now, my dear Sir Peter, we are of a mind once more, we may be the happiest couple—and never differ again, you know—ha! ha! ha! Well, you are going to be in a passion, I see, and I shall only interrupt you —so, bye-bye. [*Exit.*

Sir Peter T. Plagues and tortures! Can't I make her angry either! Oh, I am the miserablest fellow! but I'll not bear her presuming to keep her temper: no! she may break my heart, but she shall not keep her temper. [*Exit.*

Scene II—At Charles's House, a Chamber

Enter Trip, Moses, *and* Sir Oliver.

Trip. Here, master Moses! if you'll stay a moment, I'll try whether Mr.—what's the gentleman's name?

Sir Oliver S. Mr.—[*Apart.*] Moses, what is my name?

Moses. Mr. Premium.

Trip. Premium—very well. [*Exit taking snuff.*

Sir Oliver S. To judge by the servants, one wouldn't believe the master was ruined. But what! —sure, this was my brother's house?

Moses. Yes, sir; Mr. Charles bought it of Mr. Joseph, with the furniture, pictures, &c., just as the old gentleman left it. Sir Peter thought it a piece of extravagance in him.

Sir Oliver S. In my mind, the other's economy in selling it to him was more reprehensible by half.

Enter Trip.

Trip. My master says you must wait, gentlemen: he has company, and can't speak with you yet.

Sir Oliver S. If he knew who it was wanted to see him, perhaps he would not have sent such a message?

Trip. Yes, yes, sir; he knows you are here—I did not forget little Premium; no, no, no——

Sir Oliver S. Very well; and I pray, sir, what may be your name?

Trip. Trip, sir; my name is Trip, at your service.

Sir Oliver S. Well, then, Mr. Trip, you have a pleasant sort of place here, I guess?

Trip. Why, yes—here are three or four of us pass our time agreeably enough; but then our wages are sometimes a little in arrear—and not very great either—but fifty pounds a year, and find our own bags and bouquets.

Sir Oliver S. Bags and bouquets! halters and bastinadoes! [*Aside.*]

Trip. And, à propos, Moses—have you been able to get me that little bill discounted?

Sir Oliver S. Wants to raise money too!—mercy on me! Has his distresses, I warrant, like a lord, and affects creditors and duns. [*Aside.*]

Moses. 'Twas not to be done, indeed, Mr. Trip.

Trip. Good lack, you surprise me! My friend Brush has endorsed it, and I thought when he put his name at the back of a bill 'twas as good as cash.

Moses. No! 'twouldn't do.

Trip. A small sum—but twenty pounds. Hark'ee, Moses, do you think you couldn't get it me by way of annuity?

Sir Oliver S. An annuity! ha! ha! a footman raise money by way of annuity! Well done, luxury, egad! [*Aside.*]

Moses. But you must insure your place.

Trip. Oh, with all my heart! I'll insure my place, and my life too, if you please.

Sir Oliver S. It's more than I would your neck. [*Aside.*]

Trip. But then, Moses, it must be done before this d——d Register takes place; one wouldn't like to have one's name made public, you know.

Moses. No, certainly. But is there nothing you could deposit?

Trip. Why, nothing capital of my master's wardrobe has dropped lately; but I could give you a mortgage on some of his winter clothes, with equity of redemption before November—or you shall have the reversion of the French velvet, or a post-obit[24] on the blue and silver:—these, I should think, Moses, with a few pair of point ruffles, as a collateral security—hey, my little fellow?

Moses. Well, well.

Bell rings.

Trip. Egad, I heard the bell! I believe, gentlemen, I can now introduce you. Don't forget the annuity, little Moses! This way, gentlemen: insure my place, you know.

Sir Oliver S. If the man be a shadow of his master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed!

Scene III

Charles Surface, Careless, Sir Toby Bumper, *&c., discovered at a table, drinking wine.*

Charles S. 'Fore Heaven, 'tis true!—there's the great degeneracy of the age. Many of our acquaintance have taste, spirit, and politeness; but, plague on't, they won't drink.

Careless. It is so indeed, Charles! they give in to all the substantial luxuries of the table, and abstain from nothing but wine and wit.

Charles S. Oh, certainly society suffers by it intolerably; for now, instead of the social spirit of raillery that used to mantle over a glass of bright Burgundy, their conversation is become just like the Spa water they drink, which has all the pertness and flatulence of Champagne, without its spirit or flavor.

First Gent. But what are they to do who love play better than wine?

Careless. True: there's Harry diets himself for gaming, and is now under a hazard regimen.

Charles S. Then he'll have the worst of it. What! you wouldn't train a horse for the course by keeping him from corn? For my part, egad, I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of Champagne, and I never lose—at least, I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing.

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[24] a note given on expectation of an inheritance.

Sec. Gent. Aye, that I believe.

Charles S. And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine? 'Tis the test by which the lover knows his own heart. Fill a dozen bumpers to a dozen beauties, and she that floats atop is the maid that has bewitched you.

Careless. Now then, Charles, be honest, and give us your real favorite.

Charles S. Why, I have withheld her only in compassion to you. If I toast her, you must give a round of her peers, which is impossible—on earth.

Careless. Oh! then we'll find some canonized vestals or heathen goddesses that will do, I warrant!

Charles S. Here then, bumpers, you rogues! bumpers! Maria! Maria——

First Gent. Maria who?

Charles S. Oh, damn the surname—'tis too formal to be registered in Love's calendar; but now, Sir Toby Bumper, beware, we must have beauty superlative.

Careless. Nay, never study, Sir Toby: we'll stand to the toast, though your mistress should want an eye, and you know you have a song will excuse you.

Sir Toby B. Egad, so I have! and I'll give him the song instead of the lady.

Song.

Here's to the maiden of bashful fifteen;
  Here's to the widow of fifty;
Here's to the flaunting extravagant quean,
  And here's to the housewife that's thrifty.

Chorus.

    Let the toast pass,—
    Drink to the lass,
I'll warrant she'll prove an excuse for the glass.

Here's to the charmer whose dimples we prize;
  Now to the maid who has none, sir:
Here's to the girl with a pair of blue eyes,
  And here's to the nymph with but *one*, sir.
    Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

Here's to the maid with a bosom of snow;
  Now to her that's as brown as a berry:
Here's to the wife with her face full of woe,
  And now to the damsel that's merry.
    Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

For let 'em be clumsy, or let 'em be slim,
  Young or ancient, I care not a feather;
So fill a pint bumper quite up to the brim,
  And let us e'en toast them together.
    Chorus. Let the toast pass, &c.

All. Bravo! bravo!

Enter Trip, *and whispers* Charles.

Charles S. Gentlemen, you must excuse me a little. Careless, take the chair, will you?

Careless. Nay, prithee, Charles, what now? This is one of your peerless beauties, I suppose, has dropt in by chance?

Charles S. No, faith! To tell you the truth, 'tis a Jew and a broker, who are come by appointment.

Careless. Oh, damn it! let's have the Jew in.

First Gent. Aye, and the broker too, by all means.

Sec. Gent. Yes, yes, the Jew and the broker.

Charles S. Egad, with all my heart! Trip, bid the gentlemen walk in—[*Exit* Trip.] Though there's one of them a stranger; I can tell you.

Careless. Charles, let us give them some generous Burgundy, and perhaps they'll grow conscientious.

Charles S. Oh, hang 'em, no! wine does but draw forth a man's natural qualities; and to make them drink would only be to whet their knavery.

Enter Trip, Sir Oliver, *and* Moses.

Charles S. So, honest Moses, walk in: walk in, pray, Mr. Premium—that's the gentleman's name, isn't it, Moses?

Moses. Yes, sir.

Charles S. Set chairs, Trip—sit down, Mr. Premium—glasses, Trip—sit down, Moses. Come, Mr. Premium, I'll give you a sentiment; here's *Success to usury*—Moses, fill the gentleman a bumper.

Moses. Success to usury!

Careless. Right, Moses—usury is prudence and industry, and deserves to succeed.

Sir Oliver S. Then—*here's all the success it deserves!*

Careless. No, no, that won't do, Mr. Premium:

you have demurred to the toast, and must drink it in a pint bumper.

First Gent. A pint bumper, at least.

Moses. Oh, pray, sir, consider—Mr. Premium's a gentleman.

Careless. And therefore loves good wine.

Sec. Gent. Give Moses a quart glass—this is mutiny, and a high contempt for the chair.

Careless. Here, now for't! I'll see justice done, to the last drop of my bottle.

Sir Oliver S. Nay, pray, gentlemen—I did not expect this usage.

Charles S. No, hang it, you shan't! Mr. Premium's a stranger.

Sir Oliver S. Odd! I wish I was well out of their company. [*Aside.*]

Careless. Plague on 'em, then!—if they won't drink, we'll not sit down with them. Come, Harry, the dice are in the next room—Charles, you'll join us when you have finished your business with these gentlemen?

Charles S. I will! I will! [*Exeunt* Gentlemen.] Careless!

Careless. [*Returning.*] Well!

Charles S. Perhaps I may want you.

Careless. Oh, you know I am always ready: word, note, or bond, 'tis all the same to me. [*Exit.*

Moses. Sir, this is Mr. Premium, a gentleman of the strictest honor and secrecy; and always performs what he undertakes. Mr. Premium, this is——

Charles S. Pshaw! have done.—Sir, my friend Moses is a very honest fellow, but a little slow at expression: he'll be an hour giving us our titles. Mr. Premium, the plain state of the matter is this: I am an extravagant young fellow who want to borrow money—you I take to be a prudent old fellow, who have got money to lend. I am blockhead enough to give fifty per cent. sooner than not have it, and you, I presume, are rogue enough to take an hundred if you can get it. Now, sir, you see we are acquainted at once, and may proceed to business without farther ceremony.

Sir Oliver S. Exceeding frank, upon my word. —I see, sir, you are not a man of many compliments.

Charles S. O, no, sir! plain dealing in business I always think best.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I like you the better for it—however, you are mistaken in one thing; I have no money to lend, but I believe I could procure some of a friend; but then he's an unconscionable dog, isn't he, Moses? And must sell stock to accommodate you, mustn't he, Moses?

Moses. Yes, indeed! You know I always speak the truth, and scorn to tell a lie!

Charles S. Right. People that speak truth generally do: but these are trifles, Mr. Premium. What! I know money isn't to be bought without paying for't!

Sir Oliver S. Well—but what security could you give? You have no land, I suppose?

Charles S. Not a mole-hill, nor a twig, but what's in beau-pots[25] at the window!

Sir Oliver S. Nor any stock, I presume?

Charles S. Nothing but live stock—and that's only a few pointers and ponies. But pray, Mr. Premium, are you acquainted at all with any of my connexions?

Sir Oliver S. Why, to say truth, I am.

Charles S. Then you must know that I have a dev'lish rich uncle in the East Indies, Sir Oliver Surface, from whom I have the greatest expectations.

Sir Oliver S. That you have a wealthy uncle I have heard; but how your expectations will turn out is more, I believe, than you can tell.

Charles S. O no!—there can be no doubt. They tell me I'm a prodigious favorite, and that he talks of leaving me everything.

Sir Oliver S. Indeed! this is the first I've heard of it.

Charles S. Yes, yes, 'tis just so. Moses knows 'tis true, don't you, Moses?

Moses. Oh, yes! I'll swear to it.

Sir Oliver S. Egad, they'll persuade me presently I'm at Bengal. [*Aside.*]

Charles S. Now I propose, Mr. Premium, if it's agreeable to you, a post-obit on Sir Oliver's life; though at the same time the old fellow has been so liberal to me, that I give you my word I should be very sorry to hear anything had happened to him.

Sir Oliver S. Not more than I should, I assure you. But the bond you mention happens to be just the worst security you could offer me—for I might live to an hundred, and never recover the principal.

Charles S. Oh, yes, you would—the moment Sir Oliver dies, you know you would come on me for the money.

Sir Oliver S. Then I believe I should be the most unwelcome dun you ever had in your life.

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[25] flower-pots.

Charles S. What! I suppose you are afraid now that Sir Oliver is too good a life?

Sir Oliver S. No, indeed, I am not; though I have heard he is as hale and healthy as any man of his years in Christendom.

Charles S. There again now you are misinformed. No, no, the climate has hurt him considerably, poor uncle Oliver! yes, he breaks apace, I am told—and is so much altered lately, that his nearest relations wouldn't know him.

Sir Oliver S. No! ha! ha! ha! so much altered lately that his nearest relations wouldn't know him! —that's droll, egad—ha! ha! ha!

Charles S. Ha! ha!—you're glad to hear that, little Premium?

Sir Oliver S. No, no, I'm not.

Charles S. Yes, yes, you are—ha! ha! ha!—You know that mends your chance.

Sir Oliver S. But I'm told Sir Oliver is coming over?—nay, some say he is actually arrived?

Charles S. Pshaw! Sure I must know better than you whether he's come or not. No, no, rely on't he's at this moment at Calcutta—isn't he, Moses?

Moses. Yes, certainly.

Sir Oliver S. Very true, as you say, you must know better than I, though I have it from pretty good authority—haven't I, Moses?

Moses. Yes, most undoubted!

Sir Oliver S. But, sir, as I understand you want a few hundreds immediately—is there nothing you would dispose of?

Charles S. How do you mean?

Sir Oliver S. For instance, now, I have heard that your father left behind him a great quantity of massy old plate?

Charles S. O Lud!—that's gone long ago.—Moses can tell you how better than I.

Sir Oliver S. Good lack! all the family race-cups and corporation bowls! [*Aside.*]—Then it was also supposed that his library was one of the most valuable and compleat——

Charles S. Yes, yes, so it was—vastly too much so for a private gentleman. For my part, I was always of a communicative disposition, so I thought it a shame to keep so much knowledge to myself.

Sir Oliver S. Mercy upon me! Learning that had run in the family like an heirloom! [*Aside.*] —Pray, what are become of the books?

Charles S. You must inquire of the auctioneer, master Premium, for I don't believe even Moses can direct you.

Moses. I never meddle with books.

Sir Oliver S. So, so, nothing of the family property left, I suppose?

Charles S. Not much, indeed; unless you have a mind to the family pictures. I have got a room full of ancestors above, and if you have a taste for paintings, egad, you shall have them a bargain.

Sir Oliver S. Hey! what the devil! sure, you would not sell your forefathers, would you?

Charles S. Every man of 'em to the best bidder.

Sir Oliver S. What! your great uncles and aunts?

Charles S. Aye, and my great grandfathers and grandmothers too.

Sir Oliver S. Now I give him up. [*Aside.*]—What the plague have you no bowels for your own kindred? Odds life, do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?

Charles S. Nay, my little broker, don't be angry: what need you care if you have your money's worth?

Sir Oliver S. Well, I'll be the purchaser: I think I can dispose of the family canvas.—[*Aside.*] Oh, I'll never forgive him this! never!

Enter Careless.

Careless. Come, Charles, what keeps you?

Charles S. I can't come yet: i'faith we are going to have a sale above stairs; here's little Premium will buy all my ancestors.

Careless. Oh, burn your ancestors!

Charles S. No, he may do that afterwards, if he pleases. Stay, Careless, we want you: egad, you shall be auctioneer; so come along with us.

Careless. Oh, have with you, if that's the case. I can handle a hammer as well as a dice-box!—a-going—a-going.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, the profligates! [*Aside.*]

Charles S. Come, Moses, you shall be appraiser, if we want one. Gad's life, little Premium, you don't seem to like the business?

Sir Oliver S. Oh, yes, I do, vastly. Ha! ha! ha! yes, yes, I think it a rare joke to sell one's family by auction—ha! ha!—Oh, the prodigal! [*Aside.*]

Charles S. To be sure! when a man wants money, where the plague should he get assistance if he can't make free with his own relations?

[*Exeunt.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT

ACT THE FOURTH

Scene I—Picture Room at Charles's House

Enter Charles, Sir Oliver, Moses, *and* Careless.

Charles S. Walk in, gentlemen, pray walk in;—here they are, the family of the Surfaces, up to the Conquest.

Sir Oliver S. And, in my opinion, a goodly collection.

Charles S. Aye, aye, these are done in the true spirit of portrait painting;—no *volunteer grace*[26] and expression, not like the works of your modern Raphael, who gives you the strongest resemblance, yet contrives to make your own portrait independent of you; so that you may sink the original and not hurt the picture. No, no; the merit of these is the inveterate likeness—all stiff and awkward as the originals, and like nothing in human nature besides.

Sir Oliver S. Ah! we shall never see such figures of men again.

Charles S. I hope not.—Well, you see, Master Premium, what a domestic character I am; here I sit of an evening surrounded by my family.—But, come, get to your pulpit, Mr. Auctioneer; here's an old gouty chair of my grandfather's will answer the purpose.

Careless. Aye, aye, this will do.—But, Charles, I have ne'er a hammer; and what's an auctioneer without his hammer?

Charles S. Egad, that's true;—what parchment have we here?—*Richard heir to Thomas.*—Oh, our genealogy in full. Here, Careless—you shall have no common bit of mahogany, here's the family tree for you, you rogue,—this shall be your hammer, and now you may knock down my ancestors with their own pedigree.

Sir Oliver S. What an unnatural rogue!—an *ex post facto*[27] parricide! [*Aside.*]

Careless. Yes, yes, here's a list of your generation indeed;—faith, Charles, this is the most convenient thing you could have found for the business, for 'twill serve not only as a hammer, but a catalogue into the bargain.—But come, begin—A-going, a-going, a-going!

Charles S. Bravo, Careless!—Well, here's my great uncle, Sir Richard Raveline, a marvellous good general in his day, I assure you. He served in all the Duke of Marlborough's wars, and got that cut over his eye at the battle of Malplaquet.[28]—What say you, Mr. Premium?—look at him—there's a hero for you, not cut out of his feathers, as your modern clipt captains are, but enveloped in wig and regimentals, as a general should be.—What do you bid?

Sir Oliver S. Bid him speak. [*Aside to* Moses.]

Moses. Mr. Premium would have *you* speak.

Charles S. Why, then, he shall have him for ten pounds, and I'm sure that's not dear for a staff-officer.

Sir Oliver S. Heaven deliver me! his famous uncle Richard for ten pounds! [*Aside.*]—Very well, sir, I take him at that.

Charles S. Careless, knock him down my uncle Richard.—Here, now, is a maiden sister of his, my great aunt Deborah, done by Kneller,[29] thought to be in his best manner, and esteemed a very formidable likeness.—There she is, you see, a shepherdess feeding her flock.—You shall have her for five pounds ten—the sheep are worth the money.

Sir Oliver S. Ah! poor Deborah! a woman who set such a value on herself! [*Aside.*]—Five pounds ten—she's mine.

Charles S. Knock down my aunt Deborah!—Here, now, are two that were a sort of cousins of theirs. You see, Moses, these pictures were done some time ago, when beaux wore wigs, and the ladies their own hair.

Sir Oliver S. Yes, truly, head-dresses appear to have been a little lower in those days.

Charles S. Well, take this couple for the same.

Moses. 'Tis a good bargain.

Charles S. This, now, is a grandfather of my mother's, a learned judge, well known on the western circuit.—What do you rate him at, Moses?

Moses. Four guineas.

Charles S. Four guineas!—Gad's life, you don't bid me the price of his wig.—Mr. Premium, you have more respect for the woolsack;[30] do let us knock his lordship down at fifteen.

Sir Oliver S. By all means.

Careless. Gone!

Charles S. And there are two brothers of his, William and Walter Blunt, Esquires, both members of Parliament, and noted speakers, and what's very extraordinary, I believe this is the first time they were ever bought or sold.

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[26] gratuitous elegance.

[27] retroactive.

[28] a battle between the English, Austrians, and Dutch on the one hand and the French on the other, fought in 1709.

[29] Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), English portrait painter.

[30] symbolic of a judge.

Sir Oliver S. That is very extraordinary, indeed! I'll take them at your own price, for the honor of Parliament.

Careless. Well said, little Premium!—I'll knock them down at forty.

Charles S. Here's a jolly fellow—I don't know what relation, but he was mayor of Norwich: take him at eight pounds.

Sir Oliver S. No, no; six will do for the mayor

Charles S. Come, make it guineas,[81] and I'll throw you the two aldermen there into the bargain.

Sir Oliver S. They're mine.

Charles S. Careless, knock down the mayor and aldermen.—But plague on't, we shall be all day retailing in this manner; do let us deal wholesale: what say you, little Premium? Give me three hundred pounds for the rest of the family in the lump.

Careless. Aye, aye, that will be the best way.

Sir Oliver S. Well, well, anything to accommodate you;—they are mine. But there is one portrait which you have always passed over.

Careless. What, that ill-looking little fellow over the settee?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, sir, I mean that, though I don't think him so ill-looking a little fellow, by any means.

Charles S. What, that?—Oh! that's my uncle Oliver; 'twas done before he went to India.

Careless. Your uncle Oliver!—Gad, then you'll never be friends, Charles. That, now, to me, is as stern a looking rogue as ever I saw; an unforgiving eye, and a damned disinheriting countenance! an inveterate knave, depend on't. Don't you think so, little Premium?

Sir Oliver S. Upon my soul, sir, I do not; I think it is as honest a looking face as any in the room, dead or alive;—but I suppose uncle Oliver goes with the rest of the lumber?

Charles S. No, hang it; I'll not part with poor Noll. The old fellow has been very good to me, and, egad, I'll keep his picture while I've a room to put it in.

Sir Oliver S. The rogue's my nephew after all! [*Aside.*] But, sir, I have somehow taken a fancy to that picture.

Charles S. I'm sorry for't, for you certainly will not have it. Oons, haven't you got enough of 'em?

Sir Oliver S. I forgive him everything! [*Aside.*] —But, sir, when I take a whim in my head I don't value money. I'll give you as much for that as for all the rest.

Charles S. Don't tease me, master broker; I tell you I'll not part with it, and there's an end of it.

Sir Oliver S. How like his father the dog is!—Well, well, I have done.—I did not perceive it before, but I think I never saw such a striking resemblance—[*Aside.*]—Here is a draught for your sum.

Charles S. Why, 'tis for eight hundred pounds.

Sir Oliver S. You will not let Sir Oliver go?

Charles S. Zounds! no!—I tell you once more.

Sir Oliver S. Then never mind the difference, we'll balance that another time—but give me your hand on the bargain; you are an honest fellow, Charles—I beg pardon, sir, for being so free.—Come, Moses.

Charles S. Egad, this is a whimsical old fellow! But hark'ee, Premium, you'll prepare lodgings for these gentlemen.

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes, I'll send for them in a day or two.

Charles S. But, hold; do now send a genteel conveyance for them, for, I assure you, they were most of them used to ride in their own carriages.

Sir Oliver S. I will, I will—for all but Oliver.

Charles S. Aye, all but the little honest nabob.

Sir Oliver S. You're fixed on that?

Charles S. Peremptorily.

Sir Oliver S. A dear extravagant rogue! [*Aside.*] —Good-day!—Come, Moses.—Let me hear now who dares call him profligate!

[*Exeunt* Sir Oliver Surface *and* Moses.

Careless. Why, this is the oddest genius of the sort I ever saw!

Charles S. Egad, he's the prince of brokers, I think. I wonder how the devil Moses got acquainted with so honest a fellow.—Hah! here's Rowley; do, Careless, say I'll join the company in a moment.

Careless. I will—but don't let that old blockhead persuade you to squander any of that money on old musty debts, or any such nonsense; for tradesmen, Charles, are the most exorbitant fellows.

Charles S. Very true, and paying them is only encouraging them.

Careless. Nothing else.

Charles S. Aye, aye, never fear. [*Exit* Careless.] —Soh! this was an odd old fellow, indeed.—Let me see—two-thirds of this is mine by right,—five hundred and thirty odd pounds. 'Fore Heaven! I find one's ancestors are more valuable relations than I took them for!—Ladies and gentlemen, your most obedient and very grateful humble servant.——

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[81] A guinea is one pound, one shilling; hence to "make it guineas" is to raise a bid by five per cent.

Enter Rowley.

Han! old Rowley! egad, you are just come in time to take leave of your old acquaintance.

Rowley. Yes, I heard they were a-going. But I wonder you can have such spirits under so many distresses.

Charles S. Why, there's the point! my distresses are so many, that I can't afford to part with my spirits; but I shall be rich and splenetic, all in good time. However, I suppose you are surprised that I am not more sorrowful at parting with so many near relations; to be sure, 'tis very affecting: but rot 'em, you see they never move a muscle, so why should I?

Rowley. There's no making you serious a moment.

Charles S. Yes, faith, I am so now. Here, my honest Rowley, here, get me this changed directly, and take a hundred pounds of it immediately, to old Stanley.

Rowley. A hundred pounds! Consider only ——

Charles S. Gad's life, don't talk about it: poor Stanley's wants are pressing, and if you don't make haste, we shall have some one call that has a better right to the money.

Rowley. Ah! there's the point! I never will cease dunning you with the old proverb ——

Charles S. "Be just before you're generous."—Why, so I would if I could; but Justice is an old lame hobbling beldame, and I can't get her to keep pace with Generosity for the soul of me.

Rowley. Yet, Charles, believe me, one hour's reflection ——

Charles S. Aye, aye, it's all very true; but, hark'ee Rowley, while I have, by Heaven I'll give; so damn your economy, and now for hazard.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene II—The Parlor

Enter Sir Oliver *and* Moses.

Moses. Well, sir, I think, as Sir Peter said, you have seen Mr. Charles in high glory; 'tis great pity he's so extravagant.

Sir Oliver S. True, but he would not sell my picture.

Moses. And loves wine and women so much.

Sir Oliver S. But he would not sell my picture.

Moses. And games so deep.

Sir Oliver S. But he would not sell my picture. —Oh, here's Rowley.

Enter Rowley.

Rowley. So, Sir Oliver, I find you have made a purchase ——

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes, our young rake has parted with his ancestors like old tapestry.

Rowley. And here has he commissioned me to re-deliver you part of the purchase-money—I mean, though, in your necessitous character of old Stanley.

Moses. Ah! there is the pity of all; he is so damned charitable.

Rowley. And I left a hosier and two tailors in the hall, who, I'm sure, won't be paid, and this hundred would satisfy them.

Sir Oliver S. Well, well, I'll pay his debts, and his benevolences too.—But now I am no more a broker, and you shall introduce me to the elder brother as old Stanley.

Rowley. Not yet awhile; Sir Peter, I know, means to call there about this time.

Enter Trip.

Trip. Oh, gentlemen, I beg pardon for not showing you out; this way.—Moses, a word ——

[*Exeunt* Trip *and* Moses.

Sir Oliver S. There's a fellow for you—would you believe it, that puppy intercepted the Jew on our coming, and wanted to raise money before he got to his master.

Rowley. Indeed!

Sir Oliver S. Yes, they are now planning an annuity business.—Ah! master Rowley, in my days servants were content with the follies of their masters, when they were worn a little threadbare; but now, they have their vices, like their birthday clothes, with the gloss on.

[*Exeunt.*

Scene III—A Library

Joseph Surface *and a* Servant.

Joseph S. No letter from Lady Teazle?

Servant. No, sir.

Joseph S. I am surprised she has not sent, if she is prevented from coming. Sir Peter certainly does not suspect me. Yet, I wish I may not lose the heiress, through the scrape I have drawn myself into with the wife; however, Charles's imprudence and bad character are great points in my favor.

Knock without.

Servant. Sir, I believe that must be Lady Teazle.

Joseph S. Hold!—See whether it is or not before you go to the door: I have a particular message for you, if it should be my brother.

Servant. 'Tis her ladyship, sir; she always leaves her chair at the milliner's in the next street.

Joseph S. Stay, stay; draw that screen before the window—that will do;—my opposite neighbor is a maiden lady of so curious a temper.—[Servant *draws the screen, and exit.*]—I have a difficult hand to play in this affair. Lady Teazle has lately suspected my views on Maria; but she must by no means be let into that secret,—at least, till I have her more in my power.

Enter Lady Teazle.

Lady T. What, sentiment in soliloquy? Have you been very impatient now?—O Lud! don't pretend to look grave.—I vow I couldn't come before.

Joseph S. Oh, Madam, punctuality is a species of constancy, a very unfashionable quality in a lady.

Lady T. Upon my word you ought to pity me. Do you know Sir Peter is grown so ill-tempered to me of late, and so jealous of Charles, too; that's the best of the story, isn't it?

Joseph S. I am glad my scandalous friends keep that up. [*Aside.*]

Lady T. I'm sure I wish he would let Maria marry him, and then perhaps he would be convinced; don't you, Mr. Surface?

Joseph S. Indeed I do not. [*Aside.*]—Oh, certainly I do! for then my dear Lady Teazle would also be convinced, how wrong her suspicions were of my having any design on the silly girl.

Lady T. Well, well, I'm inclined to believe you. But isn't it provoking, to have the most ill-natured things said of one?—And there's my friend Lady Sneerwell has circulated I don't know how many scandalous tales of me, and all without any foundation too—that's what vexes me.

Joseph S. Aye, madam, to be sure, that is the provoking circumstance—without foundation; yes, yes, there's the mortification, indeed; for when a scandalous story is believed against one, there certainly is no comfort like the consciousness of having deserved it.

Lady T. No, to be sure, then I'd forgive their malice; but to attack me, who am really so innocent, and who never say an ill-natured thing of anybody—that is, of my friends; and then Sir Peter too, to have him so peevish, and so suspicious, when I know the integrity of my own heart—indeed 'tis monstrous!

Joseph S. But, my dear Lady Teazle, 'tis your own fault if you suffer it. When a husband entertains a groundless suspicion of his wife, and withdraws his confidence from her, the original compact is broke, and she owes it to the honor of her sex to endeavor to outwit him.

Lady T. Indeed!—so that if he suspects me without cause, it follows, that the best way of curing his jealousy is to give him reason for't.

Joseph S. Undoubtedly—for your husband should never be deceived in you,—and in that case it becomes you to be frail in compliment to his discernment.

Lady T. To be sure, what you say is very reasonable, and when the consciousness of my innocence——

Joseph S. Ah! my dear madam, there is the great mistake: 'tis this very conscious innocence that is of the greatest prejudice to you. What is it makes you negligent of forms, and careless of the world's opinion?—why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you thoughtless in your conduct, and apt to run into a thousand little imprudences?—why, the consciousness of your own innocence. What makes you impatient of Sir Peter's temper, and outrageous at his suspicions?—why, the consciousness of your innocence.

Lady T. 'Tis very true!

Joseph S. Now, my dear Lady Teazle, if you would but once make a trifling *faux pas*,[32] you can't conceive how cautious you would grow, and ready to humor and agree with your husband.

Lady T. Do you think so?

Joseph S. Oh! I am sure on't; and then you would find all scandal would cease at once, for, in short, your character at present is like a person in a plethora, absolutely dying from too much health.

Lady T. So, so; then I perceive your prescription is, that I must sin in my own defence, and part with my virtue to preserve my reputation?

Joseph S. Exactly so, upon my credit, ma'am.

Lady T. Well, certainly this is the oddest doctrine, and the newest receipt for avoiding calumny!

Joseph S. An infallible one, believe me. Prudence, like experience, must be paid for.

Lady T. Why, if my understanding were once convinced——

Joseph S. Oh, certainly, your understanding, madam, should be convinced.—Yes, yes—Heaven forbid I should persuade you to do anything you thought wrong. No, no, I have too much honor to desire it.

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[32] false step.

Lady T. Don't you think we may as well leave *honor* out of the question?

Joseph S. Ah! the ill effects of your country education, I see, still remain with you.

Lady T. I doubt they do indeed; and I will fairly own to you, that if I could be persuaded to do wrong, it would be by Sir Peter's ill usage sooner than your *honorable logic*, after all.

Joseph S. Then, by this hand, which he is unworthy of—[*Taking her hand.*]

Enter Servant.

'Sdeath, you blockhead—what do you want?

Servant. I beg your pardon, sir, but I thought you would not choose Sir Peter to come up without announcing him.

Joseph S. Sir Peter!—Oons and the devil!

Lady T. Sir Peter! O Lud—I'm ruined—I'm ruined!

Servant. Sir, 'twasn't I let him in.

Lady T. Oh! I'm quite undone! What will become of me now, Mr. Logic? Oh! he's on the stairs—I'll get behind here—and if ever I'm so imprudent again—[*Goes behind the screen.*]

Joseph S. Give me that book. [*Sits down,* Servant *pretends to adjust his hair.*]

Enter Sir Peter.

Sir Peter T. Aye, ever improving himself—Mr. Surface, Mr. Surface——

Joseph S. Oh! my dear Sir Peter, I beg your pardon—[*Gaping—throws away the book.*]—I have been dozing over a stupid book.—Well, I am much obliged to you for this call. You haven't been here, I believe, since I fitted up this room.—Books, you know, are the only things I am a coxcomb in.

Sir Peter T. 'Tis very neat indeed.—Well, well, that's proper; and you make even your screen a source of knowledge—hung, I perceive, with maps.

Joseph S. Oh, yes, I find great use in that screen.

Sir Peter T. I dare say you must, certainly, when you want to find anything in a hurry.

Joseph S. Aye, or to hide anything in a hurry either. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. Well, I have a little private business——

Joseph S. You need not stay [*to the* Servant].

Servant. No, sir. [*Exit.*

Joseph S. Here's a chair, Sir Peter—I beg——

Sir Peter T. Well, now we are alone, there is a subject, my dear friend, on which I wish to unburthen my mind to you—a point of the greatest moment to my peace; in short, my dear friend, Lady Teazle's conduct of late has made me extremely unhappy.

Joseph S. Indeed! I am very sorry to hear it.

Sir Peter T. Aye, 'tis but too plain she has not the least regard for me; but, what's worse, I have a pretty good authority to suspect she has formed an attachment to another.

Joseph S. You astonish me!

Sir Peter T. Yes; and, between ourselves, I think I've discovered the person.

Joseph S. How! you alarm me exceedingly.

Sir Peter T. Ah, my dear friend, I knew you would sympathize with me!

Joseph S. Yes—believe me, Sir Peter, such a discovery would hurt me just as much as it would you.

Sir Peter T. I am convinced of it.—Ah! it is a happiness to have a friend whom one can trust even with one's family secrets. But have you no guess who I mean?

Joseph S. I haven't the most distant idea. It can't be Sir Benjamin Backbite!

Sir Peter T. O, no! What say you to Charles?

Joseph S. My brother! impossible! O no, Sir Peter, you must not credit the scandalous insinuations you may hear. No, no, Charles to be sure has been charged with many things of this kind, but I can never think he would meditate so gross an injury.

Sir Peter T. Ah, my dear friend, the goodness of your own heart misleads you. You judge of others by yourself.

Joseph S. Certainly, Sir Peter, the heart that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery.

Sir Peter T. True—but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so.

Joseph S. Yet, I can't but think Lady Teazle herself has too much principle.

Sir Peter T. Aye,—but what is principle against the flattery of a handsome, lively young fellow?

Joseph S. That's very true.

Sir Peter T. And then, you know, the difference of our ages makes it very improbable that she should have a great affection for me; and if she were to be frail, and I were to make it public, why the town would only laugh at me—the foolish old bachelor, who had married a girl.

Joseph S. That's true, to be sure—they *would* laugh.

Sir Peter T. Laugh—aye, and make ballads, and paragraphs, and the devil knows what of me.

Joseph S. No—you must never make it public.

Sir Peter T. But then again—that the nephew of my old friend, Sir Oliver, should be the person to attempt such a wrong, hurts me more nearly.

Joseph S. Aye, there's the point.—When ingratitude barbs the dart of injury, the wound has double danger in it.

Sir Peter T. Aye—I, that was, in a manner, left his guardian; in whose house he had been so often entertained; who never in my life denied him—my advice.

Joseph S. Oh, 'tis not to be credited. There may be a man capable of such baseness, to be sure; but, for my part, till you can give me positive proofs, I cannot but doubt it. However, if this should be proved on him, he is no longer a brother of mine—I disclaim kindred with him: for the man who can break thro' the laws of hospitality, and attempt the wife of his friend, deserves to be branded as the pest of society.

Sir Peter T. What a difference there is between you! What noble sentiments!

Joseph S. Yet, I cannot suspect Lady Teazle's honor.

Sir Peter T. I am sure I wish to think well of her, and to remove all ground of quarrel between us. She has lately reproached me more than once with having made no settlement on her; and, in our last quarrel, she almost hinted that she should not break her heart if I was dead. Now, as we seem to differ in our ideas of expense, I have resolved she shall be her own mistress in that respect for the future; and if I were to die, she shall find that I have not been inattentive to her interests while living. Here, my friend, are the drafts of two deeds, which I wish to have your opinion on.—By one, she will enjoy eight hundred a year independent while I live; and, by the other, the bulk of my fortune after my death.

Joseph S. This conduct, Sir Peter, is indeed truly generous.—I wish it may not corrupt my pupil. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. Yes, I am determined she shall have no cause to complain, though I would not have her acquainted with the latter instance of my affection yet awhile.

Joseph S. Nor I, if I could help it. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. And now, my dear friend, if you please, we will talk over the situation of your hopes with Maria.

Joseph S. [*Softly.*] No, no, Sir Peter; another time, if you please.

Sir Peter T. I am sensibly chagrined at the little progress you seem to make in her affections.

Joseph S. I beg you will not mention it. What are my disappointments when your happiness is in debate! [*Softly*]—'Sdeath, I shall be ruined every way. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. And though you are so averse to my acquainting Lady Teazle with *your* passion I am sure she's not your enemy in the affair.

Joseph S. Pray, Sir Peter, now, oblige me. I am really too much affected by the subject we have been speaking of, to bestow a thought on my own concerns. The man who is entrusted with his friend's distresses can never—[*Enter* Servant.] Well, sir?

Servant. Your brother, sir, is speaking to a gentleman in the street, and says he knows you are within.

Joseph S. 'Sdeath, blockhead, I'm not within—I'm out for the day.

Sir Peter T. Stay—hold—a thought has struck me:—you shall be at home.

Joseph S. Well, well, let him up. [*Exit* Servant.] He'll interrupt Sir Peter, however. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. Now, my good friend, oblige me, I entreat you. Before Charles comes, let me conceal myself somewhere—then do you tax him on the point we have been talking on, and his answers may satisfy me at once.

Joseph S. Oh, fie, Sir Peter! would you have me join in so mean a trick?—to trepan my brother too?

Sir Peter T. Nay, you tell me you are *sure* he is innocent; if so, you do him the greatest service by giving him an opportunity to clear himself, and you will set my heart at rest. Come, you shall not refuse me: here, behind this screen will be—Hey! what the devil! there seems to be one listener there already—I'll swear I saw a petticoat!

Joseph S. Ha, Ha! ha! Well, this is ridiculous enough. I'll tell you, Sir Peter, though I hold a man of intrigue to be a most despicable character, yet, you know, it does not follow that one is to be an absolute Joseph[38] either! Hark'ee, 'tis a little French milliner—a silly rogue that plagues me,—and having some character to lose, on your coming, sir, she ran behind the screen.

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[38] a reference to Joseph, who resisted the temptation of Potiphar's wife; cf. *Genesis*, chap. 39.

Sir Peter T. Ah! you rogue! But, egad, she has overheard all I have been saying of my wife.

Joseph T. Oh, 'twill never go any farther, you may depend upon it.

Sir Peter T. No! then, i' faith, let her hear it out. —Here's a closet will do as well.

Joseph S. Well, go in there.

Sir Peter T. Sly rogue! sly rogue! [*Going into the closet.*]

Joseph S. A narrow escape, indeed! and a curious situation I'm in, to part man and wife in this manner.

Lady T. [*peeping*]. Couldn't I steal off?

Joseph S. Keep close, my angel!

Sir Peter T. [*peeping*]. Joseph, tax him home.

Joseph S. Back, my dear friend!

Lady T. Couldn't you lock Sir Peter in?

Joseph S. Be still, my life!

Sir Peter T. [*peeping*]. You're sure the little milliner won't blab?

Joseph S. In, in, my good Sir Peter.—'Fore gad, I wish I had a key to the door.

Enter Charles Surface.

Charles S. Holla! brother, what has been the matter? Your fellow would not let me up at first. What! have you had a Jew or a wench with you?

Joseph S. Neither, brother, I assure you.

Charles S. But what has made Sir Peter steal off? I thought he had been with you.

Joseph S. He *was*, brother; but hearing you were coming, he did not choose to stay.

Charles S. What! was the old gentleman afraid I wanted to borrow money of him?

Joseph S. No, sir: but I am sorry to find, Charles, you have lately given that worthy man grounds for great uneasiness.

Charles S. Yes, yes, yes!—they tell me I do that to a great many worthy men.—But how so, pray? . . .

Joseph S. To be plain with you, brother—he thinks you are endeavoring to gain Lady Teazle's affections from him.

Charles S. Who, I? O lud! not I, upon my word. Ha! ha! ha! ha! so the old fellow has found out that he has got a young wife, has he?—or, what's worse, has her ladyship discovered she has an old husband?

Joseph S. This is no subject to jest upon, brother. He who can laugh ——

Charles S. True, true, as you were going to say —then, seriously, I never had the least idea of what you charge me with, upon my honor.

Joseph S. Well, it will give Sir Peter great satisfaction to hear this. [*Aloud.*]

Charles S. To be sure, I once thought the lady seemed to have taken a fancy to me; but, upon my soul, I never gave her the least encouragement:—besides, you know my attachment to Maria.

Joseph S. But sure, brother, even if Lady Teazle had betrayed the fondest partiality for you ——

Charles S. Why, look ye, Joseph, I hope I shall never deliberately do a dishonorable action: but if a pretty woman was purposely to throw herself in my way—and that pretty woman married to a man old enough to be her father ——

Joseph S. Well ——

Charles S. Why, I believe I should be obliged to borrow a little of your morality, that's all.—But, brother, do you know now that you surprise me exceedingly, by naming *me* with Lady Teazle; for, 'faith, I always understood *you* were her favorite.

Joseph S. For shame, Charles! This retort is foolish.

Charles S. Nay, I swear I have seen you exchange such significant glances ——

Joseph S. Nay, nay, sir, this is no jest.

Charles S. Egad, I'm serious. Don't you remember one day when I called here ——

Joseph S. Nay, prithee, Charles ——

Charles S. And found you together ——

Joseph S. Zounds, sir! I insist ——

Charles S. And another time when your servant ——

Joseph S. Brother, brother, a word with you!—Gad, I must stop him. [*Aside.*]

Charles S. Informed, I say, that ——

Joseph S. Hush! I beg your pardon, but Sir Peter has overheard all we have been saying. I knew you could clear yourself or I should not have consented.

Charles S. How, Sir Peter! where is he?

Joseph S. Softly; there! [*Points to the closet.*]

Charles S. Oh, 'fore Heaven, I'll have him out. Sir Peter, come forth!

Joseph S. No, no ——

Charles S. I say, Sir Peter, come into the court. —[*Pulls in* Sir Peter.]—What, my old guardian! —What! turn inquisitor, and take evidence incog?

Sir Peter T. Give me your hand, Charles—I believe I have suspected you wrongfully; but you mustn't be angry with Joseph—'twas my plan!

Charles S. Indeed!

Sir Peter T. But I acquit you. I promise you I don't think near so ill of you as I did: what I have heard has given me great satisfaction.

Charles S. Egad, then, 'twas lucky you didn't hear any more—wasn't it, Joseph?

Sir Peter T. Ah! you would have retorted on him.

Charles S. Aye, aye, that was a joke.

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, I know his honor too well.

Charles S. But you might as well have suspected *him* as *me* in this matter, for all that—mightn't he, Joseph?

Sir Peter T. Well, well, I believe you.

Joseph S. Would they were both out of the room! [*Aside.*]

Enter Servant, *and whispers* Joseph Surface.

Sir Peter T. And in future perhaps we may not be such strangers.

Servant. Lady Sneerwell is below, and says she will come up.

Joseph S. [*to the* Servant]. Lady Sneerwell! Gad's life, she mustn't come here. Gentlemen, I beg pardon,—I must wait on you downstairs: here is a person come on particular business.

Charles S. Well, you can see him in another room. Sir Peter and I have not met a long time, and I have something to say to him.

Joseph S. [*aside*]. They must not be left together. [*To* Charles.] I'll send this man away, and return directly.—Sir Peter, not a word of the French milliner.

Sir Peter T. Oh, not for the world!—[*Exit* Joseph.]—Ah! Charles, if you associated more with your brother, one might indeed hope for your reformation. He is a man of sentiment.—Well, there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!

Charles S. Pshaw! he is too moral by half—and so apprehensive of his good name, as he calls it, that I suppose he would as soon let a priest into his house as a girl.

Sir Peter T. No, no,—come, come,—you may wrong him.—No, no! Joseph is no rake, but he is no such saint in that respect either.—I have a great mind to tell him—we should have a laugh. [*Aside.*]

Charles S. Oh, hang him! He's a very anchorite, a young hermit.

Sir Peter T. Hark'ee—you must not abuse him: he may chance to hear of it again, I promise you.

Charles S. Why, you won't tell him?

Sir Peter T. No—but—this way. Egad, I'll tell him—[*Aside.*] Hark'ee, have you a mind to have a good laugh against Joseph?

Charles S. I should like it of all things.

Sir Peter T. Then, i'faith, we will—I'll be quit with him for discovering me.—[*Whispers.*]—He had a girl with him when I called.

Charles S. What! Joseph? you jest.

Sir Peter T. Hush!—a little French milliner—and the best of the jest is—she's in the room now.

Charles S. The devil she is! [*Looking at the closet.*]

Sir Peter T. Hush! I tell you! [*Points to the screen.*]

Charles S. Behind the screen! 'Slife, let's unveil her!

Sir Peter T. No, no—he's coming—you shan't, indeed!

Charles S. Egad, we'll have a peep at the little milliner!

Sir Peter T. Not for the world—Joseph will never forgive me——

Charles S. I'll stand by you——

Sir Peter T. Odds, here he is—[Joseph Surface *enters just as* Charles Surface *throws down the screen.*]

Charles S. Lady Teazle, by all that's wonderful!

Sir Peter T. Lady Teazle, by all that's damnable!

Charles S. Sir Peter, this is one of the smartest French milliners I ever saw. Egad, you seem all to have been diverting yourselves here at hide and seek, and I don't see who is out of the secret.—Shall I beg your ladyship to inform me? Not a word!—Brother, will you be pleased to explain this matter? What! is Morality dumb too?—Sir Peter, though I found you in the dark, perhaps you are not so now! All mute!—Well—though I can make nothing of the affair, I suppose you perfectly understand one another—so I'll leave you to yourselves—[*Going.*] Brother, I'm sorry to find you have given that worthy man grounds for so much uneasiness.—Sir Peter! there's nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!

Exit Charles. *They stand for some time looking at each other.*

Joseph S. Sir Peter—notwithstanding—I confess—that appearances are against me—if you will afford me your patience—I make no doubt—but I shall explain everything to your satisfaction.

Sir Peter T. If you please, sir.

Joseph S. The fact is, sir—that Lady Teazle, knowing my pretensions to your ward, Maria—I ay, sir,—Lady Teazle, being apprehensive of the ealousy of your temper—and knowing my friendhip to the family—she, sir, I say—called here—in rder that—I might explain those pretensions—but n your coming—being apprehensive—as I said—f your jealousy—she withdrew—and this, you may lepend on it, is the whole truth of the matter.

Sir Peter T. A very clear account, upon my vord; and I dare swear the lady will vouch for very article of it.

Lady T. For not one word of it, Sir Peter!

Sir Peter T. How! don't you think it worth vhile to agree in the lie?

Lady T. There is not one syllable of truth in vhat that gentleman has told you.

Sir Peter T. I believe you, upon my soul, ma'am!

Joseph S. [*aside*]. 'Sdeath, madam, will you beray me?

Lady T. Good Mr. Hypocrite, by your leave, I vill speak for myself.

Sir Peter T. Aye, let her alone, sir; you'll find he'll make out a better story than you, without rompting.

Lady T. Hear me, Sir Peter!—I came hither on o matter relating to your ward, and even ignorant f this gentleman's pretensions to her. But I came educed by his insidious arguments, at least to isten to his pretended passion, if not to sacrifice our honor to his baseness.

Sir Peter T. Now, I believe, the truth is coming ut indeed!

Joseph S. The woman's mad!

Lady T. No, sir—she has recovered her senses, nd your own arts have furnished her with the neans.—Sir Peter, I do not expect you to credit ne—but the tenderness you expressed for me, vhen I am sure you could not think I was a witess to it, has penetrated so to my heart, that had I eft the place without the shame of this discovery, ny future life should have spoken the sincerity of ny gratitude. As for that smooth-tongued hyporite, who would have seduced the wife of his too redulous friend, while he affected honorable addresses to his ward—I behold him now in a light o truly despicable, that I shall never respect myself or having listened to him. [*Exit.*

Joseph S. Notwithstanding all this, Sir Peter, Heaven knows——

Sir Peter T. That you are a villain! and so I eave you to your conscience.

Joseph S. You are too rash, Sir Peter; you *shall* hear me. The man who shuts out conviction by refusing to——

Sir Peter. O damn your sentiments.

[*Exeunt,* Surface *following and speaking.*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT

ACT THE FIFTH

Scene I—The Library

Enter Joseph Surface *and* Servant.

Joseph S. Mr. Stanley!—and why should you think I would see him? you must know he comes to ask something.

Servant. Sir, I should not have let him in, but that Mr. Rowley came to the door with him.

Joseph S. Pshaw! blockhead! to suppose that I should now be in a temper to receive visits from poor relations!—Well, why don't you show the fellow up?

Servant. I will, sir.—Why, sir, it was not my fault that Sir Peter discovered my lady——

Joseph S. Go, fool! [*Exit* Servant.]—Sure Fortune never played a man of my policy such a trick before. My character with Sir Peter, my hopes with Maria, destroyed in a moment! I'm in a rare humor to listen to other people's distresses! I shan't be able to bestow even a benevolent sentiment on Stanley.—So! here he comes, and Rowley with him. I must try to recover myself, and put a little charity into my face, however. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir Oliver *and* Rowley.

Sir Oliver S. What! does he avoid us!—That was he, was it not?

Rowley. It was, sir. But I doubt you are come a little too abruptly. His nerves are so weak, that the sight of a poor relation may be too much for him. I should have gone first to break you to him.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, plague of his nerves! Yet this is he whom Sir Peter extols as a man of the most benevolent way of thinking!

Rowley. As to his way of thinking, I cannot pretend to decide, for, to do him justice, he appears to have as much speculative benevolence as any private gentleman in the kingdom, though he is seldom so sensual as to indulge himself in the exercise of it.

Sir Oliver S. Yet has a string of charitable sentiments, I suppose, at his fingers' ends.

Rowley. Or rather, at his tongue's end, Sir Oliver; for I believe there is no sentiment he has more faith in than that "Charity begins at home."

Sir Oliver S. And his, I presume, is of that domestic sort; it never stirs abroad at all.

Rowley. I doubt you'll find it so;—but he's coming. I mustn't seem to interrupt you; and you know, immediately as you leave him, I come in to announce your arrival in your real character.

Sir Oliver S. True; and afterwards you'll meet me at Sir Peter's.

Rowley. Without losing a moment. [*Exit.*

Sir Oliver S. So! I don't like the complaisance of his features.

Enter Joseph Surface.

Joseph S. Sir, I beg you ten thousand pardons for keeping you a moment waiting.—Mr. Stanley, I presume.

Sir Oliver S. At your service.

Joseph S. Sir, I beg you will do me the honor to sit down—I entreat you, sir!

Sir Oliver S. Dear sir, there's no occasion.—Too civil by half! [*Aside.*]

Joseph S. I have not the pleasure of knowing you, Mr. Stanley; but I am extremely happy to see you look so well. You were nearly related to my mother, I think, Mr. Stanley?

Sir Oliver S. I was, sir;—so nearly that my present poverty, I fear, may do discredit to her wealthy children, else I should not have presumed to trouble you.

Joseph S. Dear sir, there needs no apology:—He that is in distress, though a stranger, has a right to claim kindred with the wealthy. I am sure I wish I was of that class, and had it in my power to offer you even a small relief.

Sir Oliver S. If your uncle, Sir Oliver, were here, I should have a friend.

Joseph S. I wish he was, sir, with all my heart; you should not want an advocate with him, believe me, sir.

Sir Oliver S. I should not need one—my distresses would recommend me. But I imagined his bounty had enabled you to become the agent of his charity.

Joseph S. My dear sir, you were strangely misinformed. Sir Oliver is a worthy man, a very worthy sort of man; but avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age. I will tell you, my good sir, in confidence, what he has done for me has been a mere nothing; though people, I know, have thought otherwise, and, for my part I never chose to contradict the report.

Sir Oliver S. What! has he never transmitted you bullion—rupees—pagodas?[84]

Joseph S. O, dear sir, nothing of the kind!—No, no—a few presents now and then—china, shawls, congou tea, avadavats,[85] and Indian crackers[86]—little more, believe me.

Sir Oliver S. Here's gratitude for twelve thousand pounds!—Avadavats and Indian crackers! [*Aside.*]

Joseph S. Then, my dear sir, you have heard, I doubt not, of the extravagance of my brother: there are very few would credit what I have done for that unfortunate young man.

Sir Oliver S. Not I, for one! [*Aside.*]

Joseph S. The sums I have lent him!—Indeed I have been exceedingly to blame; it was an amiable weakness—however—I don't pretend to defend it,—and now I feel it doubly culpable, since it has deprived me of the power of serving *you*, Mr. Stanley, as my heart directs.

Sir Oliver S. Dissembler! [*Aside.*]—Then, sir, you can't assist me?

Joseph S. At present, it grieves me to say, I cannot; but, whenever I have the ability, you may depend upon hearing from me.

Sir Oliver S. I am extremely sorry——

Joseph S. Not more than I, believe me;—to pity without the power to relieve, is still more painful than to ask and be denied.

Sir Oliver S. Kind sir, your most obedient humble servant.

Joseph S. You leave me deeply affected, Mr. Stanley.—William, be ready to open the door.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, dear sir, no ceremony.

Joseph S. Your very obedient.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, your most obsequious.

Joseph S. You may depend upon hearing from me, whenever I can be of service.

Sir Oliver S. Sweet sir, you are too good!

Joseph S. In the meantime I wish you health and spirits.

Sir Oliver S. Your ever grateful and perpetual humble servant.

Joseph S. Sir, yours sincerely.

Sir Oliver S. Charles, you are my heir! [*Aside.*] [*Exit*

Joseph S. This is one bad effect of a good character; it invites application from the unfortunate, and there needs no small degree of address to gain the reputation of benevolence without incurring the expense. The silver ore of pure charity is an expensive article in the catalogue of a man's good qualities; whereas the sentimental French plate I use instead of it makes just as good a show, and pays no tax.

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[84] Indian coins. [85] Indian song birds. [86] firecrackers.

Enter ROWLEY.

ROWLEY. Mr. Surface, your servant: I was apprehensive of interrupting you, though my business demands immediate attention, as this note will inform you.

JOSEPH S. Always happy to see Mr. Rowley—[*Reads the letter.*] How! Oliver—Surface!—My uncle, arrived!

ROWLEY. He is, indeed: we have just parted—quite well, after a speedy voyage, and impatient to embrace his worthy nephew.

JOSEPH S. I am astonished!—William! stop Mr. Stanley, if he's not gone.

ROWLEY. Oh! he's out of reach, I believe.

JOSEPH S. Why did not you let me know this when you came in together?

ROWLEY. I thought you had particular business; —but I must be gone to inform your brother, and appoint him here to meet his uncle. He will be with you in a quarter of an hour.

JOSEPH S. So he says. Well, I am strangely overjoyed at his coming.—Never, to be sure, was anything so damned unlucky. [*Aside.*]

ROWLEY. You will be delighted to see how well he looks.

JOSEPH S. Ah! I'm rejoiced to hear it.—Just at this time! [*Aside.*]

ROWLEY. I'll tell him how impatiently you expect him.

JOSEPH S. Do, do; pray give my best duty and affection. Indeed, I cannot express the sensations I feel at the thought of seeing him.—[*Exit* ROWLEY.]—Certainly his coming just at this time is the cruelest piece of ill-fortune! [*Exit.*

SCENE II—SIR PETER TEAZLE'S

Enter MRS. CANDOUR *and* MAID.

MAID. Indeed, ma'am, my lady will see nobody at present.

MRS. CAN. Did you tell her it was her friend Mrs. Candour?

MAID. Yes, ma'am; but she begs you will excuse her.

MRS. CAN. Do go again,—I shall be glad to see her, if it be only for a moment, for I am sure she must be in great distress. [*Exit* MAID.] Dear heart, how provoking! I'm not mistress of half the circumstances! We shall have the whole affair in the newspapers, with the names of the parties at full length, before I have dropped the story at a dozen houses.

Enter SIR BENJAMIN BACKBITE.

Oh, Sir Benjamin! you have heard, I suppose——

SIR BENJ. B. Of Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface——

MRS. CAN. And Sir Peter's discovery——

SIR BENJ. B. Oh! the strangest piece of business, to be sure!

MRS. CAN. Well, I never was so surprised in my life. I am so sorry for all parties, indeed.

SIR BENJ. B. Now, I don't pity Sir Peter at all: he was so extravagantly partial to Mr. Surface.

MRS. CAN. Mr. Surface! Why, 'twas with Charles Lady Teazle was detected!

SIR BENJ. B. No such thing!—Mr. Surface is the gallant.

MRS. CAN. No, No! Charles is the man. 'Twas Mr. Surface brought Sir Peter on purpose to discover them.

SIR BENJ. B. I tell you I had it from one——

MRS. CAN. And I have it from one——

SIR BENJ. B. Who had it from one, who had it——

MRS. CAN. From one immediately—but here comes Lady Sneerwell; perhaps she knows the whole affair.

Enter LADY SNEERWELL.

LADY SNEER. So, my dear Mrs. Candour, here's a sad affair of our friend Teazle.

MRS. CAN. Aye, my dear friend, who could have thought it?

LADY SNEER. Well, there is no trusting appearances; though, indeed, she was always too lively for me.

MRS. CAN. To be sure, her manners were a little too free: but she was very young!

LADY SNEER. And had, indeed, some good qualities.

MRS. CAN. So she had, indeed, But have you heard the particulars?

LADY SNEER. No; but everybody says that Mr. Surface——

SIR BENJ. B. Aye, there; I told you Mr. Surface was the man.

Mrs. Can. No, no, indeed; the assignation was with Charles.

Lady Sneer. With Charles! You alarm me, Mrs. Candour!

Mrs. Can. Yes, yes, he was the lover. Mr. Surface —do him justice—was only the informer.

Sir Benj. B. Well, I'll not dispute with you, Mrs. Candour; but, be it which it may, I hope that Sir Peter's wound will not ——

Mrs. Can. Sir Peter's wound! O mercy! I didn't hear a word of their fighting.

Lady Sneer. Nor I, a syllable.

Sir Benj. B. No! what, no mention of the duel?

Mrs. Can. Not a word.

Sir Benj. B. Oh Lord, yes, yes: they fought before they left the room.

Lady Sneer. Pray, let us hear.

Mrs. Can. Aye, do oblige us with the duel.

Sir Benj. B. "Sir," says Sir Peter, immediately after the discovery, "you are a most ungrateful fellow."

Mrs. Can. Aye, to Charles ——

Sir Benj. B. No, no—to Mr. Surface—"a most ungrateful fellow; and old as I am, sir," says he, "I insist on immediate satisfaction."

Mrs. Can. Aye, that must have been to Charles; for 'tis very unlikely Mr. Surface should go fight in his own house.

Sir Benj. B. Gad's life, ma'am, not at all—"Giving me immediate satisfaction." On this, ma'am, Lady Teazle, seeing Sir Peter in such danger, ran out of the room in strong hysterics, and Charles after her, calling out for hartshorn and water; then, madam, they began to fight with swords ——

Enter Crabtree.

Crabtree. With pistols, nephew—pistols: I have it from undoubted authority.

Mrs. Can. Oh, Mr. Crabtree, then it is all true!

Crabtree. Too true, indeed, madam, and Sir Peter dangerously wounded ——

Sir Benj. B. By a thrust in *segoon*[87] quite through his left side ——

Crabtree. By a bullet lodged in the thorax.

Mrs. Can. Mercy on me! Poor Sir Peter!

Crabtree. Yes, madam: though Charles would have avoided the matter, if he could.

Mrs. Can. I knew Charles was the person.

Sir Benj. B. My uncle, I see, knows nothing of the matter.

Crabtree. But Sir Peter taxed him with the basest ingratitude.

Sir Benj. B. That I told you, you know ——

Crabtree. Do, nephew, let me speak! and insisted on immediate ——

Sir Benj. B. Just as I said ——

Crabtree. Odds life, nephew, allow others to know something too. A pair of pistols lay on the bureau for Mr. Surface, it seems, had come home the night before late from Salthill, where he had been to see the Montem[87a] with a friend, who has a son at Eton, so, unluckily, the pistols were left charged.

Sir Benj. B. I heard nothing of this.

Crabtree. Sir Peter forced Charles to take one, and they fired, it seems, pretty nearly together. Charles's shot took place, as I tell you, and Sir Peter's missed; but what is very extraordinary, the ball struck against a little bronze Pliny that stood over the fireplace, grazed out of the window at a right angle, and wounded the postman, who was just coming to the door with a double letter from Northamptonshire.

Sir Benj. B. My uncle's account is more circumstantial, I must confess; but I believe mine is the true one, for all that.

Lady Sneer. I am more interested in this affair than they imagine, and must have better information. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

Sir Benj. B. [*after a pause, looking at each other*]. Ah! Lady Sneerwell's alarm is very easily accounted for.

Crabtree. Yes, yes, they certainly *do* say—but that's neither here nor there.

Mrs. Can. But, pray, where is Sir Peter at present?

Crabtree. Oh! they brought him home, and he is now in the house, though the servants are ordered to deny him.

Mrs. Can. I believe so, and Lady Teazle, I suppose, attending him.

Crabtree. Yes, yes; and I saw one of the faculty enter just before me.

Sir Benj. B. Hey! who comes here?

Crabtree. Oh, this is he: the physician, depend on't.

Mrs. Can. Oh, certainly: it must be the physician; and now we shall know.

Enter Sir Oliver.

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[87] one of the positions in fencing; a corruption of the French *seconde.*

[87a] triennial ceremony (abolished in 1847) of the Eton boys, who marched to a mound (*ad montem*) near the Bath road and collected money for the university expenses of the captain or senior scholar.

CRABTREE. Well, doctor, what hopes?

MRS. CAN. Aye, doctor, how's your patient?

SIR BENJ. B. Now, doctor, isn't it a wound with a small sword?

CRABTREE. A bullet lodged in the thorax, for a hundred.

SIR OLIVER S. Doctor! a wound with a small sword! and a bullet in the thorax! What! are you mad, good people?

SIR BENJ. B. Perhaps, sir, you are not a doctor?

SIR OLIVER S. Truly, I am to thank you for my degree if I am.

CRABTREE. Only a friend of Sir Peter's, then, I presume. But, sir, you must have heard of his accident?

SIR OLIVER S. Not a word!

CRABTREE. Not of his being dangerously wounded?

SIR OLIVER S. The devil he is!

SIR BENJ. B. Run through the body——

CRABTREE. Shot in the breast——

SIR BENJ. B. By one Mr. Surface——

CRABTREE. Aye, the younger.

SIR OLIVER S. Hey! what the plague! you seem to differ strangely in your accounts: however, you agree that Sir Peter is dangerously wounded.

SIR BENJ. B. Oh, yes, we agree there.

CRABTREE. Yes, yes, I believe there can be no doubt of that.

SIR OLIVER S. Then, upon my word, for a person in that situation, he is the most imprudent man alive; for here he comes, walking as if nothing at all was the matter.

Enter SIR PETER.

Odds heart, Sir Peter, you are come in good time, I promise you for we had just given you over.

SIR BENJ. B. Egad, uncle, this is the most sudden recovery!

SIR OLIVER S. Why, man, what do you out of bed with a small sword through your body, and a bullet lodged in your thorax?

SIR PETER T. A small sword, and a bullet!

SIR OLIVER S. Aye, these gentlemen would have killed you without law, or physic, and wanted to dub me a doctor, to make me an accomplice.

SIR PETER T. Why, what is all this?

SIR BENJ. B. We rejoice, Sir Peter, that the story of the duel is not true, and are sincerely sorry for your other misfortune.

SIR PETER T. So, so; all over the town already. [*Aside.*]

CRABTREE. Though, Sir Peter, you were certainly vastly to blame to marry at all your years.

SIR PETER T. Sir, what business is that of yours?

MRS. CAN. Though, indeed, as Sir Peter made so good a husband, he's very much to be pitied.

SIR PETER T. Plague on your pity, ma'am! I desire none of it.

SIR BENJ. B. However, Sir Peter, you must not mind the laughing and jests you will meet with on the occasion.

SIR PETER T. Sir, sir, I desire to be master in my own house.

CRABTREE. 'Tis no uncommon case, that's one comfort.

SIR PETER T. I insist on being left to myself: without ceremony—I insist on your leaving my house directly.

MRS. CAN. Well, well, we are going, and depend on't we'll make the best report of you we can. [*Exit.*

SIR PETER T. Leave my house!

CRABTREE. And tell how hardly you've been treated. [*Exit.*

SIR PETER T. Leave my house!

SIR BENJ. B. And how patiently you bear it. [*Exit.*

SIR PETER T. Fiends! vipers! furies! Oh! that their own venom would choke them!

SIR OLIVER S. They are very provoking, indeed, Sir Peter.

Enter ROWLEY.

ROWLEY. I heard high words: what has ruffled you, Sir Peter?

SIR PETER T. Pshaw! what signifies asking? Do I ever pass a day without my vexations?

SIR OLIVER S. Well, I'm not inquisitive. I come only to tell you, that I have seen both my nephews in the manner we proposed.

SIR PETER T. A precious couple they are!

ROWLEY. Yes, and Sir Oliver is convinced that your judgment was right, Sir Peter.

SIR OLIVER S. Yes, I find Joseph is indeed the man, after all.

ROWLEY. Aye, as Sir Peter says, he is a man of sentiment.

SIR OLIVER S. And acts up to the sentiments he professes.

ROWLEY. It certainly is edification to hear him talk.

SIR OLIVER S. Oh, he's a model for the young men of the age!—But how's this, Sir Peter? you don't join us in your friend Joseph's praise, as I expected.

Sir Peter T. Sir Oliver, we live in a damned wicked world, and the fewer we praise the better.

Rowley. What! do you say so, Sir Peter, who were never mistaken in your life?

Sir Peter T. Pshaw! Plague on you both! I see by your sneering you have heard the whole affair. I shall go mad among you!

Rowley. Then, to fret you no longer, Sir Peter, we are indeed acquainted with it all. I met Lady Teazle coming from Mr. Surface's so humbled, that she deigned to request me to be her advocate with you.

Sir Peter T. And does Sir Oliver know all, too?

Sir Oliver S. Every circumstance.

Sir Peter T. What, of the closet—and the screen, hey?

Sir Oliver S. Yes, yes, and the little French milliner. Oh, I have been vastly diverted with the story! Ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. 'Twas very pleasant.

Sir Oliver S. I never laughed more in my life, I assure you: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Oh, vastly diverting! Ha! ha! ha!

Rowley. To be sure, Joseph with his sentiments: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, his sentiments! Ha! ha! ha! A hypocritical villain!

Sir Oliver S. Aye, and that rogue Charles to pull Sir Peter out of the closet: ha! ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Ha! ha! 'twas devilish entertaining, to be sure!

Sir Oliver S. Ha! ha! ha! Egad, Sir Peter, I should like to have seen your face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha!

Sir Peter T. Yes, yes, my face when the screen was thrown down: ha! ha! ha! Oh, I must never show my head again!

Sir Oliver S. But come, come, it isn't fair to laugh at you neither, my old friend; though, upon my soul, I can't help it.

Sir Peter T. Oh, pray don't restrain your mirth on my account; it does not hurt me at all! I laugh at the whole affair myself. Yes, yes, I think being a standing jest for all one's acquaintance a very happy situation. Oh, yes, and then of a morning to read the paragraphs about Mr. S——, Lady T——, and Sir P——, will be so diverting! I shall certainly leave town tomorrow and never look mankind in the face again.

Rowley. Without affectation, Sir Peter, you may despise the ridicule of fools: but I see Lady Teazle going towards the next room; I am sure you must desire a reconciliation as earnestly as she does.

Sir Oliver S. Perhaps my being here prevents her coming to you. Well, I'll leave honest Rowley to mediate between you; but he must bring you all presently to Mr. Surface's, where I am now returning, if not to reclaim a libertine, at least to expose hypocrisy.

Sir Peter T. Ah, I'll be present at your discovering yourself there with all my heart; though 'tis a vile unlucky place for discoveries.

Rowley. We'll follow. [*Exit* Sir Oliver.

Sir Peter T. She is not coming here, you see, Rowley.

Rowley. No, but she has left the door of that room open, you perceive. See, she's in tears.

Sir Peter T. Certainly a little mortification appears very becoming in a wife. Don't you think it will do her good to let her pine a little?

Rowley. Oh, this is ungenerous in you!

Sir Peter T. Well, I know not what to think. You remember the letter I found of hers evidently intended for Charles?

Rowley. A mere forgery, Sir Peter, laid in your way on purpose. This is one of the points which I intend Snake shall give you conviction on.

Sir Peter T. I wish I were once satisfied of that. She looks this way. What a remarkably elegant turn of the head she has! Rowley, I'll go to her.

Rowley. Certainly.

Sir Peter T. Though when it is known that we are reconciled people will laugh at me ten times more.

Rowley. Let them laugh, and retort their malice only by showing them you are happy in spite of it.

Sir Peter T. I'faith, so I will! and if I'm not mistaken, we may yet be the happiest couple in the country.

Rowley. Nay, Sir Peter, he who once lays aside suspicion——

Sir Peter T. Hold, my dear Rowley! if you have any regard for me, never let me hear you utter anything like a sentiment: I have had enough of them to serve me the rest of my life. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III—THE LIBRARY

Enter Joseph Surface *and* Lady Sneerwell.

Lady Sneer. Impossible! Will not Sir Peter immediately be reconciled to Charles, and of consequence no longer oppose his union with Maria? The thought is distraction to me.

Joseph S. Can passion furnish a remedy?

Lady Sneer. No, nor cunning either. Oh! I was a fool, an idiot, to league with such a blunderer!

Joseph S. Sure, Lady Sneerwell, I am the greatest sufferer; yet you see I bear the accident with calmness.

Lady Sneer. Because the disappointment doesn't reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy, could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation.

Joseph S. But why should your reproaches fall on me for this disappointment?

Lady Sneer. Are you not the cause of it? Had you not a sufficient field for your roguery in blinding Sir Peter, and supplanting your brother, but you must endeavor to seduce his wife? I hate such an avarice of crimes; 'tis an unfair monopoly, and never prospers.

Joseph S. Well, I admit I have been to blame. I confess I deviated from the direct road of wrong, but I don't think we're so totally defeated neither.

Lady Sneer. No!

Joseph S. You tell me you have made a trial of Snake since we met, and that you still believe him faithful to us.

Lady Sneer. I do believe so.

Joseph S. And that he has undertaken, should it be necessary, to swear and prove, that Charles is at this time contracted by vows and honor to your ladyship, which some of his former letters to you will serve to support.

Lady Sneer. This, indeed, might have assisted.

Joseph S. Come, come; it is not too late yet. [*Knocking at the door.*] But hark! this is probably my uncle, Sir Oliver: retire to that room; we'll consult farther when he is gone.

Lady Sneer. Well, but if *he* should find you out too?

Joseph S. Oh, I have no fear of that. Sir Peter will hold his tongue for his own credit's sake—and you may depend on it I shall soon discover Sir Oliver's weak side!

Lady Sneer. I have no diffidence of your abilities! only be constant to one roguery at a time. [*Exit* Lady Sneerwell.

Joseph S. I will, I will. So! 'tis confounded hard, after such bad fortune, to be baited by one's confederate in evil. Well, at all events my character is so much better than Charles's, that I certainly—hey!—what!—this is not Sir Oliver, but old Stanley again. Plague on't that he should return to tease me just now—I shall have Sir Oliver come and find him here—and ——

Enter Sir Oliver.

Gad's life, Mr. Stanley, why have you come back to plague me at this time? You must not stay now, upon my word.

Sir Oliver S. Sir, I hear your uncle Oliver is expected here, and though he has been so penurious to you, I'll try what he'll do for me.

Joseph S. Sir, 'tis impossible for you to stay now, so I must beg—Come any other time, and I promise you, you shall be assisted.

Sir Oliver S. No: Sir Oliver and I must be acquainted.

Joseph S. Zounds, sir! then I insist on your quitting the room directly.

Sir Oliver S. Nay, sir ——

Joseph S. Sir, I insist on't:—here, William! show this gentleman out. Since you compel me, sir, not one moment—this is such insolence!

Enter Charles.

Charles S. Hey day! what's the matter! What the devil, have you got hold of my little broker here? Zounds, brother, don't hurt little Premium. What's the matter, my little fellow?

Joseph S. So! he has been with you too, has he?

Charles S. To be sure he has. Why, he's as honest a little—But sure, Joseph, you have not been borrowing money too, have you?

Joseph S. Borrowing! no! But, brother, you know we expect Sir Oliver here every ——

Charles S. O Gad, that's true! Noll mustn't find the little broker here, to be sure.

Joseph S. Yet Mr. Stanley insists ——

Charles S. Stanley! why, his name's Premium.

Joseph S. No, no, Stanley.

Charles S. No, no, Premium.

Joseph S. Well, no matter which—but ——

Charles S. Aye, aye, Stanley or Premium, 'tis the same thing as you say; for I suppose he goes by half a hundred names, besides A. B. at the coffeehouses. [*Knocking.*]

Joseph S. 'Sdeath! here's Sir Oliver at the door. Now I beg, Mr. Stanley ——

Charles S. Aye, aye, and I beg, Mr. Premium ——

Sir Oliver S. Gentlemen ——

Joseph S. Sir, by Heaven you shall go!

Charles S. Aye, out with him, certainly!

Sir Oliver S. This violence——

Joseph S. 'Tis your own fault.

Charles S. Out with him, to be sure. [*Both forcing* Sir Oliver *out.*]

Enter Sir Peter *and* Lady Teazle, Maria, *and* Rowley.

Sir Peter T. My old friend, Sir Oliver—hey! What in the name of wonder—here are dutiful nephews—assault their uncle at a first visit!

Lady T. Indeed, Sir Oliver, 'twas well we came in to release you.

Rowley. Truly, it was; for I perceive, Sir Oliver, the character of old Stanley was not a protection to you.

Sir Oliver S. Nor of Premium either: the necessities of the former could not extort a shilling from that benevolent gentleman; and now, aged, I stood a chance of faring worse than my ancestors, and being knocked down without being bid for.

Joseph S. Charles!

Charles S. Joseph!

Joseph S. 'Tis now complete!

Charles S. Very!

Sir Oliver S. Sir Peter, my friend, and Rowley, too, look on that elder nephew of mine. You know what he has already received from my bounty; and you also know how I would have regarded half my fortune as held in trust for him: judge then my disappointment in discovering him to be destitute of truth, charity, and gratitude.

Sir Peter T. Sir Oliver, I should be more surprised at this declaration, if I had not myself found him to be selfish, treacherous, and hypocritical.

Lady T. And if the gentleman pleads not guilty to these, pray let him call *me* to his character.

Sir Peter T. Then, I believe, we need add no more: if he knows himself, he will consider it as the most perfect punishment, that he is known to the world.

Charles S. If they talk this way to Honesty, what will they say to me, by and by? [*Aside.*]

Sir Oliver S. As for that prodigal, his brother, there——

Charles S. Aye, now comes my turn: the damned family pictures will ruin me. [*Aside.*]

Joseph S. Sir Oliver—uncle, will you honor me with a hearing?

Charles S. Now if Joseph would make one of his long speeches I might recollect myself a little. [*Aside.*]

Sir Peter T. I suppose you would undertake to justify yourself entirely? [*To* Joseph.]

Joseph S. I trust I could.

Sir Oliver. Pshaw!—nay if you desert your roguery in this distress and try to be justified, you have even less principle than I thought you had. [*Turns from him in contempt.*] Well, Sir, [*to* Charles.] and you could justify yourself too, I suppose?

Charles S. Not that I know of, Sir Oliver.

Sir Oliver S. What!—Little Premium has been let too much into the secret, I presume?

Charles S. True, sir; but they were *family* secrets, and should not be mentioned again, you know.

Rowley. Come, Sir Oliver, I know you cannot speak of Charles's follies with anger.

Sir Oliver S. Odds heart, no more I can: nor with gravity either.—Sir Peter, do you know, the rogue bargained with me for all his ancestors; sold me judges and generals by the foot and maiden aunts as cheap as broken china.

Charles S. To be sure, Sir Oliver, I did make a little free with the family canvas, that's the truth on't. My ancestors may certainly rise in judgment against me, there's no denying it; but believe me sincere when I tell you—and upon my soul I would not say so if I was not—that if I do not appear mortified at the exposure of my follies, it is because I feel at this moment the warmest satisfaction in seeing you, my liberal benefactor.

Sir Oliver S. Charles, I believe you; give me your hand again: the ill-looking little fellow over the settee has made your peace.

Charles S. Then, sir, my gratitude to the original is still increased.

Lady T. Yet, I believe, Sir Oliver, here is one whom Charles is still more anxious to be reconciled to.

Sir Oliver S. Oh, I have heard of his attachment there; and with the young lady's pardon, if I construe right—that blush——

Sir Peter T. Well, child, speak your sentiments!

Maria. Sir, I have little to say, but that I shall rejoice to hear that he is happy; for me—whatever claim I had to his affection, I willingly resign to one who has a better title.

Charles S. How, Maria!

Sir Peter T. Hey day! what's the mystery now? —While he appeared an incorrigible rake, you would give your hand to no one else; and now that he is likely to reform, I'll warrant you won't have him.

Maria. His own heart and Lady Sneerwell know the cause.

Charles S. Lady Sneerwell!

Joseph S. Brother, it is with great concern I am obliged to speak on this point, but my regard to justice compels me, and Lady Sneerwell's injuries can no longer be concealed. [*Goes to door.*]

Enter Lady Sneerwell.

All. Lady Sneerwell!

Sir Peter T. So! another French milliner! Egad, he has one in every room in the house, I suppose.

Lady Sneer. Ungrateful Charles! Well may you be surprised, and feel for the indelicate situation your perfidy has forced me into.

Charles S. Pray, uncle, is this another plot of yours? For, as I have life, I don't understand it.

Joseph S. I believe, sir, there is but the evidence of one person more necessary to make it extremely clear.

Sir Peter T. And that person, I imagine, is Mr. Snake.—Rowley, you were perfectly right to bring him with us, and pray let him appear.

Rowley. Walk in, Mr. Snake.

Enter Snake.

I thought his testimony might be wanted: however, it happens unluckily, that he comes to confront Lady Sneerwell, and not to support her.

Lady Sneer. A villain! Treacherous to me at last!—Speak, fellow; have you too conspired against me?

Snake. I beg your ladyship ten thousand pardons: you paid me extremely liberally for the lie in question; but I unfortunately have been offered double to speak the truth.

Sir Peter T. Plot and counterplot, egad! I wish your ladyship joy of the success of your negotiation.

Lady Sneer. The torments of shame and disappointment on you all!

Lady T. Hold, Lady Sneerwell—before you go, let me thank you for the trouble you and that gentleman have taken, in writing letters from me to Charles, and answering them yourself; and let me also request you to make my respects to the Scandalous College, of which you are president, and inform them, that Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, as she leaves off practice, and kills characters no longer.

Lady Sneer. You too, madam—provoking—insolent—May your husband live these fifty years! [*Exit.*

Sir Peter T. Oons! what a fury!

Lady T. What a malicious creature it is!

Sir Peter T. Hey! Not for her last wish?

Lady T. Oh, no!

Sir Oliver S. Well, sir, and what have you to say now?

Joseph S. Sir, I am so confounded, to find that Lady Sneerwell could be guilty of suborning Mr. Snake in this manner, to impose on us all, that I know not what to say: however, lest her revengeful spirit should prompt her to injure my brother, I had certainly better follow her directly. [*Exit.*

Sir Peter T. Moral to the last drop!

Sir Oliver S. Aye, and marry her, Joseph, if you can.—Oil and Vinegar, egad! you'll do very well together.

Rowley. I believe we have no more occasion for Mr. Snake at present?

Snake. Before I go, I beg pardon once for all, for whatever uneasiness I have been the humble instrument of causing to the parties present.

Sir Peter T. Well, well, you have made atonement by a good deed at last.

Snake. But I must request of the company that it should never be known.

Sir Peter T. Hey!—What the plague!—Are you ashamed of having done a right thing once in your life?

Snake. Ah, sir!—consider,—I live by the badness of my character; I have nothing but my infamy to depend on! and if it were once known that I had been betrayed into an honest action, I should lose every friend I have in the world.

Sir Peter T. Here's a precious rogue!

Sir Oliver S. Well, well,—we'll not traduce you by saying anything to your praise, never fear. [*Exit* Snake.

Lady T. See, Sir Oliver, there needs no persuasion now to reconcile your nephew and Maria.

Sir Oliver S. Aye, aye, that's as it should be, and egad, we'll have the wedding to-morrow morning.

Charles S. Thank you, my dear uncle!

Sir Peter T. What, you rogue! don't you ask the girl's consent first?

Charles S. Oh, I have done that a long time—above a minute ago—and she has looked *yes.*

Maria. For shame, Charles!—I protest, Sir Peter, there has not been a word.

Sir Oliver S. Well, then, the fewer the better;—

may your love for each other never know abatement!

Sir Peter T. And may you live happily together as Lady Teazle and I—intend to do.

Charles S. Rowley, my old friend, I am sure you congratulate me; and I suspect that I owe you much.

Sir Oliver T. You do indeed, Charles.

Rowley. If my efforts to serve you had not succeeded, you would have been in my debt for the attempt; but deserve to be happy, and you overpay me.

Sir Peter T. Aye, honest Rowley always said you would reform.

Charles S. Why, as to reforming, Sir Peter, I'll make no promises, and that I take to be a proof that I intend to set about it but here shall be my monitor—my gentle guide—ah! can I leave the virtuous path those eyes illumine?

Tho' thou, dear maid, shouldst waive thy beauty's sway,
Thou still must rule, because I will obey:
A humble fugitive from Folly view,
No sanctuary near but Love— [*To the audience*]—and you;
You can, indeed, each anxious fear remove,
For even Scandal dies if you approve.

(1777)

END OF THE FIFTH ACT

APPENDIX
GLOSSARY
INDEX

The Literary Medium

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1. THE LITERARY MEDIUM

We do not often enough think of language as spoken music. To the writer, as to the student of the writer's craft, it is indispensable to do so. The literary artist works in music as well as in meaning. His medium is one of sound and rhythm as well as of thought. Indeed it is in the mastery of this medium in its twofold nature of music and meaning that he must show his subtlest skill. If he is a poet, he will raise the music of his language until it of itself will seem almost to be eloquent of the thought; he will seem to release thought from music:

Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.

If, on the other hand, he works in what Milton called "the cool element" of prose; if he seeks, as Dryden put it, "the other harmony" of prose, he will subdue his music, in tactful and logical service to the thought.

2. VERSE AND PROSE

A versifier is not necessarily a poet. Verse differs from prose in rhythmic idea only:

I before *e*, except after *c*;
Or when pronounced *ay*, as in *neighbor* and *weigh*.

A thought, a "rule" rather, has here for our convenience been made into a jingle. Verse is language of which the free rhythm has been accommodated to some simple pattern of syllables, called meter. Upon this pattern, the rhythm turns (verse<Latin *versus*< *verto*, turn), to make line after line of patterned language. Prose, on the other hand (prose<Latin *prosa oratio*, straightforward discourse), is language the rhythm of which is free of syllable pattern or line, keeping straight ahead, and expanding and contracting easily with the thought.

3. METER

The syllables of speech are distinguished from one another by the varying qualities of stress, length, pitch, and timbre. Syllables marked by relative insistency as to stress, length, pitch, and timbre are called ***strong***, the others, ***weak***. Meters in Greek and Latin, as in English, are patterns of strong and weak syllables. In Greek and Latin the characteristic mark of insistency is length. One scans Greek and Latin verse for long (—) and short (◡) syllables:

— ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — ◡ ◡ — —
Reliquias veterumque vides monumenta virorum.
VIRGIL, *Aeneid VIII*, 356

In English, however, as in all Teutonic languages, stress is the characteristic mark of insistency. One scans for stressed (′) and unstressed (-) syllables:

′ - ′ - ′ - ′
Tiger, tiger, burning bright.
BLAKE, *The Tiger*

Four simple arrangements of stressed and unstressed syllables provide the standard meters of English verse. They are:

1. Two-syllable rising, or iambic (-′)

- ′ - ′ - ′ - ′ - ′
If all would lead their lives in love like me.
CAMPION, *My Sweetest Lesbia*

2. Two-syllable falling, or trochaic (′-)

′ - ′ - ′ - ′ -
Double, double, toil and trouble.
Macbeth

3. Three-syllable rising, or anapestic (--′)

- - ′ - - ′ - - ′ - - ′
And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade.
COWPER, *The Poplars Are Felled*

4. Three-syllable falling, or dactylic (′--)

′ - - ′ - - ′ - - ′ - -
We that have loved him so, followed him, honored him.
BROWNING, *The Lost Leader*

Besides these two-syllable and three-syllable meters, there are two four-syllable meters in English, which in the last century came into frequent use, in the hands of Kipling and others. These are:

1. Four-syllable rising, or double iambic (–′–ˋ or –ˋ–′)

–′–ˋ–′–ˋ –′–ˋ–′–ˋ
Quixotic is his enterprise, and hopeless his adventure is.
W. S. Gilbert, *The Played-Out Humorist*

2. Four-syllable falling, or double trochaic (′–ˋ– or ˋ–′–)

ˋ–′–ˋ–′–ˋ–′–ˋ–′–
When the rich Allobrogenses never kept amanuenses.
Kipling, *In the Neolithic Age*

The chief characteristic of these meters is the suppression of alternating stresses, and the doubling-up, accordingly, of two-syllable into four-syllable feet. The suppressed or secondary stresses we have marked here with the half-stress mark (ˋ).

Of these six meters the iambic is by far the most important. The anapestic, trochaic, and dactylic meters are rarely found in pure form, the anapestic combining freely with the iambic, and the dactylic with the trochaic. The double meters are too emphatic for general use.

We describe a line technically according to its syllable pattern, and according to the number of times the *foot*, or unit, of the pattern is repeated. A line of five iambic feet, for example, is called an iambic pentameter (pentameter <Greek, *pente,* five; *metron,* measure):

And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Lines of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, and nine feet, are called respectively: 1, monometer; 2, dimeter; 3, trimeter; 4, tetrameter; 5, pentameter; 6, hexameter; 7, heptameter; 8, octameter; 9, nonameter.

4. VERSE SCANSION

We have defined verse as language the free rhythm of which is accommodated to some simple syllable pattern or meter. It is important now to realize that the movement of language can never approximate the mechanical tick-tock of a meter. The rhythm of verse, like the rhythm of music, must be conceived of as playing a perpetual variation upon a given base or measure. Here the poet will use long syllables to retard or enlarge his movement; here he will contort, there loose, his rhythms; here drop, there add, a syllable—all in skillful keeping with his meter, and in subtle enhancement of his thought. The purpose of our analysis, of our "scansion" of a line of verse, is to determine: 1. its meter, that is, the fixed and conventional basic syllable pattern upon which the line is made; 2. its rhythm, that is, the free and ever changing movement of the line, as brought out by natural, expressive reading; 3. the subtle relationship between meter and rhythm, the meter, once suggested, arousing a certain expectancy in the reader, by the satisfaction or the disappointment of which the poet can make the least rhythmic fluctuation of his line infinitely expressive.

Consider two lines from Tennyson's *The Princess*:

They lost their weeks, they vexed the souls of deans.
A little clockwork steamer paddling plied.

These lines are regular enough. Each weak syllable is followed by a syllable of relative insistency. Are then the lines mechanically regular? By no means; for: 1. each weak syllable and strong syllable has its individual qualities of length, pitch, timbre; and the degree of stress varies; 2. there is a pause or cesura (Latin, *caesura,* cutting) in the first line, after "They lost their weeks," and the pattern, in the second line, of "A little clockwork" is not –′–′–, but –′–′ˋ; that is, the second syllable of "clockwork" has too much insistency to be called weak; 3. the *phrasing,* that is, the grouping of unstressed syllables about the stresses, as determined of course by the constitution of the words themselves and by the syntax, is not at all the same in both lines: in the first line it is: They lost their weeks, they vexed the souls of deans; in the second line it is: A little clockwork steamer paddling plied.

Ordinary scansion cannot picture all these irregularities; syllables must be marked roughly, stressed, unstressed, or half-stressed, without regard for subtle differences of intensity, or length, or pitch, or timbre. We can, however, easily mark pauses, and we can indicate the phrasing:

They lost their weeks, they vexed the souls of deans.

Meter –′ –′ –′ –′ –′
Rhythm –′ –′ / –′ –′ –′

A little clockwork steamer paddling plied.

Meter –′ –′ –′ –′ –′
Rhythm –′ –′ ˋ′ –′ –′

The difference between the two lines can now be seen at a glance. Both are iambic pentameter lines, but the first has a cesura (marked with a slant line), and its phrasing (marked by underscoring) is regularly rising or iambic; the line flows equably, in the rhythm of smooth innocuousness. The second line has a slightly irregular third foot, (‵′) instead of (–′), and its phrasing is predominantly falling or trochaic; the line running its rhythm with mechanical consistency against the metric base, may, in its toylike precision, be felt to be suggestive of the image it carries.

Before attempting to illustrate further this system of scansion, let us observe that all rhythmic variations —and the possibility here is infinite—must necessarily fall under one of three heads: 1. variation of stress, 2. variation of cesura, 3. variation of syllable number. The first two have already been introduced; let us spend a moment on the third.

The fact is, that, as regards syllable number, there are two great metric traditions in English poetry, the Anglo-Saxon and the French. One scans Anglo-Saxon verse by counting stresses, classical French verse by counting syllables. We call the one type of verse *stress verse*, the other, *syllable-counting verse.*[1]

Fyrst forð gewāt; flota wæs on yðum,
Time (forth) passed; [the] ship was on [the] waves,

bāt under beorge. Beornas gearwe
[the] boat under [the] hill. [The] warriors ready

on stefn stigon; strēamas wundon,
on [to the] stem sprang; [the ocean-] streams twisted,

sund wið sande; secgas bǣron
sea against sand; [the] men bore

on bearm nacan beorhte frætwe,
into [the] bosom of [the] ship bright armor,

gūð-searo geatolic; guman ūt scufon,
war-armor splendid; [the] men out shoved,

weras on wil-sīð, wudu
[the] men on [the] willing-journey, [the] ship [well-]

bundenne.
braced.

gewāt þā ofer wǣg-holm winde gefȳsed
Departed then over [the] billowy sea wind impelled

flota fāmī-heals fugle gelīcost.
[the ship] foamy-necked [to a] bird most like.

Beowulf, 210-218

The Anglo-Saxon line is made up regularly of two half lines held together by alliteration; each half line is composed of two feet, and each foot, in turn, is composed of a single predominant stress, either standing alone (monosyllabic foot) or accompanied by one or more unstressed or half-stressed syllables, the number of unstressed syllables constantly varying.

In the centuries following the Norman Conquest, English stress verse, though it persists in certain notable instances—Layamon's *Brut,* 13th Century; Langland's *Piers Plowman,* 14th Century—slowly gives way before the growing influence of French syllable-counting verse. Under this influence a new technique is developed, a technique brought to its perfection by Chaucer:

/ _ / _ / \ / _ / _
Love, ayeins the which who-so defendeth

_ / _ / \ / _ / _ / _
Him-selven most, him alder-last avayleth,

_ / _ / \ / _ _ / _ / _
With desespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,

_ / _ _ _ / _ / _ / _
That streyght un-to the deeth myn herte sayleth.

_ / _ / \ / _ _ / _ / _
Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,

_ _ _ / _ / _ / _ / _
That to ben slayn it were a gretter Ioye

_ / _ / _ / _ / _ / _
To me than king of Grece been and Troye!

CHAUCER, *Troilus and Criseyde, Book I*

These lines do not have the strict syllable numbering of French verse. The classic French poet wrote to a fixed syllable count. The alexandrine, for example, is a verse of twelve, or, with feminine ending, of thirteen syllables:

N'allons point plus avant, demeurons, chère Oenone,
Je ne me soutiens plus—ma force m'abandonne:
Mes yeux sont éblouis du jour que je revoi,
Et mes genoux tremblants se dérobent sous moi.

RACINE, *Phèdre*

Chaucer, like all English poets—except of course those who write on the stress system—steers between the free syllable count of Anglo-Saxon verse, and the fixed syllable count of French verse. His favorite meter is the decasyllabic, or ten-syllable iambic line; he will occasionally omit the first syllable; he very frequently ends on an extra-metrical syllable (feminine ending), and he freely inserts an extra syllable here or there in the line, making an anapest of an iamb. The other variations of stress and of pause, he, of course, uses also:

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[1] Gerard Manley Hopkins speaks not of "stress" and "syllable counting," verse but of "sprung" and running rhythms.

Love, ayeins the which who-so defendeth

Meter -′ -′ -′ -′ -′
Rhythm ‸′ / -′ -′ / \′ -′-

The first syllable is here omitted; there is a pause after the first and after the third foot; the fourth foot has a half-stressed in place of an unstressed syllable, and there is an extra syllable at the end; that is, the line has feminine ending. The place of an omitted syllable is marked, in scansion, by a caret.

Following Chaucer, the great English poets have, for the most part, written in iambic, trochaic, dactylic, and anapestic meter, rather than in stress meter, allowing themselves, as Chaucer did, certain rhythmical variations of syllable number. In the more formal verse types—the heroic couplet, heroic blank verse, the sonnet, the Spenserian stanza, ottava rima, rime royal—variation of syllable number has, conventionally, been limited; in the less formal, lyrical types, variation of syllable number is exceedingly free. In the lyric, and in the lyric narrative, accordingly, it is often difficult to draw the line between stress and syllable-counting verse:

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.
TENNYSON, *Break, Break, Break*

The first line here may be scanned either upon a simple three-stress meter:

Break, break, break

Meter ′ ′ ′
Rhythm ′ / ′ ′

—or, in keeping with the other lines of the stanza, upon an anapestic trimeter base, with omission of syllables:

Break, break, break

Meter --′ --′ --′
Rhythm ‸ ‸′ / ‸ ‸′ / ‸ ‸′

Even in a poem written expressly on the stress system, a poet will occasionally fall back upon syllable counting:

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
COLERIDGE, *Christabel*

Coleridge asks us in his note to *Christabel* to scan by "counting in each line the accents, not the syllables." Most of the lines of the poem do indeed, scan in this way. Note, however, that the fourth line here (Áll in the míddle of the gáte) does not have four accents, as most lines in *Christabel* do. Nor can we scan it—without making it impossibly heavy, awkward, and tumbling—as a three-stress line (Áll in the míddle of the gáte). The peculiar rhythmical charm of the line, its light mysteriousness, depends, in fact, upon the iambic tetrameter base, which, without pegging the movement upon four stresses, gives it the rhythmical compass of four, and so lends it its floating quality.

All in the middle of the gate

Meter -′ - ′ -′ -′
Rhythm ‸′ --′ -- -′

Compare Milton's line, in the same meter, though in slightly different phrasing:

Under the hawthorne in the dale
L'Allegro

Meter -′ - ′ -′ -′
Rhythm ‸′ --′ -- -′

So much then for the one variation of syllable number. We return now to the illustration of variation in general, and to the study of the expressiveness of rhythmic variation. In the lines following, from different ages of English poetry, may be found some suggestion of what the poet can do.

Spenser, by running trochaic and dactylic phrasing against iambic meter, conveys, with beautiful art, his sense of the complexity of woven boughs:

With boughes and branches, which did broad dilate
Their clasping arms, in wanton wreathings intricate.
Faerie Queene

Meter -′ -′ -′ -′ -′ -′
Rhythm -′ -′ / -′ -′ -′ --

Shakespeare, in a famous scene of passion and darkness, makes his rhythm waver and pulse with the uncertainty of candleflame:

'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus; the flame of the taper
Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids.
Cymbeline

The doubtful stress of *that*, of *Perfumes*, of *toward*, gives to the movement a hovering, flickering quality, eloquent beyond speech. The scansion of the third line here is open to interpretation, as the scansion of a good line may very well be. We may scan (pronouncing *tōwárd*):

Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids.

Meter -' -' - ' -' -'
Rhythm '- '- / —' -' -'

—or (pronouncing *tówārd*):

Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids.

Rhythm ' ' --/- - ' - ' - '

—or (making *toward* a monosyllable):

Bows toward her, and would under-peep her lids.

Rhythm ' ' -/- - ' - ' - '

The truth is, we must not scan the line into inertness. It is the uncertainty of the rhythm—always felt, whatever the actual pronunciation may be—that makes all the charm.

In the lines following, Milton, whose rhythm always speaks for him, makes us feel, through the vehemence of juxtaposed stresses, and the tug of complex phrasing upon an iambic base, the clash of irreconcilable forces:

His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battles on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne.
Paradise Lost

The first line, making *power* a monosyllable, may be scanned:

His utmost power with adverse power opposed.

Meter -' -' -' -' -'
Rhythm '' \' -' \' -'

Contrast this enlocked line with Dryden's satirically loose and scuttling pentameter upon a less heroic rebel than Lucifer:

Turn rebel and run popularly mad.
Absalom and Achitophel

Meter -' -' -' -' -'
Rhythm '' — '' — -'

There is a good deal of movement in this line. The next, written by a poet who never fails to be passionate about bad art, is flat enough:

And ten low words oft creep in one dull line.
Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*

Meter -' -' -' -' -'
Rhythm -' '' '' -' ''

For startling, abrupt, vigorous movement, the poet will often begin his iambic line with a trochee: so Byron, in the line following, depicting the sudden gigantic movement of thunder:

Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud.
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

Meter -' -' - ' -' -'
Rhythm '- '' -/' -' ''

Shelley, whose rhythms are wonderfully free, loved especially to buoy his lines upon multiplied stresses, quivering with intensity, or throbbing with passion:

Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix.
Prometheus Unbound

Meter -' -' -' -' -'
Rhythm '' '' '' '' -'

Especially charming is the movement, filled with romantic distance, of the line following, by that chief inheritor of Spenser's alexandrine (iambic hexameter), Keats:

Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.
The Eve of St. Agnes

Meter -' -' -' -' -' -'
Rhythm -' -' -' \- -' -'

But perhaps the greatest virtuoso among nineteenth-century poets is Tennyson, to illustrate whose technical ingenuity would require endless particularization. We content ourselves with one example, a line in which the poet—through skillful phrasing, stress manipulation, and the use of extra-metrical light syllables—amuses himself by capturing the delicate eccentricity of water:

Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn.
Song, The Princess

Meter - ' -' -' - ' -'
Rhythm '— -' —' — - -'

5. TONE QUALITY

Having thus far studied the movement, we must now turn to a study of the sound of the poet's language. We are to see that as the poet works in specially patterned and specially expressive rhythm, so he works also in specially tempered and specially expressive sound. Following the usual procedure, we shall study:

1. *Rime:* the matching of the terminal sounds of words, the correspondence including the last accented vowel, and all that may follow the last accented vowel:

In the stormy east wind str*aining*,
The pale yellow woods were w*aning*.
TENNYSON, *The Lady of Shalott*

2. *Assonance:* sometimes called vowel rime; the correspondence of terminal accented vowel sounds in words whose terminal consonant sounds do not match:

While their hearts were jocund and sublime,
Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine.
MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*

3. *Alliteration:* called also initial or head rime: the writing together, or in close proximity, of words whose first accented syllables begin with the identical consonant sound (consonant alliteration), or of words beginning with vowels, whether identical or not (vowel alliteration):

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers.
HERRICK, *The Argument of His Book*

Bright effluence of bright essence increate.
MILTON, *Paradise Lost*

4. *Coliteration*—a comprehensive term, invented by the late American poet, Bliss Carman: the general agreement of consonant sounds, and the general agreement or expressive variegation of vowel sounds throughout the line:

Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore.
MILTON, *Paradise Lost*

Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.
SHELLEY, *Prometheus Unbound*

Trellised with intertwining charities.
THOMPSON, *The Hound of Heaven*

Thompson, in this line, suggests, through the winding of the rhythm upon expressively variegated vowels, the mystic maze of a Gothic window. The suggestive power of sound in poetry is indeed infinite. We shall limit ourselves to the brief illustration of what we may call the structural and expressive functions of sound.

The structural function of sound has, of course, its most obvious illustration in rime, by the help of which the poet may bind his lines together in couplets or stanzas:

A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
POPE, *An Essay on Criticism*

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewelled shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.
TENNYSON, *The Lady of Shalott*

But assonance and alliteration, too, may perform structural function: assonance, by lending the tonal stress of recurrent vowel sounds to the strong end-syllables of lines in series; alliteration, by bringing together the parts of a line (Anglo-Saxon verse), or by bracing the whole line with prominent initial sounds in repetition:

Assonance:

O how comely it is and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long oppressed!
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might
To quell the mighty of the earth, th' oppressor,
The brute and boist'rous force of violent men
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous and all such as honor truth.
MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*

Alliteration:

hlūdne in healle; þǣr wæs hearpan swēg.
Beowulf, 89

In sun-struck petal or in sun-struck bud.
SWINBURNE, *Tristram of Lyoness*

The structural function of sound may, however, be seen in its subtlest as well as in its most effective form in coliteration, which gives to the line, as a whole, an appropriate sensuous quality, light or heavy, rough or smooth, brittle or pliant—and here, of course, the structural and expressive functions of sound may be seen to meet:

> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.
> TENNYSON, *Song, The Princess*

These lines of Tennyson are obviously onomatopoeic; that is, the sounds are imitative. So are the lines following, by Milton—lines which, as it happens, Tennyson himself singled out as a good example of onomatopoeia:

> on a sudden open fly
> With impetuous recoil and jarring sound
> Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
> Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
> Of Erebus.
> *Paradise Lost*

Milton's art is subtler than Tennyson's, but onomatopoeia, even at its best, is the most obvious of poetical devices. Sounds need not be actually imitative to be expressive. It is enough that the poet should know when to use vigorous, when gentle, sounds; when to make liquid, when brazen, melody. For strong utterance, for rant—in satire, perhaps, or comic writing—he will put together explosive sounds:

> The raging rocks
> And shivering shocks
> Shall break the locks
> Of prison gates.
> *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*

So speaks the soul of bully Bottom. His playmate Quince cries:

> Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
> He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast.
> *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*

W. S. Gilbert tunes the praise of his stout hero, Alum Bey, to the same note:

> Oh, big was the bosom of brave Alum Bey,
> And also the region that under it lay.
> *Brave Alum Bey*

And Chaucer, by the same means, slyly touches off the embonpoint of his good monk:

> A manly man to been an abbot able.
> *Prologue, Canterbury Tales*

We learn that where Keats, in his great sonnet on Homer, wrote *Cortez*:

> Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes

—he should have written Balboa. But substitute Balboa for Cortez in the line, and what an exophthalmic hero you have: No, every line has its own texture, its own coliteration. You cannot patch it with foreign matter. Consider the magical richness of the word "gules" in the lines:

> Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
> And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
> As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
> Rose-bloom fell on her hands together prest.
> KEATS, *The Eve of St. Agnes*

We need scarcely forgive Keats the preciousness of the heraldic term "gules." Try in its place—if you can permit yourself the profanity—its modern equivalent, "red." How the depth, the liquid quality, the mystery passes from the picture: Observe the play on the deep "oo" sound in this passage: *boon, Rose-bloom, moon.* Shelley, too, makes it suggestive of depth:

> The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
> The sapless foliage of the ocean.
> *Ode to the West Wind*

The "l" and the "s" sounds, too, in the second line here, take on special appropriateness: indeed the "l" and "s" sounds, sometimes combined with "k" and "r," appear with remarkable frequency in images of light and of sheen:

> Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
> Now the sun is laid to sleep;
> Seated in thy silver chair,
> State in wonted manner keep.
> Hesperus entreats thy light,
> Goddess excellently bright.
> BEN JONSON, *Hymn to Diana*

> Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star.
> MILTON, *Comus*

> The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
> Soft o'er the shrouds aerial whispers breathe,
> That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
> Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
> Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold;
> Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
> Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light,
> Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
> Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew.
> POPE, *The Rape of the Lock*

> Fill your dim glens and liquid wildernesses.
> SHELLEY, *Prometheus Unbound*

In this last line, by Shelley, note—besides the characteristic coliteration for an image of light: (l, r, s, q)—the vowel focus of the line, upon the (i, e) sounds. Such medial assonance, as we may call it, seems to have the efficacy of staying the image. Contrast the fixed direction of this line, with the erratic:

> Five miles meandering with a mazy motion.
> COLERIDGE, *Kubla Khan*

The rhythmic maze presented by a long word, of varied vowel pitches, may, of course, be made especially expressive:

> Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
> Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
> Up-coiling and inveterately convolved.
> WORDSWORTH, *Yew Trees*

Pope, indeed, in a well-known line, makes his rhythm seem to turn full circle, upon the usually humdrum and respectable word *circumference*:

> To fifty chosen Sylphs, of special note,
> We trust th' important charge, the Petticoat:
> Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
> Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale;
> Form a strong line about the silver bound,
> And guard the wide circumference around.
> *The Rape of the Lock*

But indeed it is not at all uncommon for a word, prosaic or colorless enough in the dictionary, to take on, with benefit of rhythm and sound, a new virtue, sometimes even a new meaning, in poetry. Consider what impetuosity is expressed by the apparently sober word *unpremeditated*, what unexpected signification is assumed by the unpromising word *snarling*, in the two passages following:

> Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
> Bird thou never wert,
> That from heaven, or near it,
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.
> SHELLEY, *To a Skylark*

> Soon, up aloft,
> The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide.
> KEATS, *The Eve of St. Agnes*

The rough "ch" sound, in the word *chide* here takes up beautifully the cue of the "snarling"—albeit silver snarling—of the trumpets. The "ch" sound has humbler function in the following satirical passage, in which, also, may be found further illustration of the expressiveness of movement upon variegated vowels:

> The man who laugh'd but once, to see an ass
> Mumbling to make the cross-grain'd thistles pass,
> Might laugh again, to see a jury chaw
> The prickles of unpalatable law.
> DRYDEN, *The Medal*

One visualizes clearly enough here the industrious routine of the ass's jaws. Compare:

> a few cattle looking up aslant
> With sleepy eyes and *meek mouths ruminant.*
> LEIGH HUNT, *Story of Rimini*

Dryden, who on one occasion defined poetry as "wit-writing," has all too infrequently been given his due as one of our chief craftsmen in sensuous language. What can be better, as regards merely the clever suiting of the music to the sense, than the last line of the following passage, in which MacFlecknoe, the prince "Through all the realms of nonsense absolute," may be seen bowing his mighty and stupid head three times—so we may imagine it—three colossal nods of conclusiveness, over the weighty matter of deciding "which of all his sons was fit To reign, and wage immortal war with wit":

> This aged prince, now flourishing in peace,
> And blest with issue of a large increase;
> Worn out with business, did at length debate
> *To settle the succession of the state.*
> *MacFlecknoe*

How the rhythm lurches forward—one syllable, three syllables, and again three—to the alliterated and coliterated s-sounds:

> To Set—tle the sucCes—ion of the State.

Elsewhere he makes the same design upon the "p" sound:

> And popularly prosecute the Plot.
> *Absalom and Achitophel*

The word *popularly*, in this satire of Dryden's, can be depended upon to clown it: *Turn rebel and run popularly mad; On each side bowing popularly low.*

Dryden, like many another English poet, exploits the "p" sound in vehement, indignant, or ceremonious utterance:

> The Presbyter, puff'd up with spiritual pride.
> *The Medal*

> Swift, unbespoken pomps thy steps proclaim.
> *Absalom and Achitophel*

This may recall Shakespeare's:

> Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war.
> *Othello*

The "p" sound, in combination with the more sonorous "b" and the energetic "r", makes one of the ruling sounds in the coliteration of the voluptuous picture of the famous Nile scene:

> The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
> Burn'd on the water; the poop was beaten gold,
> Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
> The winds were love-sick with them.
>
> *Anthony and Cleopatra*

The medial assonance (burnish'd, Burn'd, Purple, perfumed) seems here—as medial assonance is likely to do—to fix and intensify the image. Contrast these gorgeous and Egyptian harmonies with the delicate textures and tones of the English picture, following:

> On her left breast
> A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops
> I' the bottom of a cowslip.
>
> *Cymbeline*

Here again, the medial assonance (On, spotted, drops, bottom)—but here the coliteration is made up predominantly of l's, r's, s's.

Shakespeare is indeed the master of what Newman called "the two-fold logos, the thought and the word." There is no important character in his pages, scarcely a character at all, who does not speak his own language, whose passion does not mould its own music. Othello has his amplitude, Hamlet his penetrating and earnest clarity, Macbeth his rounded and mysterious harmonies, Lear his impatient thunderings and sudden helpless transparencies:

> *Othello:* Set you down this;
> And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
> When a malignant and a turban'd Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by the throat the circumcised dog,
> And smote him thus.
>
> *Hamlet:* O! I die, Horatio;
> The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:
> I cannot live to hear the news from England,
> But I do prophesy the election lights
> On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice;
> So tell him, with the occurents, more or less,
> Which have solicited—The rest is silence.
>
> *Macbeth:* She should have died hereafter;
> There would have been a time for such a word.
> To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time.
>
> *Lear:* And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life!
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never!
> Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir.
> Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
> Look there, look there.

There are no bristling coliterations or dainty assonances in these passages—the thought is all; but the thought has its proper music.

6. VERSE FORMS

Rime, we have seen, serves to group single lines of verse into couplets or stanzas. We have now to describe briefly the most important—because historically the best established, of such groupings. But rime, as Milton pointed out, is essential neither to the music of the line, "which consists only in apt numbers [feet, measures], fit quantity of syllables," nor to the grouping of lines, the natural unifying agent of which is "the sense variously drawn out from one line to another, not . . . the jingling sound of like endings." We shall accordingly review, first, the chief English rimed forms; secondly, the unrimed—the so-called *blank verse* forms, and free verse.

The Ballad Stanza. The ballad stanza, the typical stanza form of the folk ballads or popular ballads, is a quatrain of alternating iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter lines, rimed on the short lines only, the rime scheme being: *x a y a.* (See page 199.)

Rime Royal. Rime royal, probably so named after the French *chant royal,* was, in England, first used by Chaucer, with whom it was a great favorite. It is a stanza of seven iambic pentameter lines, riming *ababbcc.* Rime royal is seen at its best in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde.*

Ottava rima. This stanza, used most brilliantly by Byron in his *Don Juan,* is the stanza of the great Renaissance Italian epic poets, Ariosto and Tasso. It was brought into England by Wyatt. The stanza has eight iambic pentameter lines, rimed *abababcc.*

The Spenserian Stanza. This, one of the most beautiful of English stanza forms, was created by Spenser, for his *Faerie Queene.* It consists of two intertwined iambic pentameter quatrains, and of a concluding rime-linked iambic hexameter, the rime scheme being *ababbcbcc.* The Spenserian stanza is the stanza form of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* Shelley's *Adonais,* Keats's *The Eve of St. Agnes.* Not even Keats, ardent disciple of Spenser that he was, could equal his master's art in this stanza.

The Sonnet. The sonnet is not a stanza form, but a poem—characteristically, though not invariably, a lyrical poem—of fourteen iambic pentameter lines, rimed in the Italian manner (Italian sonnet), or in the English manner (English sonnet).

The Italian sonnet—introduced into England by Wyatt, a translator and imitator of the greatest Italian sonneteer, Petrarch—falls into two parts: an octave (rimed generally, *abbaabba*), and a sestet (rimed on two or on three rimes, two typical arrangements being *cdcdcd* and *cdecde*). The greatest practitioners in the Italian form are Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, and D. G. Rossetti.

The English form of the sonnet, contrived by Wyatt's younger friend, Surrey, falls into three quatrains and a couplet, the typical scheme being *abab cdcd efef gg*. The greatest writer of English sonnets is Shakespeare, after whom the form is sometimes named the Shakespearean sonnet.

The Ode. The ode (Greek *ōdē*, song) is, in its more elaborate forms, the most complex of lyrical structures. Four types of ode are distinguished in English: 1. the true Pindaric; 2. the false Pindaric, or free English; 3. the regular stanzaic; 4. the free choral ode, or chorus.

The true Pindaric ode, named after the greatest Greek lyrical poet, Pindar, is built up in large three-part periods of strophe (turn), antistrophe (turn back), and epode (stand)—these figures having originally corresponded with the movements of the Greek choral dance. Strophe and antistrophe—structurally alike in any one period—may change their forms from period to period; the form of the epode, differing from that of the strophe and antistrophe, is fixed throughout the poem. The first English poet to attempt the Pindaric structure was Ben Jonson; the best odes in this form are, by general consent, Gray's *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*.

The free English ode was popularized by Cowley. It is made up of strophes of ever varying length and meters. Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, his *Alexander's Feast*, and his *Ode to the Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew*, are the first masterpieces in this type. Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, is perhaps our greatest free English ode.

The regular stanzaic ode differs from non-odic verse only by its greater elevation of tone, by its rhapsodic or ceremonial quality, and by the technical characteristic that it tends to combine long and short lines. Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Ode on a Grecian Urn* may be taken to be the best examples of this type. Certain regular stanzaic odes, the stanza form of which is relatively simple and seems to be modeled upon the odes of Horace, may suitably be called Horatian. We may mention Andrew Marvell's *Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* and Collins's *Ode to Evening*.

The free choral ode or chorus—an imitation of the choral odes of the Greek drama—is the freest of metrical forms, and is indeed but a step removed from free verse, that is, verse without meter. The chorus is seen at its best in Milton's *Samson Agonistes*; Milton here, without quite abandoning his iambic base, moves freely and daringly upon lines of various length, and modulates easily and expressively from rime to assonance, and from assonance to blank verse—verse without rime.

Terza rima. Terza rima, the rime scheme of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, is a species not so much of stanzaic as of continuous verse, the lines being arranged in an unbroken chain of rime-linked tercets, according to the scheme *aba bcb cdc ded*, etc. At the end of his canto Dante would conclude the series with a closing fourth line: *xyx yzyz*. Terza rima, though introduced long ago, by Chaucer, has never enjoyed frequent use in England. It may be seen at its best in Shelley's *The Triumph of Life*, and—in modified form—in his *Ode to the West Wind*. Browning uses it in *The Statue and the Bust* and William Morris in *The Defence of Guinevere*.

The Rimed Couplet. Two forms of the English rimed couplet surpass all others in importance: the octosyllabic or iambic tetrameter couplet, and the decasyllabic or iambic pentameter couplet. The tetrameter couplet has never been more beautifully used than by Milton in his *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. The pentameter or heroic couplet is one of the greatest of English verse forms, and deserves special attention.

It was apparently in the seventeenth century that the term "heroic" came to be applied to the iambic pentameter, as being the meter of the greatest English dramatic, epic, and narrative poetry. The heroic verse of ancient Greece and Rome is the dactylic hexameter; the heroic verse of France is the alexandrine. In English criticism the expression "heroic" seems to be reserved for the iambic pentameter couplet (the heroic couplet) and for iambic pentameter unrimed (heroic blank verse).

We distinguish two forms of the heroic couplet: the open and the closed. In the open couplet the sense is variously drawn over the line endings; the lines are, as we say, run-on lines (French: *enjambement*); in the closed couplet, the sense is cut to the line endings, the lines are, as we say, end-stopped.

Chaucer, the first and perhaps the greatest master of the heroic couplet, combines, with the finest artistic tact, the open and the closed types. He gains succinctness and emphasis by the use of end-stopped lines, freedom and colloquial ease by the use of run-on lines. He will stop the clause or the sentence, as it suits him, at the end of the first or at the end of the second line of the couplet:

> This maked Emelye have remembraunce
> To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
> Y-clothed was she fresshe, for to devyse;
> Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse
> Bihynde hir bak a yerde long, I gesse;
> And in the gardyn at the sonne up-riste,
> She walketh up and doun, and as hire liste
> She gadereth floures, party white and rede,
> To make a subtil gerland for hire hede,
> And as an aungel hevenysshly she soong.
> Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*

Chaucer's rhythm is the delightful rhythm of the story-teller. A tidier art, following, in the seventeenth century, upon the lawlessness of a good deal of late Renaissance verse, patterned English heroic couplet verse into what may be described as a mosaic of distichs, that is, into a series of rhythmically independent closed couplets. It is this perfectly conventionalized verse—capable within its fixed limits, be it noted, of infinite variety—which became established in the neoclassical or Augustan age, as the accepted mode of poetical expression:

> Nature to all things fixed the limits fit,
> And wisely curbed proud man's pretending wit.
> As on the land while here the ocean gains,
> In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;
> Thus in the soul while memory prevails,
> The solid pow'r of understanding fails;
> Where beams of warm imagination play,
> The memory's soft figures melt away.
> One science only will one genius fit;
> So vast is art, so narrow human wit:
> Not only bounded to peculiar arts,
> But oft in those confined to single parts.
> Pope, *An Essay on Criticism*

The young Keats rebels at the formalism of the closed couplet:

> Yes, a schism
> Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
> Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
> Men were thought wise who could not understand
> His glories: with a puling infant's force
> They sway'd about upon a rocking horse,
> And thought it Pegasus. Ah, dismal soul'd!
> The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
> Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue
> Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
> Of summer nights collected still to make
> The morning precious: beauty was awake!
> Why were ye not awake?
> Keats, *Sleep and Poetry*

We must not look for justice here. An intimation of Keats's maturer acquaintance with neoclassical art may be found in the couplets of his *Lamia*, the rhythms of which seem to have benefited by a close study of Dryden's versification.

The lack of firmness, often commented upon, in Keats's earlier verses, may be partly accounted for by his uncertainty in the use of rime. In Chaucer, in Pope, the rimes are honest and expressive; in the writing of the young Keats, the enemy of formalism, the rimes are often merely formal. Chaucer could never have harbored the naïve theory that rimes are to be used casually or with an affectation of nonchalance; his rimes fall always into one of two well-recognized classes: they are either good strong *paused* rimes, that is, end-stopped rimes, or good strong *poised* rimes, that is, rimes upon which the voice, without pausing, may, in passing, linger, or increase its intensity, or pitch, or somehow modify its tone quality (timbre) to mark the end of the line. Every capable reader, every actor whose purpose is not the mistaken one of turning his verse systematically into prose, knows how to poise his line endings.

A careful reading of the passage from *Sleep and Poetry*, given above, will make it sufficiently clear that Keats, not yet passed from his apprenticeship, had but a very exceptional beginner's understanding of the subtle art of riming. The rime *barbarism* may be technically described as a slighted rime, that is, a rime without stress; a slighted rime may nevertheless be expressive, and *schism* and *barbarism* go very well together; unfortunately *barbarism* is the last word one can apply to neoclassical art. The rime *understand* is a good strong poised rime, but the stress it demands is slightly false to the sense. The word *horse* makes a vigorous and expressive end-stopped rime; the rime *roll'd* is an excellent poised rime; but the rime *dew* cannot be either paused or poised, a pause being offensive to the syntax, a poise to the sense. Finally, the rime-word *make*, being completely lacking in associative power, the echoing word *awake* seems to be conscripted by mechanical law, rather than by any imaginative necessity.

Heroic Blank Verse. Heroic blank verse, iambic pentameter unrimed (Italian: *versi sciolti:* verses "freed" [from rime]), was first used in England by Surrey in his translation of the second and third books of the *Aeneid*. Blank verse is the supreme verse form, the "organ voice" of England, the metric instrument of Shakespeare (in drama), of Milton (in epic), of Wordsworth (in philosophical and narrative poetry), of Tennyson (in epic, narrative, and lyric).

Technically, it is convenient to distinguish three types of blank verse: 1. end-stopped blank verse; 2. run-on blank verse with paused and poised, and sometimes with feminine, endings; 3. run-on blank verse with paused, poised, feminine, and slighted endings. Illustration of all three types may be found in the plays of Shakespeare, whose technical development may be described as a progress from the first to the third type.

End-stopped blank verse:

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
And then grace us in the disgrace of death;
When, spite of cormorant devouring Time,
The endeavour of the present breath may buy
That honour which shall bate his scythe's keen edge,
And make us heirs of all eternity.
Love's Labour's Lost

As Shakespeare's art advanced he sought for freer rhythmic expression, and attained it by varying the structure of his line, and by variously drawing out the sense from line to line:

Run-on blank verse:

Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age,
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck (pause)
A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,
Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd (poise)
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly, (pause)
Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,
And with indented glides did slip away (poise)
Into a bush; under that bush's shade (pause)
A lioness with udders all drawn dry,
Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,
When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis (poise)
The royal disposition of that beast
To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead.
As You Like It

Toward the end of his career Shakespeare, without losing any of the vigor of his middle period, moved still further in the direction of freedom and naturalness; he would sometimes slight altogether the end-syllables of his lines (weak, or slighted endings)—sometimes overburden his last foot with an extrametrical syllable (feminine ending):

Remember, sir, my liege, (pause)
The kings your ancestors, together with (slighted ending)
The natural bravery of your isle, which stands (pause)
As Neptune's park, ribbed and paled in (pause)
With rocks unscaleable and roaring waters,
With sands, that will not bear your enemies' boats,
But suck them up to the topmast. A kind of conquest (feminine ending)
Caesar made here, but made not here his brag (poise)
Of "came, and saw, and overcame": with shame—
The first that ever touch'd him—he was carried (feminine ending)
From off our coast, twice beaten; and his shipping— (feminine ending)
Poor ignorant baubles!—on our terrible seas,
Like egg-shells mov'd upon our surges, crack'd (poise)
As easily 'gainst our rocks.
Cymbeline

7. FREE VERSE

Free verse may be defined simply as verse without meter. It is distinguished technically from prose by the fact that it is written in lines; that is, its rhythms are composed, not merely printed, in lines. Free verse, like regular or metrical verse, should be read with due attention to syllable quantity, and to the various expressiveness of paused and poised line endings. In the free choral odes of Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, and in such poems as Matthew Arnold's *Philomela*, may be seen the approach, on the part of our classical poets, to the complete freedom of free verse.

Once, Paumanok,
When the lilac-scent was in the air and Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this seashore in some briers,
Two feather'd guests from Alabama, two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird to and fro near at hand,
And every day the she-bird crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.
WHITMAN, *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*

8. PROSE SCANSION

The rhythm of verse—excepting, of course, free verse—is, we have seen, metrical, the rhythm of prose, free. We have now to inquire into the nature of free rhythm, and into the possibilities of its expressiveness.

A moment's reflection will make it clear that the syllable sequence of language, made up as it is of varying alternations of strong and weak syllables, must fall into a succession, in various orders, of four types of syllable arrangements. The rhythm may: 1. *rise* from a weak to a strong syllable (Type: –′; Variations: –′, ––′ –\′, *etc.*); 2. *fall* from a strong to a weak syllable (Type: ′–; Variations: ′–, ′––, ′\–, *etc.*); 3. *wave* upon a pattern of a strong syllable between two weak (Type: –′–; Variations: ––′–, –\′–, ––′ \–, *etc.*), or a weak syllable between two strong (Type: ′–′; Variations: ′––′, ′ \–′, *etc.*); 4. remain *level* upon one or more strong syllables (Type: ′; Variations: ′′, ′′′, ′′′′). It is, then, an ever varying succession of rising, falling, waving, and level rhythms that we may expect to find in language. In verse these rhythms are, as we have seen, accommodated to some meter; in prose they remain free, and it is, therefore, in the markings of the four rhythmic types and of their variations that the scansion of prose must consist.

Studies serve for delight, / for ornament, /
′–   ′   —′   –′––

and for ability.
——′––

Bacon, *Of Studies*

We have, here, as in the scansion of verse, marked the rhythmic phrasing and the pauses. Bacon's sentence may be seen to be composed of five rhythmic phrases or speech groups, the rhythm of the first speech group (Studies) being of the type we have called *falling*; of the second (serve), *level*; of the third (for delight), *rising*; of the fourth and fifth (for ornament), (and for ability), *wave*.

This, then, is the way that prose patterns may be scanned. But to scan prose in this way is, of course, to mark merely the atomic units of prose rhythm. The speech groups are but the "feet" of prose. What now are the larger units of prose rhythm? An analysis of a well-known sentence of Izaak Walton's will bring us to the right answer:

Look! / under that broad beech-tree I sat down, /
′   _\′   ′′   \\′

when I was last this way a-fishing; / and the birds
_′   ′′   _′_   —′

in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly
——′_   ′   _′   _′_

contention with an echo, / whose dead voice
_′_   —′_   \′′

seemed to live in a hollow tree / near to the brow
_′   —′_   ′   ′   ––′

of that primrose-hill.
_\′\   ′

The Compleat Angler

We have, as in our scansion of Bacon's sentence, marked the speech groups, their patterns, and the pauses. We have now to note that speech groups may combine, at lesser or greater length, into larger rhythmic units, marked here by the pause mark (/). These larger units we shall call *rhythmic groups*, and a rhythmic group may at once be defined as a unit of rhythm indivisible by cesura. Secondly, we may note that the rhythmic groups, in turn, combine into still larger units, ending in a partial or complete relaxation of the voice, the first relaxation (partial) coming, in Walton's sentence, after the word *a-fishing*; the second relaxation (complete) coming at the end of the sentence. We shall call these relaxation or cadential units—according as their cadence or relaxation is partial or complete—*lesser* or *greater cycles*, and a cycle may be defined as a rhythmic wave, following upon, and itself ending in, partial or complete relaxation. If now, keeping the single slant line to mark the end of a rhythmic group, we use a double slant line (//) to mark the end of a lesser cycle, and a triple slant line (///) to mark the beginning and end of a greater cycle, we may make a completer picture of Walton's sentence:

/// Look! / under that broad beech-tree I sat down,
′   _\′   ′′   \\′

when I was last this way a-fishing; // and the birds
_′   ′′   _′_   —′

in the adjoining grove seemed to have a friendly
——′_   ′   _′   _′_

contention with an echo, / whose dead voice
_′_   —′_   \′′

seemed to live in a hollow tree / near to the brow
_′   —′_   ′   ′   ––′

of that primrose-hill. ///
_\′\   ′

So much, then, for the patterns, and for the rhythmic units of prose rhythm. Before taking up the question of the expressiveness of rhythm in prose, we have yet another very important observation to make about the movement of the prose sentence. An examination of three short sentences from the *Centuries of Meditations*, by Traherne, will reveal what unanalytically perhaps we have always known about sentence movement.

> /// An empty book / is like an infant's soul, / which anything may be written. ///
>
> /// To contemn the world / and to enjoy the world / are things contrary to each other. ///
>
> /// The corn was orient and immortal wheat, / which never should be reaped, / nor was ever sown. ///

Each of these sentences will be seen to be composed of three rhythmic groups; each sentence, in other words, rounds out its cycle in three rhythmic impulses; nevertheless, the larger movement, the cyclic progress, of the three sentences, is not in each case the same. Observe that in the first sentence the movement ascends upon the first rhythmic group—the sense at the end of the group remaining still incomplete or anticipatory—turns and descends upon the second rhythmic group—the sense here becoming for the first time consummatory, and descends once more upon the third rhythmic group, which in sense is complementary to the second. The sentence, in short, ascends upon the first rhythmic group, turns and descends upon the second, and descends once more upon the third. The first rhythmic group constitutes, then, what we may call the ascent or *flow* of the sentence, the second and third rhythmic groups, the turn and descent, or, as we may call it, the *ebb* of the sentence. If now we adopt the three new symbols (Γ, [, L)—simple modifications of our pause mark (/)—to indicate respectively: a rhythmic ascent (Γ), a rhythmic turn ([ ), and a rhythmic descent (L), we may then make a complete picture of the cyclic movement of our sentence:

> /// An empty book Γ is like an infant's soul, [in which anything may be written. L ///

Since, however, the last rhythmic group of a sentence must necessarily be a descending group, we may omit the last, the "descent" mark (L), and our final picture will, then, be this:

> /// An empty book Γ is like an infant's soul, [in which anything may be written. ///

Turning now to the other two of our three sentences, we may note that the second evolves its cyclic movement according to the formula: ascent, ascent, turn-descent; and the third, according to the formula: turn-descent, descent, descent. In other words, the sense, and therefore the movement, of the second sentence remains anticipatory upon the first two groups, and becomes consummatory upon the third; the sense, and therefore the movement, of the third sentence becomes consummatory upon the first group, and descends in two complementary cadences on the second and third groups:

> /// To contemn the world Γ and to enjoy the world Γ are things contrary to each other. ///
>
> /// The corn was orient and immortal wheat, [which never should be reaped, L nor was ever sown. ///

We may now go a step further. It will be readily seen that a sentence the sense of which remains anticipatory to the end, is what the rhetorician calls a *periodic* sentence.

The closing-turn or periodic sentence:

> /// To contemn the world Γ and to enjoy the world Γ are things contrary to each other. ///

Again, a sentence the sense of which is at once consummatory, though it ebb away in a series of falls, is what the rhetorician would call a *loose* sentence. Our third sentence, our opening-turn sentence, is, then a loose sentence.

The opening-turn or loose sentence:

> /// The corn was orient and immortal wheat, [which never should be reaped, L nor was ever sown. ///

Finally, a sentence the anticipatory phrases of which are balanced by a more or less equal number of consummatory phrases, is what the rhetorician would call a *balanced* sentence. Our first sentence, then, our middle-turn sentence, is a balanced sentence.

The middle-turn or balanced sentence:

> /// An empty book Γ is like an infant's soul, [in which anything may be written. ///

We conclude, then, that sentences, according to the manner in which they round out their sense, and therefore their rhythmic cycle, may be said to belong to one of three types: 1. the opening-turn or loose sentence; 2. the closing-turn or periodic sentence; 3. the middle-turn or balanced sentence. The three short sentences we have analyzed are of course pure types. Other sentences, taken at random, will naturally be found to be compounds or mergings, in various combinations, of the three forms. At any rate, the inseparableness of sense and rhythm, of idea and sensuous form, is well demonstrated by our study of the sentence turn. We may pause for one last exemplification of the artistic oneness of thought and movement, before turning to the illustration, specifically, of the expressiveness of prose rhythm.

Nothing serves better to show the esthetic unity of language, as content and as form, than the repetition —according to rhetorical reduplications or antitheses of sense—of compound rhythmic patterns, or, as we shall call them, rhythmic designs:

> He only was (under God) the light of her eyes, and the cordial of her spirits, and the guide of her actions, and the measure of her affections.
>
> Jeremy Taylor, *Character of Lady Carbery*

The repeated rhythmic design here may be described as a compound pattern of rising and of wave rhythms, differing slightly from group to group, but having always the same general configuration:

He only was (under God)		
the light of her eyes,	-'	--'
and the cordial of her spirits,	--'	---'-
and the guide of her actions,	--'	--'-
and the measure of her affections.	--'	----'-

Repeated designs are used with special effectiveness in such rhetorical figures as antithesis and parallelism.

Parallelism:

> The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, ***had it been early, had been kind;*** but it has been delayed ***till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it.***
>
> Johnson, *Letter to the Earl of Chesterfield*

Such writing as this is of course characteristic of authors who affect a balanced style. By most writers the device of repeated design is avoided as being too ostentatious. That the reduplication of thought is well balanced by the reduplication of pattern is, however, obvious enough.

Another kind, not so much of repeated as of typical design, is the so called cursus, or conventional cadence, coming at the end of lesser or greater cycles. These cadences are found in Latin as well as in English prose, and are especially frequent in the Bible. Three types of English cursus have been distinguished:

Planus: pattern '--'- or '---'-

Tardus: pattern '--'-- or '---'--

Velox: pattern '--'-'- or '---'-'- or '---'-'--

A single instance of each type must suffice:

Planus '--' -

> The expiring senate displayed a sudden lustre, blazed for a moment, and was ***extinguished forever.***
>
> Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

Tardus '--'--

> Hell is darkness; and the way to it is the cloud of ignorance; hell itself is but condensed ignorance, ***multiplied ignorance.***
>
> Donne, *Sermons*

Velox '--'-'-

> What song the sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are ***not beyond all conjecture.***
>
> Browne, *Hydriotaphia*

The cursus must be thought to add, not so much to the absolute expressiveness, as to the dignity or stateliness of a passage. We turn now to the brief illustration, specifically, of the expressiveness of rhythm in prose.

De Quincey, in a complex pattern of rising, falling, wave, and level rhythms, makes us feel the redoubtable commotion of a departing mail coach:

> Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir! what sea-like ferment! what a thundering of wheels! what a trampling of hoofs! what a sounding of trumpets! what farewell cheers! what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation!
>
> *The English Mail Coach*

Contrast this rearing, plunging, bounding, and dashing, with the considered pace, halted gently upon the long vowels, of the following predominantly waved and level rhythms:

> As Florian Deleal walked, one hot afternoon, he overtook by the wayside a poor aged man, and, as he seemed weary with the road, helped him on with the burden which he carried, a certain distance.
>
> Pater, *The Child in the House*

The vowels are indeed important in prose, as in verse. Observe how Carlyle, in the sentence following, makes his rhythm actually writhe in the tortuous maze of difficult vowel and consonant passages:

> He began anywhere: you put some question to him, made some suggestive observation: instead of answering this, or decidedly setting out towards answer of it, he would accumulate formidable apparatus, logical swim-bladders, transcendental life-preservers and other precautionary and vehiculatory gear for setting out.
>
> *Life of Sterling*

Where the vowels are not variegated but repeated, there may be, in prose, the same intensification and focusing of emotion that we found in assonantal verse:

> I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl on the surface of the earth.
>
> SWIFT, *Gulliver's Travels*

The long "a" sound is repeated in the words: *natives, race, nature;* and the "u" sound, in *bulk, pernicious, vermin, suffered, surface, earth.* The rhythm in such a passage as this is held to the faithful rebound of the hammer on the anvil.

Sound and rhythm conspire, at the end of the following sentence, by Donne, to suggest the reverberations, as of thunder deadening and renewing, of the divine wrath:

> The almighty God himself only knows the weight of this affliction, and except he put in that *pundus gloriae*, that exceeding weight of an eternal glory, with his own hand, into the other scale, we are weighed down, we are swallowed up, irreparably, irrevocably, irrecoverably, irremediably.
>
> *Sermons*

The narrowing sound and falling rhythm are here wonderfully expressive of loss and despair. Milton, too, knew how, through the majestic wave rhythms of linked polysyllables, to suggest the noble and ineffable vastness of the eternal:

> and in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in over-measure for ever.
>
> *Of Reformation in England*

The grandeur of this, of the mere movement of this "large utterance" is to be explained as much by the boundless sweep of the rhythmic groups and cycle as by the patterns of the speech groups. The length of the group and cycle is, indeed, of the greatest stylistic importance. Contrast Milton's seraphic music with Carlyle's yelpings in the hell below:

> Straw is burnt; three cartloads of it, hauled thither, go up in white smoke: almost to the choking of patriotism itself; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart; and Réole the "gigantic haberdasher," another. Smoke as of Tophet; confusion as of Babel; noise as of the Crack of Doom!
>
> *The French Revolution*

Much depends, in such writing as this—characteristic of Carlyle's crooked, electric style—upon the nervous jerk of short staccato groups. It is the right rhythm for the man of action:

> *Prince.* We two saw you four set on four and you bound them, and were masters of their wealth.
>
> SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry the Fourth*

—or for the spasmodic eloquence of a gossip:

> "O, my dear sir, how are you this morning? My dear Miss Woodhouse—I come quite overpowered. Such a beautiful hindquarter of pork! You are too bountiful! Have you heard the news? Mr. Elton is going to be married."
>
> JANE AUSTEN, *Emma*

But brevity, if not too tightly strung, may make for dignity and simplicity rather than for verve or gush:

> Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth into life, and few there be that find it.
>
> *St. Matthew*

Ruskin, who was master of two styles, the elaborate and the simple, knew how to expand or contract his rhythmic compass according to the requirements of his theme. Contrast the spacious circlings of the first passage following, with the thwarted prison-pacings of the second:

> And then you will hear the sudden rush of the awakened wind, and you will see those watch-towers of vapor swept away from their foundations, and waving curtains of opaque rain let down to the valleys, swinging from the burdened clouds in black, bending fringes, or pacing in pale columns along the lake level.
>
> *Modern Painters*

> Turner saw the exact reverse of this. In the present work of men, meanness, aimlessness, unsightliness: thin-walled, lath-divided, narrow-garreted houses of clay; booths of a darksome Vanity Fair, busily base.
>
> *Modern Painters*

Lamb, too, the mockingbird of English writers, was master of all melodies and of all rhythms. No one has ever played more, or better, with words than he, and no one has ever understood so well the gait, the habit, the personality of words. A single passage from Lamb is like a single facet of a jewel; it is admirable, but we want the others:

> Our clock appears to have struck. We are superannuated. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony, to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore we cherish dreams.
>
> *Popular Fallacies: That We Should Rise with the Lark*

Lamb's style is the product not of one, but of three centuries: Browne and Addison remain alive in him. Of the other great prose masters of Lamb's own century, Landor is undoubtedly the most purely artistic. We look in Landor for our irreproachable examples of poetical prose, as we look in Swift for our irreproachable examples of admirable prosaic prose.

How different a thing English prose rhythm can become in the hands of these two masters, may be seen from the passages following:

> My dream expanded and moved forward. I trod again the dust of Posilipo, soft as the feathers in the wings of Sleep. I emerged on Baia; I crossed her innumerable arches; I loitered in the breezy sunshine of her mole; I trusted the faithful seclusion of her caverns, the keepers of so many secrets; and I reposed on the buoyancy of her tepid sea. Then Naples, and her theatres and her churches, and grottoes and dells and forts and promontories, rushed forward in confusion, now among soft whispers, now among sweetest sounds, and subsided, and sank, and disappeared.
>
> LANDOR, *The Dream of Boccaccio*

> This diversion is only practised by those persons who are candidates for great employments and high favour at court. They are trained in this art from their youth and are not always of noble birth or education. When a great office is vacant either by death or disgrace (which often happens), five or six of those candidates petition the Emperor to entertain his Majesty and the court with a dance on the rope, and whoever jumps the highest without falling succeeds in the office.
>
> SWIFT, *Gulliver's Travels*

Landor works like a poet, from rhythm to sound, from sound to meaning; his music is enriched by meaning, his meaning by music. His words are those "passion-winged Ministers of thought" Shelley conceived of in his *Adonais,* words with

> strength to pierce the guarded wit,
> And pass into the panting heart beneath
> With lightning and with music.

Swift's art is the art of pure prose: "the proper word in the proper place," applied logic. His business with sound and rhythm—for he too works in a musical medium—is to make them seem transparent. That we hear nothing and see everything when Swift speaks, is the peculiar triumph of his art. He wounds through the mind, and we know how deep such a wound goes.

Here then we have the two extremes of literary technique: at the one the writer exploits to the full the sensuous powers of language, at the other he makes of language an extraordinarily precise and lucid medium of thought.

Glossary of Literary Terms

Alexandrine the French heroic line; in classical French verse, a line of twelve, or with feminine ending, of thirteen syllables; in English verse, a line of six iambic feet.

Alliteration the writing together, or in proximity, of words beginning with identical consonant sounds: *bed, bird* (consonant alliteration), or with vowel sounds, identical or not: *ever, aye* (vowel alliteration).

Antistrophe counterturn, the movement following the strophe, or turn, in the Pindaric ode.

Apostrophe literally, a turning away; a digression within a discourse, the speaker turning to address a real or imaginary person, power, or thing.

Assonance the matching of vowel sounds within words. **Assonantal rime** the riming of accented vowel but not consonant sounds: *victory, billow.*

Aubade a morning song.

Ballad a song narrative, or story in song. **Folk ballad, popular ballad, traditional ballad** a ballad of the people, a ballad of unknown authorship. **Literary ballad** a modern ballad in the manner of the old or traditional ballads.

Ballade a lyrical French form of three stanzas and an envoy, made upon a single set of rimes; stanzas and envoy end with the same refrain line.

Blank verse verse unrimed. **Heroic blank verse** iambic pentameter unrimed.

Burden (burthen) refrain.

Cadence rhythmic fall, or relaxation of movement partial or complete.

Cesura (cæsura) a break or pause in the line.

Chant royal a lyrical French form, a more elaborate form of the ballade; it consists of five stanzas and an envoy, all made upon the same set of rimes; stanzas and envoy end upon the same refrain line.

Conceit an ingenious or far-fetched figure or image; an involved or affected thought or expression.

Dactyl a foot of three syllables; in English: stress, unstress, unstress ('--).

Dimeter a line of two feet.

Dissonance in verse, a riming of consonants but not of vowels: *prod, prude.*

Distich a couplet.

Elegy a form of lyrical poetry; a mourning song.

End-stopped rime the rime of an end-stopped line; that is, of a line whose sense does not overflow into the next.

Enjambement the running on or overflow of the sense of one line into the next.

Epic a heroic narrative poem, of which the elements—in the classical epic—may be enumerated as: a national hero or heroes, a struggle involving man and the gods, a cosmogony or world view, the grand style.

Epigram a pithy or pointed saying or poem.

Epitaph a memorial inscription, in verse or prose.

Euphuism expression in the manner of Lyly's *Euphues*; that is, characterized by artificiality, overelaborateness, or preciousness, and by conscious manipulation of rhythm and tone quality.

Figure an extension or heightening of the ordinary powers of expressiveness of language by the imaginative, or striking, or suggestive use of words and word orders.

Foot the measure or bar in metrical verse.

Free verse verse in free rhythm; that is, poetical language whose rhythm is made to "turn" upon the line, but answers to no metrical norm or syllable pattern.

Heroic couplet see page 886.

Heroic verse the verse form of epic or tragedy; English: iambic pentameter; French: alexandrine; Greek and Latin: dactylic hexameter.

Hexameter a line of six feet.

Hyperbole figure of speech; exaggeration.

Iambic patterned upon the *iamb*, a foot of two syllables; in English: unstress, stress (-').

Idyl (idyll) a descriptive or pictorial narrative poem.

Invocation a calling upon, a prayer, as to the muse, or the Deity.

Lyric a poem of songlike quality. The chief types of the English lyric are: the song, elegy, ode, sonnet, ballad (narrative lyric).

Madrigal a love poem.

Measure the foot or bar in metrical verse.

Metaphor a figurative *identification* of one person or thing with another. Shylock speaks of Portia as "a Daniel come to judgment."

Meter the rhythmic norm, or basic syllable pattern, to which the rhythms of "regular" verse are accommodated.

Miltonic sonnet a sonnet rimed in the Italian manner; more especially, a sonnet in which the octave is run over (according to Milton's occasional practice) into the sestet.

Monometer a one-foot line.

Octave (octet) the first division, or eight lines, of a sonnet.

Onomatopoeia imitative sound.

Parallelism a figure of speech; the repetition of an idea in similar form or phrasing: *But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?*

Pastoral poetry poetry concerned with shepherds or rural life and scenes.

Pentameter a line of five feet.

Petrarchan sonnet a sonnet rimed in the Italian manner, the octave being *abbaabba*, and the sestet, typically, *cdecde* or *cdcdcd*.

Pindaric ode a highly wrought and impassioned or lofty lyrical poem in large periods of three-part structure: strophe (turn), antistrophe (turn back), and epode (stand).

Prosody the science of the elements and forms of verse.

Quatrain a stanza or rimed grouping of four lines.

Refrain (sometimes called **burden**) the repetition, exact or varied, of a phrase, line, or stanza, usually at regular intervals in a poem.

Rhythm ordered and expressive movement. **Metered rhythm** rhythm composed upon a given stress count (stress verse), or upon a given syllable pattern (syllabic verse). **Free rhythm** rhythm without meter; the rhythm of free verse and prose.

Rime (rhyme) the matching, in words, of the last accented vowel, and of such sounds as may follow the last accented vowel: *rod, pod; frittering, glittering.*

Rime royal a stanza of seven iambic pentameter lines riming *ababbcc*.

Rondeau a lyrical French form of thirteen lines (type 1), or of ten (type 2). In type 1 the first part of the first line serves for the refrain, which recurs according to the scheme *aabba, aabR, aabbaR*. In type 2 the first word of the first lines serves for refrain, recurring according to the scheme *abbaabR, abbaR*.

Rondel a lyrical French form; a poem of fourteen (type 1), or of thirteen (type 2) lines, with a two-line refrain. Type 1 is rimed according to the scheme *a(R)b(R)ab, baa(R)b(R), ababa (R)b(R)*. Type 2 rimes: *a(R)*b*(R)ba, aba(R)b(R), abbaa(R)*.

Roundel a lyrical French form of nine lines. The first part of the first line serves for refrain, which recurs according to the scheme: *aba(R,* riming with *b), bab, aba(R,* riming with *b)*.

Rune a letter of the primitive Teutonic alphabet; a cryptic poem.

Running rhythm see *sprung rhythm.*

Sestet six lines; the second part of a Petrarchan sonnet.

Sestina a lyrical French form of six six-line stanzas, and an envoy of three lines. The six terminal words of the lines of the first stanza recur in varying order, according to a complex scheme, as the terminal words of the lines in stanzas two to six, and as the medial and terminal words in the lines of the envoy. The sestina, originally without rime, is sometimes rimed by modern poets.

Shakespearean sonnet a sonnet rimed in the English manner: *abab cdcd efef gg.*

Simile a figurative comparison, the *likening* to one another of persons and things in different realms of being: *So like a shattered column lay the king.*

Sonnet a lyrical poem of fourteen iambic pentameter lines, rimed in the Italian manner (see *Petrarchan sonnet*) or in the English manner (see *Shakespearean sonnet*).

Spenserian stanza a nine-line stanza made up of eight iambic pentameters followed by one iambic hexameter, the rime being *ababbcbcc*.

Spondee a foot of two syllables; in English: stress, stress (").

Sprung rhythm the rhythm of stress, as distinguished from syllabic, verse. Gerard Manley Hopkins speaks not of stress and syllabic verse, but of verse in sprung and in running rhythm.

Stanza a group of lines of a fixed number, arrangement, and metrical pattern.

Strophe turn; the first part of the three-part period of a regular Pindaric ode. More loosely: any paragraph of odic or choral verse.

Terza rima see page 886.

Tetrameter a line of four feet.

Trimeter a line of three feet.

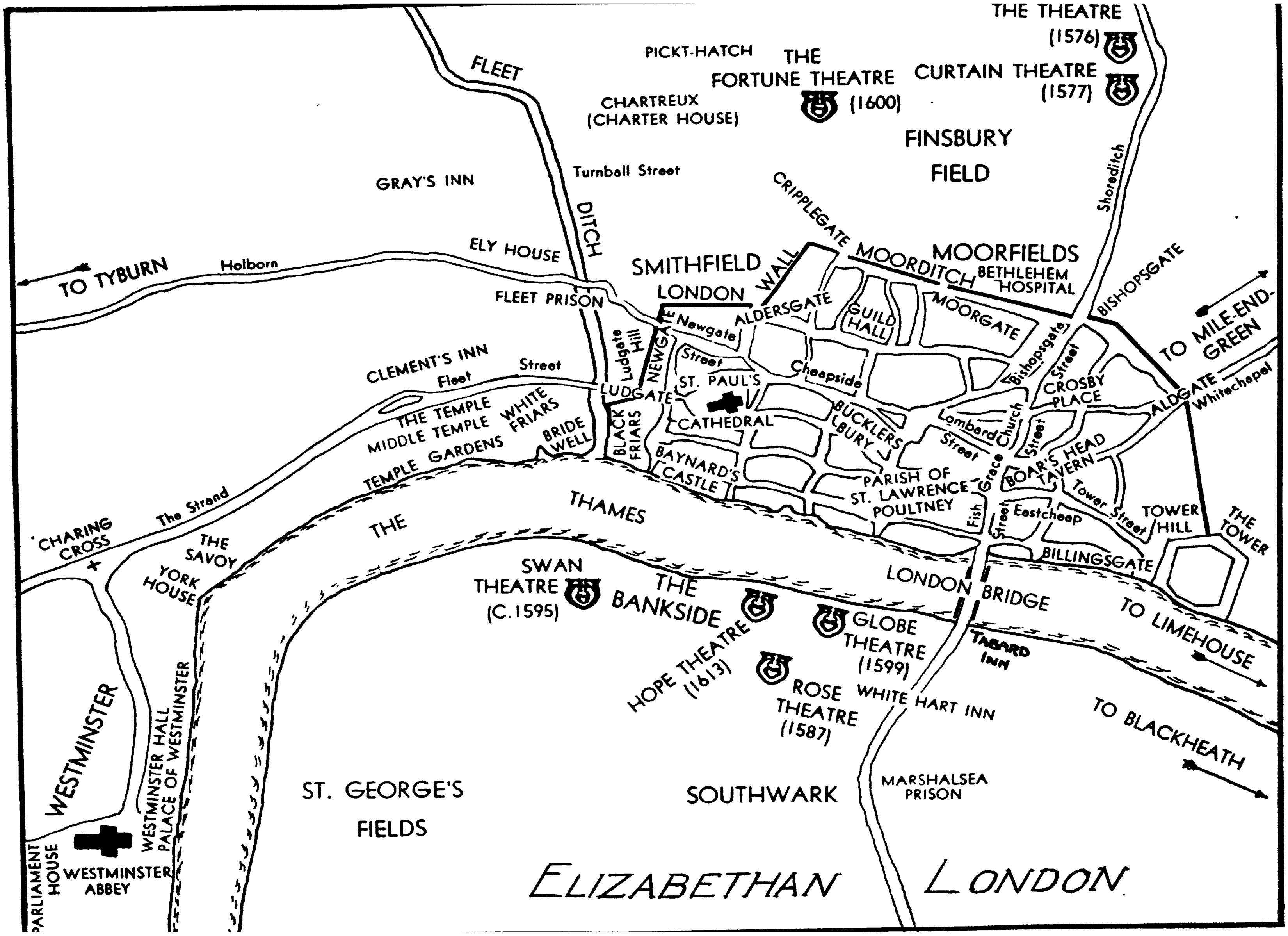
Triolet a lyrical French form of eight lines. Lines one and two are used as the refrain, the scheme being: *a(R)b(R)aa(R)aba(R)b(R)*.

Triplet three lines riming *aaa.*

Trochee a foot of two syllables; in English: stress, unstress ('-).

Vers libre free verse.

Villanelle a lyrical French form of six stanzas, five three-line stanzas (*aba*) and one four-line stanza (*abaa*). The first and third lines of the first stanza make the refrain; the first line recurs at the end of the second and fourth stanzas, the third line recurs at the end of the third and fifth stanzas; lines one and two recur together at the end of the sixth stanza.


ELIZABETHAN LONDON
THE THEATRE (1576)
CURTAIN THEATRE (1577)
PICKT-HATCH
THE FORTUNE THEATRE (1600)
CHARTREUX (CHARTER HOUSE)
FINSBURY FIELD
FLEET
Turnball Street
GRAY'S INN
DITCH
Shoreditch
CRIPPLEGATE
MOORDITCH
MOORFIELDS
BETHLEHEM HOSPITAL
BISHOPSGATE
TO MILE-END-GREEN
TO TYBURN
Holborn
ELY HOUSE
SMITHFIELD
LONDON WALL
FLEET PRISON
ALDERSGATE
GUILD HALL
MOORGATE
Newgate
NEWGATE
Street
Ludgate Hill
CLEMENT'S INN
Fleet Street
Cheapside
Bishopsgate Street
CROSBY PLACE
ALDGATE
Whitechapel
ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL
LUDGATE
THE TEMPLE
MIDDLE TEMPLE
WHITE FRIARS
BLACK FRIARS
BUCKLERS BURY
Lombard Street
Church Street
Grace
BRIDE WELL
TEMPLE GARDENS
BAYNARD'S CASTLE
PARISH OF ST. LAWRENCE POULTNEY
BOAR'S HEAD TAVERN
Tower Street
TOWER HILL
THE TOWER
Fish Street
Eastcheap
The Strand
THAMES
THE
CHARING CROSS
THE SAVOY
YORK HOUSE
BILLINGSGATE
SWAN THEATRE (C.1595)
THE BANKSIDE
LONDON BRIDGE
TO LIMEHOUSE
GLOBE THEATRE (1599)
TABARD INN
HOPE THEATRE (1613)
ROSE THEATRE (1587)
WHITE HART INN
TO BLACKHEATH
WESTMINSTER
WESTMINSTER HALL
PALACE OF WESTMINSTER
ST. GEORGE'S FIELDS
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MARSHALSEA PRISON
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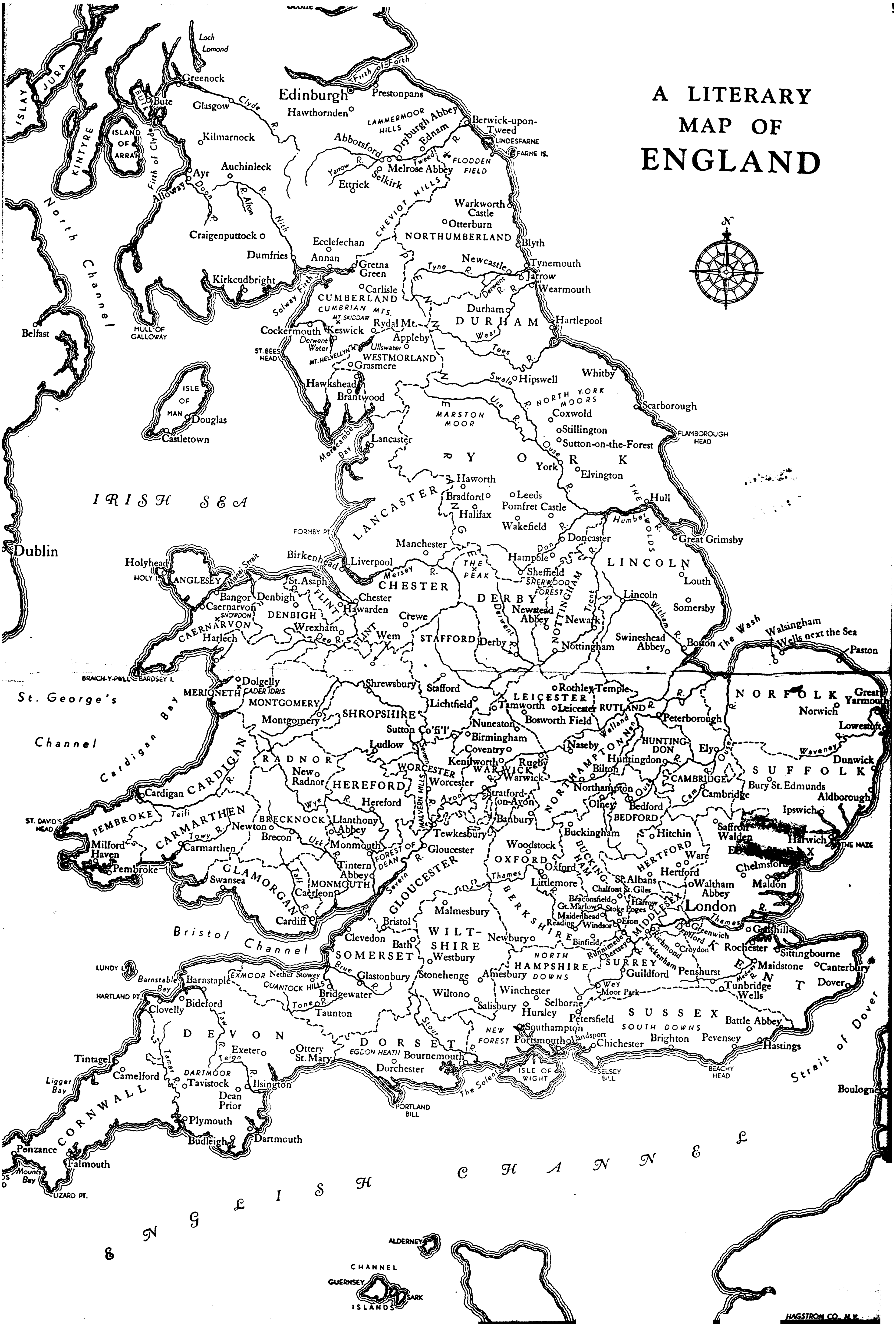
A LITERARY MAP OF ENGLAND



N
Loch Lomond
Firth of Forth
Islay
Jura
Kintyre
Island of Arran
Bute
Greenock
Glasgow
Clyde R.
Edinburgh
Prestonpans
Hawthornden
Lammermoor Hills
Dryburgh Abbey
Ednam
Berwick-upon-Tweed
Lindesfarne
Farne Is.
Abbotsford
Tweed R.
Flodden Field
Yarrow R.
Melrose Abbey
Selkirk
Ettrick
Kilmarnock
Firth of Clyde
Auchinleck
Ayr
Alloway
Doon R.
R. Alton
Nith R.
Craigenputtock
Cheviot Hills
Warkworth Castle
Otterburn
Northumberland
Blyth
North Channel
Ecclefechan
Dumfries
Annan
Gretna Green
Newcastle
Tyne R.
Tynemouth
Jarrow
Wearmouth
Derwent R.
Kirkcudbright
Solway Firth
Carlisle
Cumberland
Cumbrian Mts.
Mt. Skiddaw
Durham
D U R H A M
Wear
Hartlepool
Belfast
Mull of Galloway
Cockermouth
Keswick
Rydal Mt.
Appleby
Derwent Water
Ullswater
Mt. Helvellyn
St. Bees Head
Westmorland
Grasmere
Tees R.
Swale
Hipswell
Whitby
Hawkshead
Brantwood
North York Moors
Coxwold
Scarborough
Isle of Man
Douglas
Castletown
Marston Moor
Ure R.
Stillington
Sutton-on-the-Forest
Flamborough Head
Morecambe Bay
Lancaster
Ouse R.
Y O R K
York
Elvington
Haworth
Leeds
Bradford
Pomfret Castle
Halifax
Wakefield
Hull
The Wolds
Humber
Irish Sea
Lancaster
Formby Pt.
Dublin
Manchester
Doncaster
Don
Great Grimsby
Lincoln
Birkenhead
Liverpool
Mersey R.
The Peak
Hampole
Sheffield
Sherwood Forest
Louth
Holyhead
Holy I.
Anglesey
Menai Strait
St. Asaph
Chester
Derby
Nottingham
Trent
Lincoln
Witham R.
Bangor
Denbigh
Flint
Hawarden
Newstead Abbey
Newark
Somersby
Caernarvon
Snowdon
Denbigh
Wrexham
Crewe
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Harlech
Dee R.
Wem
Stafford
Derby
Swineshead Abbey
Boston
The Wash
Walsingham
Wells next the Sea
Paston
Braich-y-Pwll
Bardsey I.
Dolgelly
Cader Idris
Merioneth
Shrewsbury
Stafford
Rothley Temple
Leicester
Norfolk
Great Yarmouth
St. George's Channel
Montgomery
Lichtfield
Tamworth
Leicester
Rutland
Peterborough
Norwich
Lowestoft
Shropshire
Sutton Co'fi'l'
Nuneaton
Bosworth Field
Welland
Cardigan Bay
Birmingham
Naseby
Hunting Don
Ely
Waveney
Dunwick
Ludlow
Coventry
Northampton
Huntingdon
Ouse
Suffolk
Radnor
Kenilworth
Rugby
Bilton
Nen
Cambridge
Bury St. Edmunds
Worcester
Warwick
Cardigan
New Radnor
Hereford
Worcester
Stratford-on-Avon
Avon
Northampton
Cam
Cambridge
Aldborough
Malvern Hills
Severn
Olney
Bedford
Bedford
Wye R.
Hereford
Ipswich
Pembroke
Teifi
Carmarthen
Brecknock
Llanthony Abbey
Tewkesbury
Banbury
Buckingham
Hitchin
Saffron Walden
St. David's Head
Newton
Towy R.
Brecon
Usk
Monmouth
Forest of Dean
Gloucester
Woodstock
Buckingham
Hertford
Ware
Harwich
The Naze
Milford Haven
Carmarthen
Tintern Abbey
Oxford
Oxford
Hertford
Chelmsford
Pembroke
Glamorgan
Taff
Monmouth
Gloucester
Thames
Littlemore
St. Albans
Chalfont St. Giles
Waltham Abbey
Maldon
Swansea
Caerleon
Severn R.
Berkshire
Beaconsfield
Harrow
Gt. Marlow
Stoke Poges
Maidenhead
Eton
Reading
Windsor
Middlesex
London
Thames
Cardiff
Bristol
Malmesbury
Bristol Channel
Clevedon
Bath
Wiltshire
Newbury
Binfield
Runnymede
Chertsey
Richmond
Twickenham
Greenwich
Deptford
Croydon
Gadshill
Rochester
Sittingbourne
Kent
Somerset
Westbury
North Hampshire
Surrey
Brue
Glastonbury
Stonehenge
Amesbury
Downs
Guildford
Penshurst
Maidstone
Medway
Canterbury
Lundy I.
Barnstable Bay
Barnstaple
Exmoor
Nether Stowey
Quantock Hills
Bridgewater
Winchester
Wey
Moor Park
Tunbridge Wells
Dover
Hartland Pt.
Bideford
Clovelly
Taw
Tone R.
Taunton
Wiltono
Salisbury
Selborne
Hursley
Petersfield
Sussex
Battle Abbey
Strait of Dover
Devon
Stour
Dorset
Southampton
New Forest
Portsmouth
Landsport
Chichester
South Downs
Brighton
Pevensey
Hastings
Tintagel
Camelford
Exeter
Teign
Ottery St. Mary
Egdon Heath
Bournemouth
Isle of Wight
Selsey Bill
Beachy Head
Ligger Bay
Tamar R.
Dartmoor
Tavistock
Ilsington
Dorchester
The Solent
Boulogne
Cornwall
Dean Prior
Portland Bill
Plymouth
Budleigh
Dartmouth
Penzance
Falmouth
Mounts Bay
Lizard Pt.
English Channel
Alderney
Channel Islands
Guernsey
Sark
Hagstrom Co. N.Y.