THE BOOK WAS DRENCHED

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

CRITICAL ESSAYS OF TO-DAY

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
LONDON • BOMBAY • CALCUTTA • MADRAS
MELBOURNE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
NEW YORK • BOSTON • CHICAGO
DALLAS • ATLANTA • SAN FRANCISCO

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
OF CANADA, LIMITED
TORONTO

CRITICAL ESSAYS OF TO-DAY

SELECTED BY

EDWARD PARKER
M.A., PH.D., DIP.ED.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1932

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

What is Literary Criticism ?

To say " I like this book " or " This is a bad book " is an expression of opinion, and " opinions," as Mr. G. K. Chesterton has said, " are brass farthings." That is, the value of an opinion depends upon the value of the mind which expresses it, and that mind must show its own value by supporting the opinion with reasons of some sort. It is when an explanation is added in support of an opinion on a book or author that the opinion becomes a judgment, and the realm of literary criticism is entered.

Literary Criticism, then, is the field of considered judgment on written works as works of art and on their authors as artists. Judgments on written works in any other light than as works of art are not literary judgments, and judgments on authors as, for instance, private persons belong to the field of biography, not ,of literary criticism.

Literary Criticism is, therefore, a part of Art and has its own technique, which has been developed, little by little, by the great critics. The technique of criticism has to be studied, like the technique of any other art, and it is an art which has had, too, its ups and downs in history and sometimes been almost entirely lost. It can be kept alive only by a fresh

understanding of the few principles of it which have been discovered, and in each new age it has to solve fresh problems presented by the literary art of the time. Far from being a machine, it is an organism which will live or die according as it is used.

Objects and Kinds of Criticism.

Criticism has two decisions to make about every work of literary art. The first decision answers the question, What is the text of this work? The second answers the question, What is the nature and value of this work? These two questions raise such different problems that they really divide criticism into two parts, known, respectively, as Textual Criticism and General Criticism.

A. Textual Criticism.

With Textual Criticism we have not much concern here, but it is evidently very necessary that critics should be agreed on what the author exactly wrote before they proceed to judge its value. When an ancient author is in question, whose work has come down in manuscripts which are all later than the author and often dissimilar from each other in the readings of the text which they give, the preparation of a text nearest to that which the author probably composed must needs be a very difficult task. Even when the author lived within the age of printing, *i.e.* after about 1450 A.D., the problem of deciding what he wrote or what text he wished to be remembered by demands much comparison of texts, manuscript and printed, and much skill and knowledge for its solution. It is, however, upon a " definitive

edition," as it is called, of an author's text that the later work of General Criticism can be surely built.

B. General Criticism.

General Criticism divides, in turn, into a number of branches or methods, each of which pursues a special enquiry of its own and demands special knowledge and powers from the critic. We take it for granted now that we have a text to work upon which represents what the author wrote or as near to what he wrote as can be obtained. What is next to be done ? To read and enjoy it, one might reply, and certainly it is the first and main business of a work of art to give enjoyment. If it yields none or little, there is not much temptation to think further about it. If, however, pleasure comes from it, there will be a curiosity to know more about it, perhaps in the hope of increasing one's pleasure.

B. I. Formal Criticism.

This is where the first special enquiry of General Criticism begins. It is called Formal Criticism, and its object is to place the work in a class according to essential characteristics which it shares with other works of art resembling it.

The Greeks made a classification of " forms " which is still useful, though there have been great developments since their day. Their literature was written in either definite verse or definite prose and gave them primary forms of Poetry and Prose, the former being imaginative in character and the latter factual and argumentative. Poetry, again, fell for

them into three sub-forms—the Epic, the Lyric and the Drama—according as narration or reflection or action predominated, and there were further sub-divisions, such as Comedy and Tragedy in the Drama. Prose had its parallel forms of History, Philosophy and Oratory. These divisions allowed of clear thinking and fruitful comparison, for one must recognise whether a literary work is one of imagination or fact, whether epic or history for instance, before proceeding to enquire further into it or judge it. Evidently, it matters a great deal to one's view of the *Iliad* whether one thinks of it as a history of actual events or as an imaginative creation.

Since Greek times, however, new " forms " like the Essay, the Novel, the Short Story, have arisen, each of which needs a fresh definition of its own. Further, there have been produced literary works which partake of the character of more than one of the simple Greek forms. Shakespeare, for example, seldom wrote pure Comedy or pure Tragedy but preferred, in his " imitation of life," to blend these forms and thereby achieved new and often very powerful effects as well as what we feel to be a stronger resemblance to actual life in his plays. Among nineteenth-century poets, Browning had a special tendency towards " hybridisation" and, recognising it, has given collections of his poems such titles as *Dramatic Lyrics.* In fact, nowadays, we have to regard the ancient Greek " forms " as abstractions and, when classifying a modern literary work, often use more than one formal name to fix its nature. Hardy's *The Dynasts* may thus be called an " epic drama " because, while dramatic in presenta-

tion, the story of it has the epic width and complexity ; Carlyle's *The French Revolution* may even be said to cross the frontier between poetry and prose and be named an " epic history," for, while it adheres strictly to facts so far as he knew them, it is informed throughout with a high imagination that pictures spiritual forces latent behind the facts.

Formal Criticism is, therefore, by no means a cut-and-dried proceeding, but requires considerable sensitiveness in the critic to enable him to judge, for instance, on which side of the line between Poetry and Prose a work or even a passage in a work lies ; whether *The Book of Job* is to be regarded as history or as drama, or the accounts of the Creation in *Genesis* as history or epic. Decisions like this are, obviously, of profound consequence for the interpretation of the work.

B. 2. Historical Criticism.

Let it, however, be supposed that a given work has been " classified." What next is there to be learnt about it ?

The work now being in a class with others resembling it in " form," the natural trend of enquiry is in the direction of comparison with these other works. But these works usually belong to different ages or peoples, making it very difficult to compare them. *If Job,* for instance, is taken as a drama, how can it be compared with the *Oedipus at Colonos* of Sophocles or Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* Though the heroes of all three plays bear certain striking resemblances to each other, yet the ways of thought and action of a Chaldean Jew and of a Greek of almost

prehistoric times are not directly comparable, and the ways of both are different from the ways of an Elizabethanised Dane.

The critic has now, that is, to take account of time and place in making judgments of comparison, and he is on the threshold of Historical Criticism. Here we have a great field which every reader now knows something about, yet it is strange to think that the first English *History of Poetry* was written less than two hundred years ago. In less than two centuries, mainly in one century, the huge network of " sources," " influences," " currents," " movements " and " periods " has been constructed which makes the present-day study of " history of literature."

What is the purpose of " history of literature " ? It is to place a work of literature in relation to tradition, *i.e.* to show how much of its matter or form or style is owing to preceding or contemporary writers. By thus placing a work historically, the critic hopes not only to estimate the indebtedness of his author to other authors but also to perceive the quality of his author's mind, his native genius, and the force and originality of his work, for an author may borrow much from other men and yet so transmute what he borrows by the power of his own genius that it becomes new and his own. Many of our greatest writers have been great borrowers, but they have more than repaid their debts to earlier literature by the new meaning and improved value which they have given to what they borrowed.

A constant study of literary history is designed to develop what is called the " historical sense," that is the ability to see any given literary work of art in

perspective against the background of the history of the time when it was written and in relation to other writings of its own day and also to writings of the same " form " belonging to any day, previous to or later than itself. If literary history is studied, however, without reading the original works of which it speaks, there is great danger of producing a sham learning which can rattle off names of authors and works and give their stock literary relationships without any first-hand knowledge or enjoyment of them.

Historical criticism reveals the sensitiveness of a critic to what may be called the external relations of a literary work. As a form of literary criticism it has learnt a very great deal from the methods pursued in the study of political and constitutional history during the nineteenth century—which may indeed be called the " century of history " in knowledge since the idea of historical development spread, during that century, into so many fields of learning, including biology and theology. It is, therefore, a form of criticism with a well-understood object and highly developed methods of attaining that object.

B. 3. Psychological Criticism.

The same cannot be said of " psychological criticism," which might be defined as the study of the birth of a literary work and its relation to the mental development of its author. Such criticism is based largely on the so-called " new psychology " and has arisen only during this present century. It is not only very young but it has had to learn its methods

from a branch of learning far apart from itself and with very different objects, viz., medicine. It is, therefore, in a very undeveloped condition, but, just as the nineteenth century was devoted to the historical development of matters of knowledge, so the twentieth appears to have turned its attention to their psychological development, and " psychological criticism " will in time see more clearly what it means to do and how to do it.

The starting-point of this branch of study is that a work of art was first a dream in the mind of the artist. If, then, medical men can tell us the mechanism of dreams—as some of them say they can—it should be possible to learn something about how a work of art arises in the mind of its author, from what it grows, how it develops and why it is produced. At the same time, such a study would serve as a check on that part of historical criticism which says that one author " borrows " from another. What does " borrowing " mean ? And how does the debtor author improve what he " borrows " ? Such questions and many others far greater—such as, Why does the creation of a work of art give relief to its author and pleasure to those who enjoy it ?—ask for an answer, and it seems that only by entering into the artist's mind and by understanding the at present dark ways in which it works and the reasons for its working as it does shall we get the answers we require.

But the methods of the medical psychologist and of the psychological critic cannot be quite the same, as their purposes are not the same. The medical man has a living patient whom he can ask all

necessary questions, and his purpose is to heal the mind by analysing dreams ; the critic can only analyse written material or, if he is a poet himself, his own mind also, and his purpose is to understand and estimate. The critic has, therefore, to learn what he can from medical methods but must make his own, keeping steadily before him his purpose of studying and estimating the " subconscious mind " of his author *as an artist.*

Although this form of criticism is so young that it has neither fixed methods nor " canons " as yet, there are beginning to appear books which demonstrate how valuable and illuminating the form can be. Thus, Professor John Livingstone Lowes, following through a great number of books which Coleridge had been reading just before the composition of the poem *Kubla Khan,* has shown with astonishing skill in his book *The Road to Xanadu* how fragments of Coleridge's reading wove themselves, evidently largely unconsciously, into that poem—which Coleridge said he dreamt and which he called " A Vision in a Dream "—and into *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,* composed about the same time. Robert Graves also, one of our contemporary poets, has done a great deal of pioneer work in this kind of analysis.

B. 4. Dogmatic Criticism.

The Greeks, who invented " formal criticism " and began that long work upon the text of the Homeric poems which has lasted down to our own day and developed the methods of " textual criticism," have left us a work by one of their greatest philosophers

and greatest critic which set the fashion, many centuries later, for a kind of criticism which may be called " dogmatic " because it sought to measure books by certain " principles " which were supposed to govern literature.

This philosopher and critic, Aristotle, was responsible for a work, *The Poetics,* which, whether written by himself or by another from his discourses, undertook to distinguish poetry from other arts and to analyse the practice of the great Greek poets in the composition of their works. *The Poetics* is a fragment and goes no further than to sketch the relation of poetry to nature and to analyse the character and parts of tragedy according to the dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and other principal dramatists of Aristotle's age and that which preceded him. Aristotle's analysis was so penetrating, however, and his powers of generalisation so great that when Italian and French scholars of the Renascence (from about 1450 A.D.) began again the study of Greek and the organisation of modern drama, they were dominated by his book and developed out of its perceptions a number of statements which they called " laws," almost as if poetry were a science. Aristotle spoke of poetry as being a kind of " imitation " of nature, of the " tragic hero " as being one of elevated character and position but brought low by some inherent fault in his nature, of the " tragic plot" as being one which had " a beginning, a middle and an end," which means one not haphazard in starting, growing and concluding, of " tragic action" as generally—according to the practice of the best dramatists—being completed " within a single re-

volution of the sun," and of the strange power and attraction of tragedy as consisting in a " purification " (Katharsis) of the mind of the spectators " by pity and terror." These views were hardened by Renascence scholars into " rules " and " unities," and upon these " rules " and " unities " were built a whole dramatic practice which we see exemplified best in the work of the French seventeenth century, especially of Racine. So a " classical " drama was subjected to the so-called Three Unities of Place, Time and Action, meaning that all the action of a play must be represented as happening in one place, within twelve (or twenty-four) hours, and as proceeding from a clean-cut beginning through a climax to a denouement. A mixture of comedy with tragedy was abhorred.

This was a bad mishandling of *The Poetics,* in which a " unity of place " is not even mentioned, a " unity of time " only stated to be a practice, and a " unity of action " presented only in the form of an analysis of kinds of tragic action. The effort to introduce this false Aristotelianism into the English theatre in Shakespeare's time and later failed because the English genius and tradition were against it, but in our eighteenth century there was much talk of " rules of poetry " and of art as the " imitation of nature " in the sense of an imitation of the " classics " because they were supposed to be nature itself. Such views were generally presumed to rule literature during the first half of the eighteenth century, and they illustrate the great danger of " dogmatic criticism," which is that a great critic's analysis, true to the practice of one people and age, should

be first distorted and then forced on other peoples and ages without " historical " consideration.

There must, however, be something to learn from tradition in the way of practice of literature, some better and some worse ways of writing poetry, drama or prose, some " standards " of composition and, therefore, of criticism. This, at least, is the feeling of critics in every age, and in each age there are some who, having learnt from the error of " classicism " that old truths cannot be made into new laws by a process of logical freezing, try Aristotle's original method of arriving at fresh principles by an analysis of the works of their own day related to a philosophic view of art and life.

This kind of " dogmatic" critic who extracts fresh principles is, however, very uncommon. Much commoner it is to find a kind of " dogmatic criticism " which judges by its experience of literature without a statement of principles. Sometimes such a critic may support his judgments by saying that " every competent critic will agree " with what he says, but he is really trusting to his own taste as much as to his wide knowledge of what has been held to be great literature by men who are now canonised as having been competent critics in their own time. So what Dryden, Addison, Johnson, Coleridge or Matthew Arnold said, each in his time, makes a body of criticism of great importance, educating the learner into ways of looking at literature which help him to form his own judgments, but they cannot be said to leave permanent " laws of literature " ; at best they leave impressions of strong natural sense like Dr. Johnson's, or memorable analyses like

Coleridge's analysis of the poetic imagination, or incomplete dicta like Arnold's about " the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty."

B. 5. *Impressionistic Criticism.*

It may be due partly to despair of arriving at any " principles of literature " which have more than a very narrow validity, but much more to actual dependence on the critic's individual taste, that a type of criticism arose which, during the second half of the nineteenth century, received the name of " impressionistic criticism."

The name explains itself, for it means that the critic presents " impressions " which he has received from a work of literary art, but these impressions are more than mere opinions, for they are usually fortified with a great wealth of comparative illustration and accompanied sometimes with an imaginative eloquence which may raise the criticism itself to the level of a work of art in its turn. Anatole France has vividly described such critiques as these as " adventures of a soul among masterpieces." Much of the literary criticism of Swinburne and Walter Pater, for example, is of this type, and it is frequently the offspring of minds which are themselves creative in a literary way, so that a list of " impressionistic " critics would include, as might be expected, many names of poets and imaginative writers who, in their spare time as one might say, were also critics.

It is a tempting method of criticism, but there is a danger of its becoming " thin," devoid of real thought about literature and its problems, dependent upon flashes of intuition and mere stylistic brilliance

for a success which is temporary because it can, at best, satisfy only so long as the reading of it lasts.

Often one and the same critic blends in himself the dogmatist and the impressionist. Very easy is it, indeed, for a critic fond of certain beliefs about literature to see them verified in an author when they are not, or to cherish favourite impressions about literature and elevate them into " laws." These are failings against which every critic has to guard himself. But there is a good blending of the dogmatic and impressionistic in much critical work when, on the one hand, the critic keeps firm hold of ideas about literature which he has gathered after much experience and thought and, on the other, remains open and sensitive to the reception of fresh impressions from works expressing new and original tendencies. In fact, a great deal of the best reviewing and literary journalism of our time is of this blended type.

J5. *6. Aesthetic Criticism.*

The liking or disliking of a book is immediate and due to taste. It is perhaps the hardest task of criticism to account for such liking and disliking, or, in other words, to develop a theory of Taste.

Browning has, in *Rabbi ben Ezra,* put the practical problem of Taste forcibly enough :

> Now, who shall arbitrate ?
> Ten men love what I hate,
> Shun what I follow, slight what I receive ;
> Ten, who in ears and eyes
> Match me : we all surmise,
> They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe ?

In common speech we say, Tastes differ, and leave our disagreements about the value of a work of nature or art there.

But it can very often be said that tastes agree, more often than is actually said, for we do not register our agreements in words so often as we do our disagreements. In literature, for instance, there is a large body of agreement about which are the great books of the world, and, after a period of fluctuation between neglect and over-estimation, fresh authors come to take a fairly permanent place among the so-called " classics."

There must, then, be some theory of value to account for these agreements as well as the more obvious disagreements, and, in matters of art, the supreme value has always been called Beauty. Mr. Sturge Moore, poet as well as critic, states the beauty-value in general terms when he says, " That we enjoy looking at it remains the all-sufficient reason for asserting an object to be beautiful," [1] but we can accept too his further analysis that " Beauty usually designates proportionate arrangements of constituents which we love to contemplate, whether these be also a part, as the eyes of the face, the face of the head, or not—and may be applied to cloud or landscape, sculpture or painting, building or town, music, speech or thought." 1

And now we are launched upon what is called " aesthetic criticism," which seeks to find out what is universally true of Beauty, and to investigate what used to be called the " laws of Taste " in a day when fairly safe generalisations were called " laws."

[1] *Armour for Aphrodite,*

The difficulty of " aesthetic criticism " in literature is that aesthetics itself has been considered as a branch of philosophy of art, so that interest has centred on, What is Beauty ? and, in this preoccupation, the question, What is Beauty in literature ? has come to be rather neglected.

Nevertheless, many truths about Beauty in general hold good of beauty in literature without further modification, such as that a book is beautiful because of something in itself, not because it reminds us of something else that we like, or because someone else has said that it is beautiful, still less because it is very ancient or rare or highly priced or—most subtle of errors !—because it teaches good morals or supports the conventions of the day. A beautiful book may be or do all of these things, but its beauty is intrinsic and independent of these possible accompaniments.

Similarly, the power in man which perceives Beauty, viz., Taste, is something of which things may be known which are as true in literature as in any other field of art. That individual taste is healthy which is unaffected by any of the accompaniments of a book just mentioned, but which meets the book directly and alone and feels it. Then, Taste is an organic thing and grows by accepting and rejecting. Also, Taste can affect the will as much as the emotions and make its possessor do a thing because he sees it to be beautiful or refuse to do it because he *sees* it ugly : there is an aesthetic conscience, that is, as much as a moral one or an historical or scientific one.

These are enquiries of " aesthetic criticism " and cannot here be pursued further. What is essential to remember is that the aesthetic judgment of a book,

the judgment whether it is beautiful or not, is the final and decisive judgment upon it, also that the aesthetic and the moral in man are ultimately one, are sides of the same personality, imperfect yet growing to perfection by development within itself.

THE SELECTIONS

After the above necessarily brief consideration of Literary Criticism and its problems and methods of solving them, some account must be given of the essays put together in the book that follows. And first a few general observations must be made on the principles governing their selection.

i. The essays are chosen out of contemporary authors because contemporary criticism is likelier to touch " live " questions of literature and create discussion than, say, the criticism of the last century or the last century but one.

2. The essays are chosen also with regard to their subjects, *i.e.* that they shall discuss very well-known authors which every young student is likely to know something about and so be able to follow what the critic says.

3. The essays are chosen, out of a mass of possible material, because they attempt to go down to fundamentals and are not merely elegant appreciations.

4. The essays are, in no case, meant to be representative of the critics themselves, for no writer can be represented save by all his work. Obviously, for example, the *Aristophanes on Tennyson* " represents " Dr. Verrall only in so far as it illustrates the grace of his scholarship, that supreme mastery which could at

times play with the objects of its knowledge and yet play with effect.

5. The essays are chosen so as to distribute critical interest over each of the three great branches of literature and, in each branch, to include one essay which considers general problems in that branch.

On Drama.

Shakespeare being by far our greatest dramatic name and one whose works demand perpetually fresh examination, both selections under this head concern him.

Feste the Jester is a specimen of that sensitive study of a Shakespearian character which shows breadth, balance and perspicuity of scholarship as well as an ever-fresh enjoyment, making the picture of Feste not a mere catalogue of qualities but a living personality. Though here Professor Bradley is working in miniature, there is the same care of fine points of text-criticism in the notes to the essay and of detailed interpretation in his view of the authenticity and philosophic worth of Feste's closing song as are demonstrated so powerfully in his now classical work, *Shakespearian Tragedy*, or in his *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*. How much judgment lies in the opening sentences, which place the other two chief fools in the Shakespearian plays in relation with Feste, is not easily estimated till one has tried to make such comparisons between Shakespearian characters oneself.

The body of the essay, dealing first with the graces then the household position of Feste, gathers up from all parts of *Twelfth Night* at once the illustrations which support and illuminate the argument, point by

point, and around the whole composition there is cast that garment of a finished and charming style which makes one forget the careful arrangement of the parts of the argument and, while giving the unity of Professor Bradley's viewpoint, gives also the sense of sharing with him a delightful experience.

Professor Vaughan's *Romantic Tragedy: Shakespeare,* being part of a long study of *Types of Tragic Drama,* not only extends its view over all the tragic work of Shakespeare but employs the work of the greatest French tragic dramatist, Racine, as a background. The canvas on which he works is, therefore, as large as the preceding study is small.

The purpose of this essay contrasts also with that of the former. Not an experienced assessment of effects is here attempted, but an analysis of methods. The author has, in a previous chapter, shown by an examination of Sophocles the principal characteristics of Greek tragedy, which is the original classical tragedy of Europe. It is his purpose now to show in Shakespeare the characteristics of that other kind of tragedy which criticism has come to label " Romantic."

Here presents itself an excellent example of that " historical sense " which must be part of the equipment of a literary critic. A direct comparison between Shakespeare and Sophocles is not attempted—there are no direct historical connections between their dramatic methods. But a direct historical connection there is between the drama of Shakespeare and that of Racine, though the latter lived and worked in a different country and half a century later than Shakespeare. The connection is that, while Shakespeare's type of drama sprang from the natural

English genius, being lineally descended from English mediaeval drama of like though feebler characteristics (only superficially touched by the Latin classical arrangement into acts and scenes), Racine's type was the flowering of a style which Ben Jonson had attempted unsuccessfully to introduce into England in Shakespeare's day and which was artificially constructed according to the " rules " of Italian and French Renascence students of Aristotle and rejected by the English play-going public.

The essay is, then, at bottom a study of two types of drama, one of which suited the mind of England and ruled there in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the other the mind of France and governed French practice through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are natural rivals to each other and caused powerful artistic dissensions in both England and France. In England, Ben Jonson's " classical" tragedies *Sejanus* and *Catiline* and similar works by Chapman and others could make no headway against the English tradition of which Shakespeare was the triumphant exponent, and Addison's *Cato* had but a " *succes d'estime"* in the same style in the early eighteenth century : in France the budding " romantic " tendencies of Corneille were nipped by the scholastic and Court disapproval reflected in the then new French Academy's condemnation of his first play, *Le Cid,* and imported " classicism " ruled supreme till the belligerent young Romantics of the 1830's literally fought the classicists in the theatres of Paris for a hearing for plays patterned partly on Shakespeare and expounded in the famous preface which Victor

Hugo wrote for his " Shakespearian " play, *Cromwell.*

During the century now passed since *Cromwell,* Europe has learned that there is room for both types of tragedy side by side, but also that each appeals to different temperaments and ways of cultural upbringing, and Professor Vaughan's exposition of the Shakespearian type in contrast with that of Racine is perhaps the best English critical example of that recognition and a very clear analysis of the differences between these contrasting styles that have had such a lively history and have now settled down to mutual recognition.

On Prose.

Prose, as a form of literature, arose later in Greece than Poetry and has done so in all the literatures of Europe, if we think of Poetry as necessarily writing in verse, for originally all instruction as well as imaginative creation was presented by authors in the shape of verse. But social changes occurred which needed information, teaching and inspiration to action to be presented in a style nearer to the rhythms of ordinary speech, and a form of writing arose which more and more took over these departments of literature from Poetry.

Prose does not, however, present quite similar critical problems to those presented by Poetry. Poetry interests us as a vehicle, as Verse, but much more as the expression of a gifted few whom we call poets, and each poet presents his own problems besides the general question, What is Poetry ? Prose interests us, as it interested Moliere's M. Jourdain

when he discovered that he had been talking prose all his life, as the normal method of expression, especially written expression, by every one of us. To make our meaning clear and unequivocal when we speak or write is a problem none can escape, and, since Style is the form of writing or speech, we are all engaged, whether we think or not, in forming a prose style.

There are, of course, further questions concerning the differentiation of one man's prose style from another's—for style is individual and " the style is the man "—but the first problem in prose is simply how to be honest and say what we mean in a straightforward manner. This is not a question of being " educated," that is literate, or not, except in the sense that literate people are often not as clear and straight-speaking as illiterate. It is a question of feeling definitely and thinking clearly and then of avoiding all slipshod, vulgar, roundabout ways of expressing what we feel and think.

This is where Sir A. Quiller-Couch's *Interlude : On Jargon* intervenes. The author has, in previous lectures, been dealing with questions connected with verse, which he wishes students to practise writing, and is about to approach the central problem of writing prose but suspends his course of argument in order to deal with false prose, or what he calls Jargon. To clear this first out of the way is to define much more clearly what is good prose, for these ways of writing which he details and makes fun of as Jargon are not good prose. They are, however, ways of writing and speech so common and insidious to-day that everybody uses them and thinks no more about it.

When looked at critically, as Sir A. Quiller-Couch looks at them, these ways of writing prose are shown up for what they are—ridiculous, misleading and wasteful—and the critic, whose own clear and delightful style in many novels and lectures might sufficiently exemplify the virtues of good writing, concludes by leading us to admire John Donne, a master of vivid prose in the seventeenth century when English writers had a language to their hands fresh from the mint of the Elizabethan poets and quite unspoilt by careless and unthinking usage.

There follow, in the other two selections illustrative of Prose, considerations of the work of Thackeray and H. G. Wells. Since modern English prose was formed in the seventeenth century, we have had masters in every department of it, but no department has been more surprising in its growth and the influence it has exerted on the general mind than the Novel. Beginning, under Richardson and Fielding in the mid-eighteenth century, as a study of character and manners, it showed itself adaptable—like the Essay—to almost every need of expression and kind of interest. During the nineteenth century it entered the domains of history, national character, psychology, philosophy and natural science, but the character of individuals remained always its central theme and great appeal. Thackeray and Dickens stood out, among a dozen novelists of the first order, as masters of character-painting, and the differences between them have been analysed and discussed to the bottom. It remains a matter of taste, even after the greatness of both writers has been accepted, whether

one prefers *The Pickwick Papers* or *Vanity Fair*. Here Thackeray has been chosen for a study of the Novel, because the author of *Vanity Fair* stands nearer to our time, both in his manner of depicting real life and in his critical temper of mind. As John Bailey, business man as well as literary critic, says, it is probable that, when the claims of the best novel of every master in English fiction have been considered, *Vanity Fair* will be allowed the supremacy for the number and force of its living characters, the intense and unflagging interest with which Thackeray makes us enter into their minds and follow their fortunes, and the power and ease with which he casts the lights of relentless irony or tender pity or amused sympathy upon them from his own great and gentle mind.

Since the day of Thackeray yet another branch of fiction has grown and borne rich fruit. This is the Short Story, perhaps the most characteristic literary production of our own day. Again, there are many masters of the form in English, but none greater than H. G. Wells at his best. Mr. Wells has, too, this other claim on our attention, that he has illuminated more aspects of modern thought and life than any other contemporary author and, in especial, has brought at least the picturesque questions of modern science very near to a mass of readers. Many things may be said in adverse criticism of him, some of which Mr. Shanks finds occasion to say, and other authors of to-day may be preferred to him, with good critical reason, for their finer artistry or deeper understanding of human nature, but the life of our time, its heterogeneous elements and its restless and often incoherent living and thinking,

has not a fuller **nor** more attractive chronicler than Mr. Wells.

On Poetry.

As we enter now the oldest and richest realm of literature, the difficulty is to make only a very few selections give an idea of how poetry appeals to modern critical minds, what its present-day problems are and the methods used to solve them. Nothing, of course, in any way representative of the mass and variety of modern criticism of poetry can be offered ; the necessity, rather, is to single out a few critics who deserve attention and to choose even them for the variety of their ways of treating poetry.

Mr. Saintsbury, now the doyen of English literary critics, could scarcely be omitted and, when reading him, one can think also of such men of the elder critical school as Edmund Gosse and Austin Dobson who connect us with the ways of thought that ruled in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. These men could be called tasters of literature if the term did not convey the suggestion that they took literature in small quantities, which is the reverse of the truth, for they read vastly. The ancient classics having been their school and English literature their pleasure-ground, they read with both intense enjoyment and the nicest discrimination. They took principles of literature largely for granted—the " competent critic " whom Mr. Saintsbury is fond of invoking calls up the picture of a cultured Victorian gentleman who considers the foundations of literary judgment to be as solidly laid as the credit of the Bank

of England and the canons of literary taste as changeless as the principles of English Common Law.

It is refreshing, then, to come out of our world of the 20th century, where everything is questioned, into the spacious and ordered world of literary thought of which the essay on *Eighteenth Century Poetry* gives a glimpse. Putting all questions aside and allowing ourselves to be led by Mr. Saintsbury, we can feel after him, if not for ourselves immediately, something of the poetic life which stirred in England two hundred years ago, even though the dress and manners, the diction and versification, are strange and old-fashioned. Yet the eighteenth century is nearer to us to-day than to English minds in Mr. Saintsbury's youth. The wheel of life has turned again in two centuries, and our rationalism, our almost excessive belief in "form" in poetry, our growing insistence on sculptured and polished expression are much nearer to the ways of the cultured in Pope's day than to the abounding optimism and florid self-satisfaction of ordinary English life sixty years ago. One has only to read some of the poetry of the Sitwells, of the Imagists and Mr. Ezra Pound, to feel how near we are getting to eighteenth-century methods, and the interest of Mr. Gibson in working-class lives and fortunes, though modern, is not far distant from the point of view of George Crabbe.

The next short piece—*Keats and His Predecessors*—brings to bear upon the study of one Romantic poet the well-established methods of historical text-criticism. Mr. Blunden's is a study of the literary " sources " of some of the language of the famous *Ode to a*

Nightingale. Opening with a both sound and striking contrast between Keats and Shelley as readers, he illustrates Keats's manner of retaining the words as well as thoughts of the authors he read, and the unconscious result of that when he comes to compose his own poetry.

As a sort of pleasure outing before entering upon the last serious effort, Dr. Verrall's amusing imitation of Aristophanes has been introduced. It is not there only for amusement, however, nor to make fun of Tennyson. There is as much severe scholarship behind this triumphant capture of the spirit and manner of the ancient Greek comic dramatist as in any of the other essays, and there is superadded a real creative artistry in the little dramatic scene itself. Tennyson appears to come off badly—how well the gruff side of his nature is seized, by the way !—but actually, when we reflect on the issue, we see how stupidly he has been used by the other two characters, what a mere hole-picker the self-appointed criticaster Gigadibs is and what a gullible fool is the philistine who represents the public that does not feel and understand poetry. In fact, the piece is a satire, not on Tennyson nor even on his foibles, but on false critical methods and on a public that has poets and will not hear them aright.

The Poetic World is one possible summation of modern thoughts upon the art of poetry and what it means. Again we are in the hands of a poet, for Mr. Abercrombie was a poet before he was a professor of literature, and in reading the essay, which is the kernel of a long analysis and disquisition on aspects of the nature of poetry, we feel that, while the

procedure is carefully methodical, the real value of the argument lies in its attempt to put into reasoned language the intuitions and sensibilities of a poet regarding his own experience and his craft. Poetry, with him, becomes a craft by which, using the instrument and substance of mere words, a whole world of the mind may be framed, corresponding to the world of actual experience in its details—true to life, as we say, though in no mechanical or photographic sense—but complete and ordered, as the actual world is not complete nor ordered, by finding a place for even evil and presenting a harmonious whole in which the spirit of man may live.

The essay is not easy, even to an adult mind, but requires several re-readings. That is an argument for the amount of truth it contains, for nothing is falser than to think lightly or easily of poetry, which is an art that has absorbed the best energies of greatest men and has always claimed powers akin to prophecy and the right to guide as well as illuminate mankind.

EDWARD PARKER.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THE thanks of the compiler are due to the following for permission to reprint the copyright essays included in this volume : Professor Lascelles Abercrombie and Messrs. Martin Seeker, Ltd., for " The Poetic World,[5]' from *The Theory of Poetry ;* Mr. Edmund Blunden and the Editor of the *London Mercury,* for " Keats and his Predecessors " ; Mr. A. C. Bradley, for " Feste the Jester," from *A Miscellany ;* the Cambridge University Press, for "Interlude : On Jargon," from *On the Art of Writing,* by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, and " Aristophanes on Tennyson," from *Literary Essays, Classical and Modern,* by A. W. Verrall; the Clarendon Press, for " Thackeray and the English Novel," from *The Continuity of Letters,* by John Bailey ; Professor George Saintsbury and the Editor of the *London Mercury,* for " Eighteenth-Century Poetry"; and Mr. Edward Shanks, for "The Work of Mr. H. G. Wells," previously published in the *London Mercury* and in *First Essays in Literature* (1923)-

FESTE THE JESTER[1]

A. C. BRADLEY

Argument. Feste the most lovable of Shakespeare's fools ; a fine judge of character and full of wit and wisdom ; a free spirit in spite of his servile position ; an artist in song ; clean-mouthed. To be pitied because he is too good for a fool's place and, also, lacks a thorough-going friend or protector. He must, therefore, look out for himself, begs at every opportunity, is cautious in his fooling, especially in the plot against Malvolio. Left alone at the end, he sings a ballad expressing a rueful but courageous philosophy—perhaps a part of Shakespeare's own, who had also to be " a motley to the view."

LEAR'S Fool stands in a place apart—a sacred place ; but, of Shakespeare's other Fools,[2] Feste, the so-called Clown in *Twelfth Night,* has always lain nearest to my heart. He is not, perhaps, more amusing than Touchstone, to whom I bow profoundly in passing ; but I love him more.

[1] Contributed to *A Book of Homage to Shakespeare,* 1916.

[2] I mean the Fools proper, *i.e.* professional jesters attached to a court or house. In effect they are but four, Touchstone, Feste, Lavache in *All's Well,* and Lear's Fool; for it is not clear that Trinculo is the court-jester, and the Clown in *Othello,* like the Fool (a brothel-fool) in *Timon,* has but a trivial part. Neither humorists like Launce and Launcelot Gobbo, nor " low " characters, unintentionally humorous, like the old peasant at the end of *Antony and Cleopatra* or the young shepherd called "Clown" in *The Winter's Tale,* are Fools proper. The distinction is quite clear, but it tends to be obscured for readers because the wider designation " Clown " is applied to persons of either class in the few lists of Dramatis Personae printed in the Folio, in the complete lists of our modern editions, and also, alike in these editions and in the Folio, in stage-directions and in the headings of speeches. Such directions and headings were meant for the actors, and the principal comic man of the company doubtless played both Launce and Feste. Feste, I may observe, is called " Clown" in the stage-directions and speech-headings, but in the text always " Fool." Lear's Fool is " Fool " even in the former.

Whether Lear's Fool was not slightly touched in his wits is disputable. Though Touchstone is both sane and wise, we sometimes wonder what would happen if he had to shift for himself. Here and there he is ridiculous as well as humorous ; we laugh *at* him, and not only *with* him. We never laugh at Feste. He would not dream of marrying Audrey. Nobody would hint that he was a " natural" or propose to " steal " him *(As Tou Like It,* i, ii, 52, 57 ; iii. 131). He is as sane as his mistress ; his position considered, he cannot be called even eccentric, scarcely even flighty ; and he possesses not only the ready wit required by his profession, and an intellectual agility greater than it requires, but also an insight into character and into practical situations so swift and sure that he seems to supply, in fuller measure than any of Shakespeare's other Fools, the poet's own comment on the story. He enters, and at once we know that Maria's secret is no secret to him. She warns him that he will be hanged for playing the truant. " Many a good hanging," he replies, " prevents a bad marriage " ; and if Maria wants an instance of a bad marriage, she soon gets it : " Well, go thy way ; if Sir Toby would leave drinking, thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria." (Gervinus, on the contrary, regarded this marriage as a judgment on Sir Toby ; but then Gervinus, though a most respectable critic, was no Fool.) Maria departs and Olivia enters. Her brother is dead, and she wears the deepest mourning, and has announced her intention of going veiled and weeping her loss every day for seven years. But, in Feste's view, her state of mind would

be rational only if she believed her brother's soul to be in hell; and he does not conceal his opinion. The Duke comes next, and, as his manner ruffles Feste, the mirror of truth is held firmly before him too : " Now, the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy mind is a very opal." In these encounters we admire the Fool's wisdom the more because it makes no impression on his antagonists, who regard it as mere foolery. And his occasional pregnant sayings and phrases meet the same fate. His assertion that he is the better for his foes and the worse for his friends the Duke takes for a mere absurdity or an inadvertence of expression, though he is tickled by Feste's proof of his affirmation through double negation.[1] The Philosopher may speak to Sebastian of " this great lubber the world " ; he may tell Viola how " foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun ; it shines everywhere " ; he may remark to the whole company how " the whirligig of time brings in his revenges " ; but nobody heeds him. Why should anyone heed a man who gets his living by talking nonsense, and who may be whipped if he displeases his employer ?

[1] **Feste's statement of his proof (v. i. 25) can hardly be called lucid, and his illustration (" conclusions to be as kisses, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives ") seems to have cost the commentators much fruitless labour. If anything definite was in the Fool's mind it may have been this. The gentieman asks for a kiss. The lady, denying it, exclaims " No no no no." But, as the first negative fan adjective} negates the second (a substantive) and the third in like manner the fourth, these four negatives yield two enthusiastic affirmatives, and the gentleman, thanks to the power of logic, gets twice what he asked for. This is not Feste's only gird at the wisdom of the schools. It has been gravely surmised that he was educated for the priesthood and, but for some escapade, would have played Sir Topas in earnest.**

All the agility of wit and fancy, all the penetration and wisdom, which Feste shows in his calling, would not by themselves explain our feeling for him. But his mind to him a kingdom is, and one full of such present joys that he finds contentment there. Outwardly he may be little better than a slave; but Epictetus was a slave outright and yet absolutely free: and so is Feste. That world of quibbles which are pointless to his audience, of incongruities which nobody else can see, of flitting fancies which he only cares to pursue, is his sunny realm. He is alone when he invents that aphorism of Quinapalus and builds his hopes on it; and it was not merely to get sixpence from Sir Andrew that he told of Pigrogromitus and the Vapians passing the equinoctial of Queubus. He had often passed it in that company himself. Maria and Sir Toby (who do enjoy his more obvious jests) are present when, clothed in the curate's gown and beard, he befools the imprisoned Malvolio so gloriously; but the prisoner is his only witness when, for his own sole delight, himself as Sir Topas converses with himself the Fool. But for this inward gaiety he could never have joined with all his heart in the roaring revelry of Sir Toby; but he does not need this revelry, and, unlike Sir Toby and Sir Toby's surgeon, he remains master of his senses. Having thus a world of his own, and being lord of himself, he cares little for Fortune. His mistress may turn him away; but, "to be turned away, let summer bear it out." This "sunshine of the breast" is always with him and spreads its radiance over the whole scene in which he moves. And so we love him.

We have another reason. The Fool's voice is as

melodious as the " sweet content " of his soul. To think of him is to remember " Come away, come away, Death," and " O Mistress mine," and " When that I was," and fragments of folk-song and ballad, and a catch that " makes the welkin dance indeed." To think of *Twelfth Night* is to think of music. It opens with instrumental music, and ends with a song. All Shakespeare's best praise of music, except the famous passage in *The Merchant of Venice,* occurs in it. And almost all the music and the praise of music comes from Feste or has to do with Feste. In this he stands alone among Shakespeare's Fools ; and that this, with the influence it has on our feeling for him, was intended by the poet should be plain. It is no accident that, when the Duke pays him for his " pains " in singing, he answers, " No pains, sir ; I take pleasure in singing, sir " ; that the revelry for which he risks punishment is a revelry of song ; that, when he is left alone, he still sings. And, all this being so, I venture to construe in the light of it what has seemed strange to me in the passage that follows the singing of " Come away." Usually, when Feste receives his " gratillity," he promptly tries to get it doubled, but here he not only abstains from any such effort but is short, if not disagreeably sharp, with the Duke. The fact is, he is offended, even disgusted ; and offended, not as Fool, but as music-lover and artist. We others know what the Duke said beforehand of the song, but Feste does not know it. Now he sings, and his soul is in the song. Yet, as the last note dies away, the comment he hears from this noble aesthete is, " There's for thy pains " !

I have a last grace to notice in our wise, happy,

melodious FooL He was little injured by his calling. He speaks as he likes ; but from first to last, whether he is revelling or chopping logic or playing with words, and to whomsoever he speaks or sings, he keeps his tongue free from obscenity. The fact is in accord with the spirit of this ever-blessed play, which could not have endured the " foul-mouthed " Fool of *All's Well,* and from which Aldis Wright in his school edition found, I think, but three lines (not the Fool's) to omit. But the trait is none the less characteristic of Feste, and we like him the better for it.

It remains to look at another side of the whole matter. One is scarcely sorry for Touchstone, but one is very sorry for Feste ; and pity, though not a painful pity, heightens our admiration and deepens our sympathy. The position of the professional jester we must needs feel to be more or less hard, if not of necessity degrading. In Feste's case it is peculiarly hard. He is perfectly sane, and there is nothing to show that he is unfit for independence. In important respects he is, more than Shakespeare's other fools, superior in mind to his superiors in rank. And he has no Celia, no Countess, no Lear, to protect or love him. He had been Fool to Olivia's father, who " took much delight in him " ; but Olivia, though not unkind, cannot be said to love him. We find him, on his first appearance, in disgrace and (if Maria is right) in danger of being punished or even turned away. His mistress, entering, tells him that he is a dry fool, that she'll no more of him, and (later) that his fooling grows old and people dislike it. Her displeasure, doubtless, has a

cause, and it is transient, but her words are none the less significant. Feste is a relic of the past. The steward, a person highly valued by his lady, is Feste's enemy. Though Maria likes him and, within limits, would stand his friend, there is no tone of affection in her words to him, and certainly none in those of any other person. We cannot but feel very sorry for him.

This peculiar position explains certain traits in Feste himself which might otherwise diminish our sympathy. One is that he himself, though he shows no serious malevolence even to his enemy, shows no affection for any one. His liking for Maria does not amount to fondness. He enjoys drinking and singing with Sir Toby, but despises his drunkenness and does not care for him. His attitude to strangers is decidedly cool, and he does not appear to be attracted even by Viola. The fact is, he recognizes very clearly that, as this world goes, a man whom nobody loves must look out for himself. Hence (this is the second trait) he is a shameless beggar, much the most so of Shakespeare's Fools. He is fully justified, and he begs so amusingly that we welcome his begging; but shameless it is. But he is laying up treasures on earth against the day when some freak of his own, or some whim in his mistress, will bring his dismissal, and the short summer of his freedom will be followed by the wind and the rain. And so, finally, he is as careful as his love of fun will allow to keep clear of any really dangerous enterprise. He must join in the revel of the knights and the defiance of the steward; but from the moment when Malvolio retires with a threat to Maria, and Maria begins to

expound her plot against him, Feste keeps silence ; and, though she expressly assigns him a part in the conspiracy, he takes none. The plot succeeds magnificently, and Malvolio is shut up, chained as a lunatic, in a dark room ; and that comic genius Maria has a new scheme, which requires the active help of the Fool. But her words, " Nay, I prithee, put on this gown and this beard," show that he objects ; and if his hesitation is momentary, it is not merely because the temptation is strong. For, after all, he runs but little risk, since Malvolio cannot see him, and he is a master in the management of his voice. And so, agreeing with Sir Toby's view that their sport cannot with safety be pursued to the upshot, after a while, when he is left alone with the steward, he takes steps to end it and consents, in his own voice, to provide the lunatic with light, pen, ink, and paper for his letter to Olivia.

We are not offended by Feste's eagerness for sixpences and his avoidance of risks. By helping us to realize the hardness of his lot, they add to our sympathy and make us admire the more the serenity and gaiety of his spirit. And at the close of the play these feelings reach their height. He is left alone ; for Lady Belch, no doubt, is by her husband's bedside, and the thin-faced gull Sir Andrew has vanished, and the rich and noble lovers with all their attendants have streamed away to dream of the golden time to come, without a thought of the poor jester. There is no one to hear him sing ; but what does that matter ? He takes pleasure in singing. And a song comes into his head ; an old rude song about the stages of man's life, in each of which the rain rains every day ; a

song at once cheerful and rueful, stoical and humorous ; and this suits his mood and he sings it. But, since he is even more of a philosopher than the author of the song, and since, after all, he is not merely a Fool but the actor who is playing that part in a theatre, he adds at the end a stanza of his own :

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain ;
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.[1]

Shakespeare himself, I feel sure, added that stanza to the old song ; and when he came to write *King Lear* he, I think, wrote yet another, which Feste might well have sung. To the immortal words,

Poor Fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee,

the Fool replies,

He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.

So Shakespeare brings the two Fools together ; and, whether or no he did this wittingly, I am equally grateful to him. But I cannot be grateful to those critics who see in Feste's song only an illustration of the bad custom by which sometimes, when a play was finished, the clown remained, or appeared, on the stage to talk nonsense or to sing some old " trash ";

[1] **Those who witnessed, some years ago, Mr. Granville Barker's production of *Twelfth Night*, and Mr. Hayden Coffin's presentment of the Fool's part, must always remember them with great pleasure, and not least the singing of this song.**

nor yet to those who tell us that it was " the players " who tacked this particular " trash " to the end of *Twelfth Mght.* They may conceivably be right in perceiving no difference between the first four stanzas and the last, but they cannot possibly be right in failing to perceive how appropriate the song is to the singer, and how in the line

But that's all one, our play is done,

he repeats an expression used a minute before in his last speech.[1] We owe these things, not to the players, but to that player in Shakespeare's company who was also a poet, to Shakespeare himself—the same Shakespeare who perhaps had hummed the old song, half-ruefully and half-cheerfully, to its accordant air, as he walked home alone to his lodging from the theatre or even from some noble's mansion ; he who, looking down from an immeasurable height on the mind of the public and the noble, had yet to be their servant and jester, and to depend upon their favour ; not wholly uncorrupted by this dependence, but yet superior to it and, also, determined, like Feste, to lay by the sixpences it brought him, until at last he could say the words, " Our revels now are ended,'[1] [2] and could break—was it a magician's staff or a Fool's bauble ?

(A Miscellany. **Macmillan.)**

[1] **" I was one, sir, in this interlude ; one Sir Topas, sir, *but that's all one.*[4]"**

[2] ***The Tempest,*** **iv. i. 148.**

ROMANTIC TRAGEDY : SHAKESPEARE

C. E. VAUGHAN

Argument, **Classical and Romantic Tragedy contrasted in the work of Racine and Shakespeare : (I) in amount of incident presented on the stage, (2) in plot-construction, which is loose in Shakespeare, allowing sub-plots and greater range of action, reversing the classical subordination of character to plot. The Romantic elevation of character above plot allows *(a)* emphasis on development of character, *(b)* room for reflective passages, *e.g.* soliloquies, which replace the Greek Chorus but are more woven into the action, *(c)* widening of range of dramatic character-study, including the grotesque as well as the serious.**

WE pass now from the classical to the romantic drama ; from one great type of tragedy to its opposite. It is true that classical tragedy had undergone many modifications since it left the hands of Æschylus and Sophocles. It is true that many of what may fairly be called romantic elements had been introduced by Euripides and Seneca ; that they hold their own, to some degree, even in so convinced a classicist as Racine. It is true, on the other side, that the influence of Seneca was a great, perhaps the dominant, influence upon the romantic predecessors of Shakespeare, and indeed upon Shakespeare himself, no less than on their classical rivals. But, for all that, it cannot be denied that the difference between the romantic and the classical type proclaims itself at the first glance ; and that in no two writers is that contrast more strongly marked than it is between Racine and Shakespeare.

The contrast appears, first and foremost, in the amount of action, of outward incident, admitted by

the one dramatist and the other. Racine, as we have seen, is to the last degree sparing in this matter. Everything in the shape of violent action is jealously excluded. As Hugo complained, it is only the " elbows of action " that appear upon his stage ; the hand that strikes the blow, the heart that bleeds from it, are laboriously hidden. And when the romantic revolt at last began, the first cry was invariably for more, and more vivid, action. On this point, though in practice he lacked the courage of his convictions, Voltaire was hardly less emphatic than Hugo himself. How different is the stage of the Elizabethans ! From the first scene to the last it is alive with action. Nothing is left to relation. Everything is presented to the eye. And in spite of obvious abuses, this was a healthy instinct. The eye will not be satisfied with hearing. It demands, and rightly demands, to see as well. Aristotle had felt this from the beginning ; and few passages of the *Poetics* are more striking, few bear stronger witness to his sagacity and detachment, than those in which he asserts the claims of the spectacular element in tragedy. Even Horace, though his authority did more perhaps than anything else to sanction the banishment of action, had fitful glimmerings of the truth :

> *Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures*
> *Quam quae sunt oculis subjectafidelibus.*

Yet, in spite of these protests from within the camp, the classical tyranny maintained itself unbroken. And it was only the reckless unconventionality of the Elizabethans and the Spaniards which had the power

to overthrow it. It may be readily admitted that the revolt was not seldom carried to excess. In some of the Elizabethans, both early and late, the action is too much akin to melodrama. In Dryden—and there are many earlier instances too—it is apt to degenerate into sound and fury, into mere empty bustle and noise. Even in Shakespeare, it has a habit of defeating its own ends ; of bringing upon the stage things which, with the appliances of the stage, can only look farcical and absurd ; battles, for instance, where the armies of two great kingdoms, as Addison said, are represented by " a pair of scene-shifters and a couple of candle-snuffers." Such scenes, however, occur mainly in the *Histories*, which are necessarily of looser build, and must obviously be judged by their own laws.

Apart from these, there is a class of incident which is freely admitted to the Shakespearean stage, but which to Racine would have seemed an abomination. These are the murders and sudden deaths which, at the close of *Hamlet* and other tragedies, leave the stage fairly choked with corpses. " Look on the tragic loading of this bed," says Lodovico at the end of *Othello*. And the same words, with slight variations, would apply to almost any other of the great tragedies. Here an English taste will find nothing to complain of, though a Frenchman would be apt to feel very differently. On the whole, it would seem that the gain of admitting such action far outweighs all possible drawbacks. For not only is it natural that such deeds should take place on the scene, and in the heat, of the passions which provoke them ; but, as Horace himself saw, they make a far deeper

impression on the imagination when presented to the eye than when merely reported to the ear. And, after all, they are just the deeds which, in the outward sense at any rate, constitute the tragedy. Moreover, the devices on which the classical dramatists are driven in their efforts to sweep them into the side-scenes are uncommonly clumsy ; and the Messenger's speech, with its arrest of action and its inevitable tendency to rhetorical description, is one of the least tolerable things in the classical drama, ancient as well as modern. In the main, then, we may say that Shakespeare is abundantly justified in his prodigality of action. Certainly, he is not less, but more scrupulous on the point than many of his fellow Elizabethans. A glance at the *Spanish Tragedy* and the *Jew of Malta,* or, to take later instances, at the *Duchess of Malfi,* and one at least of the great tragedies of Ford, will suffice to put this beyond doubt. There is, however, one incident in Shakespeare which most readers will surrender without a pang. This is the tearing out of Gloucester's eyes in *Lear.* The mere physical repulsion, the sickening horror, of such a sight is enough to condemn it. But when all allowance has been made for such excesses, it surely remains true that the demure inaction of the classical drama is well replaced by the fire and vividness of the Elizabethan and the Spanish.

We pass now to a matter where the contrast between the classical and the romantic drama is still more significant, and its consequences still more deep-reaching. No one who compares a tragedy of Racine with one of Shakespeare's—*Othello* is, perhaps,

a partial exception—can fail to notice that the latter is far looser in its general structure than the former. And this is as true—it is, in fact, still more true—of the Elizabethans in general. But, for convenience* sake, the following remarks will be mainly confined to Shakespeare. With him the drama is no longer limited to the main action, the single situation. Its scope is far wider ; the range it includes far richer and more varied. There *may* be a secondary action. There are sure to be episodes, side-lights, by-scenes, where the action stands still, but where those strains of character which do not and cannot come to the surface in the main action, or indeed in any action at all, are thrown into relief. We take each of these points singly ; and first, the admission of a secondary action.

No doubt, in the hands of the less skilful writers, this practice is liable to abuse. In the noblest of Middleton's tragedies, for instance, *The Changeling,* the imaginative effect of the main action comes near to being lost—it is certainly much weakened—by the insertion, at regular intervals, of a side-action entirely independent of it, entirely detached from it, and entirely alien from it in character and temper. Here the two plots are simply cut neatly into slips and laid alongside of each other ; no attempt is made to bring the one into any sort or kind of vital connection with the other. Such, however, is not Shakespeare's way of working. In one only of his tragedies, *King Lear,* does he admit a secondary action at all, though in his comedies he does so more often than not. And in that one tragedy, the story of Gloucester and his sons is so interwoven with that of Lear and his daughters

that it would be impossible to sever the two without destruction to the whole drama. Nor is the connection simply that of incidents and personages. The minor action, if we may call it so, is, in idea and substance, an echo of the main action. And in the cunning brutality of Edmund we have a reverberation of the " dog-hearted " cruelty of Goneril and Regan. Thus, what might have destroyed the unity of the piece serves only to strengthen and enhance it. The imaginative effect, so far from being weakened, is made more intense.

So also with those scenes which, though they involve no secondary action, yet stand manifestly apart from the plot and the main business of the tragedy. Such are the scenes with the players and the gravediggers in *Hamlet*; the scene between Lear and Edgar, the real and the assumed madman, on the heath ; the scene between Desdemona and I ago on the quay at Cyprus ; and, if we interpret the term " main action " at all rigorously, the sleepwalking scene in *Macbeth.* In all these the action halts, or rather is deliberately suspended. In all it is replaced by talk ; talk which, in every case but the last, has little or no reference to the plot. Yet in all a searching light is thrown upon the characters ; and the plays would have been quite infinitely poorer without them. Can any one honestly say that he would know so much about the character of Hamlet, its inward strength and its inward weakness, that he would understand so well the causes of his action or his inaction, if the scenes in question were cut out ? Or the characters of Desdemona and I ago ? Or that of Lady Macbeth ? Or the sublime tenderness which

lies hid behind the ungovernable passion of Lear? To maintain any of these things would surely be impossible.

Yet again, there are scenes which seem to have no bearing either upon character or action; to stand there simply and solely for their imaginative effect. The most famous instance of this, and perhaps the only certain and complete one, is the Porter-scene in *Macbeth*. It is obvious that neither action nor character is here in question. But what other means would have served so well to drive home to our imagination the infinite horror of the deed which has just been done almost before our eyes? Gould anything have thrown into such sharp relief the tragedy of the hellish passions let loose above, as the cynical comedy of the half-drunken churl below? the roysterer who, even as he speaks, has become, not in jest but in grim earnest, the " porter of hell-gate " ?

Now it does not need much reflection to show us that—whether they serve merely to make an appeal to our imagination, or to throw light on character and temperament, or to introduce a distinct and secondary thread of action—all such scenes would infallibly have been barred out by the classical tradition. There is not one of them which does not violate the " unity of action," as it was understood not only by such critics as Aristotle or Horace, but, what is far more important, by dramatists such as iEschylus, Sophocles, and Racine. It is clear, therefore, that we have here nothing short of a revolution in the whole conception of tragic drama. And, as those scenes which let us into the secrets of character and motive are manifestly the most significant among

those we have considered, it is also clear wherein exactly that revolution consists. The ideal of Aristotle, which was also the practice of the classical dramatists, has been entirely reversed. The plot, which with them held the first place, is now thrust down into the second. Character, which had been the subordinate interest, is now treated as the principal. By the ancients character was regarded as the means, and plot as the end. With Shakespeare character becomes the end, and plot sinks into the position of the means. The centre of gravity has been shifted from plot to character. And character has come to have an independent and intrinsic value of its own.

We have seen an earnest of this revolution in the works of the ancients themselves ; under one form in Sophocles, under another in Euripides. We have seen the principle carried still further by Racine, and further yet by Alfieri. And seeing that the drama, on any showing, is a presentation of human life, seeing that of all the conditions which go to make the web of human life and human destiny character is beyond comparison the most important, it is a principle which, so long as any vitality remains to the drama, is bound to assert itself and extend itself. But so long as the classical form was the accepted mould in which all tragedy was cast, so long it was inevitable that plot should play a commanding, if not a preponderating, part. And so long as it did so, it was impossible that character should come by its full rights. The rigid mould had to be broken up ; the structure of the plot had to be loosened. Then, and then only, was it possible to obtain a free scope for the

portrayal of character. To break down the barriers, to employ the free space, thus opened, for the noblest ends which the drama can achieve—this was the glory of the romanticists in England and Spain. It was—so far as the latter point is concerned—the glory, above all, of Shakespeare.

The principle was applied in a variety of ways. Of these, we must content ourselves with the most obvious. And, in the first place, no one can fail to notice the weight given by Shakespeare to that which is the highest, and at the same time the most tragic, quality of character, its capacity for growth or decay. In two of his tragedies, *Macbeth* and *Lear,* this may be said to form the point round which the whole is centred. In *Macbeth* this is sufficiently obvious. Two wills, each cast in an entirely different mould, are suddenly dazzled by hopes before which the purest conscience might have wavered. Both have a touch of heroism. The man has the heroism of great physical courage—" I dare do all that may become a man "—and of a name hitherto honoured and unsullied ; the woman, the heroism of a commanding temper and dauntless resolution. Both give way to ambition ; they join hands in an unpardonable crime. The life of both is for ever poisoned by the deed. But the poison works in utterly different ways. The woman, who before the deed had been all fire and determination, breaks down directly the strain of prompt decision is taken off. The remainder of the action sweeps by her, a helpless witness of her partner's crimes. In the closing scene, we see her once more, now a hopeless wreck, her whole being absorbed in the memory of the fatal moment, which

was " to all her nights and days to come " to have " given solely sovereign sway and masterdom," and which has ended thus. It is quite otherwise with the man. The deed which came on him irresolute, leaves him " whole as the marble, founded as the rock." To the first murder he had nerved himself only by a dead effort, only when " chastised by the valour of a woman's tongue." In the others he has no qualm. He accepts them as his doom. He moves on to each in turn with the force and precision of a machine. But, none the less, his soul is poisoned, and his peace is departed from him. He is a hunted creature ; alone in a world of curses ; stripped of everything save the will to do evil, and the knowledge that, with the evil, will come its own punishment of self-torture and despair. So his doom closes round him, and he dies at last, like " a bear tied to the stake," fighting with desperate courage against a world in arms ; the same world from which he had "bought golden opinions " before his trial came and found him wanting.

The reverse of the picture is given in *Lear.* Like Macbeth, Lear is one man at the opening of the tragedy and another at its close. At the opening, he is rash, choleric, swept by gusts of ungovernable fury. But trouble, the direct consequence of his own rashness, falls upon him and hurls him not only from his throne but from his former self. He is purified by suffering. In his own sorrows he learns to feel the sorrows of mankind. He bows himself in passionate repentance, to seek forgiveness of those he has wronged and who yet love him and would give all to save him. The old world, the old self,

have fallen from him. He lives now in a world where all things are made new, and where, as " God's spy," he mocks at the earthly pomp which once had been his pride ; now, in a truer sense than when he used the words, " every inch a king." And if a fit of the old wilfulness once again comes on him, it is to take vengeance on the ruffian who murders her whom he had once cast from him with contempt. The old self survives in the new, the " one touch of nature " which binds him more closely than ever to our hearts.

Now it is perfectly clear that we have nothing like this in the classical dramatists. And the reason is plain. So long as the unity of time, even in its laxest form, is a condition of tragedy, so long any growth or deterioration of character—except in so far as the past may be reflected in the action of the present[1]—is impossible. Time is essential to this ; and time is just what the classical drama obstinately refuses to give. And if it be true that even in the romantic drama the thing is strangely rare, that besides Shakespeare but few romantic dramatists have attempted it, that is not because of any outward conditions, it is not due to any obstacle imposed by the dramatic form, but either to lack of genius or its diversion into other channels. Still it must not be forgotten that in one at least of Calderon's tragedies, *Amar despues de la Muerte,* the same theme is taken ; nor that in the most famous of all modern dramas, Goethe's *Faust,* it is carried out with triumphant success.

The defiance of the other external unity, that of

[1] **As is repeatedly the case in the plays of Ibsen, who observes the unity of time more or less closely ; e.g. *Ghosts* or *Rosmersholm.***

place, cuts, no doubt, less deep. But it, too, is of great importance. It allows the dramatist a far greater freedom in his choice both of incidents and personages than would otherwise have been possible. And the shifts to which the classical dramatists are driven in their frantic efforts to preserve this unity are in themselves sufficient to condemn it. On the other hand, if we turn to the tragedies of Shakespeare, we see at once what is gained by its violation. What would *Lear* be without the scene on the heath ? or *Hamlet* without those on the platform and in the graveyard? or *Othello* without the guardroom and Desdemona's chamber, or *Macbeth* without the blasted heath and the witches' cave ? Not to mention that most of these scenes permit the introduction of personages—the witches, for instance—who, given the unity of place, must inevitably have been excluded.

That character should now be presented as a thing capable of growth is, then, one of the things which mark the change both of form and spirit that came over the drama with the triumph of romance. But there is another, still more significant and still more worthy of attention. This is the blending of reflection with the more active energies, which stamps the romantic drama in general and the tragedies of Shakespeare in particular. It appears in some of the greatest plays of Calderon ; for instance, *La Vida es Sueno.* It appears in *Faust.* It appears, above all, in the soliloquies of Shakespeare. Here again the action is for the moment suspended—nay, forgotten ; and that, it may be, at the most critical moment of its course. Take, for instance, the best

known of all reflective speeches, the soliloquy of Hamlet. The hero has just taken the resolution on which his subsequent action, or inaction, is absolutely to depend. He has designed the test which is to put the guilt or innocence of his enemy to the proof. The moment before he has been all fire and eagerness over this device. Now all is forgotten. He enters entirely wrapt up in other thoughts. "Will the scheme fail or will it prosper?"—that is what we should have expected. Not in the least. "To be, or not to be?"—to put an end to himself, or no?—that is the question that now absorbs every energy of his soul. And the same preoccupation, the weariness of life and the fascination of the mystery of death, runs through the poignant dialogue with Ophelia, which follows. So, in truth, to the very end of the tragedy. It is the inner, rather than the outer, life of Hamlet; his reflection, rather than his deeds; his inaction, rather than his action, which is the true theme of the drama. Yes, it may be objected, and just for that reason it is not a fair instance to take. The character of Hamlet is so abnormal that it could only be presented by exceptional means. This is true. But the fact remains that, for the subject of his masterpiece, Shakespeare took a theme which could not possibly have found a place in classical tragedy, and that, in his hands, the end abundantly justified the means.

Moreover, the same objection cannot possibly be urged in the case of his other tragedies. Yet there too, doubtless under a different form, the same method reappears. It is hardly less characteristic of *Lear*, *Macbeth*, or even *Othello*, than it is of *Hamlet*.

On *Lear*, which is avowedly a play of suffering rather than of action, it is unnecessary to dwell; though, once again, the mere choice of such a subject is intensely significant. *Othello*, at first sight, may seem to offer no confirmation of the point now under consideration. None of Shakespeare's heroes is less reflective in temper ; to none is so little of anything even distantly approaching to soliloquy assigned ; and what little there is bears directly and obviously upon the action of the moment. Yet in the great speeches of Othello we have, if not reflection, at any rate the lyric note in its highest possible intensity. And the lyric note has this in common with reflection, that it raises the soul of the speaker far above the mere purposes and circumstances of the moment. It exalts him to a region of which the actual world, its passions and sufferings, are but a pale and fleeting image, to the region which is his true home, which abides when all that he has loved and striven for in this world is torn from him or dashed in pieces. Nothing, therefore, could serve to bring out more strongly, to press more closely home upon our imagination, that innate heroism, that largeness of soul, which is the seal of Shakespeare's tragic figures, and of none more than of Othello, " once so good," now

Fallen in the practice of a damned slave,

a " demi-devil," who has had the cunning to " ensnare him, soul and body." And that is the reason why such lyric outbursts as

Never, Iago ! Like to the Pontic sea,

Had it pleased heaven to try me with affliction,

or,

Put out the light, and then—put out the light,

or,

If heaven would make me such another world
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it——

have power to move us to the very depth of our soul.

But, after all, the most striking of all illustrations is to be drawn from *Macbeth.* Here is a subject which only the highest genius could have made available for the purposes of art. But for the instinctive sureness of Shakespeare's touch, we should probably have felt for the hero nothing but horror and repulsion. By what means does Shakespeare check this repulsion ? By what means does he convert it into interest, pity, and admiration ? It is not only that from the first he makes us feel that both hero and heroine have something above the common in their nature ; that they are cast in a larger mould than the men and women among whom we habitually move ; that their powers, both for good and evil, are greater ; that their passions are stronger and more masterful than those of ordinary clay. This would apply equally to Richard I I I ; and there is no reader but will feel that Macbeth and his wife move upon a higher plane than their earlier prototype, and that their story has a far deeper tragic appeal than his. Where, then, does the difference lie? Partly, no doubt, in the atmosphere of the appalling and the supernatural with which Shakespeare has surrounded the whole action from first to last. Yet more in the amazing fidelity and minuteness with which he has

traced every deed to its conflicting motives ; every purpose from its first dim conception to its final accomplishment and its remotest effects upon the soul and conscience ; every hesitation, every revulsion in the fatal march of crime ; every contortion of the victim, self-doomed for ever

> On the torture of the mind to lie
> In restless ecstasy,

crushed beneath the consciousness of its own defilement and degradation. Most of all, perhaps, in the lyric outbursts which are nowhere so abundant as in this gloomiest and most despairing of human tragedies. It is surely intensely significant that one of the deepest reflections on the vanity of human life and human effort, and by far the most impassioned to be found in Shakespeare, should be placed on the lips of a criminal, red with the blood of murder, and at the moment when he might seem to have lost all sense of the bond which unites him to other men, to have retained nothing save the blind instinct of the hunted beast.

The significance of such passages, the impress they give to the whole spirit and substance of the tragedies in which they occur, is hardly to be exaggerated. They carry us into a world that lies far apart from, and far above, the direct action, the immediate surroundings of the speaker. Yet there are no passages which let us so deeply into the hidden springs of character ; none which so powerfully serve to enforce the end and purpose of tragedy, as the dramatist conceived it; to quicken and deepen our sense that the whole man is something greater than

his actual achievement; that, in his deepest abasement as in his highest exaltation, he has " thoughts which can ne'er be packed into the narrow act" ; that the heroism of the hero will shine through the darkest or most distorted deed in which he has imprisoned it; that he is not at the mercy of his success or failure in the purposes, perverted or noble, which he would seem to have staked all on attaining. Beyond the action however engrossing, beyond the passion however intense, there is an inner region into which the soul withdraws herself and is alone ; where the noble spirit is brought face to face with the beauty and purity for which in this life it seeks in vain ; where the perverse or the criminal, if a spark of heroism still lingers in his breast, is confronted with the truth and justice which he has defied and trampled on in this life and is forced " even to the teeth and forehead of his faults to give in evidence," to confess the emptiness and the ugliness of that which he has lost all to win. So it is that to Macbeth, racked by the torture of his own memories,

> Life's but a walking shadow ... a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.

To Hamlet, tossed to and fro between thought and action, buffeted by the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to, death is a " sleep, a consummation devoutly to be wished." For Othello, wielding the " sword of justice," the relentless purpose half breaks as he gazes on his victim, and he stoops to kiss her as she sleeps. Then, when his eyes are at length opened, there is nothing for him but to seek refuge

in death ; and once again he kisses her as he falls, self-slain, at her side :

> I kissed thee, ere I killed thee. No way but this,
> Killing myself to die upon a kiss.

No other dramatist has seen so clearly the double life of the soul. None has held the scales so evenly between the two worlds which contend for her possession. None has grasped so unerringly the tragedy, so bitter and so ennobling, which springs from their collision.

There is yet another aspect of the reflective and lyrical passages of Shakespeare on which we may pause for a moment. That is their more formal aspect, the purely poetical purpose which they serve in the general economy of his tragedies. In such passages it is fair to say that we have some equivalent for the purely lyrical episodes, the choric interludes, of the Greek drama. The Chorus of Greek tragedy has, almost inevitably, failed to find a place in the modern drama. It is too alien from modern conditions ; and the attempts to introduce it, or something distantly approaching to it, have seldom been successful. In that form, we may take it, the lyric element is no longer available for dramatic uses. And the question arises : Is it possible to find some other embodiment for it, to discover some imaginative equivalent? Now, in the classical drama of the moderns, bound as it has commonly been within the limits of a highly concentrated action, it is seldom that the spirit of poetry, as such, can disengage itself; seldom that the purely lyrical element can win its flight, even for a moment, from the cage of cunningly

woven plot or the pressure of circumstances and situation. The passionate anguish of Phedre may be cited as an exception ; but it is an exception that stands almost alone. In the romantic drama, with its looser structure and its wider range of passion and feeling, the case is different. Witness, on the one hand, the lyric outbursts of Calderon ; on the other, the soliloquies and the often essentially lyrical dialogue of Shakespeare. Here, if anywhere, is to be found the equivalent of which we are in search. And it is significant that, while in the Greek drama the choric ode was a thing quite apart from the general movement of the piece, in the romantic drama, above all in that of Spain and England, the lyrical element is part and parcel of the dramatic structure ; bone of its bone, and flesh of its flesh ; in the strictest sense, the most dramatic thing in it ; the element which, more than any other, reveals the deepest springs of character and embodies the specifically tragic appeal to the imagination.

But the loosening of the general structure in romantic tragedy has further consequences yet. And one of these is so far-reaching that, even in this cursory view, we are not entitled to overlook it. This is the enormous widening of the dramatic range which it carries with it ; the infinite variety of human character which it admits. That is, perhaps, the first thing to strike us in the dramas of Shakespeare as contrasted with those of Sophocles or Racine. And there is no need to dwell on its significance. There is, however, one special point on which we may linger for a moment. The classical drama confines itself to the serious side of life ; the

romantic includes the grotesque and the humorous as well. And the surest way, perhaps, to realise the importance of this is to remind ourselves that, in the French revival of 1830, it formed the battle-ground between the romantic and the classical armies. A glance at the preface to *Cromwell* will put this beyond doubt. And, however little the author of that manifesto may have succeeded in naturalising the humorous, or even the grotesque, in his own dramas, he was abundantly justified in his contention that it is one of the marks which serve most clearly to distinguish the romantic from the classical type of tragedy.

Roughly speaking, it may be said that in romantic tragedy the grotesque, the humorous, takes two distinct forms, a higher and a lower. In the lower shape, it is simply laid alongside of the more serious theme, and little or no attempt is made to blend them, or give them organic unity. An extreme instance of this is found in Middleton's *Changeling.* Here there are two distinct plots, one serious, the other comic ; and between them there is absolutely no connection. The result is a tragedy with a succession of comic interludes interspersed at stated intervals. And the effect is in the last degree baffling to the imagination. In the Spanish drama we have something of the same method, but turned to issues far more legitimate. Here the humorous element is embodied in personages—generally servants, or *graziosos*—who fill a natural part in the serious action of the piece. But the comic scenes are studiously held apart from the tragic ; as often as not they offer a sort of burlesque mimicry of the tragic circumstances, the tragic passions, which form the

main theme of the play. And this holds true—the burlesque apart—of Shakespeare's earlier effort to unite the humorous with the tragic ; the scene in *Romeo* where Gapulet storms in the kitchen, while Juliet lies to all appearance dead in the chamber above. In the later tragedies his method is very different. And here we come to the highest form which the union of tragedy and humour can take. Here the two elements are, in the strictest sense, fused and blended with each other. The sorrow is thrown into relief by the laughter ; the jest of the clown or fool only serves to make the tragedy more poignant. The scene of the porter in *Macbeth,* the scene between Hamlet and the gravediggers, above all the scenes between the King and the Fool in *Lear,* are the supreme instances of this. And nowhere does the genius of Shakespeare rise more triumphantly than here.

All sides of life are represented in the matter of Shakespeare's tragedies. All sides of human character are reflected in his style. Who has not felt the marvellous variety of his style, the unflagging ease with which he passes from one style to another, in obedience to the mood or character of the speaker ? The speech of Hamlet is not the speech of Macbeth ; the speech of Macbeth is not that of Lear or of Othello. The language of Iago is not that of Edmund ; the language of Horatio not that of Banquo or of Kent. Passing, as he did, whenever he was truly himself, into the inmost soul of each character in turn, by an unprompted instinct Shakespeare fell upon the speech appropriate to each. And few things in his dramas are more remarkable than the

infinite range of style, speech, dialect they unfold before us. In no one play is this so clearly seen as in *Othello.* There he comes nearer to the common circumstances of life than in any other of his tragedies. And this is clearly reflected in the style. From the pure colloquial, the cynical brutality, of Iago—in the earlier scenes almost every phrase bites into the memory—to the fiery indignation of Emilia at the close, from the moving wail of Desdemona to the passionate anguish and the no less passionate repentance of Othello, he seems to sweep the whole scale in which human baseness and human nobility can find utterance.

Here, then, once more we come back to the battle of classicism and romance—a battle as sharply waged in the field of style as it is in that of substance and of treatment. The variety of Shakespeare's style, its daring transitions from gay to grave, from sublime to familiar, would have seemed to Racine a profanation of the drama. To those who have entered into the spirit of Shakespearean tragedy the sustained harmony of Racine will inevitably seem monotonous. The diffused glow of Racine, the lights and shadows of Shakespeare, these represent two contrary ideals, and between the two there is no possibility of compromise. Each has its own legitimate effect; but the two are mutually exclusive. And few will now be found to deny that the ideal of Shakespeare is a wider ideal, and the effect of his style a more dramatic effect, than those which were sought and found by Racine. The variety of his style, however, is but the outward and visible sign of the endless variety of his theme. And that is the secret of its **importance.**

It is because he had scanned life and character so widely that he has grasped their significance so clearly. It is because he had sounded the depths of the soul more deeply than any other man that he touches our imagination more strongly, and grips our heart-strings with more power.

(Types of Tragic Drama. **Macmillan.)**

INTERLUDE: ON JARGON

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH

Argument Recognition of good prose assisted by recognition of **bad** prose, one type of which is Jargon. Jargon not Journalese, though the two overlap. Favourite words and phrases of Journalese have still a remnant of artistry in them, but Jargon is the offspring of Caution and Indolence. It is becoming the language of Parliament, public bodies and commerce. It is fond of abstract words, of circumlocutions, of " elegant variation." Shakespeare illustrates, in contrast to Marlowe and Webster, the superiority of the concrete over the abstract term : in prose, Burke shows the same superiority over Brougham. A passage from Donne given as a final example of the vivid particularising style.

WE parted, Gentlemen, upon a promise to discuss the capital difficulty of Prose, as we have discussed the capital difficulty of Verse. But, although we shall come to it, on second thoughts I ask leave to break the order of my argument and to interpose some words upon a kind of writing which, from a superficial likeness, commonly passes for prose in these days, and by lazy folk is commonly written for prose, yet actually is not prose at all; my excuse being the simple practical one that, by first clearing this sham prose out of the way, we shall the better deal with honest prose when we come to it. The proper difficulties of prose will remain *i* but we shall be agreed in understanding what it is, or at any rate what it is not, that we talk about. I remember to have heard somewhere of a religious body in the United States of America which had reason to suspect one of its churches of accepting Spiritual consolation from a coloured preacher—an offence

against the laws of the Synod—and despatched a Disciplinary Committee with power to act; and of the committee's returning to report itself unable to take any action under its terms of reference, for that while a person undoubtedly occupied the pulpit and had audibly spoken from it in the committee's presence, the performance could be brought within no definition of preaching known or discoverable. So it is with that infirmity of speech—that flux, that determination of words to the mouth, or to the pen—which, though it be familiar to you in parliamentary debates, in newspapers, and as the staple language of Blue Books, Committees, Official Reports, I take leave to introduce to you as prose which is not prose and under its real name of Jargon.

You must not confuse this Jargon with what is called Journalese. The two overlap, indeed, and have a knack of assimilating each other's vices. But Jargon finds, maybe, the most of its votaries among good douce people who have never written to or for a newspaper in their life, who would never talk of " adverse climatic conditions" when they mean " bad weather," who have never trifled with verbs such as " obsess," " recrudesce," " envisage," " adumbrate," or with phrases such as " the psychological moment," " the true inwardness," " it gives furiously to think." It dallies with Latinity—*'sub silentio,' de die in diem,' 'cui bono?*' (always in the sense, unsuspected by Cicero, of " What is the profit ? ") —but not for the sake of style. Your journalist at the worst is an artist in his way : he daubs paint of this kind upon the lily with a professional zeal; the more flagrant (or, to use his own word, arresting)

the pigment, the happier is his soul. Like the Babu he is trying all the while to embellish our poor language, to make it more floriferous, more poetical —like the Babu for example who, reporting his mother's death, wrote, " Regret to inform you, the hand that rocked the cradle has kicked the bucket."

There is metaphor : *there* is ornament : *there* is a sense of poetry, though as yet groping in a world unrealised. No such gusto marks—no such zeal, artistic or professional, animates—the practitioners of Jargon, who are, most of them (I repeat), douce respectable persons. Caution is its father : the instinct to save everything and especially trouble : its mother, Indolence. It looks precise, but is not. It is, in these times, *safe* : a thousand men have said it before and not one to your knowledge had been prosecuted for it. And so, like respectability in Chicago, Jargon stalks unchecked in our midst. It is becoming the language of Parliament: it has become the medium through which Boards of Government, County Councils, Syndicates, Committees, Commercial Firms, express the processes as well as the conclusions of their thought and so voice the reason of their being.

Has a Minister to say " No " in the House of Commons ? Some men are constitutionally incapable of saying no : but the Minister conveys it thus—" The answer to the question is in the negative." That means " no." Can you discover it to mean anything less, or anything more except that the speaker is a pompous person ?—which was no part of the information demanded.

That is Jargon, and it happens to be accurate. But as a rule Jargon is by no means accurate, its method being to walk circumspectly around its target; and its faith, that having done so it has either hit the bull's-eye or at least achieved something equivalent, and safer.

Thus the Clerk of a Board of Guardians will minute that :

In the case of John Jenkins deceased the coffin provided was of the usual character.

Now this is not accurate. " In the case of John Jenkins deceased," for whom a coffin was supplied, it is wholly superfluous to tell us that he is deceased. But actually John Jenkins never had had two,—a coffin in a case : but I suspect the Clerk to be mistaken, and I am sure he errs in telling us that the coffin was of the usual character : for coffins have no character, usual or unusual.

For another example (I shall not tell you whence derived) :

In the case of every candidate who is placed in the first class (So you see the lucky fellow gets a case as well as a first-class. He might be a stuffed animal: perhaps he is.). In the case of every candidate who is placed in the first class the class-list will show by some convenient mark (I) the Section or Sections for proficiency in which he is placed in the first class and (2) the Section or Sections (if any) in which he has passed with special distinction.

" The Section or Sections (if any) "—But, how, if there are not any, could they be indicated by a mark however convenient ?

The Examiners will have regard to the style and method of the candidate's answers, and will give credit for excellence *in these respects.*

Have you begun to detect the two main vices of Jargon? The first is that it uses circumlocution rather than short straight speech. It says "In the case of John Jenkins deceased, the coffin" when it means "John Jenkins's coffin": and its yea is not yea, neither is its nay nay: but its answer is in the affirmative or in the negative, as the foolish and superfluous "case" may be. The second vice is that it habitually chooses vague woolly abstract nouns rather than concrete ones. I shall have something to say by-and-by about the concrete noun, and how you should ever be struggling for it whether in prose or in verse. For the moment I content myself with advising you, if you would write masculine English, never to forget the old tag of your Latin Grammar:

> Masculine will only be
> Things that you can touch and see.

But since these lectures are meant to be a course in First-Aid to writing, I will content myself with one or two extremely rough rules: yet I shall be disappointed if you do not find them serviceable.

The first is: Whenever in your reading you come across one of these words, *case, instance, character, nature, condition, persuasion, degree*—whenever in writing your pen betrays you to one or another of them—pull yourself up and take thought. If it be "case" (I choose it as Jargon's dearest child—"in Heaven yclept Metonomy") turn to the dictionary,

if you will, and seek out what meaning can be derived from *casus,* its Latin ancestor : then try how, with a little trouble, you can extricate yourself from that case. The odds are, you will feel like a butterfly who has discarded his chrysalis.

Here are some specimens to try your hand on :

(1) All those tears which inundated Lord Hugh Cecil's head were dry in the case of Mr. Harold Cox.

Poor Mr. Cox ! left gasping in his aquarium !

(2) (From a cigar-merchant.) In any case, let us send you a case on approval.

(3) It is contended that Consols have fallen in consequence, but such is by no means the case.

" Such," by the way, is another spoilt child of Jargon, especial in Committee's Rules—" Co-opted members may be eligible as such : such members to continue to serve for such time as "—and so on.

(4) Even in the purely Celtic areas, only in two or three cases do the Bishops bear Celtic names.

For " cases " read " dioceses."

Instance, In most instances the players were below their form.

But what were they playing at ? Instances ?

Character—Nature. There can be no doubt that the accident was caused through the dangerous nature of the spot, the hidden character of the by-road, and the utter absence of any warning or danger signal.

Mark the foggy wording of it all ! And yet the man hit something and broke his neck ! Contrast that explanation with the verdict of a coroner's jury

in the West of England on a drowned postman : " We find that deceased met his death by an act of God, caused by sudden overflowing of the river Walkham and helped out by the scandalous neglect of the way-wardens."

The Aintree course is notoriously of a trying nature.

On account of its light character, purity and age, Usher's whiskey is a whiskey that will agree with you.

Order. The mesalliance was of a pronounced order.

Condition. He was conveyed to his place of residence in an intoxicated condition.

" He was carried home drunk."

Quality and *Section.* Mr.——, exhibiting no less than five works, all of a superior quality, figures prominently in the oil section.

—This was written of an exhibition of pictures.

Degree. A singular degree of rarity prevails in the earlier editions of this romance.

That is Jargon. In prose it runs simply " The earlier editions of this romance are rare "—or " are very rare "—or even (if you believe what I take leave to doubt), " are singularly rare " ; which should mean that they are rarer than the editions of any other work in the world.

Now what I ask you to consider about these quotations is that in each the writer was using Jargon to shirk prose, palming off periphrases upon us when with a little trouble he could have gone straight to the point. " A singular degree of rarity prevails," " the accident was caused through the dangerous nature of the spot," " but such is by no means the

case." We may not be capable of much ; but we can all write better than that, if we take a little trouble. In place of, " the Aintree course is of a trying nature" we can surely say " Aintree is a trying course " or " the Aintree course is a trying one "—just that and nothing more.

Next, having trained yourself to keep a look-out for these worst offenders (and you will be surprised to find how quickly you get into the way of it), proceed to push your suspicions out among the whole cloudy host of abstract terms. " How excellent a thing is sleep," sighed Sancho Panza ; " it wraps a man round like a cloak "—an excellent example, by the way, of how to say a thing concretely : a Jargoneer would have said that " among the beneficent qualities of sleep its capacity for withdrawing the human consciousness from the contemplation of immediate circumstances may perhaps be accounted not the least remarkable." How vile a thing—shall we say ?—is the abstract noun ! It wraps a man's thoughts round like cotton wool.

Here is a pretty little nest of specimens, found in *The Times* newspaper by Messrs. H. W. and F. G. Fowler, authors of that capital little book *The King's English* :

One of the most important reforms mentioned in the rescript is the unification of the organisation of judicial institutions and the guarantee for all the tribunals of the independence necessary for securing to all classes of the community equality before the law.

I do not dwell on the cacophony ; but, to convey a straightforward piece of news, might not the

Editor of *The Times* as well employ a man to write :

One of the most important reforms is that of the Courts, which need a uniform system and to be made independent. In this way only can men be assured that all are equal before the law.

I think he might.

A day or two ago the musical critic of the *Standard* wrote this :

MR. LAMOND IN BEETHOVEN

Mr. Frederick Lamond, the Scottish pianist, as an interpreter of Beethoven has few rivals. At his second recital of the composer's works at Bechstein Hall on Saturday afternoon he again displayed a complete sympathy and understanding of his material that extracted the very essence of aesthetic and musical value from each selection he undertook. The delightful intimacy of his playing and his unusual force of individual expression are invaluable assets, which, allied to his technical brilliancy, enable him to achieve an artistic triumph. The two lengthy Variations in E flat major (Op. 35) and in D major, the latter on the Turkish March from " The Ruins of Athens," when included in the same programme, require a master hand to provide continuity of interest. *To say that Mr. Lamond successfully avoided moments that might at times, in these works, have inclined to comparative disinterestedness, would be but a moderate way of expressing the remarkable fascination with which his versatile playing endowed them,* but *at the same time* two of the sonatas given included a similar form of composition, and no matter how intellectually brilliant may be the interpretation, the extravagant use of a certain mode is bound in time to become somewhat ineffective. In the Three Sonatas, the E major (Op. 109), the A major (Op. 2), No. Q, and the C minor (Op. in), Mr. Lamond sig-

nalised his perfect insight into the composer's varying moods.

Will you not agree with me that here is no writing, here is no prose, here is not even English, but merely a flux of words to the pen ?

Here again is a string, a concatenation—say, rather, a tiara—of gems of purest ray serene from the dark, unfathomed caves of a Scottish newspaper :

The Chinese viewpoint, as indicated in this letter, may not be without interest to your readers, because it evidently is suggestive of more than an academic attempt to explain an unpleasant aspect of things which, if allowed to materialise, might suddenly culminate in disaster resembling the Ghang-Sha riots. It also ventures to illustrate incidents having their inception in recent premature endeavours to accelerate the development of Protestant missions in China ; but we would hope for the sake of the interests involved that what my correspondent describes as " the irresponsible ruffian element " may be known by their various religious designations only within very restricted areas.

Well, the Chinese have given it up, poor fellows ! and are asking the Christians—as to-day's newspapers inform us—to pray for them. Do you wonder ? But that is, or was, the Chinese " viewpoint,"—and what a willow-pattern viewpoint ! Observe its delicacy. It does not venture to interest or be interesting ; merely "to be not without interest." But it does " venture to illustrate incidents "—which, for a viewpoint, is brave enough : and this illustration " is suggestive of something more than an academic attempt to explain an unpleasant aspect of things which, if allowed to materialise, might suddenly culminate." *What* materialises ?

The unpleasant aspect ? or the things ? Grammar says .the " things," " things which if allowed to materialise." But things are materialised already, and as a condition of their being things. It must be the aspect, then, that materialises. But, if so, it is also the aspect that culminates, and an aspect, however unpleasant, can hardly do that, or at worst cannot culminate in anything resembling the Chang-Sha riots. ... I give it up.

Let us turn to another trick of Jargon : the trick of Elegant Variation, so rampant in the Sporting Press that there, without needing to attend these lectures, the Undergraduate detects it for laughter :

> Hayward and C. B. Fry now faced the bowling, which apparently had no terrors for the Surrey crack. The old Oxonian, however, took some time in settling to work....

Yes, you all recognise it and laugh at it. But why do you practise it in your Essays ? An undergraduate brings me an essay on Byron. In an essay on Byron, Byron is (or ought to be) mentioned many times. I expect, nay exact, that Byron shall be mentioned again and again. But my undergraduate has a blushing sense that to call Byron Byron twice on one page is indelicate. So Byron, after starting bravely as Byron, in the second sentence turns into " that great but unequal poet" and thenceforward I have as much trouble with Byron as ever Telemachus with Proteus to hold and pin him back to his proper self. Half-way down the page he becomes " the gloomy master of Newstead " : overleaf he is reincarnated into " the meteoric darling of society " : and so proceeds through successive avatars—" this

arch-rebel," " the author of *Childe Harold"* " the apostle of scorn," " the ex-Harrovian, proud, but abnormally sensitive of his club-foot," " the martyr of Missolonghi," " the pageant-monger of a bleeding heart." Now this again is Jargon. It does not, as most Jargon does, come of laziness ; but it comes of timidity, which is worse. In literature as in life he makes himself felt who not only calls a spade a spade but has the pluck to double spades and redouble.

For another rule—just as rough and ready, but just as useful : Train your suspicions to bristle up whenever you come upon " as regards," " with regard to," " in respect of," " in connection with," " according as to whether," and the like. They are all dodges of Jargon, circumlocutions for evading this or that simple statement: and I say that it is not enough to avoid them nine times out often, or nine-and-ninety times out of a hundred. You should never use them. That is positively enough, I hope ? Though I cannot admire his style, I admire the man who wrote to me, " Re Tennyson—your remarks anent his *In Memoriam* make me sick " : for though *re* is not a preposition of the first water, and " anent" has enjoyed its day, the finish crowned the work. But here are a few specimens far, very far, worse :

The special difficulty in Professor Mincoelsi's case (our old friend " case " again) arose *in connexion with* the view he holds *relative to* the historical value of the opening pages of Genesis.

That is Jargon. In prose, even taking the miserable sentence as it stands constructed, we should write, " the difficulty arose over the views he holds about the historical value," etc.

From a popular novelist:

I was entirely indifferent *as to* the results of the game, caring nothing at all *as to* whether *I had losses or gains*. . . .

Cut out the first " as" in " as to," and the second "as to " altogether, and the sentence begins to be prose—" I was indifferent to the results of the game, caring not whether I had losses or gains."

But why, like Dogberry, have " had losses " ? Why not simply " lose " ? Let us try again. " I was entirely indifferent to the results of the game, caring nothing at all whether I won or lost."

Still the sentence remains absurd : for the second clause but repeats the first without adding one jot. For if you care not at all whether you win or lose, you must be entirely indifferent to t*he* results of the game. So why not say " I was cateless if I won or lost," and have done with it ?

A man of simple and charming character, he was fitly *associated with* the distinction of the Order of Merit.

I take this gem with some others from a collection made three years ago, by the *Oxford Magazine* ; and I hope you admire it as one beyond price. " He was associated with the distinction of the Order of Merit." If the members of that Order make a society then he was associated with them ; but you cannot associate a man with a distinction. The inventor of such fine writing would doubtless have answered Canning's Needy Knife-grinder with :

I associate thee with sixpence ! I will see thee in another association first!

But let us close our f*lorilegium* and attempt to illustrate Jargon by the converse method of taking a

famous piece of English (say Hamlet's soliloquy) and remoulding a few lines of it in this fashion :

To be, or the contrary ? Whether the former or the latter be preferable would seem to admit of some difference of opinion ; the answer in the present case being of an affirmative or of a negative character according as to whether one elects on the one hand to mentally suffer the disfavour of fortune, albeit in an extreme degree, or on the other to boldly envisage adverse conditions in the prospect of eventually bringing them to a conclusion. The condition of sleep is similar to, if not distinguishable from, that of death ; and with the addition of finality the former might be considered identical with the latter : so that in this connection it might be argued with regard to sleep that, could the addition be effected, a termination would be put to the endurance of a multiplicity of inconveniences, not to mention a number of downright evils incidental to our fallen humanity, and thus a consummation achieved of a most gratifying nature.

That is Jargon : and to write Jargon is to be perpetually shuffling around in the fog and cotton-wool of abstract terms ; to be for ever hearkening, like Ibsen's Peer Gynt, to the voice of the Boyg exhorting you to circumvent the difficulty, to beat the air because it is easier than to flesh your sword in the thing. The first virtue, the touchstone of a masculine style, is its use of the active verb and the concrete noun. When you write in the active voice, " They gave him a silver teapot," you write as a man. When you write " He was made the recipient of a silver teapot," you write Jargon. But at the beginning set even higher store on the concrete noun. Somebody—I think it was FitzGerald—once posited the question, " What would have become of Christianity if Jeremy Bentham had had the writing of the

Parables ? " Without pursuing that dreadful enquiry I ask you to note how carefully the Parables—those exquisite short stories—speak only of " things which you can touch and see " — " A sower went forth to sow," " The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took,"—and not the Parables only, but the Sermon on the Mount and almost every verse of the Gospel. The Gospel does not, like my young essayist, fear to repeat a word, if the word be good. The Gospel says, " Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's "—not " Render unto Caesar the things that appertain to that potentate." The Gospel does not say, " Consider how the lilies grow." It says, " Consider the lilies, how they grow."

Or take Shakespeare. I wager you that no writer of English so constantly chooses the concrete word, in phrase after phrase forcing you to touch and see. No writer so insistently teaches the general through the particular. He does it even in *Venus and Adonis* (as Professor Wendell, of Harvard, pointed out in a brilliant little monograph on Shakespeare, published some ten years ago). Read any page of *Venus and Adonis* side by side with any page of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander* and you cannot but mark the contrast : in Shakespeare the definite, particular, visualised image, in Marlowe the beautiful generalisation, the abstract term, the thing seen at a literary remove. Take the two openings, both of which start out with the sunrise. Marlowe begins :

> Now had the Morn espied her lover's steeds :
> Whereat she starts, puts on her purple weeds,
> And, red for anger that he stays so long,
> All headlong throws herself the clouds among.

Shakespeare wastes no words on Aurora and her feelings, but gets to his hero and to business without ado :

> Even as the sun with purple-colour'd face . . .

(You have the sun visualised at once),

> Even as the sun with purple-colour'd face
> Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,
> Rose-cheek'd Adonis hied him to the chase ;
> Hunting he loved, but love he laugh'd to scorn.

When Shakespeare has to describe a horse, mark how definite he is :

Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong ;
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide.

Or again, in a casual simile, how definite :

> Upon this promise did he raise his chin,
> Like a dive-dipper peering through a wave,
> Which, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in.

Or take, if you will, Marlowe's description of Hero's first meeting Leander :

> It lies not in our power to love or hate,
> For will in us is over-ruled by fate, . . .

and set against it Shakespeare's description of Venus' last meeting with Adonis, as she came on him lying in his blood :

> Or as a snail whose tender horns being hit
> Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain,
> And there all smother'd up, in shade doth sit,
> Long after fearing to creep forth again ;
> So, at his bloody view . . .

I do not deny Marlowe's lines (if you will study the whole passage) to be lovely. You may even judge Shakespeare's to be crude by comparison. But you cannot help noting that whereas Marlowe steadily deals in abstract, nebulous terms, Shakespeare constantly uses concrete ones, which later on he learned to pack into verse, such as :

Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleeve of care.

Is it unfair to instance Marlowe, who died young ? Then let us take Webster for the comparison ; Webster, a man of genius or something very like it, and commonly praised by the critics for his mastery over definite, detailed, and what I may call *solidified* sensation. Let us take this admired passage from his *Duchess of Malfy :*

Ferdinand. How doth our sister Duchess bear herself
In her imprisonment ?
Basola. Nobly : I'll describe her.
She's sad as one long wed to't, and she seems
Rather to welcome the end of misery
Than shun it : a behaviour so noble
As gives a majesty to adversity.
You may discern the shape of loveliness
More perfect in her tears than in her smiles ;
She will muse for hours together ; and her silence
Methinks expresseth more than if she spake.

Now set against this the well-known passage from *Twelfth Night* where the Duke asks and Viola answers a question about someone unknown to him and invented by her—a mere phantasm, in short : yet note how much more definite is the language :

Viola. My father had a daughter lov'd a man ;
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
/ should your lordship.

Duke. And what's her history ?

Viola. A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek ; she pined in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy,
She sat like Patience on a monument
Smiling at grief. Was not this love indeed ?

Observe (apart from the dramatic skill of it) how, when Shakespeare has to use the abstract noun " concealment," on an instant it turns into a visible worm " feeding " on the visible rose ; how, having to use a second abstract word " patience," at once he solidifies it in tangible stone.

Turning to prose, you may easily assure yourselves that men who have written learnedly on the art agree in treating our maxim—to prefer the concrete term to the abstract, the particular to the general, the definite to the vague—as a canon of rhetoric. Whately has much to say on it. The late Mr. E. J. Payne, in one of his admirable prefaces to Burke (prefaces too little known and valued, as too often happen to scholarship hidden away in a school-book), illustrated the maxim by setting a passage from Burke's speech *On Conciliation with America* alongside a passage of like purport from Lord Brougham's *Inquiry into the Policy of the European Powers.* Here is the deadly parallel :

BURKE	BROUGHAM
In large bodies the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern	In all the despotisms of the East, it has been observed that the further any part of the empire is removed from the capital, the

Egypt and Arabia and Curdistan as he governs Thrace ; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has in Brusa and Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all ; and the whole of the force and vigour of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. more do its inhabitants enjoy some sort of rights and privileges : the more inefficacious is the power of the monarch ; and the more feeble and easily decayed is the organisation of the government.

You perceive that Brougham has transferred Burke's thought to his own page : but will you not also perceive how pitiably, by dissolving Burke's vivid particulars into smooth generalities, he has enervated its hold on the mind ?

" This particularising style," comments Mr. Payne, " is the essence of Poetry ; and in Prose it is impossible not to be struck with the energy it produces. Brougham's passage is excellent in its way : but it pales before the flashing lights of Burke's sentences. The best instances of this energy of style, he adds, are to be found in the classical writers of the seventeenth century. " When South says, ' An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise,' he communicates more effectually the notion of the difference between the intellect of fallen and unfallen humanity than in all the philosophy of his sermons put together."

You may agree with me, or you may not, that South in this passage is expounding trash ; but you will agree with Mr. Payne and me that he uttered it vividly.

Let me quote to you, as a final example of this vivid style of writing, a passage of Dr. John Donne far beyond and above anything that ever lay within South's compass :

The ashes of an Oak in the Chimney are no epitaph of that Oak, to tell me how high or how large that was ; it tells me not what flocks it sheltered while it stood, nor what men it hurt when it fell. The dust of great persons' graves is speechless too ; it says nothing, it distinguishes nothing. As soon the dust of a wretch whom thou wouldest not, as of a prince whom thou couldest not look upon will trouble thine eyes if the wind blow it thither ; and when a whirlewind hath blown the dust of the Churchyard into the Church, and the man sweep out the dust of the Church into the Churchyard, who will undertake to sift those dusts again and to pronounce, This is the Patrician, this is the noble flowre (flour), this the yeomanly, this the Plebeian bran ? So is the death of *lesabel {lesabel* was a Queen) expressed. They shall not say *This is lesabel*; not only not wonder that it is, nor pity that it should be ; but they shall not say, they shall not know, *This is lesabel.*

Carlyle noted of Goethe, " his emblematic intellect, his never-failing tendency to transform into *shape,* into *life,* that feeling that may dwell in him. Everything has form, has visual excellence : the poet's imagination bodies forth the forms of things unseen, and his pen turns them into shape."

Perpend this, Gentlemen, and maybe you will not hereafter set it down to my reproach that I wasted an hour of a May morning in a denunciation of

Jargon, and in exhorting you upon a technical matter at first sight so trivial as the choice between abstract and definite words.

A lesson about writing your language may go deeper than language ; for language (as in a former lecture I tried to preach to you) is your reason, your \6y09. So long as you prefer abstract words, which express other men's summarised concepts of things, to concrete ones which lie as near as can be reached to things themselves and are the first-hand material for your thoughts, you will remain, at the best, writers at second-hand. If your language be Jargon, your intellect, if not your whole character, will almost certainly correspond. Where your mind should go straight, it will dodge : the difficulties it should approach with a fair front and grip with a firm hand it will be seeking to evade or circumvent. For the Style is the Man, and where a man's treasure is there his heart, and his brain, and his writing, will be also.

Thursday, May i.

(On the Art of Writing. Cambridge University Press.)

THACKERAY AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

JOHN BAILEY

Argument. **The history of story-writing is displacement of plot by character in order of importance. This displacement early in drama, late in the prose tale where it begins with Richardson. Over-neglect of plot in late eighteenth century left to the nineteenth the task of harmonising both elements. Various contributions to this end by novelists from Scott to Flaubert. Thackeray considered. Biographical materials slight, but his character clearly the reverse of cynical. Construction of his novels, like those of Dickens, a reversion to looseness of ancient epic and early eighteenth-century " picaresque " romances. Thackeray's view-point that of the intellectualist and man of the world, denying greatness but never goodness. He is the great showman, but also the unerring judge, of the life of the well-to-do. *Vanity Fair* probably the greatest, certainly the most brilliant, of nineteenth-century novels. *The Newcomes, Pendennis* and *Esmond* next in order. No successors to Thackeray in power of insight into character combined with stylistic charm. He may be deserted for the naturalism of Zola and Bennett or the mysticism of Hardy, but the supreme greatness of *Vanity Fair* remains.**

THE historical development of the story, whether it take the form of epic, drama or novel, has been one from incident to character. In the matter of drama, Aristotle, as is well known, laid the main stress on plot, whereas it is the function of a modern critic, like Prof. C. E. Vaughan in his admirable work, *Types of Tragic Drama,* to point out that the balance has now shifted, and that in the drama of the modern world the main interest is not that of plot but that of character. And this is true whether we look at Shakespeare and the Romantics or at the classical tragedy of Racine or Alfieri. But the general law is really not so conspicuous in drama as it is in poetry and the novel. It is even obvious, for instance, that there is more study of character in Æschylus and

Sophocles, to say nothing of Euripides, than there is in the drama of Victor Hugo. The truth is that we do not possess any important drama—if any ever existed—of the period before character became an important interest. Directly Æschylus, in the famous chorus, denied the accepted theory that prosperity causes the wrath of the gods and produces ruin, directly he proclaimed the new doctrine that it was never wealth or happiness, but always and only sin, that brought upon men the Divine anger, the really decisive step was taken. Man had become the architect of his own fate ; character had become destiny ; and incident, the fact or event in itself, the thing that just happens to a man irrespective of what he is, had been displaced by the greater interest of the deed which issues from a man's personality and results in his weal or woe, his life or death. No doubt the lesson was very insufficiently learned. The plays of the Middle Age, for instance, were, on the whole, childish things. But the very compactness of its form makes it more difficult for the drama than for the story in verse or prose to be satisfied with what one may call externality. It is on too small a scale to be able, like the mediaeval story, to give the loose helter-skelter of a world of disconnected events. And not only had it no room for multiplicity ; it stood in visible need of unity ; and real unity can only come into the picture through character. Consequently there is no great drama without it, the principal apparent exceptions to this rule, such as the earlier plays of Shakespeare, being great, so far as they are great at all, as poetry, history or story, rather than as drama. The only thing dramatically great in

them is indeed just their partial introduction of internality, of the study of character, into what would otherwise represent life as a mere external pageant of strange, exciting, or amusing events. The essential condition of the drama is that it has to produce its effect within the space of two or three hours ; and the insufficiency for that purpose of the loose method of the chronicle is obvious almost at once.

But it was not so obvious in other fields. Adventures as adventures, alike endless, meaningless and incredible, satisfied in the main the literary curiosity of the Middle Age. Chaucer came indeed for a moment to transform the mere picture of occurrences into an interpretation of human life, as Dante had read into it a still higher significance ; but Chaucer's lesson, like Dante's, was on the whole lost with the teacher, and the story, whether in prose or verse, remained for centuries in an almost childish stage of externality. Boccaccio is not only the creator of Italian prose ; he is a great artist. But in him, as in the authors of the Fabliaux, the mere intrigue is the principal thing ; the study of character is elementary or non-existent. And so it remains, broadly speaking, down to the eighteenth century, with the partial exception of Cervantes. The hour of the great novel was still not come. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the age of the drama, not of the novel ; of life seen on a stage, not of life studied in a book, and those who asked of art an insight into the meaning of life went for their answer to the theatre of Shakespeare or Moliere or Racine, not to any book which they could read at home. The genius of Cervantes could, in fact, only begin a work which

could not be completed till more than a century after his death. The novel had no real chance till the age of the printed book and the general habit of reading had come, till poetry had begun to share its supremacy with prose, till the beginnings of the arrival of the social and intellectual middle class, that is to say, till the eighteenth century.

But then came a curious thing. The novel, which had hitherto paid almost no attention to character, took at once to paying too much. It is true that Defoe and Fielding still followed the old lines in the main. Robinson Crusoe is nothing but an individual placed in a singular situation, the consequences of which are set before us with amazing verisimilitude. The man himself is nothing. And though that cannot be said of Tom Jones and Parson Adams, it is still true of them that they are rather buried under their adventures. Fielding expects to interest us by what happens to them at least as much as by what they are. But the greatest English novelist of the eighteenth century was not Fielding, but Richardson. I am, of course, aware that this would not be universally admitted ; but to me, at any rate, it seems plain that, though Fielding was the more attractive man of the two, the saner thinker, and even the better writer, he stands distinctly below Richardson as a master of the novelist's art. *Clarissa* is a thing quite out of Fielding's reach. He never approached its noble unity of conception. Compared with Clarissa all his people seem superficial and external. He has never been inside the very soul of any of his creations, as Richardson has been inside the soul of Clarissa. It is a new world of imaginative power

altogether that we come to when we pass from him to live, as Richardson can make us live, in the most secret chambers of Clarissa's being, identify ourselves with her, and hang breathless for whole volumes on the slow-moving crisis of her fate.

Now Richardson, whose work, it may be remarked, had immense popularity and influence abroad, lays his chief stress on character. Johnson, though a great admirer of Richardson, is well known to have said that, " if you were to read Richardson for the story, your impatience would be so fretted that you would hang yourself." No real Richardsonian would admit that. The story is, in fact, of absorbing interest ; but the point is that it is interesting in the new way, not in the old. The stuff of the book is to be sought in the heart, mind, and soul of Clarissa ; the things which happen are only its illustrations. It is the most individual book that was ever written, and in that sense the most modern. For the real difference between ancient literature and modern—one which, in spite of much loose talk to-day about the corporate spirit in Church and State, is continually growing wider—is the substitution of the individual for the State or the class or the family, as the centre of imaginative and dramatic interest. And Clarissa is the supreme instance of this. In her story we know nothing of State or Church, and in her family we have nothing but a collection of impertinent obstacles to the free development of an individual soul. This overpowering interest in character was safe enough in the case of a born story-teller like Richardson. With him the stress laid on the inner life of an individual could not extinguish

the plot altogether. Genius can in this way often manage to escape the dangers of its own age. But the fact that the novel had come to its own in a century given over as none before or since to the criticism of life and manners had its inevitable effect on others. And if we look at two famous stories by two very great men of letters, who, widely as they differed, were both very typical men of the eighteenth century and were the acknowledged chiefs of literature, each in his own country—if we look at *Rasselas* and *Candide*, we shall find that, where a man is not a born story-teller, he inevitably yields to the spirit of his age, and his story is buried in criticism of life and discussion of moral ideas. Plot, in fact, is nothing; the interest of character has destroyed it; and, as the life of the novel depends on the union of the two, the story, as a story, is dead. We read *Candide* to laugh with it, and *Rasselas* perhaps to learn from it, but no one will ever again read either for the story.

The problem of the novel was therefore left over for the nineteenth century to solve. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as in the Middle Age, it had tended to be a mere succession of disconnected adventures, superficial, external, accidental, neither influencing character nor influenced by it. In the eighteenth century it tends to become a moral essay. The interest now lies in character; but the plot, where there is one, is uninfluenced, and remains absurd and incredible, as in *Candide* and even in the beautiful masterpiece of Goldsmith. The thing the future had to try to do was to realise their union by interaction of the external and internal, circumstance making itself felt as the destiny which shapes char-

acter, and character asserting itself as the transforming architect of circumstance. But first of all the novel had to have its share in the general escape from the colourless abstraction of the eighteenth century. It had to recover the element of action, of poetry, of visible life. All that was, of course, achieved by Scott with a splendour which carried him all over Europe. But Scott did not take his work seriously enough to grapple successfully with the artistic problem of the novelist. He can create the Antiquary, but he cannot create a rational or probable world of action for him to move in. Only, perhaps, in his most perfect story can he make the whole plot turn with complete dramatic probability round a central character ; and, when he has created Jeanie Deans and a world for her to dominate, he shows by the slipshod and vulgar fairy-tale of his last chapters how little he values or understands his achievement.

Scott's greatness lay not in any working of art but in the careless abundance of the world that came to life at his will, and in the genial sympathy with which he looked at every creature in it. " Here is God's plenty," we say as we read him ; a plenty still full of waste and disorder and apparent inconsequence, as it is in the greater world outside. But while he, out of this abundance of his, was pouring the riches of his genius into the treasury of the novel, there was a young woman who was putting into it two mites which, from the strict and narrow point of view of art, out-valued all his wealth. Jane Austen never " gets out of the parlour " ; nothing of importance happens in her novels ; nothing great is ever said in them ; but all that happens and all that is said

belongs strictly to the persons who are the actors in the story. *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion* may or may not be great novels, but perfect novels they unquestionably are. Here then, on a small scale, was the goal attained, plot and character interacting in unity. Henceforth there is no step to be taken in artistic method ; the development for the future is one not of method but of scale, not of art but of substance. The novel cannot be satisfied till it has tried to take all life, not Jane Austen's tiny fraction of life, for its province ; and for that it will have to gain a wider experience, a deeper emotion, a profounder philosophy, a more scientific grasp of the forces which issue in the tragedy and comedy of human lives.

The effort to provide these is the history of the novel in the nineteenth century. That is, happily, not my present subject, for it would be a vast one. No previous century gave to the novel a twentieth or a fiftieth part of the literary energy given by the nineteenth. Everything in turn was poured into it : by Dickens an invincible belief in the value of life, an inexhaustible fountain of laughter and tears ; by the Bronte sisters an almost Shakespearean power of tragedy ; by George Eliot a seriousness both of mind and conscience, strange to what had previously been the least serious of literary forms ; by Victor Hugo an exuberance of power that could include, as in an epic, the whole life of his age ; by George Meredith a quality and quantity of brain which had never before been given to the novel ; by Flaubert that infinite patience both of art and science which is not genius, but the instrument by which genius

may create perfection, if it retains the freedom to use the results with mastery and ease. All these and other things, which in earlier centuries would have taken other shapes, took in the nineteenth century the shape of the novel. By the end of the century, aided by the decay of the drama, the once despised novel could claim to be the principal interpreter of the mind of the age, second only in dignity to poetry and far superior to it in general popularity.

Among those who in England did most to give it that position was William Makepeace Thackeray, the centenary of whose birth was widely celebrated last year.[1] One of the best forms the celebration took was the issue by his old publishers of a Centenary Edition of his works, with Introductions by his daughter, Lady Ritchie. These Introductions are not, indeed, new. The bulk of them had already appeared in the Biographical Edition twelve years ago. But they have now been considerably enlarged and a few mistakes corrected. For instance, the present Introduction to *Vanity Fair* contains thirty-five pages, some half-dozen of which at least are absent from the old one, and they are not the least interesting, including, as they do, some extracts, which will be new to most people, from Whitwell Elwin's *Quarterly* essays on Thackeray, the statement that Dobbin was founded on Thackeray's (and Fitz-Gerald's) great friend, Archdeacon Allen, and the curious conversation between Mr. J. E. Cooke and Thackeray as to whether Becky killed Jos Sedley. And there are a good many additional illustrations, both in the Introduction and in the book itself.

[1] *I.e.* in 1911.

Thackeray did not wish his life to be written, and these charming pictures of him, as his daughter and his friends remember him, are likely to remain the nearest approach we shall ever get to an authoritative biography. Lady Ritchie's writing is, like her father's and even more so, of a very easy and desultory sort, rambling backwards and forwards over an uncertain country, very reluctant to be tied by any chronological or other order. As in the novels, so in these Introductions, we are often a little uncertain where we are, and what year or what people we are talking about. The daughter does not care any more than the father to make it quite clear who people are, and what relation they bear to each other ; and, like him, she frequently prefers to give us the marriage or the funeral first, and to say nothing about the courtship or illness till afterwards ; all of which is rather confusing. To give one instance only. *Vanity Fair* fills the first two volumes of the edition ; it may therefore be assumed that its Introduction will generally be the first read. Yet the reader, who may very possibly know nothing of Thackeray's life is casually introduced to members of the Carmichael-Smyth family without a word of explanation of Thackeray's connexion with them. All we are told is that " the schoolboy often stayed with his stepfather and mother" in Dr. James Carmichael-Smyth's house near the British Museum. Then follow other facts about that family, out of which you may extract the Thackeray relationship if you know it already but not otherwise. It is a pity that people who write reminiscences will forget that we who read them need to be supplied with the

groundwork of facts and dates which they themselves hold in their memories, and on which they safely make their pleasant embroideries. We cannot follow them comfortably unless we are plainly told who married whom, and when, if not where ; and how long each of them lived, and how many children they had.

But *nihil est ab omni Parte beatum.* We have to take things as they are. Perhaps Lady Ritchie could not have given us what she has given us if she had undergone a training in the business methods of biography under Sir Leslie Stephen or Sir Sidney Lee. As it is, every one who reads these Introductions comes away with a sense of having, as it were, passed through a " careless-ordered garden " of pleasant and gracious memories, in which Thackeray appears and reappears as the principal figure. What is the ultimate impression left of him—of the man, not the writer—as we look at him here through his daughter's affectionate eyes, or divine him for ourselves behind the characters in his books ? Not that of a strong man certainly. A life of literature, journalism, and dining-out is not the sort of life that develops strength of will or character. He had a shrewd eye for his own defects as well as for those of others ; and he knew how to lay his finger on the root of them. " Yes, it is very like—it is certainly very like," he once said to an American lady as he looked at a volume *oiPendennis.* " Like whom, Mr. Thackeray ? " " Oh ! like me, to be sure ; it is very like me." " Surely not," objected the lady, " for Pendennis was so weak ! " " Ah, well, Mrs. Baxter," he replied, " your humble servant is not very strong."

Thompson, afterwards Master of Trinity, said of him that in his undergraduate days he led "a somewhat lazy but pleasant and gentlemanlike life"; and though most of the laziness of it had perforce to go when he lost his fortune, some of its laziness as well as all of its gentlemanlike pleasantness lingered in the man of middle age; so that when, after praising Carlyle for living in a £40 house with only a "snuffy Scotch maid to open the door," he fancies himself asked, "And why don't you live with a maid yourself?" his reply is categorical enough: "Well, I can't; I want a man to be going my own messages, which occupy him pretty well. There must be a cook, and a woman about the children, and that horse is the best doctor I get in London; in fine, there are a hundred good reasons for a lazy, liberal, not extravagant but costly way of life." He was probably quite right. A prophet can denounce society without any other assistance than a Scotch maid-of-all-work; but Thackeray's business was to describe it, to extract its essence and convert it into art. That cannot be done without living in it, and then the man to go on messages and the rest of the machinery become valuable if not necessary at once.

It has been recorded that for a boy who did not play games he was "wonderfully social, full of vivacity and enjoyment of life. His happy *insouciance* was constant. Never was any lad at once so jovial, so healthy and so sedentary." There is the key of his life. A youth of these tastes was destined from the first to live the life of a man about town. And that life Thackeray did live always. But it is a complete mistake to think that he was subdued to it.

He was above it, and in it, never merely and entirely of it. He caught from it its not unkindly tolerance of many sorts of men who would never have got past the snuffy Scotch maid of Cheyne Row ; he learnt from it that truth on which saints and philosophers may sometimes reflect with wonder and humility, that this world is apparently meant to be a place of multiplicity and variety ; and would not be so interesting, nor even, he is bold enough to tell his mother, " so good a world as it is, were all men like " his saintly friend John Allen. But he knew the worth of such a man, " yearning day and night in the most intense efforts to gain Christian perfection," and wrote to him, " I love you with all my heart and soul. I owe more to you than to all others put together." But, for good or for evil, he and Allen were different men and perforce lived different lives. And it may be that, though Allen was the better man, Thackeray was the better preacher, and was enabled to make the more breaches in the fortifications of the world precisely by knowing its strong and weak places from inside.

If that was so, it was, of course, because he kept his heart sound. He had been near enough to Major Pendennis to understand his point of view as no one else before or since has ever understood it, but he never himself became Major Pendennis. If he had, he could not have painted that wonderful portrait. Arthur Pendennis could paint himself, more or less, because he saw a good many points of view beside his own, and was never quite sure what his own was. But pure worldlings and pure saints, like the Major and Archdeacon Allen, could never

depict themselves because they never for a moment get outside their own point of view. Thackeray, of course, was inside and also outside them all; and so could understand, love, and judge Allen, and could create the immortal Major. Perhaps there are too many worldlings in his books; and perhaps he knew too many in his life. Even of himself, perhaps, one side was the Sadducee whom he denounces in Arthur Pendennis.

"Friend Arthur was a Sadducee, and the Baptist might be in the Wilderness shouting to the poor, who were listening with all their might and faith to the preacher's awful accents and denunciations of wrath or woe or salvation; and our friend the Sadducee would turn his sleek mule with a shrug and a smile from the crowd, and go home to the shade of his terrace, and muse over preacher and audience, and turn to his roll of Plato, or his pleasant Greek song-book babbling of honey and Hybla and nymphs and fountains and love."

But it was the side which was kept under, which was judged and condemned and defeated.

"If, seeing and acknowledging the lies of the world, Arthur, as see them you can with only too fatal a clearness, you submit to them without any protest further than a laugh; if, plunged yourself in easy sensuality, you allow the whole wretched world to pass groaning by you unmoved; if the fight for the truth is taking place, and all men of honour are on the ground armed on the one side or the other, and you alone are to lie on your balcony and smoke your pipe out of the noise and the danger, you had better have died, or never have been at all, than such a sensual coward."

That is not the language of the worldling. It is a different thing—the language of a man who knew

inside as well as outside himself what worldlings are. " Charges of cynicism," as Meredith said, " are common against all satirists. Thackeray had to bear with them." But, as Meredith adds, the man himself was " one of the manliest, the kindliest of human creatures. It was the love of his art that exposed him to misinterpretation. . . . He described his world as an accurate observer saw it ; he could not be dishonest." Those who knew him knew well how much the opposite of a cynic he was ; and Shirley Brooks expressed their feelings in *Punch* when he wrote the memorial verses which begin :

He was a cynic ? By his life all wrought
Of generous acts, mild words, and gentle ways ;
His heart wide open to all kindly thought,
His hand so quick to give, his tongue to praise !

And did any real cynic ever love his children ? These Introductions show how Thackeray loved his, and how he was loved in return. No claims or pleasures of the world were ever allowed to keep him apart from his two girls. When he and they were unavoidably separated, he was a constant and affectionate correspondent; when all were at home together, they were his chosen companions ; and his engagement to dine with them so many nights a week took precedence of all others, however distinguished.

It is inevitable that the Introductions should deal rather with the man than with the writer. They are avowedly biographical, and Lady Ritchie would naturally decline the part of her father's critic. But, after all, the man is remembered for the writer's

sake. And besides, *caret vate sacro.* He desired not to have and has not had a biographer. We shall never know him as we know Johnson or Scott. He will therefore stand or fall by his own writings. What place is he likely permanently to occupy in the roll of English writers? What part did he play in that brilliant development of the novel which, as we were saying just now, was such a striking feature of the century in which he lived?

Flaubert, in one of his letters to George Sand, makes a very interesting remark about English novelists. He has been reading *Pickwick,* and he says of it, "*i l y a des parties superb es, mais quelle composition defectueuse! Tous les ecrivains anglais en sont la ; Walter Scott excepte' ils manquent de plan"* He probably had never heard of Jane Austen ; and, of course, his remark does not apply to the work of the last forty or fifty years. But even to-day, looking broadly at the English novel, it is still true, in spite of Scott and Jane Austen and George Eliot and Hardy, that it is singularly loose in construction. Of that weakness Thackeray is almost the worst example. No doubt the detestable method of writing novels for magazines in parts, so that the whole story is never before the author for revision, is largely responsible for the incoherence of the plots of Dickens and Thackeray. The first parts are printed, and then the novelist begins to see the story moving in a new direction, or, as Thackeray so often says, the characters insist on going their own way, and it turns out to be not at all the way mapped out for them by the author in the first chapters, before they themselves got warm with life and knew what they wanted ; and the result is

that mist of confusion and inconsistency which hangs over nearly all the stories both of Dickens and Thackeray. No one could write out a skeleton of the plot of *Pickwick* or *Pendennis* ; they are all flesh and no bones, and their progress is as elastic and uncertain of direction as those of a boneless body would be. Dickens's good things, in particular, are always isolated and unrelated atoms, not parts of an organised body. Weller and Winkle and Micawber and Mrs. Gamp are perfect in themselves ; they come full-armed from their creator's brain and owe nothing to those about them, who equally owe nothing to them. What a contrast to Jeanie Deans, or Maggie Tulliver, or Madame Bovary, or Bathsheba Everdene ! Thackeray's people belong far more to his stories than those of Dickens ; but still he is open in his degree to the same criticism. When we think of *Vanity Fair* we remember Becky and Miss Crawley and certain scenes and places—Sir Pitt on his knees, Rawdon Crawley's discovery of Steyne and Becky, and so forth ; we don't think of the story as a whole, and the other persons in it. Where there is a real plot it is impossible to think of one character alone ; to recall Bathsheba is at once to recall Oak and Boldwood, and Troy.

Part of the explanation of this is that both Dickens and Thackeray reverted to the old epic tendencies of the novel as against the stricter influence of the drama that had been lately brought to bear on its development. *Pickwick* and *Barry Lyndon* and that " novel without a hero," *Vanity Fair,* are all, like the *Odyssey* and *Orlando Furioso* and *Don Quixote* and *Gil Bias* and *Tom Jones,* the loosely-connected adven-

tures of a wandering " hero," who, in the course of his goings about the world, shows us a great deal of the life and manners of his day. So large and discursive an " action " does not generally admit the intensity of the drama. It is almost inevitably too external to do so. And so Dickens never, except in *A Tale of Two Cities,* got near the drama ; everywhere else—perhaps even there—what he approaches is not drama but only melodrama, which, it is to be remembered, is what results when, in the words of a living critic, " a dramatist attempts tragedy with characters over whom he has no philosophic superiority, or with a situation which is to him nothing but a series of startling events." Both of these unfavourable conditions are always present in Dickens, but not, it is true, in Thackeray, who maintained more than enough superiority over his characters, and was always too intellectually middle-aged to be anything but bored by mere startling events. What then, in his case, is the explanation of the fact, which I think will hardly be denied, that he seldom or never leaves on us the intensity of impression which belongs to the experience of having been through a great action where a great issue was at stake ? We do get that impression from *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *The Heart of Midlothian,* and *Villette* and *Adam Bede,* and *The Return of the Native* ; why do we not get it from *The Newcomes* or *Vanity Fair* ?

On the whole I am afraid it is because Thackeray's books are too much written from the point of view of the man of the world. No one knows quite so little of the real meaning of life as the man who habitually

watches it from club windows ; no one's view of it so entirely stops short at the things on the surface. And though Thackeray was much more than a club man, it is that part of himself which chiefly devised his stories. The people who crowd his stage could not possibly have anything to do with great actions or great issues. Nobody can imagine Major Pendennis or Barnes Newcome loving or dying ; the most either could attain to would not go farther than having his marriage arranged, or his decease announced in *The Times*. The fountains of great life, which spring from the heart, are dried up in them. Whatever soul they may have once had has as entirely disappeared under a continual overlaying of worldliness as the souls of Mr. Bernard Shaw's people have disappeared under a continuous course of dialectics in which nobody is himself moved or expects to move anybody else. Emotion, in fact, is out of the range of those whose occupation is to play with the intellectual or sensual counters of life, not with life itself. And great emotion is the necessary atmosphere of great action. The fact, then, that Thackeray's characters consist so very largely of people of the " Hon. Mr. Deuceace " type is fatal to the claim of his novels to convey to us the greater emotions. There is a certain monotony of littleness in his work. One grows weary of the perpetual repetition of the intrigues and meanness and emptiness of the world in which nearly all his characters live. He seems to take pleasure in introducing irrelevant personages who play no real part in his story, but apparently come in merely to be shown at their business of dining and gambling and match-hunting, which the

necessary onesidedness of the satirist supposes to be the business of all persons who are well-to-do in this world.

The fact is that the determination to have done with shams, which was as strong in Thackeray as in Carlyle, really led him to a new sort of sham. Because many persons made a pretence of being actuated by fine motives when they were in fact looking out for themselves, Thackeray chose sometimes to assume that men of the world never in any case thought of anything but themselves ; which is a sham of delusion as much as the other, the truth, of course, being that very few people, whether in the world of fashion or any other world, act either on entirely selfish or entirely unselfish grounds. I expect Miss Crawley and Becky had at least a grain or two of real kindliness mixed into their desire to get the most out of each other ; and there was probably some motherly love mixed with the astute generalship of Mrs. Bute. But it was neither Thackeray's business nor his temperament to see that. When he saw goodness he saw it very good indeed, and not very strong, very wise, or very interesting. His intelligence always inclined to paint the world black ; and any white patches that were forced into the picture came not from his imagination but from his heart. The remorseless realism of the satirist found nothing on the aesthetic side of him to check it. His heart overflowed very easily into genuine tears that for the moment washed the analysing sceptic and cynic away ; but nothing else did, certainly not his imagination. It is curious to see how entirely unmoved, to speak frankly how stupid, he showed

himself both at Athens and at Rome. And so he always treats history from the point of view of the prose realist who means at all costs to get rid of the heroic and bring forward the mean or ridiculous side that may generally be found by him who looks for it in the greatest events.

His method is seen in its most brilliant shape in *The Second Funeral of Napoleon* ; it is that of a man who, as its opening paragraphs show, quite deliberately chose the part of the Argus-eyed valet who has seen all heroes naked ; and one may be the exact reverse of a Napoleon-worshipper without liking it, indeed without being able to avoid feeling strongly that, even in that case, it is the Devil's method of writing history. I am not speaking of morals. The spirit that denied in Thackeray never denied goodness ; what it denied was greatness in history, greatness in art, greatness in life. There are plenty of good figures in the novels, and for my part, I do not at all find them so insipid as they often have been called ; but no one will pretend that either Dobbin, or Colonel Newcome, or Warrington can have greatness thrust upon him even by the blindest affection. Thackeray is the first instance in English of the everlasting nemesis of realism ; it gets so close to its object that the only things it can see are small things. We laugh at his people or weep with them ; we love them or hate them ; but we never, or almost never, admire them.

Yet he wrote the most brilliant English novel—in some ways the greatest—of the nineteenth century ! And, though it is a real defect in a novelist to leave out, as he did, so many of the biggest things in

human life, he might yet fairly reply that those who can give the whole of life are very few, so that art is forced to these narrowing choices and partial views. At any rate, if he did not make his people admirable, he made them astonishingly alive. He had the merits of his defects. If realism like his, in its eagerness to strip off trappings, is apt to strip off a great deal else as well, it does at least strip off the trappings. Becky stands eternally before us, naked and unashamed, the first instance, perhaps, in literature of cleverness standing absolutely alone. Iago, after all, appears to have had a devil of hatred in him; but Becky has no emotions good or bad. She just has her brains to fight the world with, and she does her sword-play so brilliantly that every one likes her and wishes her success. We are all greedy of pleasure, and she gives us so much that it is with her almost as it is with Falstaff and Mrs. Gamp ; she has extended the bounds of life for us, and we resent her misfortunes, however justly deserved. But *Vanity Fair* is much more than Becky. It is a prose epic of a siege of Mayfair which lasted more than ten years and in which, though Becky alone is the Achilles, who certainly never sulks in her tent, there are still, as of old, plenty of other warriors engaged who all distinguish themselves in ways proper to this kind of warfare. The greatest achievement of the epic is to get a whole age into itself. That grows increasingly difficult as the world gets larger and more complicated, and better informed about its own life. Thackeray at any rate could not do it even superficially, as Victor Hugo did in *Les Misirables,* He only knew one world—that of the well-to-do—and

seldom adventured outside it and its satellites. But what a master he is there, always, of course, under those inevitable limitations of the satirist. There are, no doubt, such things as good Marquises and May-fair people who are indifferent to rank or money. But they were not Thackeray's affair. His business was with the others, who do indeed usually secure the places nearest the footlights on that bustling and crowded stage where the play of Vanity Fair is continuously performed by day and by night. Of that play he is the greatest of all showmen. Balzac covers wider ground and is a finer artist in construction, but on this particular field he strikes one after Thackeray as heavy, prosaic, and *bourgeois.* Vanity Fair at play, which Thackeray so often gives us, is certainly not an inspiring or beautiful spectacle ; but it is a delightful and amusing entertainment compared with Vanity Fair at business, which is Balzac's commoner theme. The sustained unity of impression of *Eugenie Grandet* or *La Vieille Fille* is quite out of Thackeray's reach ; but so, I think, is the vivacity of the scene between Morgan and Major Pendennis out of Balzac's.

No doubt the showman obtrudes himself too freely. The manager in modern evening dress coming on to direct his actors before our eyes cannot fail to destroy the illusion. Thackeray's frequent personal interventions prevent our giving his stories enough of that temporary suspension of our knowledge of their unreality which in one shape or other is necessary to all art. Many people complain of his sermons. **But though** they are certainly too frequent and repeat themselves too much, they do grow immediately out

of the story, and justify themselves, besides, by being among the most effective sermons to be found anywhere in the English language. Ruskin would not have one line of Thackeray, if I remember right, in his list of *A Hundred Best Books*, because he thought Thackeray made people worldly and cynical. This seems to me as hasty and wilful as any judgment, even any of Ruskin's, could well be. The truth is the exact opposite. No one has ever painted the two pictures of selfish worldliness, on the one hand, and love, genuineness and simplicity, on the other, with such convincing power of appeal in favour of the latter as Thackeray. He lets the worldling design his story and occupy nearly the whole of his stage ; but what the worldling does on it is to exhibit his own emptiness and ugliness, and assuredly none of the spectators are tempted to envy or adopt his way of life. On the contrary, the balance is all in the other scale ; and many a half-worldling man or woman must have felt, as he read the story of Ethel Newcome or Beatrix Esmond or even Arthur Pendennis, that no pulpit has ever put to him the greatest of all choices as it is put there, and must have wondered to find himself still so capable of being moved, to find his heart-strings loosened and his tears flowing, not for Ethel or Beatrix only, but for himself and many other weak and struggling men and women.

These three books are, no doubt, Thackeray's best, after the supreme and unapproachable *Vanity Fair*. That stands alone in all sorts of merits ; chiefly, perhaps, in the fact that it is the only one of his books which is never tedious. Thackeray is there for once caught out of himself and swept along in an irresis-

tible torrent of energy which makes a world, though it scarcely makes a story. No one who can take up *Vanity Fair* without being obliged to read it to the end, even if it be for the fiftieth time, has ever really felt the genius of Thackeray. After it many people would place *Esmond,* certainly his most beautiful book. But, beautiful as it is, it seems to me not altogether to escape the inevitable fate of the *tour de force* ; " *c'est magnijique, mais ce n'est pas* "—the real thing, as we know it in *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes.* It is an exquisite piece of artistry rather than a great work of imagination believing in itself. Would Thackeray in any of his contemporary novels have failed to be sensitive to the false note involved in Esmond marrying his mistress's mother ? It seems profanation to criticise a thing of such beauty ; still there can be little doubt that Thackeray was primarily a satirist, and that his true business was therefore with his own day ; in which case, though he himself said he would " like to stand or fall by *Esmond"* his genius must ultimately be judged by the three great pictures of the world which he himself knew, not from books, but from personal experience. And of the two minor performances I confess to greatly preferring *The Newcomes.* It seems to me so much more alive. How much more one really cares about what is going to happen to Clive and Ethel and old Colonel Newcome than one does about Pendennis and Laura and Warrington ! And old Lady Kew and Barnes and the Newcome world generally are fifty times as vivid as the Claverings and Fokers. Major Pendennis is indeed a creation of genius ; but his is a rather solitary splendour.

A word should perhaps be said of the only other work of Thackeray for which a claim to pre-eminence is ever raised. Trollope thought that " in mental force " Thackeray never rose above *Barry Lyndon.* What exactly he means by mental force may be doubtful; but the judgment seems to me simply amazing, if meant to place *Barry Lyndon* in the same rank as the great three or *Esmond.* What is a novel ? It is a story and a picture of life. And the measure of its greatness lies in the depth, truth, and abundance of its life, and in the power of art under which it is compelled into shape, made to take the mould of a controlling human mind. What has *Barry Lyndon* of all this ? It is the loosely-constructed adventures of a clever scoundrel who runs all over Europe and yet scarcely meets a single person who is not as great a blackguard as himself. No doubt Thackeray displays immense *verve* in being able to carry through such a history at all ; and certainly he shows considerable powers of invention in the matter of the accidents of the hero's career. But how superficial it all is ! Barry is the conventional external profligate and adventurer of the old satirists and dramatists : what a contrast to Thackeray's manner when he has really formed himself! One chapter tells us more of the heart, or no heart, of the great adventuress of *Vanity Fair* than the whole book tells us of Barry. We look through a window and see him, some way off, a stagey figure, swaggering about the picturesque Ireland and Germany of the eighteenth century ; but we never really know him at all. And if we put aside the contemporary novels, and try Barry by the side of the other eighteenth-century

creation, what chance can its monotonous externality have against the humanity, variety, intimacy, and beauty of *The History of Henry Esmond*?

No; what Lady Kew said to Ethel in one of the best conversations in *The Newcomes* is true of all of us, and certainly not least of Thackeray. "You belong to your belongings, my dear," said that very shrewd old lady; and the belongings of Thackeray were the Pall Mall and Mayfair of the first half of the nineteenth century. He stands alone, has no very obvious ancestors, and no descendants at all. Fielding is certainly the man he owed most to; the same method, that of a series of rambling adventures, the same habit of talking to his reader direct, the same admirable and beautiful English, refined, of course, perhaps weakened, to the taste of a generation that came after instead of before Wesley and Whitefield, but still essentially the same; a language of unapproachable ease, seeming, especially in the later master's hands, to be the very language of every day and of all the world, and yet never stupid, never inharmonious, never obscure, never unconscious of the great tradition, full everywhere of music and meaning and truth. No one else gives quite the same impression as Thackeray of complete mastery over his instrument; one feels he could run up and down the keyboard for ever and never strike a false note. Certainly no other writer of novels approaches him in this quality of liquid ease. His style may sometimes be too garrulous and conversational; and, of course, it was never meant to handle and never tries to handle the great things of nature and art. It could not have done the work of Scott or Hardy or Mere-

dith. But when one comes fresh from a long summer bathe in its cool smooth waters, how much other people suffer by the comparison ; how stilted and conventional much of Scott seems, how crude much of Dickens, how tainted with virtuosity most of Meredith !

Thackeray found the novel divided between the historical romance of Scott and the exquisite parlour miniatures of Miss Austen. What he did with it was to give it the modernism that was not in Scott and the scale and range that was not in Jane Austen. Both he and Dickens deserted the strict construction of Miss Austen, and to some extent of Scott, in favour of the old loose epic model. And both turned to their own day for their material. But Thackeray was far more interested in character than Dickens, and knew immeasurably more about it. Dickens lives by his exuberant vitality, his inexhaustible humour, and the immense pleasure he takes in the spectacle of life, not by his characters, which, whether they belong to melodrama or farce, are seldom of the sort that convince. Thackeray lives, on the other hand, by his subtle insight into character, by the charm of his style, by the essential permanence of the world he described. The world does not grow poorer ; 1 and wherever there is a rich society there will Lady Kew and Major Pendennis be gathered together. Dickens, on the contrary, suffers by the fact that the lives of the poor and the lower middle class which he described so vividly have changed so much in half a century that the manners and customs we find in his books are almost as remote from us as those of

Written, of course, in 1912.

Scott's Crusaders. And one other thing. Dickens devoted himself in his novels to the assault upon special evils—bad schools, bad law courts, bad workhouses and so forth. These are all now reformed or extinct and his novels suffer in consequence from a certain air of tilting at windmills. Thackeray's subject, on the other hand, was the struggle between the spirit of the world and the best instincts of the human heart, a struggle which is not likely to be concluded this year or next.

So these two very different men go down the generations bearing their very different sheaves with them ; and no one can confidently say as yet which sheaf will prove more valuable in the ultimate market of posterity. Thackeray, at any rate, must fight his own battle ; for he left no successors. And since his day the novel has followed other paths. The chief, perhaps, is one that his path led us into. The worst of the good sort of realism is that it will lead to naturalism. When people have been given real life under the conditions of art, as in *Vanity Fair,* they soon want it without those conditions, as in Zola. In an age of science there is inevitably a confusion between the province of science and that of art. People very easily forget that art is the child of the imagination, and that, as Mr. Hardy has told us, a good work of imagination is truer than any literally exact history. But to forget that is to accept the substitution of facts for truth. The conversations in many recent novels are as stupidly true as if they had been taken down by a reporter in a boarding house. The sayings and doings in such a book as *The Card* are as uninteresting as the photographs in the shop-

windows, as like life as they are and as empty and superficial. But naturalism, however fatal for the moment to such artistic realism as Thackeray's, can have no permanent life, because it is not art at all but a bastard kind of science intruding into the world of art.

Thackeray has, however, suffered from the arising of other needs which neither he nor Dickens could satisfy. As the novel increased in importance and became the principal vehicle of literary expression, people naturally demanded that it should express their attitude towards the great problems of life and destiny. In a word, they demanded from it something like a philosophy of the meaning of things. And so, many people turned from Thackeray to such writers as George Eliot and George Meredith, who were felt to make an attempt to explain, if no longer perhaps to justify, the ways of God to man. And finally those who thought as well as read were certain not to rest content for ever with the ruthlessly prosaic note of Thackeray or the sentimentalism which was almost his solitary escape from it. If the novel was to absorb the work of all other forms of literature, it must needs satisfy the eternal demand for poetry. And so those to whom Thackeray seemed to be immeshed in this visible world as we know it drew away from him to one who appeared to give so much more—the invisible, intangible essence of life, its spirit, in a word its poetry—and transferred their allegiance to Mr. Hardy. The love of nature too, the sense of a Presence about us which the forms of nature somehow reveal, has been growing ever since Wordsworth's day ; and the novel could not do

without it for ever, as Thackeray did ; so that for this reason again people turned from him to the Brontes, to George Eliot, to George Meredith, and above all again to Mr. Hardy.

All these things are against Thackeray, yet so much is for him that he triumphantly survives them. *Non omnes omnia.* He cannot give us what others give, but he gives us of his own no mean or ordinary gift. After all the great fact remains. *Vanity Fair* was written in 1847 ; and it is still doubtful whether, in spite of all its limitations, it is not on the whole the greatest novel in the language. A writer who is still talked of for the first prize in the race which he began to run longer ago than the historic Sixty Years Since can have no complaint to make of his treatment at the hands of Fame.

(The Continuity of Letters. **Oxford University Press.)**

THE WORK OF MR. H. G. WELLS

EDWARD SHANKS

Argument. **Mr. Wells claims to be a journalist, not an artist. Yet his best work shows great artistic skill—for example, in his way of winning necessary belief for the enjoyment of his scientific stories and romances. His short stories are models of compactness and economy as well as powerful interest. At his best, as in *The Island of Dr. Moreau,* he is a myth-maker, almost our only modern one. His later works are loose in structure through an attempt to catch every fleeting thought, and they are over-concerned with contemporary topics of transient, however urgent, interest. His thought is marked by impatience, for he thinks in terms of the future not the past, and by instability, because he thinks only provisionally. Nevertheless, none has had a more powerful influence on our generation than he.**

I

THE paragraphists and gossipers, who know such things, tell us that Mr. Wells is unable to speak in public. But perhaps the power of oratory is withering in the modern world. There are too many people. The busiest politician cannot make on more than a small proportion of those whom he would influence that direct and personal impact which was made by Gladstone and Mr. Bryan on subjugated and devoted audiences. A few thousands at most can gather within range of the speaker's voice : the rest of the nation must be reached through the medium of print. The speeches of Senator Hughes and M. Briand at the Washington Conference, which produced so deep an effect throughout the world, were conceived and delivered as oratory ; but they came to an overwhelming proportion of the minds they were meant to influence in the shape pf newspaper

articles. And simultaneously Mr. Wells also was in Washington addressing the same audience in the same manner.

The importance of the direct personal impact must not even now be under-rated. It cannot make a nation of enthusiasts ; but it can leaven a nation with enthusiasts. Nevertheless, its importance is diminishing : the orator, with his physical gifts, is being reduced nearly to an equality with the publicist who may have none. The publicist grows in importance. When Mr. Wells went to Washington to comment on the proceedings there we were informed that no journalist had ever before addressed so large an audience ; and this was very likely true. If we gave less deep and immediate attention to his articles than to the speeches of Senator Hughes and M. Briand, it was only because the utterances of statesmen are thought to be not merely persuasive but revealing. It is possible that M. Briand will betray what the rulers of the world intend to do : Mr. Wells cannot, because he is not one of them. But, this aside, Mr. Wells's letters from Washington, not merely commenting but urging a policy with every art of persuasion, form the modern counterpart, if only in embryo, of the oratorical " campaigns " which in England, and especially in America, made so conspicuous a part of political life during the last century.

Especially in America. These words are not without significance : for if Mr. Wells in his capacity as publicist is to be compared with the tribe of orators then the comparison is closest with a type of orator which is rather American than English. He

is a spell-binder, a silver-tongue. Though he conveys it only through the written word, he relies much on personality and a known personality. He uses the silver-tongue's devices of humour and especially humorous confession ; he makes elementary facts and almost platitudinous principles appear vivid and concrete and new ; he rises, without putting a distance between himself and his audience, into passages of emotional eloquence. The style of his later books does closely resemble that of modern oratory—not the oratory of Gladstone even, still less that of Burke or Grattan, but perhaps that of Mr. Lloyd George.

Especially in America. Or perhaps we might equally well substitute for that word the phrase " a new country." Someone remarked in the early days of the War, when Mr. Wells was killing invaders with his rook-rifle and winding up all the armament firms in the world, that he had about him something reminiscent of a Colonial Premier—of a person, be it understood, of a time when there were still Colonies and their Premiers were not so familiar in England as later they became. He has all the advantages and disadvantages of being detached from that enormous weight of tradition which is the common appendage of European thinkers. He proceeds to settle whatever problem may be before him without suspecting that it may have its roots in something outside his horizon—though that horizon is continually expanding. Some curious accident has done for him what the Atlantic has done for American statesmen. It has severed an umbilical cord : the facts and the meaning of the vast, tumbled, contradictory record

of European development are things foreign to him—things which can be learnt indeed but which have not with him, as with most writers born and educated in Europe, early and natural roots in the mind. There are American statesmen who seem to believe that such world-history as need be known began with President Monro or President Lincoln. Mr. Wells for a great part of his life (perhaps even now, save in so far as he finds there a source of horrible examples) has believed that it begins—when ? with his birth ? with the initiation of his scientific studies ? or perhaps with the moment when Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb " appeared riding very rapidly upon bicycles from the direction of London " and urged him " to join and stimulate the Fabians " ?

II

It might be possible, by guessing, to hit on some explanation of the " accident" of which I spoke above. Mr. Wells's education, it is legitimate to deduce from several of his books, was grotesquely inefficient until it became exclusively scientific. And he was a science-student in a decade when the worship of science—the conception of it as a pre-eminent and all-suffering form of learning—was perhaps at its height. Add to this the odd fact that in him immense literary ability somehow exists without the literary turn of mind. He is of all good writers the least a man of letters, and it is minds of a literary turn which most naturally and unconsciously absorb tradition and make it a part of themselves. Mr. Wells insisted in his controversy with Henry James

that he was a journalist: he was not, he was not, an artist ! And yet he has been, and sometimes still is, an artist in spite of himself.

Although he had written *The Wheels of Chance* and *Love and Mr. Lewisham*—not inconspicuous books—he was known, until he published *Kipps* in 1905, almost entirely, both to the general and to the more carefully selective public, as a writer of scientific romances. His first novel, *The Time Machine,* set the key : it was followed by a series of similar improbabilities ingeniously made probable. His gifts of plausibility and invention were indeed so great that they obscured all other qualities and got for him that very misleading title of " the English Jules Verne." Jules Verne shall never be lightly spoken of by me ; but even if one looks no further than plausibility and invention the comparison is unfair to the English writer. Jules Verne wrote for boyish, eager and uncritical readers, with a robust and hearty disregard for detail. Mr. Wells could imagine as daringly ; but his romances will stand adult scrutiny and their detail is fashioned with great care.

Put side by side Jules Verne's airship in *The Clipper of the Clouds* and the mechanical devices which Mr. Wells invented for his Martians. In the first case the existence of the machine is asserted and the reader must make a round, thumping act of faith, before going further in the story. But the Martians' fighting-machines are visualised, are made to work before our eyes with touches of description and explanation (and confessions of ignorance) so cunningly applied that, for so long as we are reading, the difficulty of believing in them is almost negligible.

Mr. Wells never had a contrivance harder to describe than his Time Machine, and this is how he does it :

" This little affair," said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above the apparatus, " is only a model. It's my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal." He pointed to the part with his finger. " Also, here is one little white lever and here is another."

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. " It's beautifully made," he said.

... " Would you like to see the Time Machine itself? " asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally incomplete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

This is sleight of hand, it is almost charlatanry ; but it is amazingly well done. The surroundings, the incidentals, are made as vivid and real as possible, while nothing definite is said of the object which is really the centre of the picture. A machine to travel through time might very well look like any other

machine ; but if it were so described we should probably be less ready to believe in its marvellous powers. Mr. Wells gives one or two meaningless details, and our imagination fills in the gap quite solidly enough for the purposes of the story. A caricaturist was once asked by a sitter to be merciful to a very prominent nose. He accordingly omitted the nose altogether, leaving a blank in the line of the profile; and the nose spread out into the margin of the picture, indefinitely huge. Mr. Wells's device is the same. He has the first necessary quality of a literary artist : he knows what to leave out.

I could multiply examples of this ingenuity ; and indeed they are interesting to contemplate. In most of his books, it is true, Mr. Wells is working on a sounder scientific basis than in *The Time Machine.* In *The Invisible Man* there is little for him to slide over. There are two direct assertions. Griffin finds a way to bleach the living blood. He also discovers how to reduce the refractive index of the substances of the living body to an equality with that of air. We find no difficulty in believing that these discoveries *might* be made ; and such a belief is all that the story requires. The author's skill consists in making their attainment and results seem lifelike. So it is in *The Food of the Gods,* where Redwood and Bensington first discover that growth is caused by the intermittent presence of a hitherto unknown substance in the blood and then produce this substance artificially, enabling growth to become continuous. So in *The First Men in the Moon,* where Cavor makes a shield which is opaque to the rays of gravitation. There is nothing flimsy in

the dexterity with which these openings are contrived. Mr. Wells uses a purely artistic strictness in concentrating all his powers, in the first chapters of these stories, on inducing in the reader the attitude of belief necessary for what follows.

Two qualities are to be observed in the developments which succeed these openings ; and they are qualities for lack of which most scientific romances go to shipwreck. One is their severe and logical inevitability. Mr. Wells never makes his story easier to handle by neglecting any of the necessary consequences of the original thesis : he uses the consequences as material. An ordinary imagination would probably be content with the adventures which invisibility would make possible to the possessor of it, and would find it convenient to ignore its disadvantages. Mr. Wells makes his story out of the disadvantages. The second is the strong but controlled flow of living detail in which his stories are clothed. They are not, as ordinary imaginations would make them, merely ingenious. If one thinks of the Invisible Man, one does not think of a figure whose only characteristic is that he is invisible : one thinks of Griffin, egotistic, brutal, monomaniac. The ingenious idea is worked out to its last ramification in terms of character and the reactions of character. Mr. Wells has thus raised the scientifically fantastic romance, generally so poor or so crude a thing, to a serious level in the art of story-telling, to a level which it has never reached before.

And these devices and qualities are those of the natural teller of stories. In his introduction to *The*

Country of the Blind, Mr. Wells wrote of the short story :

So that it is moving and delightful, it does not matter whether it is as " trivial "as a Japanese print of insects seen closely between grass stems, or as spacious as the prospect of the plain of Italy from Monte Mottarone. It does not matter whether it is human or inhuman, or whether it leaves you thinking deeply or radiantly but superficially pleased.

So Scheherazade might have spoken, if she had rationalised on her methods of survival; but not so the writer who really considers literature as a means rather as an end and who would rather be called a journalist than an artist. These phrases, however, taken from the celebrated dispute with Henry James are only examples of his curious impulsiveness in controversy. He does not mean what he says.

Some of his stories do indeed " leave you thinking deeply" ; but it is not because they are acute journalism. I shall return to these. Most of them are simply " inventions," scientific or other, made real for a moment by the writer's skill purely for the reader's entertainment. They are expositions of what Mr. Wells calls " the jolly art of making something very bright and moving." Many of them do not even depend on character or emotion for their interest : these elements are only introduced as aids to verisimilitude. *Aepyornis Island* is the tale of a man who hatches out the egg of an extinct bird on a desert island and finds it inconveniently large and fierce— " I told him straight that I didn't mean to be chased about a desert island by any damned anachronisms."

The Stolen Bacillus is a tale of an Anarchist who stole a tube of germs from a bacteriologist and departed to poison the water-supply of London : when he was pursued he drank the contents. " And I wanted to astonish him, not knowing he was an Anarchist, and took up a cultivation of that new species of Bacterium I was telling you of that infest, and I think cause, the blue patches upon various monkeys ; and, like a fool, I said it was Asiatic cholera." These stories are of precisely the same character as those which make up the *Arabian Nights* : they are told with the purpose of giving entertainment. In this particular branch of literature I do not think that any English writer, except Mr. Kipling and, in a lesser degree, Stevenson, has ever been so successful as Mr. Wells. It is, one might add, an art which seems almost to have disappeared.

The writing of short stories is an effective schooling in the technique of construction. A well-constructed story is, quite simply, one which pins the reader's interest and makes itself easy, to the measure of its theme, for him to grasp. No failure here is forgiven to the man who attempts narrative ; and Mr. Wells rarely fails. His short stories are compact, symmetrical and economically written. So too are his longer romances. *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds* are admirably built up so as to present and exhaust their themes, without overloading. *The War in the Air,* later than these and already propagandist, is a remarkable example of technical skill. The subject is a war in which all the world joins, and in which civilisation is smashed to pieces. The author's problem is to show how this happens, how

it affects the world and how it affects individuals. He chooses as his eye-piece Bert Smallways, a smart, limited Cockney mechanic, who is caught up by a series of amusing chances into the German air-fleet, sees its destruction of New York and its own destruction by the Asiatic forces, makes his way back to England, founds what he calls a " Vigilance Committee " in a village there and settles down to keep pigs among the ruins. Now and again Mr. Wells, generally by the device of explaining something seen but not understood by Bert, takes a wider view, and in a sort of panorama, always without effort or irrelevancy, sketches in the world-wide background of disaster and confusion. In the perfect tact of these alternations of method this book reaches an extraordinary high level of efficiency in construction. How well it treats its subject may be seen by comparing it with *The World Set Free,* a later book of similar purpose, rather more ambition, and much less success. Here there is no continuous thread like the adventures of Bert Smallways. There is a series of disconnected episodes centring round unconnected characters ; and the book moves from one to another and into long passages of quasi-historical summary with an effect of confusing incoherence.

III

The word " artist," as I have used it in what goes before, is not, of course, properly opposed to the word " journalist." The best journalist, other things being equal, is he who uses most " artistry " in doing what he has to do. But in real life the distinction

does well enough ; the journalist writes on day-to-day subjects, and, as a rule, has not time to be much of an artist. However, to prove that Mr. Wells has considerable artistic powers is not to prove that he is anything more than an unusually good journalist. I should like to show, if I can, that he has been very much more at his best ; but the right descriptive word is hard to find. The German language allows one to use of a prose-writer the word *Dichter,* " poet," which we are obliged to translate clumsily and inadequately " creative artist." If I were to say that many of Mr. Wells's early books have a poetic quality I should run the risk of conveying a false impression. Luckily they have a peculiar quality which enables them to bear a special description. They are, in their degree, myths; and Mr. Wells is a myth-maker.

Mr. Beresford says, in his essay on Mr. Wells, that *The Island of Dr. Moreau* does not intend " any particular fable beyond the evident one that, physically, one species is as like to the next as makes no matter." But the story reaches further than that. There is a remote island, where no ship ever touches, ruled by an old, outlawed scientist pursuing without ruth his inquiries into the plasticity of human flesh. Its population is brutes, brought a second time into the world in " the House of Pain " in horrible human semblance, suffering ignorantly from the conflict between their bestial instincts and the law which has been imposed upon them. If they break it, they return to the operating-table. Moreau is killed. The brute instincts, relieved from fear of him, begin to rise again and the Beast Folk gradually slide back to their origins. The only human survivor

finds his way back to England, stricken in mind, with a shrinking from human beings. He says, in the course of his adventures on the island :

A strange persuasion came over me that, save for the grossness of the line, the grotesqueness of the forms, I had here before me the whole balance of human life in miniature, the whole interplay of instinct, reason, and fate in its simplest form.

And when he reaches England again, the thought recurs :

I look about me at my fellow-men. And I go in fear. I see faces keen and bright, others dull or dangerous, others unsteady, insincere ; none that have the calm authority of a reasonable soul. I feel as though the animal was surging up through them ; that presently the degradation of the Islanders will be played over again on a larger scale. I know this is an illusion, that these seeming men and women about me are indeed men and women, men and women for ever, perfectly reasonable creatures, full of human desires and tender solicitude, emancipated from instinct and the slaves of no fantastic Law—beings altogether different from the Beast Folk. Yet I shrink from them, from their curious glances, their inquiries and assistance, and long to be away from them and alone.

These passages suggest one interpretation of the book. But it is a myth, not an allegory ; and, whereas an allegory bears a single and definite interpretation, a myth does not, but can be interpreted in many ways, none of them quite consistent, all of them more alive and fruitful than the rigid allegorical correspondence. This work is a conspicuous example of Mr. Wells's work in his character as a myth-

maker ; **and** it is among the half-dozen or so things, two of them at least being short stories, which, I believe, constitute his permanent contribution to English literature.

Among the short stories, *The Country of the Blind* ranks as high. There is a lost valley in the Andes where a body of settlers was cut off by an earthquake. Some influence in the air of the place affected their eyes. They multiplied and the new generation was born blind and succeeding generations forgot what " seeing " meant. Into this valley falls by accident **a** Peruvian guide. There are legends of it in his country, and he thinks he will make himself king in this kingdom of the blind. But he is not prepared against the special acutenesses of sense which the blind people have developed ; and he finds himself not their king, but their inferior and their butt. At last he resigns himself and desires to marry one of their daughters. The wise men agree that his foolishness is probably caused by two useless protuberances under his forehead and decide that, if these are removed, the match may be permitted. He accepts the condition—but when its fulfilment is due he revolts and flies. Again a myth, with all its subtly shifting possibilities of interpretation.

I do not know whether anyone has ever noticed the odd resemblance between this tale and one by Remy de Gourmont. The comparison is exceedingly interesting. Gourmont is a teller of fairy-tales in the old manner: he imagines "a distant country" where strange conditions obtain. But Mr. Wells is the myth-maker of the scientific modern world. As the Greeks found material for their mythology in **the**

nature which surrounded them, so he finds his in the scientific atmosphere of the twentieth century. No fairy-tale country for him, nor anything inconsistent with biological possibilities ! The settlers " did not think of germs and infection " ; but Mr. Wells does. And the consequences of the " strange disease " that blinded them are worked out in complete accordance with what we know of the adaptability of human intelligence. The other and very important point of contrast is that Mr. Wells's story, with its significance undefined and well clothed in concrete detail, is larger and more suggestive than Gourmont's more satirical, less living version.

I think Mr. Wells's last successful attempt to create a myth on a large scale was *The Food of the Gods,* The struggle between the new huge growth—rats like mastiffs, wasps as big as hens and men forty feet high—and the old little world is simply a modern version, from a different angle and in scientific terms, of what an earlier writer attempted in terms of the Greek mythology :

> As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
> Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs ;
> And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
> In form and shape compact and beautiful,
> In will, in action free, companionship,
> And thousand other signs of purer life ;
> So on our heels a fresh perfection treads.

Mr. Wells's politicians and scare-raising journalists and men talking in railway carriages seem very different from Keats's fallen Titans ; but the idea which they embody is the same.

IV

It is dangerous work guessing what turned Mr. Wells's mind from work of this order to work in his later manner. The change is from the eternal to the temporal. Before and after it he wrote novels which were not scientific romances and yet not " problem novels." These are books about the romance of ordinary existence and there are five of them in all—*The Wheels of Chance,* which is an unripe precursor of two more, *Kipps* and *Mr. Polly, Love and Mr. Lewisham,* a story with traces of Gissing about it which its author, I think, over-rates, and that lamentably facetious work, *Bealby.* Of these *Mr. Polly* in its gusto, its rich, wandering, picaresque invention, is undoubtedly the best : it is like *Aepyornis Island,* another entertainment devised by a modern Scheherazade.

But most of his novels since about 1906 have been clearly didactic, propagandist and controversial in nature. They are written " about " contemporary topics : the characters are invented to discuss and illustrate contemporary problems. Mr. Wells has shifted his focus from the human spirit to the difficulties which the human spirit finds itself in at the moment. *Marriage* is " about " marriage : *Ann Veronica* is " about" the relations between parents and children and also " about" love and sex : *Joan and Peter* is " about " the bringing-up of children and adolescents : *The Soul of a Bishop* is " about" modern developments in religion. Now, debatable question as it is, and not to be argued in an essay of this scope, I believe that the business of the artist is

not with these surface things, but with the fundamentals in human nature which produce them and on which they react. This is proposed, of course, not as a " rule " but as a generalisation from experience. I think that much of the lack of grip of Mr. Wells's later novels, to which I shall refer again, is due to his mistaken use of his powers. If it be argued that his later books do interest more readers than his earlier books, I assert that it will not be so in the long run.

Tono-Bungay, which to a certain extent begins this series, is Mr. Wells's last novel of high rank, and it is only a little " about" patent medicines and advertising and company promoting. It is a panoramic view of our modern civilisation. George Ponderevo began life in the housekeeper's room at Bladesover and rose to be " an item in the house-party of a countess " ; he speaks of " this remarkable social range, this extensive cross-section of the British social organism." That is the value of his story ; and his story does make one definite, though complex, impression, in spite of his desire " to get in too all sorts of things that struck me, things that amused me and impressions that I got—even although they don't minister directly to my narrative at all." This sounds like Mr. Wells's anticipatory defence of his new loose method of writing ; but here it is hardly necessary. *Tono-Bungay* is a description, in a multitude of instances, of how human nature expressed itself in England in the twentieth century ; and, because the emphasis is still on the fundamental human nature behind the expression it has the unity without which a book cannot be fully interesting. But already the emphasis is beginning to shift.

Ponderevo's excuse for *Tono-Bungay* being written " all over the place " as one says, was that it was his first novel and almost certainly his last. But that defence is no good for Mr. Wells and, therefore, he has written an essay of some length on *The Contemporary Novel.* Here he attacks " that tired giant, the prosperous Englishman," who " wants to be taken out of himself" and "doesn't want—*Problems."* Well, that gentleman is sufficiently catered for by other writers than Mr. Wells, and we need not take much account of him. But the essay goes on to attack the critics who allege that this or that book " isn't a novel," and to urge " a return to the lax freedom of form, the rambling discursiveness, the right to roam " of an earlier age. " Nothing is irrelevant," it argues, " if the writer's mood is happy." And Mr. Wells curiously puts forward the *Old Wives'" Tale,* that strict, tight, perfectly proportioned book, as an example of roaming, rambling fiction.

Now no one has a right to demand form in the novel except in so far as he finds the author's attention to form a means of pinning his interest ; and no one has a right to condemn irrelevancies in a novel unless he finds them making it duller than it should have been. Mr. Wells mistakes the " laws" of criticism, which are in fact generalisations from multitudes of observations, for rules arbitrarily imposed. Critical " laws " are precisely like scientific " laws " ; they are valid only so long as no new fact upsets them. Mr. Wells's recent novels do not upset, I think, the generalisation that a work of art to be interesting must have a unity, a centre, must pursue a

definite object, as patiently and single-mindedly as Mr. Bennett pursues his object in the *Old Wives' Tale.*

The subject of that book is the growing up and the growing old of two sisters ; it is the progress, shown in these two examples, of humanity from youth to age. What is the subject of Mr. Wells's *Joan and Peter* ? One begins to answer confusedly : education and the various methods of bringing up the young in England, with discursions on imperialism, on the war, on sex problems, and on other things. Education is the nearest approach to a centre that the book contains ; but it does not approach very near. The development of Joan and Peter is *not* the subject. When, for example, Peter finds Joan at Cambridge consorting with an Indian student and is troubled, the emphasis is thrown, not on the significance this has for both their spirits but on the general question of white and coloured races. If a critic looks at this book as impartially as he can and finds that it does not interest him as much as it should, considering the brilliance with which it is written, what is he to conclude ? He may well defend the conclusion that still the " law " holds good that a novel to be interesting must pursue a definite object. He will add perhaps that Mr. Wells's original object seems to have been the present state of education in England, but that it does not lend itself to treatment in fiction.

I am not so sure of this as I am of the further conclusion that a wrong choice of subjects accounts for many defects in the style of these novels—for the amazing verbosity of *Joan and Peter,* out of which thousands of words could be " sweated " without eliminating one incident or one argument, for such

grotesque devices as the calling in of an angel into the North Library of the Athenaeum Club in order to convert the Bishop of Princhester to the ideas of *God the Invisible King,* for the tendency to forget a minor character and introduce him again with a new set of qualities. But I strongly suspect it. A radical evil will produce many on the surface ; and the radical evil of these books is that they are " not novels" but a sort of literary mules, doomed to sterility and bad tempers. It is even possible to find in Mr. Wells's last " novel" signs of his recognition that the bastard form will not do : for *The Undying Fire* is no more a novel than *The Republic* or Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy.* It is quite simply a philosophical dialogue.

It is true that " uninteresting " seems rather an unsuitable epithet of condemnation to apply to these books ; but I think that it is fundamentally just. The immediate urgency of their topics makes them deceptively readable ; but when that urgency has passed they will be readable no longer, except for those brilliant individual passages which each one of them contains. Even already, *Ann Veronica,* published in 1908, is beginning to fade. It treated notions current in that year about sex-problems and the relations between parents and children as though they were of universal validity. This book was of the surface only ; and the surface has changed.

V

This is not the place, if I had the room and the competence, for an exhaustive criticism of Mr.

Wells's political, moral and religious ideas ; but a general sketch of the character of his thought is necessary. Its predominating colour is that of impatience. He once delivered a lecture which he called *The Discovery of the Future.* One of the most remarkable things about him, as I have already noted, is that the past has no native place in his mind ; and it might be said that the future has taken its place. It is natural for a man so constituted to be impatient. He can foresee in an hour more than can happen in a century ; and he demands that the procession of events shall be accelerated. He is perpetually in the position of a child on Christmas Eve : he finds that the hours go very slowly to Christmas morning. He has, indeed, through the mouth of one of his characters, Karenin in *The World Set Free,* preached patience with human slowness ; but after all there are few points of view which he has not preached at one time or another. Karenin's effect on his listeners was doubtful : on his creator it has been quite negligible.

It would be interesting if an investigator would some day trace the rise of that nineteenth-century rage for prophesying which culminated in the liberal vaticinations of Mr. Wells. The " discovery of the future " was a good phrase. The nineteenth century discovered it almost as definitely as Columbus discovered America : until then it was thought of roughly as an unchanged continuation of the present. And, before Mr. Wells's *Anticipations,* prophecy was hardly organised or methodical : it was mostly a method of finding a locality for your Utopia. But Mr. Wells has prophesied more ardently, more often

and more fully than anyone before or since. His first book of forecasts, written about 1900, is still readable and in many ways has proved astonishingly correct. He foresaw the splashing-out, instead of the spreading, of the great towns over the countryside. He foresaw the development of road-transport. So far as flying was concerned, he imagined slower than events have gone, but how much faster than anyone else imagined ! He pictured a different type of machine from any that has appeared ; but his visualisation of aerial warfare turned out to be strangely correct.

Then after twenty years of looking forward over the history of the world from the moment in which he happened to be writing, he turned back and surveyed it from its beginnings. This wonderful book—which phrase I use without forgetting its defects—is certainly the work of a man whose chief interest lies in the future. Mr. Wells sets about all the past ages with just so much zest as he might find in tidying a cluttered writing-table. It would have been considerably better if in several places he had adopted a different point of view. But, in spite of its defects, it was very much better that *The Outline of History* should have been written than that it should not ; and who else could have done it with so much chance of success and influence ? This is among his perishable works, for others, it can hardly be doubted, will follow him and rewrite his history without his peculiar biases. But he has established the framework, as it has never yet been done since, under the hands of Ranke, history took on the methods of science, multiplied its material a hundredfold

and passed out of the hands of men of letters and imagination.

The radical fault of the *Outline* is, of course, merely its impatience. One seems to hear Mr. Wells saying : You talk of your Greece and Rome ! Poor fools, who had not even enough wit to invent the Penny Post ! Mankind has been on the earth some twenty thousand years and even now (for to such details does his Utopia condescend) the practice is not universal of rounding the corners of rooms and the edges of floors and ceilings for convenience in dusting. It is an unfortunate fact that Mr. Wells often seems to find himself in the position of scold to the entire human race.

In an impatient man, a man always in a hurry, we are not surprised to find the allied defect of instability. Someone once said that it was Mr. Wells's habit " to conduct his own education in public " : he himself, I believe, invented the expression " provisional thinking." One sometimes wishes that he could educate himself a little more privately, that he would keep his provisional thoughts a little longer in his note-book. But he is a man of ideas ; and when he has an idea he proceeds to express it with all his persuasive powers. A disciple would be hard put to it to ascertain his final view on the sex-problems he has so often solved. The just men made perfect by an unknown gas in a comet's tail admit a sort of group-marriage as a conceivable solution of some of them. The hero of *The New Machiavelli* seems to arrive at a comparative chastity by a process of trial and error. George Ponderevo's love-affair with Beatrice is a justificatory study in

aesthetic sensuality. Peter's trials and errors with Hettie are severely reprobated. And, one may be allowed to observe, if the propagation of right ideas can do any good then the propagation of wrong ideas must do harm. All the ideas Mr. Wells has put forward on political and social topics cannot be right.

His defence might be that the good done by right ideas is greater than all the harm wrong ideas can ever do. It is perhaps at any rate a tolerable defence that he is a man of many ideas. His impatience, his restlessness, and his haste carry him incessantly round the modern world and nothing that is topical is alien to him : there is no subject which may not inspire him to demand of the thinking public that it should stop and think about it. Even where he causes repulsion, as his glib and facile assertions often do, that is of itself a stimulus to thought.

In this brief essay I have omitted much I should like to have included. I have said next to nothing, for example, of his humour, of the rollicking adventures of Kipps and Mr. Polly, or of the malicious but admirably satirical portrait gallery which is contained in *The New Machiavelli.* I have said nothing of his gift of descriptive phrase, which can illuminate the dreariest argument. But it would be pusillanimous to close a study of so eminent a prophet without some prophecy of his future reputation. This will, I imagine, resemble very closely one of those eighteenth-century reputations which have not many books to show in justification of themselves. Mr. Wells will seem to have been a great figure in the intellectual life of his time ; but his books will be ruthlessly winnowed. I should select for possible

and passed out of the hands of men of letters and imagination.

The radical fault of the *Outline* is, of course, merely its impatience. One seems to hear Mr. Wells saying : You talk of your Greece and Rome ! Poor fools, who had not even enough wit to invent the Penny Post ! Mankind has been on the earth some twenty thousand years and even now (for to such details does his Utopia condescend) the practice is not universal of rounding the corners of rooms and the edges of floors and ceilings for convenience in dusting. It is an unfortunate fact that Mr. Wells often seems to find himself in the position of scold to the entire human race.

In an impatient man, a man always in a hurry, we are not surprised to find the allied defect of instability. Someone once said that it was Mr. Wells's habit " to conduct his own education in public " : he himself, I believe, invented the expression " provisional thinking." One sometimes wishes that he could educate himself a little more privately, that he would keep his provisional thoughts a little longer in his note-book. But he is a man of ideas ; and when he has an idea he proceeds to express it with all his persuasive powers. A disciple would be hard put to it to ascertain his final view on the sex-problems he has so often solved. The just men made perfect by an unknown gas in a comet's tail admit a sort of group-marriage as a conceivable solution of some of them. The hero of *The New Machiavelli* seems to arrive at a comparative chastity by a process of trial and error. George Ponderevo's love-affair with Beatrice is a justificatory study in

aesthetic sensuality. Peter's trials and errors with Hettie are severely reprobated. And, one may be allowed to observe, if the propagation of right ideas can do any good then the propagation of wrong ideas must do harm. All the ideas Mr. Wells has put forward on political and social topics cannot be right.

His defence might be that the good done by right ideas is greater than all the harm wrong ideas can ever do. It is perhaps at any rate a tolerable defence that he is a man of many ideas. His impatience, his restlessness, and his haste carry him incessantly round the modern world and nothing that is topical is alien to him : there is no subject which may not inspire him to demand of the thinking public that it should stop and think about it. Even where he causes repulsion, as his glib and facile assertions often do, that is of itself a stimulus to thought.

In this brief essay I have omitted much I should like to have included. I have said next to nothing, for example, of his humour, of the rollicking adventures of Kipps and Mr. Polly, or of the malicious but admirably satirical portrait gallery which is contained in *The New Machiavelli.* I have said nothing of his gift of descriptive phrase, which can illuminate the dreariest argument. But it would be pusillanimous to close a study of so eminent a prophet without some prophecy of his future reputation. This will, I imagine, resemble very closely one of those eighteenth-century reputations which have not many books to show in justification of themselves. Mr. Wells will seem to have been a great figure in the intellectual life of his time ; but his books will be ruthlessly winnowed. I should select for possible

survival *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *The Food of the Gods, The Invisible Man,* and perhaps *The Time Machine, Tono-Bungay* and *Mr. Polly,* and possibly all the short stories collected with *The Country of the Blind,* but certainly that one and *The Green Door.* I think future readers will pay as much and as little attention to *Ann Veronica* and the rest of them as we do to the tragedies of Voltaire. For the rest—a vigorous and restless thinker who powerfully disturbed the waters of his generation.

***(First Essays on Literature.* Collins, 1923)**

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POETRY

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

(A paper based on, but not identical with, a discourse delivered at what may be called the headquarters of the subject—the Pump Room, Bath, October ist, 1919.)

Argument. **General belief that there is no poetry in the eighteenth century. Pope even being omitted as disputable, parts of three other poets and most of the work of ten more have been allowed to be poetry. Here two poems—Dyer's *Grongar Hill* and Mrs. Greville's *Prayer for Indifference*—are particularly examined " as examples of pure poetry charged with special eighteenth-century difference—for that is the point at issue." In addition, much of the rhetorical and light verse of the eighteenth century must be granted the name of poetry.**

THE effect of convincing anyone against his will is sufficiently familiar, but it may be questioned whether there is not another state of mind which is still more insusceptible of real conviction, which it is still more of a labour of Sisyphus to convince. In this state there is too much mere inertia for the word " will " to come in. There is no intention of relapsing into the same opinion ; there is indeed no need of any, for the opinion is never disturbed. The attempts at convincing need not be resisted or contemned ; they may even be listened to and enjoyed like a very pleasant song, but they are at once forgotten.

Something of this sort, it may be feared, is the case with the subject of this present paper. People have made up their minds that there was *no* eighteenth-century poetry or, at best, that such as there was was not properly eighteenth-century poetry at all, but merely a survival or an anticipation. The present

writer had a perhaps accidental but certainly curious illustration of the fact in reference to the origin of this very paper ; for having expressed his intention of discussing " eighteenth-century *poetry"* he found the subject announced at first as " eighteenth-century *verse"* In face of such a popular attitude—let us be bold and give it its proper name : such a vulgar error—it may not be quite idle to make a fresh attempt against it. I am not sure that in some of the versions of the Pagan Apocrypha it is not recorded that Sisyphus *did* get that stone lodged at last. At any rate it is worth trying, even at the risk, which is almost a certainty, of the very illogical suspicion that if you like eighteenth-century poetry, you *dorCt* like—or don't sufficiently understand—seventeenth and nineteenth. On that point the present writer may, he thinks, slap his sword home and decline duello with any man. But he will take the liberty firstly, in order to confine the matter within reasonable limits, of leaving Pope almost entirely out. Obviously the famous and much-argued question, " Was Pope a poet ? " can be answered, even in the negative, without deciding our general point here.

There is, of course—the fact has been already admitted in passing—a division of the poetry of 1700-1800 to which, in a more or less grudging way, the poetical franchise is generally granted. Scraps of Lady Winchilsea and Parnell quite early ; Dyer and Thomson at the beginning of the second quarter ; Collins and Gray in the middle ; Blake and Burns and Chatterton, if not also Cowper and Crabbe, in the last division, are admitted, if only to a sort of provincial or proselyte membership. Gray, indeed,

has always been granted special grace, even, as some think, to an unfair comparative extent, and perhaps Mr. Swinburne's exuberant championship was never less wasted than in the cases of Collins and Blake. But Blake really does belong to no time at all except in a few fragments, and most of the others are too well known for further comment. Let us in the very limited space here available, before passing to other aspects of the subject, take two poems, one of the earlier, one of the later time, as examples of pure poetry charged with special eighteenth-century difference—for that is the point at issue. They shall be Dyer's *Grongar Hill* and Mrs. Greville's *Prayer for Indifference.* The one is a picture of that external nature to which as a rule the century is supposed to have been blind, yet charged with an " inwardness " to which that century is equally supposed to have been callous. The other is a poem of mood, almost a pathological poem, possessing the same inwardness, but charged with a flutter of feeling, again supposed to be quite unknown to the age of prose and sense. Both are curious examples of what is called the conventional phraseology of the time, flushed and animated by something additional—a characteristic which also appears in Collins, but is more disputable in Gray, save perhaps in the remarkable " Vicissitude " ode. *Grongar Hill* ought to be given whole, but it is not difficult of access ; the " Hymn " is not so easy to get at, but it suffers less from " sampling."

There is not the slightest extravagance, from any catholic point of view over poetry, in calling *Grongar Hill* simply beautiful. I think it deserves that term better than anything of Gray's, though not perhaps

quite so well as some things of Collinses in the first half of the century ; while nothing outside them can touch it, and it came before both. Its attractions, to a somewhat close student, are manifold, not the least of them being the fashion in which, for the first time since Milton, and in a way not directly imitated even from him, it moulds the couplet of mixed eight and seven syllable lines. But one need not neglect the late Mr. Lowell's remark that when Edgar Poe talked of iambs and pentameters he made other people d—n metres. The poem has plenty of other attractions for the most untechnical reader. Dyer, who was himself a painter, invokes the Muse of Painting as well as Her of Poetry, and it is really remarkable how, at this time when hardly anybody is supposed to have had his eye on nature except Thomson, and in the very year of *Winter* itself, full eighty, too, before Scott provoked from Pitt his famous surprise that verse should be able to express the effect of painting—how visual as well as audible effect is produced. The exordium to the

> Silent nymphs with curious eye,
> Who in the purple evening lie
> On the mountain's lonely van ;

the following description of the landscape in general with its unusual and extraordinarily true conclusion :

> And swelling to embrace the light,
> Spreads around beneath the sight,

in which everybody who has after climbing a hill turned round and seen the prospect must acknowledge the felicity of " swelling " though he may never have formulated the appearance before ; the details

of wood, and ruin, and river, with the sudden and just sufficient moral :

> A little rule, a little sway,
> A sunbeam on a winter's day ;

for the castle, and for the rivers :

> Sometimes swift, sometimes slow,
> Wave succeeding wave they go,
> A various journey to the deep,
> Like human life to endless sleep ;

the fillings in of various detail and the penultimate passage formed into a sort of roundel :

> Now, even now, my joys run high
> As on the mountain turf I lie,
> While the wanton Zephyr sings
> And in the vale perfumes his wings ;
> While the waters murmur deep,
> While the shepherd charms his sheep,
> While the birds unbounded fly,
> And with music fill the sky—
> Now, even now, my joys run high ;

with the finale to Peace and Quiet, close allied to Pleasure—all these and all the rest of the 150 lines or so of the poem have their own appropriate agreeableness. And it will be very dangerous for anyone to try the usual sneer at eighteenth-century convention, lest haply he be thought to be blinded or hoodwinked by conventions of another sort. He has, for instance, been taught to think " wanton Zephyr " very bad. But has he quite realised the simplicity and perfection with which the single word " sings " distinctively characterises the rush of the wind aloft, and the next line brings before the mind's senses the

flower and crops and woods, from which the " perfume " is derived below ? Is " unbounded," in the particular and yet fully legitimate sense, quite what Edmond de Goncourt used disdainfully to call " everybody's epithet" for the apparently limitless freedom of the birds' flight ? Without quoting the whole piece it would be impossible to show the singular uniformity of pictorial and musical skill which distinguishes it ; but this can be left, with complete security of mind, to anyone who gives it an impartial reading to discover for himself. Even the impartial reader is not recommended to proceed from *Grongar Hill* to *The Ruins of Rome,* as the poet in this latter piece most unwisely invites him to do—still less to *The Fleece.* But no attempt is being made here to prove that the eighteenth century never produced bad poetry : one merely endeavours to point out that it sometimes produced good.

The *Prayer for Indifference* is much less varied in kind, and much more limited in degree, of attraction, but it is perhaps subtler. The personal application of it can escape no reader of Fanny Burney's Diaries, but is not necessary to appreciation. The idea is that of an appeal to Oberon for a " balm " slightly different from that which plays so important a part in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—a spell causing neither love nor hate, but only indifference. The metre is ordinary ballad or common measure ; the language not very different from the ordinary poetic diction of the time. You are not, as in *Grongar Hill,* made to believe that you are not in the eighteenth century at all, or, if at all, as far from its usual and central ways and thoughts as Grongar itself was and

is from London. But, by a quaint and pleasing paradox, the suppliant infuses into her prayer qualities which were the very opposite of that which she prays for, and which in a certain sense might be said to be the quality of the century itself at least on the common estimate. IndifFerence—in the sense of abstinence from enthusiasm—certainly *was* affected by many, and positively approved by some, in those days. But when the lady says :

I ask no kind return in love,
No tempting charm to please—
Far from the heart such gifts remove
That sighs for peace and ease,

there is a quiver in verse and phrase and sense alike which indicates and expresses very effectively aspirations quite different from indifference. And the quiver becomes a throb, emphasised by the repetition of that potent word " far," as she goes on :

Nor ease, nor peace that heart can know
That, like the needle true,
Turns at the touch of joy or woe,
But, turning, trembles too.

Far as distress the soul can wound,
'Tis pain in each degree ;
'Tis bliss, but to a certain bound,
Beyond, 'tis agony.

And there is not much less real passion, though the expression has become ironic instead of direct, in the concluding stanza :

And what of life remains to me
I'll pass in sober ease :
Half-pleased, contented I will be—
Content but half to please.

Now it is probably hopeless to expect readers who have been thoroughly broken to other styles of poetry themselves to be contented, to be even " half-pleased " with this. The metre will seem to them jog-trot, the language hopelessly prosaic, the expression, as Nietzsche says of John Stuart Mill, " offensively clear " ; the absence of any attempt at elaborate ornament or elaborate ugliness almost more offensive still. And it may also seem idle boasting or sheer mendacity to observe that there are people who delight in intricate versification, who love even metaphysical ambiguousness and obscurity ; people for whom Blake is not too uncommonplace or Rossetti too flamboyant, or—to come to more recent days, while keeping to the equal waters of the dead—Mary Coleridge too problematic, who yet can enjoy this verse very much indeed, and feel that, having known it, they could not do without it, which some have held to be the great test of poetry. Indeed, to them, not the least interesting point about it is that it *does* take the form and colour of the time to so large an extent and vindicates its indispensableness thereby. On the other hand, if anyone says, " But I do not perceive the quiver, or feel the throb of which you talk," why, of course, there is nothing more to be done or said. For that person Mrs. Greville's work is undoubtedly not poetry. But whether his or her state is the more gracious, because of the fact, is a further question, though one on which we need not enter. The whole purport of this paper is once more to make an effort to establish the old position that there are many mansions in the Heaven of Poetry, and that the mere fact that some one does not care

to live in or to recognise the existence of this or that among them does not prove that they ought to be pulled down or that they do not exist at all.

It may, however, be admitted—in fact no admission or confession is required, no idea of contesting or denying having been entertained—that neither the qualities of *Grongar Hill* nor those of the *Prayer,* that still less the general characteristics of the group of romantic precursors from Collins to Blake, distinguish eighteenth-century poetry generally. And it may in the same way be further allowed that some of the actual characteristics of this poetry in general are not *strictly* poetic at all. Its didacticism is perhaps the chief of these ; but there are undoubtedly others. And we are busy not with what is not poetical in eighteenth-century verse, but with what is poetical in eighteenth-century poetry. There are two departments in which it is almost pre-eminent, in which it is certainly very distinguished. The strict poeticalness of both of them has indeed been denied by extremists. All of us probably have heard it said, perhaps some of us have said it ourselves, that rhetoric is not poetry ; and (though here there may not have been so much agreement) that "light" verse, whether regularly satiric or not, is at best poetry by allowance and, short of the best, not poetry at all. Now undoubtedly some rhetoric is not poetry, and a good deal of light verse is poetry only by extremely generous allowance. But the complete ostracising of either kind from the poetical city involves two propositions which are contentious in the extreme, and which I and those who think with me hold to be abominable heresies. The one is that

" All depends on the subject" in poetry, and the other is that " Verse is not an essential feature of poetry.[5]' We maintain that anything can be treated poetically, though some things are very rebellious to such treatment, and that though rhetoric is strictly a characteristic of prose, it can be, so to speak, super-saturated with poetry when it adopts poetical form, the same contention extending to the subjects of satiric or of merely light verse. A great deal of the abundant rhetorical verse of the eighteenth century is no doubt not poetry, or not very poetical poetry, and a good deal of its abundant satire, not a very little of its *vers de societe* and trifles is not poetry or not very poetical. But, on the other hand, not a very little of both kinds *is* poetry, and the reason and origin of its poetical character are by no means uninteresting to trace. There is no room, and indeed not much occasion, to do this at length here. Suffice it to say that for its rhetorical verse the century was very much indebted to Dryden, and that for its light verse it was still more indebted to Prior.

The positions of the two were indeed different, for Dryden was a dead man when the century opened, though he had died on its very eve, while Prior was an actual member of its first great literary group. And, further, Dryden's influence, though it continued to some extent directly through the whole time, was largely exercised at second-hand through Pope, while Prior's was first-hand all through. For which reasons we need not say anything more here on Dryden himself, while we must say something on Prior. But the rhetorical influence which had pro-

duced such great poetry (for great it is, let who will gainsay) as the finest passages of Dryden's satires, the opening of *Religio Laid,* the " wandering fires " paragraph in *The Hind and the Panther,* and not a few things in the neglected plays, was well justified of its children in the following century. I have never seen any successful attempt to deny the name of poetry to such magnificent things as the close of *The Dunciad* and the close of *The Vanity of Human Wishes.* I have never seen any real fight at all made for this denial except the endeavour to turn them, as scapegoats, into the wilderness of rhetoric. And that, as I have said already, is really a begging of the question. Most certainly there is rhetoric which is not poetry—there is a very great deal of it—in fact most of it ; as certainly there is rhetoric which is. And the passages which may claim that name in the eighteenth century, if never quite so great as the two just mentioned, are very numerous. There is that fine one in Tickell's epitaph on Cadogan which, after the eclipse of eighteenth-century verse in the earlier nineteenth, Thackeray was the first to rediscover :

Ah, no ! when once the mortal yields to fate
The blast of Fame's sweet trumpet sounds too late—
Too late to stay the spirit on its flight
Or soothe the new inhabitant of light,

with its later address to Fame herself:

Thou music, warbling to the deafened ear !
Thou incense, wasted on the funeral bier !

There is Akenside's still finer *Epistle to Curio,* which Macaulay laughed at rather ignobly as unpractical. Well, Akenside, like Macaulay himself, was a Whig,

and I am a Tory ; nor are the ideals expressed in the following lines by any means mine. But if they are not fine lines—if they are not, though in one of the outer provinces no doubt, poetical—I will acknowledge that I know nothing at all about poetry :

> Ye shades immortal, who by Freedom led,
> Or in the field or on the scaffold bled,
> Bend from your radiant seats a joyful eye,
> And view the crown of all your labours nigh.
> See Freedom mounting her eternal throne,
> The sword submitted, and the laws her own ;
> See public power chastised beneath her stand,
> With eyes intent and uncorrupted hand,
> See private life by wisest arts reclaimed,
> See ardent youth to noblest manners framed,
> See us acquire whate'er was sought by you,
> If Curio ! only Curio ! will be true.

Well, once more, Curio, *alias* Pulteney, was *not* true, but deserted Akenside's party and became Earl of Bath and possessor of no small part thereof. And private life and ardent youth were not reclaimed much in the days of the historic Charteris and the fictitious Lovelace. And the practical realisation of something like Akenside's undoubted principles and aspirations was the French Revolution fifty and the Russian Revolution nearer two hundred years later. But all this has nothing to do with the question whether in this passage also rhetoric, which hardly anybody will deny to it, has not passed under the influence and received the transforming force of poetry. I say it has, though I am perfectly willing to admit that it is not the best or the most poetical form of poetry, and that it is very far indeed from the

forms that I myself like best. But one of the cries which the critic should never be tired of uttering, whether in the streets or in the wilderness, is that nothing is bad merely because it is different from another thing which is good, and that in this world there is no equality or fixed standard to which everything must be cut down or stretched out. The best rhetorical poetry of the eighteenth century is not the best poetry, but it is poetry in its own way, exhibiting the glow, the rush, the passion, which strict prose cannot, and which poetry can give.

There is less specific prejudice against "light" poetry on the part of poetical highfliers than there is against poetical rhetoric, but there is some. Once more I venture to disallow this prejudice *in to to* as far as kind is concerned, though, of course, each individual specimen of that kind must pass its individual muster as a piece of intenser thought or feeling, expressed in appropriate language and inspired by the charm of verse-music. For that, though no one ever has defined or will define poetry, is one of the divers good approaches to a description of it. Now here, as was briefly said above, the eighteenth century possessed, for nearly the whole of its first quarter as an actual living practitioner, and for the whole of the rest of it as a past contemporary of still living persons, an unsurpassed general of light verse in Matthew Prior. On the whole I know few English poets who have so seldom had full justice done to them. No competent judge, indeed, has ever denied Prior's excellence in pure lightness, but there have been frequent failures to allow for that undercurrent of seriousness, sadness, and almost passion—

that "feeling in earnest while thinking in jest," according to the best definition of humour—which characterises him. Thackeray has, indeed, equalled, but in obvious and even frank following, the great lines written (or not written) in Mezeray's *History of France* ; but hardly anyone else has come near them in irony and melancholy and music, blended as three appeals in one. There is even a touch, though more than a touch would have been out of place, in the famous *Child of Quality,* and a great deal more, not quite so perfectly expressed, in the *Lines to Charles Montague.* If the touch of sadness be for the moment unwelcome, there is *Daphne and Apollo* or the famous *English Padlock,* with a dozen or several dozen others ready to hand. And to go to yet another *nuance,* the recent discovery at Longleat of *Jinny the Just,* with its touches of sincere sorrow and the tliree unequalled stanzas of kindly irony :

Thus still, while her morning unseen fled away,
In ord'ring the linen and making the tea,
That she scarce could have time for the psalms of the day—

And while after dinner the night came so soon
That half she proposed very seldom was done,
With twenty "God bless me's, how this day has gone !"

While she read, and accounted, and paid and abated,
Ate and drank, played and worked, laughed and cried, loved and hated,
As answered the end of her being created.

especially with that last unsurpassable line ; all these and many more exemplify and illustrate that

indescribable raising of the expression—that making the common as if it were not common—which is the essence of poetry and the privilege of verse.

How this side of the matter was produced (in the mathematical sense) and maintained throughout the century would take many times the space of the present paper to show in anything but the briefest and barest epitome. Almost all Prior's own shorter later poems would have to be quoted ; Swift, though so much greater in prose, and though best in verse on the severer side, especially in the magnificent and quite sufficiently authenticated *Judgment Day* verses, could not be left out ; and it might be possible to make more fight than even lovers of the eighteenth century have recently made for Gray. But perhaps the scraps and orts of lesser men of letters—though sometimes not lesser *men*—show the strong point of the century even more convincingly. Where will you find more musical lightness of a certain easy but far from unpoetical kind than in those verses on Strawberry Hill in which Pulteney almost paid his rather heavy debts in more serious ways to the House of Walpole ? Or than in the others in which he and Chesterfield combined to estimate " Hanover, Bremen and Verden "—that is to say, the whole continental dominions for which George the Second was making England fight, as worthless compared with the charms of Molly Lepell ? Go lower still, take a professional litterateur and laureate like William Whitehead, to whom hardly anybody save Mr. Austin Dobson (and it is certainly no small exception) has been favourable, and read the piece on Celia, which is a more or less independent expansion of

Ausonius on Crispa. It begins with a sort of pettish avowal of ignorance how the mischief of love came, and goes on with rather rude depreciations of the lady's face, figure, air, and even sense. Then it slides rapidly into a sort of grudging allowance :

> Her voice, her touch, *might* give the alarm—
> 'Twas both perhaps or neither,

and then capitulates headlong :

> In short 'twas that provoking charm
> Of Celia altogether !

Trivial, of course, but then it ought to be trivial, and the trivial can be, and is, here super-trivialised.

One might go on, even in this skipping fashion, for a long time till one came to the great political satires of the close of the century, but once more time and space forbid. As it has been frivolously said :

> You have only to search
> In Dodsley and Pearch

(the standard ten volumes of eighteenth-century miscellaneous poetry) and you will find ; though, of course, if you only look for bad things you will find them, too, in plenty. But even this collection is by no means exhaustive, and with some of the more famous verse-writers it does not deal at all; while we have in this survey confessedly left most of them alone. What has been intended is to show that making of the common uncommon by means of treatment in verse was not an unknown thing between 1700 and 1800 ; that it was attempted and achieved in various kinds. Finally, if the attempts

were rarely and the achievements hardly ever in kinds that can be called the very highest, one may at least urge that there is not an absolute vacuum between the loftiest mountain-tops of poetry and the actual plain of prose—that Parnassus has lower slopes, some of which are not so very low.

{The London Mercury.)

KEATS AND HIS PREDECESSORS

(A Note on the " Ode to a Nightingale.")

EDMUND BLUNDEN

Argument. **Keats and Shelley compared as readers—the latter using his authors for their ideas only, the former absorbing also their forms of expression. Signs of Keats's reading are, therefore, everywhere visible in his language, especially in the Odes. Examination of literary reminiscences in the *Ode to a Nightingale*.**

THE points of similarity between Shelley and Keats are frequently set forth with due eloquence, and those aspects wherein they are wide apart have not been neglected ; but one thing remains to be said simply and distinctly, namely that Keats was a ' literary man and Shelley not so. Keats had the curiosity of a book-hunter, finding his way through many pages and volumes of the poetry called minor and picturesque miscellanies, from the *Psyche* of Mrs. Tighe to authorities on heraldry ; Shelley in his reading was apt to be " borne darkly fearfully afar " on the rolling seas of Homeric, or Æschylean, or Miltonian majesty. If he paused and turned awhile from such reading, it was habitually to some work capable of supplying argument or illumination for his philosophical theses. The manner, the dexterous emphasis or coloured phrase, played only distantly over his attention while his thought glowed and triumphed in the access of new understanding. In this way, whatever in the reasoning and proposals of Shelley has been anticipated by liberal spirits, we

seldom find in the construction and outward effect of his poetry any trace of previous writers :

> This phoenix builds the phoenix' nest,
> His architecture is his own.

The verse of Keats, on the contrary, is chequered with references to and renovations of the detail of earlier men, and furnishes a remarkable opportunity for those who appreciate the art of poetry by itself to exercise their powers. Without going so far as to write of "The Plagiarisms of Keats," one may indeed affirm that his poetic habit included, as the means sometimes of inspiration and often of embellishment, the expressions that took his fancy as he read. In this observation, moreover, there lies no antipathy, but, of course, a tribute to the genius which could assemble (like his own admired Milton in youth) the exquisite and the impressive from the fields of poetry, and command them, rehabilitate them, newly relate them into his own unforgettable achievement.

In Keats's *Odes* especially one may discern a large number of evidences that he was at all times, even at the hour of his most personal and unique inspiration, a literary man. The words and cadences and atmospheres which had won his deeper response in reading blended their power with his other experiences when he began to write. Haunted with the critical delight in the art of his fellow-poets, he found it as natural to voice that pleasure as to perpetuate the rest of his emotions. Let the great *Ode to a Nightingale* be examined in this regard, and Keats's system of poetry will quickly appear with all its fearless re-

currence to extant poetry. The *Ode* opens with the lines :

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk. . . .

That exceptionally sharp-eyed surveyor of literature, Sir George Greenwood, in his *Lee, Shakespeare and a Tertium Quid,* has recognised these phases of submergence as a version from the Latin of Horace—a Horace is recorded among the books of Keats—in the *Epodes,* No. xix, of which the first four lines may be literally translated :

The cause that a drowsy numbness has diffused through my inmost sense so great a forgetfulness, as though with parching mouth I had drained draughts of wine bringing on Lethean slumbers. . . .

One need hardly add that Keats has enriched the quotation, and established upon it a composition still richer, whereas the Latin poet proceeds without ardour through conventional lines.

In his third stanza Keats with the utmost art calls into being a harmony between his poem and the sublimities of Milton and Shakespeare. " Fade far away, dissolve," he cries of his own desire, and the remarkable verb identifies him in that mood with Hamlet :

O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew ;

with the words " the fever and the fret," Keats resumes the involuntary threnody of Macbeth :

After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

Then come the lines figuring human life as a prison of the plague-stricken which cannot but call up in the mind their sad original, the vision of the Lazar-House " wherein were laid numbers of all diseased," in the eleventh book of the *Paradise Lost.* It is from Milton, also, in his lesser poems, that Keats takes some subsequent turns of phrase ; his " viewless wings of Poesy " corresponds exactly to Milton's notion in the final stanza of *The Passion* :

> Or should I thence, hurried on viewless wings,
> Take up a weeping on the mountains wild. . . .

" Tender is the night," and the ensuing serenity, are near akin to the vision in Milton's *Nativity,* beginning with " But peaceful was the night." And a hint of Horace, in the same part of his works as was already mentioned, has been gracefully animated by Keats in the lines :

> And haply the Queen Moon is on her throne,
> Cluster'd about by all her starry Fays ;

Horace's opening couplet in another Epode being, in crude translation, " Night had come, and in a calm heaven the moon was shining, amid the lesser stars."

Mr. de Selincourt, whose edition of Keats contains so much valuable information on the poet's reading and allusions, has noticed verbal parallels between this *Ode to a Nightingale* and the earlier and less ambitious *Nightingale* of S. T. Coleridge. I am inclined to think the connection between the two poems more profound and basic. The theme of Coleridge's easy-paced monologue was this : Milton

wrongly gave the nightingale the reputation for being "melancholy,"[5] whereas (to use Coleridge's own words) :

> In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
> But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced
> With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
> Or slow distemper, or neglected love,

must have attributed his emotions to the bird, and started the mistake thereafter enthusiastically repeated by poets. They ought rather to have surrendered themselves without qualification to the actuality of Nature, awhile forgetting the art and common reputation, so that their fame

> Should share in Nature's immortality.

Such is Coleridge's path of thought on the nightingale's song, and Keats appears to go in his steps when first he thinks the nightingale a bird of happy ecstasy, and then he imagines a complete, self-subduing escape into Nature, leaving behind those things and thinkings which make him "full of sorrow." Yet even here there is a complexity, for Keats knew his *Britannia's Pastorals* also ; and in Book i, Song 3, Browne has the lines :

> Sweet Philomela (then he heard her sing),
> I do not envy thy sweet carolling,
> But do admire thee that each even and morrow
> Canst carelessly thus sing away thy sorrow.
> Would I could do so too ! . . .

In his fifth stanza Keats may be said to be dreaming a Midsummer Night's Dream, and indeed in guessing the unseen flowers of his winding mossy

ways his memory has called up Shakespeare to the mystery, or rather Oberon with his elfin confidence :

> I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where ox-lips, and the nodding violet grows,
> Quite overcanopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine,

The violet, the musk-rose and the eglantine perfume the dusk of Keats's poem. His soft incense that " hangs upon the boughs " is described in the phrase of Ariel. These intertwined hues of the greatest fancy in literature make Keats's own enchantment all the deeper, and the reader is captivated with the sweetness of unheard melodies.

The volumes of Wordsworth's poetry published in Keats's day made a great impression on him, and he is said to have known the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* by heart ; small wonder, then, that we have a remembrance of " The pansy at my feet " in Keats's words, and again there is a thrilling consonance between that singing girl,

> Reaping and singing by herself,

whose music filled Wordsworth's heart with the joy of travellers hearing a nightingale in the desert, and Keats's Ruth, likewise longing for " far-off things," and " amid the alien corn." Even Keats's supremely fancied

> magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,

has been felt to have some genealogical bond with [ess lustrous glimpses in Wordsworth, such as the

> Lady of the Lake
> Sole-sitting by the shores of old Romance.

Upon that perilous sea Coleridge had voyaged all alone.

But that Keats should come under the spell of Wordsworth and Coleridge more than most men, and that his own young poetry should in some ways rediscover their discoveries is not to be wondered at ; the more singular and less observed community of spirit, as it is reflected in the *Nightingale* poem, is that between him and ancient Horace. One instance has been distinguished, at the opening of the *Ode.* I do not know how far one might be able to prove that the " hungry generations" and " emperor and clown " of the seventh stanza are taken from Horace, whose essence of moralisation they indeed contain. " Hungry generations " appears to be a powerful and majestic translation of his *tempus edax,* " devouring time." However this may be, it is the finale of the poem which is important when Keats, losing the nightingale's song and his revery, asks :

> Was it a vision, or a waking dream ?
> Fled is that music—Do I wake or sleep ?

Horace (in his *Odes,* iii. 4, the second stanza) addresses the muse with similar interrogations :

> Hearest thou ? Or does a lovely hallucination
> beguile me ? I think I hear thee and
> go straying through the haunted groves. . . .

Viewed in company with the others noted, this parallel seems to warrant us almost in discerning, through over a hundred years, that Keats had his Horace in his hand that day when he sat under the plum tree at Lawn Bank and presently began to write. But is it

too bold a conjecture, that his Horace not only gave him a few phrases for the symphony which he composed, but even supplied part of the impetus for his composing at all ? The *Ode* was written in dejection largely due to a hopeless love, and a doubtful. Then let the reader turn to those Epodes of Horace already alluded to in detail, and consider whether Horace's bitter cry therein against a woman who tortured his affections and was not content with one lover would not have struck Keats deeply and set his imagination working over all his own real or fancied dissatisfactions with Fanny Brawne.

{The London Mercury.)

ARISTOPHANES ON TENNYSON

A. W. VERRALL

Argument. **The methods of Comedy not those of Criticism, for Comedy cares only to raise a laugh, not to inquire or judge fairly as is required of Criticism. Thus, in *The Frogs*, Aristophanes satirises Euripides by making fun of a phrase for introducing characters which, legitimate and useful in itself, is too seldom used by Euripides to be accounted as characteristic of him. Aristophanes himself would be surprised at the seriousness of the attention sometimes paid by learning to such tricks of his. The true value of this trick demonstrated dramatically in the style of Aristophanes by applying it to introductory passages in the *Idylls of the King*, Tennyson being cast in the part of the poet Euripides, a certain Gigadibs (from Browning) in that of the Critic and Philistine (from Matthew Arnold) in that of the man in the street.**

THE Muse of Comedy and the Muse—if there be one—of Criticism are not sisters; they are "scarce cater-cousins." The business of Comedy is to plant a jest and get a laugh—with or without sense, reason and justice; it is not for her to inquire. When Aristophanes, shy perhaps of politics in the delicacy of the political situation, took for his *Frogs* a subject purely literary, and faced the risk of a popular audience to spend some hours upon a comparison between the fashionable tragedy of the day, as represented by the recently deceased Euripides, and that which had been admired, by command of Æschylus two generations before, little can he have dreamed of the gravity with which some of his impudent tricks would be canvassed by the erudition of future ages. It may be worth while to illustrate the true value of one trick,—his very best, if estimated for the purpose of the comic stage,—by

applying it to a poet and poetry not yet ancient enough to be, like Euripides, half-buried in misunderstanding.

Among the formal innovations of Euripides, one of the most conspicuous was that of opening the play with a compendious narrative of the antecedent facts or suppositions defining the situation, or at all events that view; of the situation from which the action starts. For this practice there was good reason in the peculiar attitude of Euripides towards the subject-matter of Athenian tragedy ; and Aristophanes, to do him justice, says nothing to the contrary. But of course there is in such openings a similarity of form and style, a certain dryness or simplicity of manner, which does not belong to openings directly dramatic. There are not many possible manners, or rather there is but one, of telling a story rapidly and yet completely in verse. Moreover, from the nature of the case, there is a tendency (which, as we are going to see, is almost irresistible) *to start with a statement about some personage in the story, so that the grammatical subject or nominative case of the first sentence will be a proper name.* " Samson, the mighty man, Manoah's son ..." or " The shepherd David, summoned from the flock ..." are obvious ways of beginning a summary account of these heroes.

Now, as a matter of fact, Euripides in his prologues avoided this ready and quite proper form of commencement with much more care than (as we shall see) could be expected or reasonably asked. But he used it sometimes. And Aristophanes perceived that, by collecting these cases, he could get the material for a good theatrical joke. He could pretend to show, in a dramatic manner, that Euripides knew

but one type of sentence for a beginning. For, whenever this type occurs, you can of course surprise the audience by an interruption and a nonsensical finish. " Samson, the mighty man, Manoah's son— . . . Walked up a hill and then walked down again." " The shepherd David, summoned from the flock— . . . Walked up a hill, and then walked down again." And since every kind of verse has, by necessity, certain habitual places of punctuation, it will often happen that, as in these instances, the same nonsensical finish will find a possible point of attachment. From a habit of the tragic metre in Greek, it chanced that the middle of the verse was the most convenient point for attaching a tag; what point you take matters nothing, provided it is always the same. Accordingly Aristophanes, having got together, out of some threescore Euripidean plays, half a dozen legitimate instances (and one not legitimate[1]) of opening sentences similar in this respect, that all have a personal subject and proper name, and all are punctuated at the same point, compels his pretended Euripides to quote these selected cases as typical, and assigns to his pretended Æschylus, in the character of a critic, the part of interrupting Euripides each time at the proper point, and completing the sentence with the same nonsensical end. As a stage-trick, nothing could be better; and how effective it is, an Englishman will more promptly perceive, if we apply it to poetry and themes for which we have a natural, and not merely a cultivated affection. But

[1] ***Frogs*, 1219. "Euripides" (see the context) cites this as an instance to the contrary; and so it is, though the tag can be botched on somehow. The only legitimate example among the nineteen extant plays *(Iphigenia in Taurica)* is cited.**

as criticism, were it so meant, it would be futile, as by the same application we shall most easily show and understand.

It happens that the greatest master of narrative verse among modern English poets has really done what Aristophanes attributes to Euripides—falsely, as he well knew, and idly, had the charge been true. Tennyson, in the *Idylls of the King*, does really, and quite properly, prefer to open his stories, more than half of them, in the way which Euripides used very seldom, though often enough for the purpose of the comedian. The style of Aristophanes is not to be had at command; but anyone may exhibit his impertinence.

For this purpose Tennyson shall be put, as any son of man may, whatever his dignity and glory, in the place of Euripides.

In the place of Æschylus, the "Æschylus" of Aristophanes, we will most certainly not put any English poet or person of credit. "Æschylus" is a malicious fool, for whom we will borrow the name of "Gigadibs the literary man,"—with apologies to Browning, and indeed to Gigadibs. And thirdly, to complete a parallel with the scene in the *Frogs*, we require in addition to the poet and the critic, contenders in the literary debate, a by-stander, as spectator and umpire. In Aristophanes this part is played by a sort of average Athenian ass, upon whom, as representing the patrons of the drama, is conferred the title of the "god" Dionysus, in his character as proprietor of the public theatre. We have no "Dionysus" in England, but the "Philistine" of Matthew Arnold will be good enough.

These three, then, shall be the interlocutors of our **comedy—a** "Tennyson" such **as he** chooses **to** manufacture, **a** "Gigadibs," **ditto, and a** "Philistine,[55] such **as he is** :

Gigadibs {to the Philistine). I say, sir, and repeat,—this Tennyson
Was uninventive, dull, a mere machine
For turning verse, and I will prove the same.
Philistine. Oh come, I say !
Gig. Look at his *Idylls,* then !
Tennyson. Yes, look, and show them faulty, if you dare !
Gig. **I'll** wipe out all your *Idylls of the King,*
All, with a single pocket-handkerchief.
Tenn. A handkerchief!
Gig. A handkerchief, a towel,
A napkin, rag, or anything that wipes.
All's one. So poor you are in artifice,
So stiff, mechanical, and monotonous,
That one may fit the self-same piece of stuff
To all your patterns.
Tenn. What on earth do you mean ?
Gig. Just what I say. You can't begin a tale
In any way but one. Your opening lines
Invariably admit, invite, suggest
The same pathetic end and supplement,—
A cold in the head and pocket-handkerchief,
Proper to those afflicted with catarrh.
Tenn. Nonsense ! How dare you !
Gig. Very well, begin.
Begin, and I will tag you every time
With just the same conclusion, every time
Same ailment and same simple remedy,
A cold in the head, *et caetera.* Come, begin :
Quote me an Idyll, any one you please,
The opening lines.
Tenn. But really . . .

Phil, Pray, my lord,
If only to expose his impudence,
Oblige the gentleman.
Tenn, Oh, certainly.
Which Idyll ?
Gig, Any.
Phil, " Gareth and Lynette."
Tenn. {reciting pompously), " The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring " . . .
Gig, Had a bad cold, and blew his little nose.
Phil. Eh?
Tenn, What ? What's that ?
Phil, Surprising ! Had a cold ?
How did he get it ?
Gig, " In a showerful spring " ;
The poet says so. Gareth, I presume,
Walked in the rain, forgot to change his clothes,
And hence the sequel. Anyhow, the tag
Fits, as I promised.
Tenn. Pooh ! An accident !
You will not do it twice.
Phil. No, that he won't;
Impossible.
Gig. {to Tennyson). Then try me. Start again.
Tenn. {beginning " The Last Tournament")
" Dagonet, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's Table Round,
At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods," . . .
Gig. Had a bad cold, and blew his little nose.
Phil. Goodness ! I never ! There it comes again.
Gig. And very aptly. Note the time and place :
" At Camelot, high above the yellowing woods,"
The autumn season, damp and treacherous,
The unsheltered situation of the town,
And carelessness of " Dagonet the fool."
Phil. Hm ! Rather odd ! — I fear, Lord Tennyson,
This is another accident.

Tenn. Oh, bosh !
Listen to this, and own yourself an ass.
(Begins " The Coming of Arthur.'")
" Leodogran, the King of Cameliard,
Had
Gig. A bad cold, and blew his little nose.
Phil. Why, this is worse and worse ! The handkerchief
Pops out already in the second line.
Gig. Yes, 'twas a chilly climate, as we hear
Later : " the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods "—a most unhealthy spot.
And pray observe, the poet gives me " had " :
Leodogran, according to the bard,
Had something. Well, I say he had a cold.
Tenn. Blasphemer !
Phil. Come, come, Tennyson, be calm.
The case is getting grave. Three accidents !
Three Idylls tainted with this monstrous cold !
There must be one that will not let it in ;
At him again, and make a better choice.
Tenn. (beginning " The Grail "). " From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale " . . .
Gig. Had a bad cold . . .
Phil. Poor Percivale !
Gig. It came
From getting hot in tournaments and tilts.
Tenn. Nonsense !
Phil. Why so ?
Tenn. Shut up ! I will be heard ;
It all comes right directly.
Gig. Go ahead.
Tenn. (recites). " . . . In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale,
Whom Arthur and his knighthood called The Pure," . . .
Gig. Had a bad cold . . .
Tenn. No, no ! *(shouting)* " Sir Percivale,
Whom Arthur and his knighthood called The Pure,
Had " • . .

Gig. A bad cold, and blew his little nose.
I knew it !
Tenn. (roaring). But I say ! . . .
Phil. No, Alfred, no,
It will not do ; Sir Percivale is doomed.
Give us " Geraint and Enid." They perhaps
May escape this influenza, though—I fear.
Tenn. (begins "Geraint and Enid"). "The brave
Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,"—
Gig. Had a bad . . .
Phil. Yes, alas ! But let it pass.
We must not be too cruel, too severe.
Even in the fatal air of Gamelot
It must, I think, have happened, now and then,
That people ran a risk of. . . you know what,
But somehow did not have it after all.
Geraint shall get the benefit of the doubt.
Gig. Just as you like.
Phil, (to Tennyson). Go on, and let us hear.
Tenn. " The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great Order of the Table Round,
Had "—
Gig. A bad cold.
Phil. Oh dear !
Gig. Of course he did,
And blew his little nose. I told you so !
Phil. This is too awful. Really, Tennyson,
We had better give it up.
Tenn. Give up ! Not I !
Listen to this, and tag it if you can. *(Begins " Elaine")*
" Elaine "—
Phil. I'm certain she will have a cold.
Tenn. (reciting). " Elaine the fair, Elaine the "—
Phil. Oh, beware !
Now comes the dangerous point. Take care of her.
Tenn. (reciting with hesitation). " Elaine the fair, . . .
Elaine . . . the lovable,"

Gig, Had a bad cold. That's one !
Phil It is ! It is !
Term, Silence ! I'll gag you if you interrupt.
(Beginning again, and reciting faster.)
" Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,"—
Gig, Had a bad cold. That's two !
Phil, It is, it is.
Tenn, (reciting at a furious pace), " Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east,"—
Gig. Had a bad cold, and blew her little nose.
Phil. She did, she did, she did ! Three colds she had,
At every verse a cold. Poor lily maid !
Gig. And well she might have in that windy flat.
Phil. " High in her chamber up a tower to the east."
Tenn, (changing desperately to another Idyll).
" Queen Guinevere had "—
Phil. No, my lord, no more.
We will not ask the fate of Guinevere ;
She had a cold, and there's an end of it ;
She had a cold, she caught it from Elaine ;
Your *Idylls* reek with it. And since the thing's
Infectious, and the air is getting thick,
We had best perhaps go home—and take quinine.

***{Literary Essays, Classical and Modern,* Cambridge University Press.)**

THE POETIC WORLD

LASCELLES ABERCROMBIE

Argument. **An inquiry into " that condition of experience which the usages of poetry promote." The poetic world may be regarded from either the poet's creative side or the reader's receptive side. Both are ultimately the same because the governing principle of poetic technique is the communication of the poet's state of mind to the reader. Poetry is the world not only of immediate but of significant values, meaning by the latter " a sense of clear and close relationship " to things we know and feelings we have. Poetry defined as " the expression of imaginative experience, valued simply as such and significant simply as such, in the communicable state given by language which employs every available and appropriate device." This definition applied to a poem means that there is no limit to the significance of experience. Evil a necessary element in the harmony of the poetic world, and tragedy the highest form of poetry because in it evil has significance in this sense. Beauty another and last necessary quality of this world, not to be sought as a pre-requisite but to be felt as arising from the achievement of the other purposes of poetry, *i.e.* living in experience which has a manifest value and a significance securely established without argument.**

I AM now to collect the chief results of these somewhat desultory studies into some sort of a summary. With a caution that every one may not commend, I have so far avoided committing myself to any direct answer to that formidable old question, What is poetry ? I cannot put it off much longer, but I have still some evasions left : evasions which, however, I hope may at last appear to have so prepared the way for my answer that it will seem unavoidable. It has been my concern to discuss *how* poetry conducts its business ; this being matter which we can take hold of without making ourselves liable to serious disputation. I am now to inquire what, from the

means employed and their effect, we must suppose to be the general scope and nature of this business. And in order to make it as broad and conclusive as possible, I will put the inquiry in this form : What are the main characteristics of the poetic world—of that condition of experience which the usages of poetry promote ?

Condition of experience : that is the first point. The poetic world does not refer to special *kinds* of experience. Many people, who will readily admit that, considering the huge variety of matters which have proved themselves suitable for poetry, it would be hopeless to think of defining a poetic subject, nevertheless retain the opinion that there are certain topics which the poetic world will not tolerate. We hear it said that the everyday lives of undistinguished people in this industrial age of ours afford no matter for poetry. That, no doubt, is a vulgar notion ; but I do not believe there is any presumed unfitness for poetry in a topic which could not be as decisively refuted as this has been by the genius of Mr. Gibson, who has made not only colliers and fishermen, but shopkeepers and clerks, unquestionable inhabitants of the poetic world. This vulgar notion itself might be the subject of quite engaging poetry ; something very like it, at any rate, inspired some delicious lines in Theocritus. Nay, there is no reason why a proposition in Euclid should not be a topic for poetry. It certainly would not be the proposition as Euclid states it : there must be something distinctive about poetry. But suppose a man's whole current of life were to be changed by an accidental reading of the Forty-seventh proposition of the first book : suppose

that this sudden revelation of a new world, the world of mathematical truth, produced a rapture of intellectual experience which soared into spiritual conviction of man's immortal dignity as the vehicle of that divine thing, reason ; would not Euclid have become poetical ? Yes, and the very unpoetical philosopher of whom the story is told, Hobbes, himself becomes in it excellent matter for poetry : for he, like Euclid's proposition, appears in the story under a certain condition. It is the condition, not the thing, which we recognise as poetical.

And so in general. If we follow the indications given by the *methods* of poetry, we shall conclude that the poetic world which those methods are designed to serve is ready to accept anything, so long as it is brought in under a certain condition. It is a general idea of this condition, then, which we have now to construct, in order to form some valid idea of the poetic world, and thus answer the question, What is poetry ?

It is sometimes made a difficulty, when we come to this stage of the discussion, that the poetic world may be looked at from opposite sides : from the side of the poet who creates it, or from the side of the reader who receives it. No doubt, looking at it from the reader's side, we accept with a good deal of equanimity what cost much intellectual and spiritual agony ; nor can our most delightful appreciation equal the joy of creation. On the other hand, if we try to put ourselves on the poet's side, and interpret his work by our knowledge of his life, we may be tempted to value the work for what we suppose it must have cost. But the poet is the only person who

can really count the cost. What the actual experience in Shakespeare's life-history may have been which set him to write his Sonnets, we cannot tell. Speculation about it is a harmless entertainment, so long as it does not seduce us into believing that the speculation, even if it were true, can enhance the value of the sonnets as poetry. For it is not this actual experience which the sonnets express, but the imaginative experience into which the actual deepened and widened and was utterly transformed. And as to what this imaginative experience is we do not need to speculate ; there it is before us, complete and radiant, in the sonnets.

The difference between the poet's and the reader's attitude to a poem does not, in fact, concern us here at all. Poetry cannot help expressing imaginative experience ; for whatever the event may have been which prompted the composition of a poem, whether it was in his inner or in his outer life, the poet, in order to put it into language, had to make his sense of the event continue after the event itself had happened. He had to keep it held before him and look at it : that is, he had to imagine it. And this very necessity of turning his sense of the event into an imaginative act enabled the poet's mind to know and feel the event to the utmost, to distinguish all the nicety of its peculiar character, and to enrich it with the fullest comment of association ; and thence to make it an occasion of that beauty and significance which we require in poetry, and into which we are now inquiring. By means of this transformation into imaginative experience, moreover, the event is removed from all dependence on

the poet's life history. In order to understand it, we do not have to relate it with any actions or behaviours recorded in the poet's biography ; without ceasing to be personal, it has become independent of circumstances and its individual quality has become a property not of any particular life, but of human nature. The poet's spirit, without losing its identity, has become capable of transferring itself to any other spirit; or rather, it has become capable of conferring its identity on any other spirit. This is the case, at any rate, when the imaginative transformation has been complete ; and the more complete it is, the more absolute its expression must be as poetry.

It is because this is so that poetic technique can exist at all. The nature of technique need not be further elaborated ; it is enough to mention once more its governing principle, which is *communication.* The poet devises his technique for the purpose of putting his audience in possession of something which he himself possesses. Clearly, then, the ideal of technique in poetry must always be to make of language a stimulus so penetrating, and at the same time so controlling, that any one who accepts it may end with a final impression as like as possible to the inspiration with which the poet began his business. This obviously supposes that a poet's inspiration is not bound up with those secrets of a man's life which his biography hopes to elucidate, with no likelihood of success. It must, on the contrary, be something in which every one can share to whom the opportunity comes. The poet's technique is that opportunity. The poetic world, therefore, is to all intents (allowing for the inevitable subjective differences) the same

whether we take it as the world of the poet when he is inspired to write poetry, or the world of the reader when he is in tune to appreciate poetry. From whichever side we view it in order to discuss it, the theoretical result should be the same ; and I shall take it now from this side, now from that, according to convenience.

If it were possible to regard technique, and its primary results, as a sort of surface, it would not be difficult, within such a limitation, to describe the poetic world, nor to answer in consequence the question, What is poetry ? For the first thing to note about the things we experience in poetry is the extraordinary richness of the impression they make on us ; and poetry, regarded, simply as the technique of language, may be defined as the simultaneous employment of every available and appropriate means of expression which can be got out of language. Poetry, by adding to the direct meaning of words the fullest and nicest use of verbal allusion, and while these are operating, complicating their effect by the subtle suggestions of syllabic sound and the excitements of metrical rhythm, can give us in one complex impression the image of a thing distinctly seen and heard, with allusions thrown off to other sensuous experiences, accompanied by an elaboration of mood, and an instant certainty of understanding relationship, which, if we had them at all in everyday life, could only be had by reflection and studied inspection. But as soon as we have noted the richness and intensity of the impression which the things of the poetic world make on us, we become aware of something even more characteristic ; and

when we note this, we seem to pass from the means of poetry to something at least of its purpose : from technique to its motive, from the surface of the poetic world to its inner nature. The poetic world is a world without prejudice. The writ of those moral and practical judgments which we feel compelled to exercise does not run here. We have even left behind those judgments as to reality and unreality without which we cannot elsewhere feel safe. But here an impression has only to be vivid enough in order to justify itself. This is the world in which Macbeth, on the brink of his crime, alarms us with fear that his wickedness may not succeed. This is the world in which the villainy of Iago delights us with its refinement and resource. This is the world in which Ariel and Titania, Circe and Armida, Polyphemus and Fafnir, Satan and Prometheus, are figures which we accept as easily as the man next door ; and the instant we ask ourselves whether such figures really exist or can exist, we are aware that in the very act of asking that question we have come clean out of the world of poetry. Just so, if we rely on the verdict in which morality reprobates Iago, then, instead of accounting for his part in the poem, we have destroyed it. It is precisely as a villain that we can enjoy him ; we can even detest him, so long as we enjoy our detestation. We know he is a bad man ; we see the destruction he causes; but in the poetic world, badness like every other quality, and destruction like any other occurrence, can only have positive valuation. The admirably bad is no paradox there, but as heartening as the admirably good : no paradox, because there can be no contradiction

in a valuation for which there is no reason, but only an immediate intuition.

For the valuation of things in poetry is the value of experience simply as such : the value which a living spirit must feel in every vivid motion of its life. This is why the art of poetry is so much older than every other deliberate use of language. Long before it was worth man's while to express his reasoned or moralised view of things, it was worth his while to express his sense of being a spirit delighting in its powers and faculties, and in whatever will call them into use ; and it was worth his while to manage words for that purpose with such art that he could delight in an added mastery—in knowing he could impose his own peculiar delight on the minds of others. The energy that finds expression in poetry must exercise itself in infinitely various moods ; but let it be in rage or in hatred as well as in love or in exultation, there is a joy in it, the core of it is the spirit's primitive relish for experience. And whatever can be accepted without arguable valuation, frankly as experience, is matter for poetry ; it bears its value on the face of it, a value which is instantly decisive, which will not alter, and cannot be stated in any arguable verdict; for it immediately declares the essential virtue of spiritual life—the virtue of delightedly conscious activity. What is there that cannot be so accepted ? It is even possible for trains of reasoning and moralisations to be so accepted ; and for this it is not in the least necessary that they should convince us. What is necessary is that we should be able to enjoy the excitements of exercising the power of reason, without having to ask ourselves whether we are

intellectually in agreement with its results. How many of us agree with Dante's reasoning, or Milton's ? Those moments of close scholastic reasoning in *The Divine Comedy*, of animated forensic reasoning in *Paradise Lost*—do we value them as moments of philosophy ? By no means ; but on the contrary precisely as we value moments of imagery and emotion : as parts, namely, of an immense whole of self-sufficient experience, including in its scope every faculty by which spirit can put forth its vigour. No doubt intellectual matter is the most intractable thing poetry can deal with. "How charming is divine philosophy ! " But the Milton of *Comus* did not venture to exhibit its charms. The passage which prompted that remark is actually the very antithesis of philosophy ; for it is a chain of magnificently unreasoned assertions. A great deal of what goes for philosophy in poetry is of this nature ; but though it may be usual, it is not necessary for philosophy to give itself up when it enters the reign of poetry. The older Milton could even afford to be syllogistic ; for he could make logic serve the whole result of a purely imaginative purpose, and invest it with the emotion appropriate to the grand achievement of his purpose. And if any one were to give us the Forty-Seventh proposition of Euclid's first book, not merely so as to prove the proposition, but so as to infect us completely and unmistakably with the rapture, say, of Hobbes' delighted experience of that train of thought—would he not be giving us poetry ?

But it is not enough to say that the poetic world is a world of immediate values ; there is a further condition to be noted. It is a world in which these

values are always significant. It is very common, in discussions round about the nature of art, to bring in this useful word significant; and it is too often used as though the mere syllables of it had a magic force to resolve difficulties. We must try to form some tolerably precise notion of poetic significance, and it is clear, from what has been said already, that it must be the notion of a significance that does not require to be argued in order to be effective. But it is also clear that there is something in our valuation of things in poetry for which we have not yet accounted. I mentioned just now, in order to emphasise the unprejudiced nature of poetic values, one or two instances of matters which we eagerly accept in poetry, but which outside poetry we should feel compelled to detest. Now it is true enough that in common life we have an unregenerate faculty of enjoying notable wickedness and calamity; and poetry no doubt takes some advantage of this. Our first interest in I ago may be of this nature; but as the poem develops, and especially as it ends, we must feel that our interest has gone far beyond this. We enjoy the villainy of Iago not only because it is a superb specimen of villainy, but because it is villainy in which we find significance.

I do not propose to meddle with that vexatious problem, the meaning of meaning. It is enough for us to note that, when we find a thing significant, we certainly do not profess to look down on it from above and assign to it some mystical import outside the world of things here and now; by whatever process we arrive at it, the significance of a thing takes us no further than some relationship with other things.

The sense of significance, in fact, is at bottom nothing else than a sense of clear and close relationship. A thing is insignificant to us when it does not belong to our way of living : when, that is, we cannot relate it with anything else we know. Unless we can make out some kindred for it, we decline to be interested in it. Indeed, it discomforts us, and we ignore it if we can. But the more richly, the more intricately, the more evidently a thing claims relationship near and far among our ideas, our moods, our sensations, the greater our sense of its significance, and the keener our interest in consequence. Now the whole texture of the experience we have in poetry is of this closely and vividly inter-related nature ; nothing stands alone there ; rather, by reason of the unusually delicate and precise adjustment of verbal suggestion surrounding the obvious meanings, the connexions between one part of an experience and another are far finer and more numerous than we can commonly perceive. Moreover, that elaborate diction of poetry, with all simultaneous variety of expression, in sound and in sense, brings out a pressure of significance behind every detail of the imagination which is more than all the nice connexion of one part with another. For the intricate subtlety of allusion and association in poetic diction gives us the constant impression of a world in which nothing can be touched without setting up a widening harmony of things round about it ; everything that comes to us in the poetic world is vivid not only in itself but in many-sided relationship to the rest of that world. Now to say that such a world is, for this reason, more significant to us than

the world of common affairs, is to say that it is a world of which we are more completely conscious than we are of the common world. The very fact, that everything here comes to us in an unusual radiance of significant allusion to moods and images all round it, means that in everything here there is more to be conscious of than is usual. And poets habitually employ devices which have no other purpose than to make our consciousness of their imaginative world as rich as possible. For besides the constantly implied allusions in their diction, they love to bring out the relatedness of the things in their world by openly insisting on the likeness of one thing to another. They have an instinctive inclination for metaphor and simile, the employment of which often produces a remarkable complexity of inter-related meanings. But the purpose is always the same : it is to enhance our sense of the significance of the things we are to imagine ; that is to enrich our consciousness of them. Thus Milton describes how, just before " the great consult began," the fiends thronged the courts and porches of Pandaemonium. They have throughout been visualised, in spite of their wings, as human figures, and this is emphasised by an allusion to the armies of chivalry. But to bring before us how the countless hosts

> Thick swarm'd, both on the ground and in the air,
> Brusht with the hiss of rustling wings,

Milton sets out an elaborate simile :

> As bees
> In spring time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
> Poure forth their populous youth about the Hive
> In clusters ; they among fresh dews and flowers

> Flie to and fro, or on the smoothed Plank,
> The suburb of their Straw-built Citadel,
> New rub'd with Baume, expatiate and confer
> Their state affairs. So thick the aerie crowd
> Swarm'd and were straiten'd.

The comparison with the familiar spectacle of a beehive simply helps us, it may be said, to see clearly and exactly what the sublime daring of Milton's imagination had created. But surely the simile does much more than make us see ; or hear either. The care with which the business of the hive is brought before us, apparently for its own sake (what have " fresh dews and flowers" to do with Pandaemonium ?) compels us to recollect the enigma every one must have felt in that inscrutable earnest bustle of the bees' commonwealth ; and at once we transfer that feeling to the vision of the fiends : we feel ourselves spectators of the vision, as though it were objectively present ; as though we had suddenly come upon it, and were marvelling what it is that can animate that horde of mysterious winged creatures : a feeling as " realistic " as if we had found ourselves in the presence of an excited mob in a foreign town. For the feeling of enigmatic business in the hive, and the transference of this feeling to the vision of the fiends (with its objectifying effect on the vision) are both encouraged by the terms of the simile : the simile is to compare fiends with bees, but the bees in the simile are themselves described in metaphors of human city life. The result is, of course, a moment of extraordinarily enriched consciousness; fiends suggest bees, bees suggest men, and so back to fiends, with a new range of suggestion brought in at each stage.

So, too, Shelley, bringing mood and sensation before us in a metaphor, straightway proceeds to expound the metaphor by inserting a simile :

> My soul is an enchanted boat
> Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
> Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing.

Modern taste has developed unnecessary scruples about this kind of thing ; scruples derived no doubt from the too narrow notion that the function of simile and metaphor is only to tensify and clarify imagery, usually visual. Such complexity as Shelley gives us leads rather, it has been complained, to confusion than to precision of imagery. And it is often regarded as self-evident that mixed metaphors (that is, an incongruous mixture of comparisons) must be poetically faulty. Ancient taste, however, seems to have been less disposed to cavil at such things ; and I should suppose that, so long as ludicrous incongruity be avoided, the mixture of likenesses in one complex expression is still eminently defensible, since it has the virtue of enlarging the significance of the moment and enriching our consciousness of it.

Now, though it has taken some argument to make out the exact nature of significance in poetry, it is clearly not a significance which requires any argument to make it effective there. We have not gone beyond experience taken at its face-value. On the contrary, the significance I have been describing is automatically the property of experience whenever we are completely conscious of it ; when we have it, for example, brought before us by means of such a

many-sided instrument as poetic language. For just as each item of the experience is valued immediately and intuitively, so the inter-relatedness of the items is valued ; and this latter inclusive value (inclusive, but equally immediate) is our sense of the significance of the experience—a sense of face-value significance which, just because it is immediate, is much more satisfying than any intellectual construction of significance.

So far, however, we have not been considering the significance of an experience as a whole, but simply as it proceeds piece by piece. We have been referring to poetry, not to poems. Of poetry, we may indeed now venture to give a definition : It is the expression of imaginative experience, valued simply as such and significant simply as such, in the communicable state given by language which employs every available and appropriate device.

But if this is the nature of poetry, we must go on now to study the perfection of its nature ; when, that is, it is made completely self-sufficient, and isolated in the single purpose of achieving the fullest possibility of its nature : when poetry exists as an individual poem. We must extend our notion of poetic significance. We have not yet accounted for such a crucial instance as the significance of Iago's villainy. As it is revealed to us moment by moment, the argument so far will certainly apply to it. But this piecemeal significance is slight compared with the final impression it makes on us when we have in our minds the poem as a whole.

It is, however, very easy to give the required extension to the notion of poetic significance which

we already have. For it is only an extension ; the notion is exactly similar, and may be arrived at in an exactly similar way. We formed our notion of the significance of things as they appear in the texture of poetry, by following up the indications given by the technique of its texture : by, that is to say, the technique of diction. But in order to enable poetry to exist in individual self-sufficiency, the poet, as we have already seen, must add to the technique of diction the technique of form. Now this simply means that, however complex and diverse the things may be which make up the substance of a poem, the meaning of the language which exhibits these things has been so exactly organised that, seconded by the rhythmical continuity of the language, the final impression is one of a harmonious unity of all the parts. For the form of the poem is the means whereby the imagination in it is at last fused into a unity, or rather expresses itself as a unity, similar to that which it must have had in the poet's mind in order to be the motive actuating the whole composition : what we have called the inspiration of the poem. The significance of a poem as a whole, therefore, is simply one way of apprehending its form : it is the sense of that vital inter-relationship of all the elements in it by which they achieve their final harmony.

This sounds simple enough ; and indeed it is simple. But it is nevertheless incomparably the most important effect which poetry can produce ; and it is to this we must look for the function of poetry. It is infinitely more decisive and compelling than the significance which diction exhibits. That enriches our consciousness of things, indeed ; and

such experience is eminently desirable and beneficial. But it is more than desirable, it is an absolute necessity to us as spiritual beings, that we should experience that significance as is given to us by poetic form : and nowhere else is it given to us so penetratingly or so ineluctably.

For this is not the sense that everything would betray, were our perceptions only keen enough, some sort of relationship with other things ; it is the sense that this matter and that matter, however apparently diverse from each other, actually are and must be related, by the mere fact of existing in our world. Iago's villainy, Desdemona's innocence, Othello's nobility—each of these, as it is unfolded to us, is enriched by an infinite subtlety of allusion and association ; it is our good luck that we have them in such splendour of revelation. But we do not call it our good luck that the poem as a whole brings these three things into such disastrous relationship with each other ; we feel, on the contrary, that the poem has .thereby revealed mere unavoidable necessity. These three things could not have existed except in this disastrous relationship. Do we deplore such a revelation ? By no means ; rather it gives us a profound satisfaction. We have seen evil doing its worst : we have seen it destroy that which we loved and admired ; but we have also seen it operating not as a licensed intruder, but in strict obedience to the inner necessity of things. This is not evil which disturbs our sense of harmony in the world ; rather, without ceasing to be evil it has confirmed that sense.

What is it we most seriously desire our world to be ?

Is it a world without evil? That is not serious; it is a fairy-tale, a notion to amuse our vacant moments. What we do desire, and what we cannot spiritually exist without endeavouring to have, is a world into which nothing, not even evil itself, can come except in the interests of the whole, as a tone necessary for the establishment of fullest harmony. Our best efforts, intellectual, moral, or practical, are directed to the realisation of this world—of the world which admits of no exception to its order, the world of perfectly coherent and indestructible inter-relationship; the world, in fact, of completely secure significance. We can never succeed in realising this world; but we can completely achieve an ideal version of it, if we will rely on experience taken at its face-value, without seeking to argue it into significance. Every poem is an ideal version of the world we most profoundly desire; and that by virtue of its form. A poem has no form unless everything in it unites into a single complex impression; and in that impression we take, by immediate apprehension, an instance of the world we require: for it is an impression of many things existing in perfect co-ordination, an impression that everything in the poem is there in assured significance. It is natural to emphasise those cases in which evil is thus mastered by the condition of poetry; and indeed such poems—tragedies—are the most striking examples of the way experience is idealised in poetry. Evil itself, without losing its nature, has become what we require everything to be: the antithesis of everything desirable has submitted to our desire. This is why tragedy is regarded as the highest

triumph of poetic art. But every kind of poem, from Herrick's song to Shakespeare's tragedy, from *Paradise Lost* to *The Jolly Beggars,* takes us into the world in which not only is experience immediately valuable in itself, but is, still without having to appeal beyond itself, inevitably significant. By what law things are thus significantly related we do not need to inquire ; it is enough for us that in poetry things manifestly are so related—that there we inhabit a world in which nothing irrelevant is known, but all is perfect order and secure coherence.

But our account of the poetic world has an obvious gap ; so far we have ignored the quality which, I dare say, most people would ascribe to it before any other. For is it not the world of beauty ? I have left this quality to the end, because it does not seem properly understandable until we have clearly in our minds every other main quality in poetry. The beauty of poetry is a quality of another order than those we have been considering. It is not a quality which poetry sets out to achieve ; at least, the desire to achieve it does not directly govern the choice and management of his methods. It may do so indirectly, however. Suppose that the impulse to compose poetry is an impulse to accomplish certain things ; and suppose that the accomplishment of these things necessarily produces in us a certain effect. Now the poet may have had in his mind the production of this effect; but it will not itself have regulated his composition, for it can only emerge as the result of achieving his first purpose. That is the view of poetic beauty which I must now briefly put forward. Poetic beauty is the effect produced in us by the

accomplishment of certain things—those things, in fact, which I have been broadly describing as characteristics of the poetic world. If this be so, it is fair to say that the governing purpose of poetry is not to be beautiful; but that the beauty of poetry is the sign that it has achieved its purpose.

If, however, we attempt to bring in the idea of beauty at the beginning of any theoretical account of poetry, it is difficult to avoid fixing the idea within preconceptions too narrow to be serviceable for long. It is impossible to maintain, in the face of poetry itself, that the subjects of poetry must be beautiful in themselves. We can only suppose, then, that they are bound to become beautiful when poetry takes hold of them, whatever they were before. How can that be? Clearly it must be the beauty they acquire from the expression poetry gives to them. But how are we to define the beauty of poetic expression? We can only do so by defining poetic expression itself; and beyond saying that it must be complete and just, every case of poetic expression must be taken on its own peculiar merits. If we attempt to apply any preconceptions as to what poetic expression ought to be, we shall soon find ourselves in difficulties.

When Browning published his *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister,* there were those who found it an offence against the ideal of beauty. We can imagine Browning's reply: " What do I care for your idea of beauty? It was the Monk I was after; and I think I have got him." He has; the Monk is irresistible; the poem is a superb instance of complete and just expression. Is it not thereby beauti-

ful ? Those who condemned it might have appealed to Sophocles or Ronsard or Spenser ; but why not to Aristophanes or Villon or Donne ? There is no need, however, for a counter-appeal. To reject *The Spanish Cloister* as unbeautiful is (it must be on purely subjective grounds) to deny beauty there to the very thi&g which is accepted as beautiful elsewhere. For apart from beauty of subject, that which in any poetry we judge to be beautiful is, in Ronsard as in Villon, in Spenser as in Donne—nothing but some unequivocal success of expression.

There is, indeed, besides beauty of subject another kind of beauty which may possibly occur in poetry—an accidental kind, as of an ornament unnecessary to any purpose : and this is the natural beauty of the sound of language. This must not involve meaning, for then we should be back again in expression ; and for the same reason it must not be sound employed in the service of the larger meaning which we call suggestion. We come near to something like a purely ornamental use of verbal sound in some of Milton's passages of proper names :

> Nymphs of Diana's train, and Naiades
> With fruits and flowers from Amalthea's horn,
> And Ladies of th' Hesperides, that seem'd
> Fairer than feign'd of old, or fabl'd since
> Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide
> By Knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
> Lancelot or Pelleas, or Pellenore.

Or again :

> And all who since, Baptiz'd or Infidel,
> Jousted in Aspremont or Montalban,
> Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond,

Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his Peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

Everything that choice and arrangement can do, Milton has done in order to make us notice the lovely sound of such words. But of course they are not merely syllables ; if our wits are alert enough, every proper name comes burdened with splendid allusion, and nobly serves to expand the meaning of the lines. But there seems to be a certain superfluity of sound in these passages ; the beauty of the syllables is more than can be accounted for as expression. We come still nearer to the merely natural beauty of sound in language when we read that tremendous geographical survey in the Eleventh Book of *Paradise Lost.* Simply because most of us have not the knowledge which can respond to such a cataract of names, we take it almost entirely as a passage of gorgeous sonority.

But it is easy to see that mere sonority does not account for the beauty peculiar to poetry ; for mere sonority is not beautiful at all for long. Language which is not expressive soon becomes simply tiresome ; syllables as pure sound will not hold our attention. Schliemann is said to have been captivated in his boyhood by the sound of Homer's hexameters ; but he did not remain thus captivated any longer than he could help : he learned Greek as soon as he could, and the natural beauty of Greek syllables then became merged in the poetic beauty of sound that is understood. The instance of Swinburne is useful here, in order to show from another point of view how closely poetic beauty is bound up with ex-

pression. Swinburne began by discovering an extraordinary individual technique, the beauty of which can hardly at its best be anywhere excelled. He then proceeded to repeat, over and over again, the devices which his youth had discovered. And why? Because he delighted in their beauty, and thought he had only to repeat them in order to repeat the achievement of beauty. Intent on preconceived beauty, allowing it to govern his technique directly, he lost that astonishing expressiveness his beloved verbal tricks had when he first found them out. The result is that, as his career went on, he failed more and more to write poetry, for he became more and more unreadable. His devices at last were not even beautiful; expression had deserted them, and left only a sonority that pleases for a moment, and then sinks into tedium.

But if we analyse what is happening in our minds when we read poetry : if we ask ourselves what any phrase which we judge to be beautiful is accomplishing for us while that judgment is effective, we shall surely feel bound to reply, that it is expressing something to us. This is the nature of beauty peculiar to poetry. It is the judgment we pass on language which achieves, within the sphere appropriate to poetry, complete and just expression. It is the judgment of delighted approval, when language, by every power it possesses as sense and sound, compels us to live in experience which has its value manifest on the face of it, and which without argument securely establishes its significance.

(The Theory of Poetry.—Seeker.)

NOTES

FESTE THE JESTER

p. i, 1. 5. Touchstone. The name of the fool in Shakespeare's *As Ton Like It.* Audrey is a country girl in the same play whom he foolishly marries.

p. 2,1. 8. a " natural." A half-witted person.

p. 2,1. 26. Gervinus. Georg Gottfried Gervinus (1805-1871). A German literary and political historian, whose book on Shakespeare (1849-1852) was and remains a considerable contribution to Shakespearian criticism,

p. 4, 1. 7. Epictetus. Stoic philosopher, born about 60 A.D. A slave as a boy, he was subsequently freed. The *Discourses of Epictetus* and the *Handbook,* which summarises his philosophy, were produced by his pupil Flavius Arrianus, as Epictetus himself wrote nothing.

p. 10,1. 22. lay by the sixpences. Refers to Shakespeare's having saved money from his work as dramatist and actor sufficient to retire to Stratford and build his house " New Place."

p. 10,1. 23. Our revels now are ended. Prospero's words *(Tempest,* iv.I) after the interruption of the masque in honour of the wedding of Ferdinand and Prospero's daughter Miranda. The "Magician's staff" is Prospero's which he proposes, in a soliloquy (v. 1) to break when his work on the island of enchantment is over. The figure of Prospero has often been taken symbolically as a picture of Shakespeare himself,, the magician of human character and destiny.

ROMANTIC TRAGEDY : SHAKESPEARE

p. 11, i. 5. Aeschylus (525-426 B.C.). First in time of the three great Greek tragic writers.

p. 11,1.5. Sophocles (495-406 B.C). Second in time of the great Greek tragic writers.

p. 11, L 7. Euripides (484-407 B.C.). Third of the great trio.

p. 11,1. 7. Seneca (B.C. 4-A.D. 65). Roman philosopher and tragic writer, and tutor to the Emperor Nero from 49 A.D. for some years. His nine tragedies were modelled on those of the Greeks.

p. 11, 1. 9. Racine (1639-1699). Greatest of the French " classical" dramatists.

p. 12,1. 11. Voltaire (1694-17 78). Greatest of Frenchmen of letters in the eighteenth century. His plays—*Zaire, Mahomet,* etc.—are " classical " in conception, though his views on drama were being influenced by the new tendencies leading to the coming Romanticism.

p. 12, 1. 18. Aristotle (384-322 B.C). Greek philosopher and master of all the sciences of his time. For his *Poetics* see the Introduction.

p. 12, 1. 23. Horace (65-8 B.C). Roman poet and author of the chief Latin work of literary criticism, *Ars Poetica.*

p. 12, 11. 27-8. Segnius irritant, etc. May be translated "Less forcibly do those matters strike the mind which are received through the ears than those which are presented to the more trusted eyes."

p. 13,1.4. Dryden (1631-1700). Chief of English literary men of the later seventeenth century. Great verse satirist and literary critic, he was also the principal writer of the type of tragedy called " heroic drama."

p. 14,1. 15. " Spanish Tragedy." The best known play of Thomas Kyd (1558-1594), a dramatic predecessor of Shakespeare. *The Spanish Tragedy* is famous for the number of violent deaths which take place in it.

p. 14,1. 16. " Jew of Malta." One of the plays of Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593), the greatest of pre-Shakespeareaa tragic writers in England.

p. 14, 1. 17. " Duchess of Main." One of the two greatest plays of Webster (1580-1624). It was first acted in 1616.

p. 14,1. 18. Ford. A considerable dramatist *of* the later Shakespearean period. Probably *The Broken Heart,* his best tragedy, is here referred to.

p. 15,1. 19. Middleton. Dramatist of the Elizabethan romantic tradition. *The Changeling* was played first in 1624.

p. 17,1. 26. " unity of action." See Introduction.

p. 18,1. 19- Alfieri. Count Vittorio Alfieri (1749-1803). Wrote nineteen tragedies on the strictly " classical" pattern. Famous for his passionate love of political liberty and hatred of despotism.

p. 21,1. 14. " unity of time." See Introduction.

p. 21,1. 27. Calderon. Pedro Calderon de la Barca (1600-1681), one of the two greatest Spanish dramatists.

p. 21,l. 29. Goethe. Greatest of German men of letters (1749-1832). His *Faust,* in two parts, was written and revised at various times between the early 1770's and the end of his life.

p. 22,1. 1. " unity of place." See Introduction.

p. 27,11. 2-3. "thoughts which can ne'er be packed." Quotation from Browning's poem *Rabbi ben Ezra.*

p. 29,1. 2. " Phedre." Acted in 1677. The last and perhaps greatest of Racine's tragedies.

p. 30,1. 6. preface to " Cromwell." The manifesto of the new tragic theories of the French Romantics which Hugo published in Oct., 1827.

INTERLUDE ON JARGON

p. 35,1. 28. cui bono ? Latin, meaning " whom does it profit ? " In journalism generally taken falsely to mean "of what use?"

p. 46,11.27-8. Canning's" Needy Knife-Grinder." The best known of the satirical poems of George Canning, statesman, which he contributed to *The Anti-Jacobin, a* weekly journal which ran from Nov. 20, 1797, to July 7,1798, and had as its aim to ridicule the French Republicans.

P- 47, 1. 33- Fitzgerald (1809-1883). Best known for his free translation of the quatrains of Omar Khayyam, the Persian poet.

P.47,1.-35- Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Political philosopher, the aim of whose ideas is summarised in the well-known dictum " the greatest good of the greatest number."

P. 52,1. 30. Dr. South (1634-1716). One of the greatest preachers of his day.

p. 53,1. 6. **Dr. John Donne** (1573-1631). Great poet and preacher of the later Elizabethan period.

P. 54, 1. 7. **λόγος.** Greek word, used by the author of the Fourth Gospel in his opening sentences and there translated " word." Means " discourse, reason " and more besides which no English word adequately gives.

THACKERAY AND THE ENGLISH NOVEL

p. 57,1. 12. Chaucer (1340-1400). Greatest of mediaeval English poets. The stories collected and retold in his *Canterbury Tales* are his most famous work.

p. 57,1. 14. Dante (1265-1321). Greatest of Italian poets. In his *Divina Commedia* the politics and scholastic philosophy of his time are sublimated in a dream and given permanent significance.

p. 57,1. 19. Boccaccio (1313-1375). Chief of Italian prose story-tellers, whose *Decameron* is the greatest collection of tales in the language.

p. 57,1. 21. the Fabliaux. Mediaeval French poems of a comic and often satirical character cast in story form, written in octosyllabics and meant for an audience of common people, as the lyrics and romances of the time were designed for the aristocracy. They existed as early as the eighth century and continued to be composed till the mid-fourteenth. About 150 of these poems and the names of twenty authors have been preserved.

p. 57,1. 25. Cervantes (1547-1616). His *Don Quixote* has made him the greatest of Spanish prose story-tellers.

P. 57, 1. 31- **Moliere** (1622-1675). Supreme French writer of comedy, of the same period as Racine.

p. 58,**1.** 11. **Defoe** (1659 or 1660-1731). Besides his best-known work, *Robinson Crusoe,* several other realistic stories of strange characters make him a principal forerunner of the English novelists.

p. 58,1. 11. Fielding {1707-1754). Second English novelist in time. His *Tom Jones* (1749), the account of a young man's adventures and scrapes, is his best title to fame.

p. 58,1. 16. Parson **Adams.** One of the most delightful characters in *Tom Jones.*

p. 58,1. 21. Richardson (1689-1761). First English novelist in time. Valued for his psychological insight, as Fielding is for his satirical and ironic powers.

p. 59, 1. 8. Johnson (1709-1784). Chief literary figure of his age, poet, literary critic, lexicographer and novelist. His *Rasselas* is more a moral essay than a story.

p. 60,1. 11. "**Candida."** The best-known romance by Voltaire. Published in the same year as *Rasselas,* 1759.

p. 62,1. 31. Flaubert (1821-1880). Greatest of the French romantic realists in novel-writing. Best known for his *Madame Bovary.*

p. 65, 1. 8. nihil est ab omni Parte beatum. Latin, "nothing is entirely successful."

p. 70,1. 1. caret vate sacro. Latin, "he lacks a dedicated poet," that is, in this case, a fully informed biographer to take care of his after-fame.

p. 70,1. 10. George Sand (1804-1876). French woman novelist.

p. 70, 11. 13-15. il y a des parties superbes, etc. French, "there are splendid parts in it, but what defective planning 1 All the English writers are the same in this respect ; except Walter Scott, they all fail in construction."

p. 71,1. 32. "Orlando Fnrioso." Published 1516, great epic of the Italian Ariosto (1474-1533).

p. 71, L 32-3. "Gil Bias." Novel by Rene Le Sage (1668-1747), which occupied him twenty years in writing, being completed in 1735.

p. 77,1. 11. Balzac. Great French novelist of the nineteenth century, whose themes are taken from middle-class life principally.

p. 81,1. 17. **Wesley** and Whitefield. John Wesley (1703-1791) and George Whitefield (1714-1770) were religious reformers, originally of the Established Church of England, who

by their preaching led what is called the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, making the coarseness of life and speech which is common in the eighteenth-century novelists unpalatable to the later generations for which Thackeray wrote.

p. 83,1. 23. Zola. Emile Zola (1840-1902), best known of the French " naturalistic " novelists who meant to photograph life in their novels.

p. 83,1. 32. The Card. Chief character in the novel of the same name by Arnold Bennett.

p. 85,1. 7. Non orones omnia. Latin, meaning " all men cannot do all things."

THE WORK OF MR. H. G. WELLS

p. 100,1. 31. Keats 's fallen Titans. The immediately preceding quotation is from Keats's unfinished epic *Hyperion* in which the Titans of Greek story, after the loss of their kingdoms of air, earth and sea to Zeus and the new gods, consider their fall and the new age beginning.

p. 101,l. 10. Oissing. George Gissing (1857-1903), realistic novelist chiefly of middle and lower class life.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY POETRY

p. 111,1. 5. labour of Sisyphus. According to Greek myth, Sisyphus was a Titan whom Zeus condemned in Hades to roll a stone perpetually up a hill, from the top of which it as constantly rolled down.

p. 116,1. 4. Edmond de Goncourt (1822-1896). The elder of two brothers who, besides being historians of manners and art of the eighteenth century in France and Japan and the co-authors of a famous *Journal,* were also novelists whose work was designed to show life as a series of fragmentary acts, moods of the soul, pictures of almost unconnected human activity. They developed the French novel from Flaubert's realism towards Zola's naturalism.

p. 116,1. 22. Fanny Barney (1752-1840), known also as Madame D'Arblay after her marriage with an exiled French general. Her novels of English society, especially *Evelina,* created great enthusiasm in their time, being considered the best since Richardson.

p. 118,1.6. **Nietzsche** (1844-1900). German philosopher.

p. 118,1.6. **John Stuart Mill** (1806-1873). English philosopher and economist.

p. 125,11. 20-21. **Strawberry Hill.** The home of Horace Walpole, son of Sir Robert Walpole and one of the greatest letter-writers of the English eighteenth century.

p. 126,1. 1. **Ausonius** (310C.-395). Roman poet and rhetorician.

KEATS AND HIS PREDECESSORS

p. 132,1. 22. **"Britannia's** Pastorals." One of the best-known of Elizabethan pastoral poems, by William Browne of Tavistock (1591 -1643). The First Book of the poem appeared in 1613.

ARISTOPHANES ON TENNYSON

p. 136,1. 6. Aristophanes. Greatest of Greek writers of the so-called Old Comedy, which allowed the greatest freedom of personal and political satire. He persistently satirised Euripides and the innovations which the latter introduced into the practice of Greek tragedy as it had been built up and, in Aristophanes* view, perfected by Æschylus and Sophocles.

p. 139,1. 22. " Gigadibs, the literary man." A person introduced by Browning into his long poem *Bishop Blougzatn's Apology* as representing a clever journalist of the mid-nineteenth century who listens to the bishop's subtle defence of theological doubt.

p. 139,11.32-33. " Philistine." The name given by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) to the middle-class attitude of mind of his day, an attitude hostile to art and all enthusiasm except for commercial success.

THE POETIC WORLD

p. 146,1. 21. **Mr.** Gibson. Wilfrid Gibson, born 1878, **one** of our best-known contemporary poets, has given himself mainly to the delineation—in such volumes of poems as *Fires, Livelihoods*—of the lives and thoughts of workers in factory and forge and shop and also of shepherds and deep-sea fishermen.

p. 146,**1. 27. Theocritus** (310-245 B.C.). Greek poet of **the later** Alexandrian period, whose *Idylls* **are the origin and source of all** European pastoral poetry.

p. 147,1. 7. Hobbes (1588-1679). English political **philosopher,** whose *Leviathan* is one of the **earliest and greatest monuments** of English political thought.

p. 151,11.16-17. **Ariel and Titania,** etc. Ariel is the spirit of the air in Shakespeare's *Tempest,* Titania the fairy queen in **his** *Midsummer Night's Dream.* **Circe** is the enchantress in Homer's *Odyssey* who transforms Ulysses' companions into swine ; **Armida** another enchantress, daughter of the Mussulman King Arbilan of Damascus, who causes dissensions amongst the Christian knights in Tasso's epic *Jerusalem Delivered,* and especially decoys the hero Rinaldo into her magic garden at Antioch ; **Polyphemus** is the one-eyed giant in the *Odyssey* who captured Ulysses and his comrades and devoured some of the latter till their leader put out his eye and rescued them ; **Fafnir** is, in Norse myth, the giant son of the magician Hraidmar who killed his father and, stealing his treasure, guarded it in the form of a dragon till Sigurd the Volsung slew him and carried it off; Satan is the enemy of God and man in Milton's *Paradise Lost*; **Prometheus** is the Titan in Greek myth who pitied men and stole fire for them from heaven and was therefore punished by Zeus by being chained on the Caucasus and having his Hver daily torn out and devoured by the bird of Zeus,; the eagle. Prometheus appears as the protagonist of Æschylus' greatest play *Prometheus Bound.*

p. 165,1. 2. **Ronsard.** Pierre de Ronsard (1525-1585), chief of the French Renascence poets.

p. 165,1. 3. Villon. Francois Villon, born 1431, French lyrist and satirist whose bohemian life in the reign of Louis XI is the subject of many romantic stories.

p. 166,1. 25. Schliemann. Heinrich Schliemann **(1822-1890),** business man and amateur Greek scholar whose excavations in the hill of Hissarlik laid bare the remains **of** a **number of** cities of which one may be the Troy of the *Iliad.*

p. 166,1.31. **Swinburne. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909), last of the great Victorian poets.**

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY ROBERT MACLEHOSE AND CO. LTD.
THE UNIVERSITY PRESS GLASGOW

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES

General Edi*ton:* J. H, FOWLER, M.A.
LATE ASSISTANT MASTER AT CLIFTON COLLEGE

1. ADDISON-ESSAYS FROM. Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. is. 6d.

2 ANDERSEN-STORIES FROM. Selected by Mrs. P. A. BARNETT. IS. 3d.

3. ARABIAN NIGHTS-STORIES FROM. Edited by A. T. MARTIN, M.A. 1s. 3d.

108. ARNOLD-PROSE SELECTIONS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD. Edited by Prof. E. T. CAMPAGNAC. IS. 6d

1 AUSTEN-PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Abridged by H. A. TREBLE, M.A. 1s 4d.

5. - SENSE AND SENSIBILITY. Abridged and Edited by Mrs. F. S. BOAS. Illustrated, is. od.

6, 7. BALLADS OLD AND NEW. Selected and Edited by H. B. COTTERILL, M.A. Part I . , is. 6d. Part II , Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d

8. BATES-A NATURALIST ON THE AMAZONS. Abridged and Edited by F. A BRUTON, M.A. 80 Illustrations. 2s.

134. A BOOK OF BLANK VERSE. Chosen by E. E. REYNOLDS, IS. 6d.

9. BORROW-WANDERINGS IN SPAIN. Ed. by F. A CAVENAGH, M.A is. 6d.

10.11. BRITAIN-TALES OF OLD. By K. P. ROBERTS. Part I. is. 3d. Part II. Limp, is. Boards, is. 3d

12. BROWNING-SELECTIONS FROM. Edited by Mrs M G GLAZEMOOK. IS 4d.

110. - PIPPA PASSES. Edited by Dr. E. A PARKER, IS. 4d.

12a - BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE. Edited by Dr. E. A. PARKER, IS. 6d.

13.14. BUCKLEY-CHILDREN OF THE DAWN. Old Tales of Greece. By E. F. BUCKLEY. With Introduction by A SIDGWICK ; Notes and Subjects for Essay? by]. H. FOWLKR. Part I , is 6d Part II., Limp, 1s 3d Boards, 1s 6d

15. BUNYAN-PILGRIMS PROGRESS. Abridged and Edited by C. F. KNOX, M.A. is 6d.

16. BYRON-CHILDE HAROLD. Cantos III. and IV. Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M A 1s 6d.

17. CARLYLE-ABBOT SAMSON- Chapters from "Past and Present," Book II. Edited by F. A. CAVHNAGH M.A. 1s 6d

18,19. - HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP. Edited by H. M. BULLER, M.A. a vols. Vol. I., is. gd Vol. 11., is. od.

20. CAVENDISH—LIFE OF WOLSEY. Edited by MARY TOUT, M.A Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d

21. CERVANTES DON QUIXOTE. Abridged and Edited by C. F. KNOX. IS. 6d.

22. COBBETT—RURAL RIDES—Selections. Edited by GUY BOAS. IS. 6d.

23. DEFOE—ROBINSON CRUSOE. Abridged and Edited by J. HUTCHISON. is.6d.

24. DICKENS—DAVID COPPERFIELD. Abridged by H. A. TREBLE, M.A. is. 6d.

26. - A CHRISTMAS CAROL. Edited by C. F. KNOX. IS. 4d.

26. — A TALE OF TWO CITIES. Abridged and Edited by C. H RUSSELL, M. A. is. 6d.

27. - NICHOLAS N1CKLEBY. Abridged and Edited by C. F. KNOX. IS. 6d.

109. - THE OLD CURIOSITY SHOP. Abridged and Edited by D. M. STVAKT. IS. 6d.

181. — PICKWICK PAPERS. Abridged and edited by C. F. KNOX. Illustrated. 2*

28. DUMAS-THE THREE MUSKETEERS. Abridged and Edited by C. J.BROWN, M.A., and H. S. WALKER, M.A. is. 6d.

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES.—*Continued.*

29. ELIOT-SILAS BURNER. Abridged by MAY COFSRY. is. 6d.
I l l FROUDE-HI8TORY OF ENGLAND. Chapter I. Edited by E. H. BLAKBNBY, M.A. is.$_4$d.
30. GASKELL—CRANFORD. Abridged and Edited by Mrs. F. S. BOAS. Illustrated. Limp, is. 3d. Boards, is. 6d.
31 GIBBON-THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES. (Chapters I.-III. of the Decline and Fall.) Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. is. 4d.
82. - THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. Narratives from. Selected and Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. First Series, is 4d.
127. - AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Edited by B. GROOM, M.A. is. od.
88. GOLDSMITH-VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. Abridged by Mrs. F. S. BOAS. IS. 6d.
116. — THE GOOD-NATURED MAN. Edited by ROBERT HERRING, M.A. is. 6d.
117. — SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER. Edited by ROBERT HERRING, M.A. xs. 6d.
34. GRIMM-FAIRY TALES-A Selection. Edited by A. T. MARTIN, M.A. is. 3d.
121. HARDY-THE DYNASTS-Scenes. Selected and Edited by J. H FOWLIR, M.A. is. 9d.
122. - THE TRUMPET-MAJOR. Abridged by C. F. KNOX. Edited by J. H. FOWLBR, M.A. is. 9d.
85. HAWTHORNE-STORIES FROM A WONDER-BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS. Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. Limp, 1s. Boards, 1s. d.
36,37. — TANGLEWOOD TALES. Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. Part I., is. 3d. Part I I., is. 4d.
38. HINDU TALES FROM THE SANSKRIT. Translated by S.M. MITRA. Edited by Mrs A. BBLL. IS. 6d.
39,49, HISTORY-A BOOK OF POETRY ILLUSTRATIVE OF ENGLISH. Edited
41 42 hyG. DOWSE, B A. Part I. A.D. 61-148S. Part II. The Tudors and Stuarts. Part I I I. The Hanoverian Dynasty. Limp, iod. each. The 3 parts in r vol. Boards, as
48. INDIAN HISTORY-TALES FROM. By MRS. A. S. ROB. IS.$_4$d.
44. IRVING—RIP VAN WINKLE, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and other Sketches. Edited by H. M. BULIKR, M.A. is. 6d
45. KEARY—HEROES OF ASGARD. By A. and E. KRARY. Adapted and Edited by M. R. EARLK. IS. id.
46. KEATS—Selections. (Without "LAMIA.") Edited by B. GROOM, M.A. is. *46**
46. — Selections. (With "LAMIA.") Edited by B. GROOM, M A 1s 6d.'
47. KINGSLEY—ANDROMEDA, with the Story of Perseus prefixed. Edited by GEORGE YELD, M.A. is. 3d
48,49. LAMB-TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE. Edited by H. A. TREBLE, M.A. First Series, is. 3d. Second Series. Limp, is. Boards, is. 3d.
50. LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (18th Century). Edited by G. G. LOANS, M.A. Limp, is. 3d. Boards, 1s. 6d.
51. LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (19th Century). First Series. Edited by G. G. LOANE, M.A. is. 6d.
114 LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (19th Century). Second Series. Edited by G. G. LOANE, M.A. is. 6d.
52. LONGFELLOW—SHORTER POEMS. Edited by H. B. Co TT a RILL, M.A. is. 3d.
53. MACAULAY-ESSAY ON SIR W. TEMPLE. Edited by G. A. TWENTY*AN, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 6d.
51 — ESSAY ON FRANCES BURNEY. Edited by A. D. GREENWOOD. Limp, 1s. Boards, is. 4d
55. - ESSAY ON CLIVE. Edited by H. M. BULLBR, M.A. 1s. 6d
56. - ESSAY ON WARREN HASTINGS. Edited by H. M. BULLER, M.A. Limp, xs. 3d. Boards. 1s. 6d.

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES.-*Continued.*

57. MACAULAY-NARRATIVES FROM. Edited by F. JOHNSON, IS. *id.*

58. - **ESSAY ON ADDISON.** Edited by R. F. WINCH, M.A. is. 6d

59. MALORY—MORTE D'ARTHUR. Selections. Edited by DOROTHY M. MACARDLE. IS. 4d.

128. **MELVILLE-MOBY DICK.** Abridged and Edited by C H. RUSSELL, M.A. 1s. 9d.

60. MODERN POETRY-A FIRST BOOK OF. Selected and Arranged by H. A. TREBLE, M A 1s. 4d.

61. MODERN POETRY-A SECOND BOOK OF. Selected and Arranged by H. A. TREBLE, M A. 1s. 4d.

115. MODERN POETRY-A THIRD BOOK OF. Selected and Arranged by H. A. TREBLE M.A. is. 6d.

62,63. MODERN LYRICS—GOLDEN TREASURY OF. Edited by L. BINYON. With Notes by J- H. FOWLER, M.A. Book I., as. Book II. 2s.

64. MORRIS-LIFE AND DEATH OF JASON. Abridged and Edited by R. W JEPSON, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 6d.

65. MOTLEY-THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC. Narrative, from. Selected and Edited by J. HUTCHISON. Limp, is. 3d. Boards, is. 6d.

66. NAPIER-HISTORY OF THE PENINSULAR WAR. Narratives from. Edited by M. FANSHAWE, B.A. IS 4d.

67. NJAL AND GUNNAR. Edited by H. MALIM, **M.A. 1**s. 4d

68. ODYSSEY-THE BOY'S. By W.C PERRY. Edited byT.S PEPPIN, M A., M A,15..9d.

69. ORATORS—BRITISH. Passages Selected and Arranged by J. H. FOWLRR, M.A. Limp, is, Boards, is 3d.

70. PANDAV PRINCES, THE. Edited by WALI ACR GANDY. IS 4d

71 PARKMAN-PIONEERS OF FRANCE IN THE NEW WORLD. Select.ons from. Edited by KENNETH FORBES, M A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d

130. PATER-MARIUS THE EPICUREAN. Abridged and Edited by E. ADAMS PARKER, M A. 1s. gd.

72. PEACOCK—MAID MARIAN. Edited by F. A CAVENAOH, M.A. is.6d.

73. PERSIAN HERO, A. Stories from the "Shah Nameh." Edited by W. GANDY. Limp, is Boards, is, 4d.

74. PLUTARCH-LIFE OF ALEXANDER. North's Translation. Edited by H. W. M. PARR, M.A. is. 4d.

75. - LIFE OF JULIUS CAESAR. North's Translation Edited by H. W. M. PARR, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is 6d.

76. PROSE-FIRST BOOK OF ENGLISH FOR REPETITION. Passages Chosen and Arranged by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. is.

77. PROSE—FOR REPETITION. Selected and Arranged by NORMAN L. FRAZRR, M.A. is. 4d.

78. PROSE-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. Selected and Edited by E. LEE. Limp, 1s. Boards, is. 4d.

79. RAMA, PRINCE OF INDIA. WANDERINGS OF. Edited by W. GANDY. Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d.

118. READE-THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH Abridged and Edited by Y. W. CANN, M.A. is. gd.

80. REYNARD THE FOX. Edited by H. A. TREBLE, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is. *id.*

81. RUSKIN-CROWN OF WILD OLIVE. Edited by J. H. *OWLKK, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d.

82. — SESAME AND LILIES. Edited by A. E. ROBERTS, M.A. is. *id.*

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES.—*Continued.*

83. RUSKIN-SELECTIONS FROM "THE STONES OF VENICE." Edited by Dr. £. A. PARKER, IS. qd.

84. SCOTT-IVANHOE. Abridged and Edited by F. JOHNSON, as.

85. — THE TALISMAN. Abridged and Edited by F. JOHNSON, as.

86,87. - TALES OF A GRANDFATHER. Abridged and Edited by J. HUTCHISON. First Series, is. 3d. Second Series, is. 3d.

126. - GUY MANNERING. Abridged and Edited by V. W. CANN, M.A. is. od.

132,133. SELECTED ENGLISH STORIES. Edited by JOHN HAMPDEN, M.A. Volume I., is. 9d. Volume II., is. od.

88,89. SERTUM: A GARLAND OF PROSE NARRATIVES. Selected and Edited by J. H. FOWLKR and H. W. M. PARR. Book I. Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries, is. 3d. Book II. Nineteenth Century. Limp, is. Boards, is. 3d.

90. SHAKESPEARE-Select Scenes and Passages from the English Historical Plays. Edited by C. H. SPHNCK, M.A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 3d

91.-MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM. Edited by P. T. CRRSWEIL, **M.A. 13.3d.**

92. SHELLEY-Selections. Edited by E. H. BLAKENEY, M.A. is. 4d.

112. SHERIDAN-SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL Edited by R. HERRING, M.A. is. 6d.

119. — THE RIVALS. Edited by ROBERT HERRING, M.A. is. 6d.

93. SIDNEY-DEFENCE OF POESY. Edited by D. M MACARDLE. IS 4d.

94. SOUTHEY TEPISODES FROM LIFE OF NELSON. Edited by C. H. SPKNCE, M A. Limp, is. Boards, is. 3d.

95. SPENSER—TALES FROM. By SOPHIA H. MACLEHOSB. IS. od.

96. STEVENSON-TRAVELS WITH A DONKEY. Edited by R E. C. HOUGHTON, M.A. is. qd.

97. - VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE AND OTHER PAPERS- Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M.A. is. od.

98. - AN INLAND VOYAGE. Fdited by R. E. C. HOUGHTON, M.A. is. 9d.

99. STOW—A SURVEY OF LONDON. Selections from. Edited by A. BARTER. Limp, is. Boards, is. 4d.

100. SWIFT-GULLIVER'S TRAVELS. Abridged and Edited by G. C. EARLH, B.A. is.6d.

123. - SELECTIONS. Chosen and Edited by W. J. HALLIDAY, M.A. is gd.

125. SWINBURNE-ATALANTA IN CALYDON. Edited by J. H. BLACKIE. IS. gd.

101. THACKERAY-THE ROSE AND THE RING. Edited by D. M. STUART, IS. 6d

111 — ESMOND. Abridged and Edited by A. C. MACKENZIE, M.A. 2s.

102. THOREAU-CHAPTERS FROM WALDEN. Edited by A. CRUSE Limp, is. Boards, 1s. 6d

103. TROY—THE TALE OF. Re-told in English toy Aubrey Stewart. Edited bv T. S. PEPPIN, M.A. 2s.

104. WHITE—SELBORNE-Selections. Edited by F. A. BRUTON, M.A. 40 Illustrations. Limp, is. 4d. Boards, is 9*d*.

105. WORDSWORTH-PRELUDE. Selections, including Book V. Edited by B. GROOM, M.A. 1s. 4d.

106,107. YONGE- A BOOK OF GOLDEN DEEDS. By CHARI O 1 TK M. YONGK. Abridged and Edited by Mrs. H. H WATSON. Parts I and II. is. 4<i. each.

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED, LONDON