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THE ENGLISH VISION

THE
ENGLISH VISION

AN ANTHOLOGY

EDITED BY
HERBERT READ

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INTRODUCTION

THIS anthology was made in the early months of 1933, when the ideals which it is designed to express were first seriously threatened by the forces which we are now compelled to challenge with arms. In declaring war the King and his Ministers repeated those words—liberty, justice, toleration—which have so often appeared as symbols of our national faith. But symbols, though they may have a self-evident meaning for those who habitually use them, stand in need of definition to the world at large. Such a definition is, I would claim, given in this book. My aim has been to present the English ideal in its various aspects as expressed by representative Englishmen, and, moreover, by Englishmen who were perfectly conscious of what they were doing and saying. This anthology is not a mere gathering of things typically English: such grow on every bush, and are too various to have much significance. But in every age we have had poets, statesmen and writers who have in rare moments felt that what they were doing or what they were propounding had about it something intimately linked with their blood and with the soil to which they belonged, and this unique quality they have

attempted to define. It is to such representative spirits that I have gone, with the hope that from the aggregation of their sentiments would emerge something clear and unequivocal, an expression of the national ideal which would be valuable, not only as a guide to all Englishmen, but even as an example for the world at large. It is surely desirable that during the catastrophic times in which we live, Englishmen should have by them a compendious book which will remind them of those traditions of liberty, justice and toleration which have always guided our destinies and in whose defence we are now fighting the last fateful battle. These qualities are not, of course, the peculiar possession of the English people, but, as more than one writer in this anthology reminds us, they have found a firmer embodiment in our customs and institutions than anywhere else, and to them we owe the stability of our national life and the comparative calm of our historical evolution.

I make haste to add that I attempt to define this ideal in no spirit of conservatism or reaction. It is precisely because the underlying spirit of the English ideal is active and dynamic that it has endured so long, and proved so capable of adaptation to the growing complexity of our civilisation. Liberty was always a fine word to make a fury about, but only in England do we pursue the idea in calmness of mind. All the various aspects of our ideal will, I hope, emerge clearly in the pages that follow. What I wish to emphasise now is the universal validity of

this our vision. Alone of national ideals, the English ideal transcends nationality. A writer so unexpected as the late D. H. Lawrence-(nevertheless a typical Englishman) wrote at a time when he had little patience with the material conditions of our present social order: "I really think that the most living clue of life is in us Englishmen in England, and the great mistake we make is in not uniting together in the strength of this real living clue—religious in the most vital sense—uniting together in England and so carrying the vital spark through."[1] That is my own profound belief, and this book has no other intention but to give that real living clue, and so offer to the distracted world one ideal which is above the intolerant extremes which now tyrannise over millions of unhappy people. I cannot hope to have succeeded in such a task, which would be worthy of the effort of a lifetime if events would wait on it; but I have done the best I could in the time at my disposal, the time being dictated by my own sense of the urgency of the task.

Having declared so high a purpose, I must hasten to apologise for the apparent irrelevance of some of my material. The book proceeds on a genetic plan. That is to say, I begin with the soil, the physical climate and the actual landscape; then to the race, its upbringing, its reaction to material considerations, the resultant character of the people; then to the historical behaviour of such

[1] Letter to Robert Pratt Barlow, 30 March, 1922.

a people, to the evolution of their ideals, and so to a formulation of these ideals in institutions, in religion, art and literature; the various aspects of native genius; and so finally to the projection of an ultimate ideal, transcending this one nationality, embracing the community of Europe and of all men. Naturally, all these extracts do not show the same degree of aptness or of eloquence, and some fall short of their function. More witnesses might have vouched for the peculiarities of our educational system, but I was not confident enough of its unfailing virtue. Something, too, of our rural genius escapes—something not reached in the extracts from Ruskin, Fuller, Hazlitt or Bagehot—something which is perhaps only fully expressed in ballad and folk-song, and in that subtly English music which died before its commentators were born. An apology is due for the excessive length of some of my extracts—the Congreve and the Dryden, for example; but I claim that the length of these extracts is duly proportioned to their importance, and that when Dryden is carefully disentangling the essentially English qualities of our drama, he is giving us an analysis significant far beyond its immediate object. I am also sensible of the objection that might be raised against the excessive nationalism of some of the extracts; and though all the time I have been conscious of the distinction between a narrow nationalism and a noble patriotism, some of the exemplars of our

virtues, and Milton is a prime instance, have so mingled nobility and excessive zeal, that the one cannot be presented without the blot of the other.

I have endeavoured to avoid the quaint, but a certain quaintness in the English character cannot be wholly excluded. I have chosen little poetry, but that is not because I have not sought it; we have not been very vocal on this score, for the very good reason that when it comes to the expression of discursive ideas, our poetic good sense tells us that prose is the better medium. For this reason even the lyrical expression of nationality in Shakespeare is better presented within the frame of Coleridge's and Swinburne's more conscious criticism. The extracts on our language might at first seem disproportionate, but it should be realised that no faculty in nationhood is so vital as language; without a consciousness of a national language there can be no consciousness of a nation, and no national goetry. In a very real sense, a nation is the creation of its language.

One further criticism I must anticipate: I have not looked into the pedigree of my authors, and some of them, like Burke and Carlyle, are not in the least English in the strict sense of the term. But England within the meaning of this book is not a tract of land bounded by the Marches in the West and the Cheviots in the North: it is an ideal, a dynamic vision with which many Irishmen, Welshmen and Scotsmen have identified themselves. The fact that

Burke and Carlyle came to London and helped to form the destinies of England, of that Greater England which includes the whole Empire, is sufficient warrant for my annexation of their names.

It will be said that it is a one-sided picture that I present, for that is my deliberate aim; by concentrating on our good qualities, we may learn to moderate our bad ones—among which, perhaps as a result of personal prejudice, I include English sport and English morals. If it is said that these are inseparable from our virtues, I flatly deny it. We must learn to distinguish between the customs of a class and the characteristics of a nation, between conventions of a negative force and positive activities. Cricket and fox-hunting have no longer any deep national significance, any more than bear-baiting or cock-fighting; and never had. The differences between a crowd at an English football final and a crowd at a Spanish bull-fight are superficial and local. As for our social morality, which is mainly a creation of the nineteenth century, it has no representative validity in the wide prospect of our history. Whatever is local and circumscribed I have tried to avoid, even an institution so apparently representative as the English Church—"national in its morals and manners, mincing in its scholarship, snobbish in its sympathies, sentimental in its emotions." [1] If I could have built an English cathedral in my pages, that would have been a different matter,

[1] Santayana: *Soliloquies in England*, p. 86.

for when English cathedrals were built they were expressive of the English vision. They are part of our landscape and were formed with our language, but the spirit that now inhabits them is not essentially English. One has only to ask: is this an ideal we can set before Europe, before the world? to arrive at a test which excludes many aspects of our life and character of which we are unreasonably proud. But what remains is very essential, and essential to the rest of this disaffected world.

Once in the history of the world an ideal not unlike ours became actual in a state, in Ancient Greece. England has reminded more than one detached observer of Greece. The philosopher I have already quoted has drawn the comparison. "What I love in Greece and in England is contentment in finitude, fair outward ways, manly perfection and simplicity." Our Lion strength and fortitude, our Lion reason, he observes, is balanced by the Unicorn of imagination and fantasy. Our vitality finds its continual support in both symbols.

And that is the vision we offer to Europe. In England our differences are not suppressed; we say that we "sink" them, meaning that we resolve them into some wider conception of conduct and life. In life, as in art, the rule of reason or intellect is finally stultifying, and society becomes "sterile, hopeless, useless, like a dead tree." Only when reason is stirred by the imagination (which in its turn has its roots in the senses) can we hope for that spirit of

love and creation upon which, as Lawrence so fully realised, depends the reality of a new and a better epoch of civilisation. "And now the time returns again"—a time of joy and love. The great central voices of our English spirit all echo that confident cry of Blake's; in this book I have tried to make those voices swell in one' clear chorus.

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LANDSCAPE

So vivid a vision everything, so visually poignant, it is like that concentrated moment when a drowning man sees all his past crystallised into one jewel of recollection.

The slow, reluctant, pallid morning, unwillingly releasing its tarnished embellishment of gold, far off there, outside, beyond the shafted windows, beyond, over the forgotten unseen country, that lies sunken in gloom below, whilst the dawn sluggishly bestirs itself, far off, beyond the window-shafts of stone, dark pillars, like bars, dark and unfathomed, set near me, before the reluctance of the far-off dawn.

The window-shafts, like pillars, like bars, the shallow Tudor arch looping over between them, looping the darkness in a pure edge, in front of the far-off reluctance of the dawn.

Shafted, looped windows between the without and the within, the old house, the perfect old intervention of fitted stone, fitted perfectly about a silent soul, the soul that in drowning under this last wave of time looks out clear through the shafted windows to see the dawn of all dawns taking place, the England of all recollection rousing into being.

The wet lawn drizzled with brown, sodden leaves; the feathery heap of the ilex tree; the garden seat all wet and reminiscent.

Between the ilex tree and the bare, purplish elms, a gleaming segment of all England, the dark plough-land and wan grass, and the blue, hazy heap of the distance, under the accomplished morning.

So the day has taken place, all the visionary business of the day. The young cattle stand in the straw of the stack-yard, the sun gleams on their white fleece, the eyes of lo, and the man with side-whiskers carries more yellow straw into the compound. The sun comes in all down one side, and above, in the sky, all the gables and grey stone chimney-stacks are floating in pure dreams.

There is threshed wheat smouldering in the great barn, the fire of life: and the sound of the threshing machine, running, drumming.

The threshing machine, running, drumming, waving its steam in a corner of a great field, the rapid nucleus of darkness beside the yellow ricks: and the rich plough-land comes up, ripples up in endless grape-coloured ripples, like a tide of procreant desire: the machine sighs and drums, wind blows the chaff in little eddies, blows the clothes of the men on the ricks close against their limbs: the men on the stacks in the wind against a bare blue heaven, their limbs blown clean in contour naked shapely animated fragments of earth active in heaven.

Coming home, by the purple and crimson hedges, red with berries, up hill over the heavy ground to the stone, old three-pointed house with its raised chimney-stacks, the old manor lifting its fair, pure stone amid trees and foliage, rising from the lawn, we pass the pond where white ducks hastily launch upon the lustrous dark grey waters.

So to the steps up the porch, through the doorway, and into the interior, fragrant with all the memories of old age, and of bygone, remembered lustiness.

It is the vision of a drowning man, the vision of all that I am, all I have become, and ceased to be. It is me, generations and generations of me, every complex, gleaming fibre of me, every lucid pang of my coming into being. And oh, my God, I cannot bear it. For it is not this me who am drowning swiftly under this last wave of time, this bursten flood. . . .

But in the farmyard up the hill, I remember, there were clusters of turkeys that ruffled themselves like flowers suddenly ruffled into blossom, and made strange, unacquainted noises, a foreign tongue, exiles of another life.

In Florida they will go in droves in the shadow, like metallic clouds, like flowers with red pistils drooping in the shade, under the quivering, quick, miraculous roof of pine-needles, or drifting between the glowing pine-trunks, metallic birds, or perched at evening like cones on the red-hot pine boughs,

or bursting in the morning across open glades of sunshine, like flowers burst and taking wing.

There is a morning which dawns like an iridescence on the wings of sleeping darkness, till the darkness bursts and flies off in glory, dripping with the rose of morning.

There is the soaring suspense of day, dizzy with sunshine, and nigfit flown away and utterly forgotten.

There is evening coming to settle amid the red-hot bars of the pine-trunks, dark cones, that emit the utter, electric darkness.

Another dawn, another day, another night—another heaven and earth—a resurrection.

D. H. LAWRENCE: *Letter to Lady Ottoline MorrelL* i st December, 1915.

2. THE VALLEY OF THE AVON

LGAME off this morning on the Marlborough oad about two miles, or three, and then turned ff, over the downs, in a north-westerly direction, in search of the source of the Avon river, which goes down to Salisbury. I had once been at Netheravon, a village in this valley; but I had often heard this valley described as one of the finest pieces of land in all England; I knew that there were about thirty parish churches, standing in a length of about thirty miles, and in an average width of hardly a mile; and I was resolved to see a

little into the *reasons* that could have induced our fathers to build all these churches, especially if, as the Scotch would have us believe, there were but a mere handful of people in England *until of late years. . . .*

In steering across the down, I came to a large farm, which a shepherd told me was Milton Hill Farm. This was upon the high land, and before I came to the edge of this *Valley of Avon,* which was my land of promise; or at least, of great expectation; for I could not imagine that thirty churches had been built *for nothing* by the side of a brook (for it is no more during the greater part of the way) thirty miles long. The shepherd showed me the way towards Milton; and at the end of about a mile, from the top of a very high part of the down, with a steep slope towards the valley, I first saw this *Valley of Avon;* and a most beautiful sight it was! Villages, hamlets, large farms, towers, steeples, fields, meadows, orchards, and very fine timber trees, scattered all over the valley. The shape of the thing is this: on each side *downs,* very lofty and steep in some places, and sloping miles back in other places; but each *out-side* of the valley are downs. From the edge of the downs begin capital *arable fields* generally of very great dimensions, and, in some places, running a mile or two back into little *cross-valleys,* formed by hills of downs. After the corn-fields come *meadows* on each side, down to the *brook* or *river.* The farm-houses, mansions, vil-

lages, and hamlets are generally situated in that part of the arable land which comes nearest the meadows.

Great as my expectations had been, they were more than fulfilled. I delight in this sort of country; and I had frequently seen the vale of the Itchen, that of the Bourn, and also that of the Teste in Hampshire; I had seen the vales amongst the South Downs; but I never before saw anything to please me like this valley of the Avon. I sat upon my horse and looked over Milton and Easton and Pewsey for half an hour, though I had not breakfasted. The hill was very steep. A road, going slanting down it, was still so steep, and washed so very deep by the rains of ages, that I did not attempt to *ride* down it, and I did not like to lead my horse, the path was so narrow. So seeing a boy with a drove of pigs going out to the stubbles, I beckoned him to come up to me; and he came and led my horse down for me. . . . Endless is the variety in the shape of the high lands which form this valley. Sometimes the slope is very gentle, and the arable lands go back very far. At others, the downs come out into the valley almost like piers into the sea, being very steep in their sides, as well as their ends towards the valley. They have no slope at their other ends: indeed they have no *back ends*, but run into the main high land. There is also great variety in the width of the valley; great variety in the width of the meadows; but the land

appears all to be of the very best; and it must be so, for the farmers confess it. ...

From the top of the hill I was not a little surprised to see, in every part of the valley that my eye could reach, a due, a large, portion of fields of Swedish turnips, all looking extremely well. I had found the turnips of both sorts by no means bad from Salt Hill to Newbury; but from Newbury through Burghclere, Highclere, Uphusband, and Tangley, I had seen but few. At and about Ludgarshall and Everley I had seen hardly any. But when I came this morning to Milton Hill Farm, I saw a very large field of what appeared to me to be fine Swedish turnips. In the valley, however, I found them much finer, and the fields were very beautiful objects, forming, as their colour did, so great a contrast with that of the fallows and the stubbles, which latter are, this year, singularly clean and bright.

Having gotten to the* bottom of the hill, I proceeded on to the village of Milton. ... I left Easton away at my right, and I did not go up to Watton Rivers, where the river Avon rises, and which lies just close to the south-west corner of Marlborough Forest, and at about 5 or 6 miles from the town of Marlborough. Lower down the river, as I thought, there lived a friend, who was a great farmer, and whom I intended to call on. It being my way, however, always to begin making inquiries soon enough, I asked the pig-driver where this friend

lived; and, to my surprise, I found that he lived in the parish of Milton. After riding up to the church, as being the centre of the village, I went on towards the house of my friend, which lay on my road down the valley. I have many, many times witnessed agreeable surprise; but I do not know that I ever in the whole course of my life saw people so much surprised and pleased as this farmer and his family were at seeing me. People often *tell* you that they are *glad to see* you; and in general they speak truth. I take pretty good care not to approach any house, with the smallest appearance of a design to eat or drink in it, unless I be *quite sure* of a cordial reception ; but my friend at Fifield (it is in Milton parish) and all his family really seemed to be delighted beyond all expression.

When I set out this morning, I intended to go all the way down to the city of Salisbury *to-day*; but I soon found that to refuse to sleep at Fifield would cost me a great deal more trouble than a day was worth. So that I made my mind up to stay in this farm-house, which has one of the nicest gardens, and it contains some of the finest flowers, that I ever saw, and all is disposed with as much good taste as I have ever witnessed. Here I am, then, just going to bed after having spent as pleasant a day as I ever spent in my life.

WILLIAM COBBETT: *Rural Rides.* 1826.

3, AN ENGLISH HILL

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is nobler far; he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH:
Miscellaneous Sonnets. 1801.

4. THIS ENGLAND

WHEN I drive across this country, with autumn falling and rustling to pieces, I am so sad, for my country, for this great wave of civilisation, 2000 years, which is now collapsing, that it is hard to live. So much beauty and pathos of old things passing away and no new things coming: this house—it is England—my God, it breaks my soul—their England, these shafted win-

dows, the elm-trees, the blue distance—the past, the great past, crumbling down, breaking down, not under the force of the coming birds, but under the weight of many exhausted lovely yellow leaves, that drift over the lawn, and over the pond, like the soldiers, passing away, into winter and the darkness of winter—no, I can't bear it. For the winter stretches ahead, where all vision is lost and all memory dies out.

It has been 2000 years, the spring and summer of our era. What, then, will the winter be? No, I can't bear it, I can't let it go. Yet who can stop the autumn from falling to pieces, when November has come in? It is almost better to be dead, than to see this awful process finally strangling us to oblivion, like the leaves off the trees.

I want to go to America, to Florida, as soon as I can: as soon as I have enough money to cross with Frieda. My life is ended here. I must go as a seed that falls into new ground. But this, this England, these elm-trees, the grey wind with yellow leaves—it is so awful, the being gone from it altogether, one must be blind henceforth. But better leave a quick of hope in the soul, than all the beauty that fills the eyes.

D. H. LAWRENCE: *Letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith.* November 1915.

5. SHAKESPEARE'S SCENERY

IT is interesting, with respect to this love of stones in the Italian mind, to consider the difference necessitated in the English temper merely by the general domestic use of wood instead of marble. In that old Shakespearian England, men must have rendered a grateful homage to their oak forests, in the sense of all that they owed to their goodly timbers in the wainscot and furniture of the rooms they loved best, when the blue of the frosty midnight was contrasted, in the dark diamonds of the lattice, with the glowing brown of the warm, fire-lighted, crimson-tapestried walls. Not less would an Italian look with a grateful regard on the hill summits, to which he owed, in the scorching of his summer noonday, escape into the marble corridor or crypt palpitating only with cold and smooth variegation of the unfevered mountain veins. In some sort, as, both in our stubbornness and our comfort, we not unfitly describe ourselves typically as Hearts of Oak, the Italians might in their strange and variegated mingling of passion, like purple colour, with a cruel sternness, like white rock, truly describe themselves as Hearts of Stone.

Into this feeling about marble in domestic use, Shakespeare, having seen it even in northern luxury, could partly enter, and marks it in several passages of his Italian plays. But if the reader still doubts his limitation to his own experience in all Subjects of imagination, let him consider how the

removal from mountain influence in his youth, so necessary for the perfection of his lower human sympathy, prevented him from ever rendering with any force the feelings of the mountain anchorite, or indicating in any of his monks the deep spirit of monasticism. Worldly cardinals or nuncios he can fathom to the uttermost; but where, in all his thoughts, do we find St. Francis, or Abbot Samson? The "Friar" of Shakespeare's plays is almost the only stage conventionalism which he admitted; generally nothing more than a weak old man, who lives in a cell, and has a rope about his waist.

While, finally, in such slight allusions as he makes to mountain scenery itself, it is very curious to observe the accurate limitation of his sympathies to such things as he had known in his youth; and his entire preference of human interest, and of courtly and kingly dignities, to the nobleness of the hills. This is most marked in *Cymbeline,* where the term ''mountaineer" is, as with Dante, always one of reproach, and the noble birth of Arviragus and Guiderius is shown by their holding their mountain cave as

> A cell of ignorance; travelling abed;
> A prison for a debtor;

and themselves, educated among hills, as in all things contemptible:

> **We are beastly; subtle as the fox, for prey;**
> **Like warlike as the wolf, for what we eat;**
> **Our valour is to chase what flies; our cage**
> **We make our choir, as doth the prisoned bird.**

A few phrases occur here and there which might justify the supposition that he had seen high mountains, but never implying awe or admiration. Thus Demetrius:

> These things seem *small* and *indistinguishable,*
> *Like far-off mountains, turned into clouds.*

"Taurus snow" and the "frosty Caucasus" are used merely as types of purity or cold; and though the avalanche is once spoken of as an image of power, it is with instantly following depreciation:

> Rush on his host, as doth the melted snow
> Upon the valleys whose low vassal seat
> The Alps doth spit, and void his rheum upon.

There was only one thing belonging to hills that Shakespeare seemed to feel as noble—the pine tree, and that was because he had seen it in Warwickshire, clumps of pine occasionally rising on little sandstone mounds, as at the place of execution of Piers Gaveston, above the lowland woods. He touches on this tree fondly again and again:

> As rough,
> Their royal blood enchafed, as the rud'st wind,
> That by his top doth take the mountain pine,
> And make him stoop to the vale.

> The strong-based promontory
> Have I made shake, and by the spurs plucked up
> The pine and cedar.

Where note his observance of the peculiar horizontal roots of the pine, spurred as it is by them like

the claw of a bird, and partly propped, as the aiguilles by those rock promontories at their bases which I have always called their spurs, this observance of the pine's strength and animal-like grasp being the chief reason for his choosing it, above other trees, for Ariel's prison. Again:

> You may as well forbid the mountain pines
> To wag their high tops, and to make no noise
> When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven.

And yet again:

> But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
> He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines.

We may judge, by the impression which this single feature of hill scenery seems to have made on Shakespeare's mind, because he had seen it in his youth, how his whole temper would have been changed if he had lived in a more sublime country, and how essential it was to his power of contemplation of mankind that he should be removed from the sterner influences of nature. For the rest, so far as Shakespeare's work has imperfections of any kind,—the trivialness of many of his adopted plots, for instance, and the comparative rarity with which he admits the ideal of an enthusiastic virtue arising out of principle; virtue being with him. for the most part, founded simply on the affections joined with inherent purity in his women, or on mere manly pride and honour in his men;—in a word, whatever difference, involving inferiority, there exists between

him and Dante, in his conceptions of the relation between this world and the next, we may partly trace, as we did the difference between Bacon and Pascal, to the less noble character of the scenes around him in his youth; and admit that, though it was necessary for his special work that he should be put, as it were, on a level with his race, on those plains of Stratford, we should see in this a proof, instead of a negation, of the mountain power over human intellect. For breadth and perfectness of condescending sight, the Shakespearian mind stands alone; but in *ascending* sight it is limited. The breadth of grasp is innate; the stoop and slightness of it were given by the circumstances of scene: and the difference between those careless masques of heathen gods, or unbelieved, though mightily conceived visions of fairy, witch, or risen spirit, and the earnest faith of Dante's vision of Paradise, is the true measure of the difference between the willowy banks of Avon, and the purple hills of Arno.

JOHN RUSKIN : *Modern Painters.* 1856.

6. LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCE IN "LYCIDAS"

DOCTOR JOHNSON observes, that LYCIDAS is filled with the heathen deities; and a long train of mythological imagery, such as a College easily supplies. But it is such also, as even the Court itself could now have easily supplied. The public diversions, and books of all sorts and from all

sorts of writers, more especially compositions in poetry, were at this time overrun with classical pedantries. But what writer, of the same period, has made these obsolete fictions the vehicle of so much fancy and poetical description? How beautifully has he applied this sort of allusion, to the Druidical rocks of Denbighshire, to Mona, and the fabulous banks of Deva! It is objected, that its pastoral form is disgusting. But this was the age of pastoral: and yet LYCIDAS has but little of the bucolic cant, now so fashionable. The Satyrs and Fauns are but just mentioned. If any trite rural topics occur, how are they heightened!

> Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
> Under the opening eye-lids of the morn,
> We drove afield, and both together heard
> What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
> Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night.

Here the day-break is described by the faint appearance of the upland lawns under the first gleams of light: the sun-set by the buzzing of the chaffer: and the night sheds *her fresh dews* on their flocks. We cannot-blame pastoral imagery, and pastoral allegory, which carry with them so much natural painting. In this piece there is perhaps more poetry than sorrow. But let us read it for its poetry. It is true, that passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of *rough Satyrs with cloven heel.* But poetry does this; and in the hands of Milton, does it with a peculiar and irresistible charm. Subordinate poets exercise

no invention, when they tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping: but Milton dignifies and adorns these common artificial incidents with unexpected touches of picturesque beauty, with the graces of sentiment, and with the novelties of original genius. It is objected "here is no art, for there is nothing new." To say nothing that there may be art without novelty, as well as novelty without art, I must reply, that this objection will vanish, if we consider the imagery which Milton has raised from local circumstances. Not to repeat the use he has made of the mountains of Wales, the isle of Man, and the river Dee, near which Lycidas was shipwrecked; let us recollect the introduction of the romantic superstition of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, which overlooks the Irish seas, the fatal scene of his friend's disaster.

But the poetry is not always unconnected with passion. The poet lavishly describes an ancient sepulchral rite, but it is made preparatory to a stroke of tenderness. He calls for a variety of flowers to decorate his friend's hearse, supposing that his body was present, and forgetting for a while that it was floating far off in the ocean. If he was drowned, it was some consolation that he was to receive the decencies of burial. This is a pleasing deception: it is natural and pathetic. But the real catastrophe recurs. And this circumstance again opens a new vein of imagination.

Dr. Johnson censures Milton for his allegorical mode of telling that he and Lycidas studied together, under the fictitious images of rural employments, in which, he says, there can be no tenderness ; and prefers Cowley's lamentation of the loss of Harvey, the companion of his labours, and the partner of his discoveries. I know not if, in this similarity of subjects, Cowley has more tenderness; I am sure he has less poetry. I will allow that he has more wit, and more smart similes. The sense of our author's allegory on this occasion is obvious, and is just as intelligible as if he had used plain terms. It is a fiction, that when Lycidas died, the woods and caves were deserted and overgrown with wild thyme and luxuriant vines, and that all their echoes mourned; and that the green copses no longer waved their joyous leaves to his soft strains: but we cannot here be at a loss for a meaning, a meaning which is as clearly perceived, as it is elegantly represented. This is the sympathy of a true poet. We know that Milton and King were not *nursed* on the *same hill;* that they did not *feed* the *same flock, by fountain, shade, or rill;* and that *rough Satyrs* and *Fauns with cloven heel* never danced to their *rural ditties.* But who hesitates a moment for the application? Nor are such ideas more untrue, certainly not less far-fetched and unnatural, than when Cowley says, that he and Harvey studied together every night with such unrcmitted diligence, that the twin stars of Leda, so *famed* for *love,* looked down

upon the twin-students with wonder *from above*. And where is the tenderness, when he wishes, that, on the melancholy event, the branches of the trees at Cambridge, under which they walked, would *combine* themselves into a *darker* umbrage, *dark* as the *grave* in which his departed friend was newly laid?

Our author has also been censured for mixing religious disputes with pagan and pastoral ideas. But he had the authority of Mantuan and Spenser, now considered as models in this way of writing. Let me add, that our poetry was not yet purged from its Gothic combinations; nor had legitimate notions of discrimination and propriety so far prevailed, as sufficiently to influence the growing improvements of English composition. These irregularities and incongruities must not be tried by modern criticism.

THOMAS WARTON : *Notes Critical and Explanatory to Milton's* Poems upon Several Occasions. 1791.

7. LANDSCAPE AND GENIUS

WE seem to have involved the supposition that mountain influence is either unfavourable or inessential to literary power; but for this also the mountain influence is still necessary, only in a subordinate degree. It is true, indeed, that the Avon is no mountain torrent, and that the hills round the vale of Stratford are not sublime; true,

moreover, that the cantons Berne and Uri have never yet, so far as I know, produced a great poet; but neither, on the other hand, has Antwerp or Amsterdam. And, I believe, the natural scenery which will be found, on the whole, productive of most literary intellect is that mingled of hill and plain, as all available light is of flame and darkness; the flame being the active element, and the darkness the tempering one.

In noting such evidence as bears upon this subject, the reader must always remember that the mountains are at an unfair disadvantage, in being much *out of the way* of the masses of men employed in intellectual pursuits. The position of a city is dictated by military necessity or commercial convenience: it rises, flourishes, and absorbs into its activity whatever leading intellect is in the surrounding population. The persons who are able and desirous to give their children education naturally resort to it; the best schools, the best society, and the strongest motives assist and excite those born within its walls; and youth after youth rises to distinction out of its streets, while among the blue mountains, twenty miles away, the goatherds live and die in unregarded loneliness. And yet this is no proof that the mountains have little effect upon the mind, or that the streets have a helpful one. The men who are formed by the schools and polished by the society of the capital, may yet in many ways have their powers shortened by the absence of

natural scenery; and the mountaineer, neglected, ignorant, and unambitious, may have been taught things by the clouds and streams which he could not have learned in a college, or a coterie.

And in reasoning about the effect of mountains we are therefore under a difficulty like that which would occur to us if we had to determine the good or bad effect of light on the human constitution, in some place where all corporal exercise was necessarily in partial darkness, and only idle people lived in the light. The exercise might give an advantage to the occupants of the gloom, but we should neither be justified in therefore denying the preciousness of light in general, nor the necessity to the workers of the few rays they possessed; and thus I suppose the hills around Stratford, and such glimpses as Shakespeare had of sandstone and pines in Warwickshire, or of chalk cliffs in Kent, to have been essential to the development of his genius. This supposition can only be proved false by the rising of a Shakespeare at Rotterdam or Bergen-op-Zoom, which I think not probable; whereas, on the other hand, it is confirmed by myriads of collateral evidences. The matter could only be *tested* by placing for half a century the British universities at Keswick and Beddgelert, and making Grenoble the capital of France; but if, throughout the history of Britain and France, we contrast the general invention and pathetic power, in ballads or legends, of the inhabitants of the Scottish Border with those

manifested in Suffolk or Essex; and similarly the inventive power of Normandy, Provence, and the Bearnois with that of Champagne or Picardy, we shall obtain some convincing evidence respecting the operation of hills on the masses of mankind, and be disposed to admit, with less hesitation, that the apparent inconsistencies in the effect of scenery on greater minds proceed in each case from specialties of education, accident, and original temper, which it would be impossible to follow out in detail. Sometimes only, when the original resemblance in character of intellect is very marked in two individuals, and they are submitted to definitely contrary circumstances of education, an approximation to evidence may be obtained. Thus Bacon and Pascal appear to be men very similar in their temper and powers of minds. One, born in York House, Strand, of courtly parents, educated in court atmosphere, and replying, almost as soon as he could speak, to the queen asking how old he was—"Two years younger than Your Majesty's happy reign!"—has the world's meanness and cunning engrafted into his intellect, and remains smooth, serene, unenthusiastic, and in some degree base, even with all his sincere devotion and universal wisdom; bearing, to the end of life, the likeness of a marble palace in the street of a great city, fairly furnished within, and bright in wall and battlement, yet noisome in places about the foundations. The other, born at Clermont, in Auvergne, under the shadow of the

Puy de Dome, though taken to Paris at eight years old, retains for ever the impress of his birthplace; pursuing natural philosophy with the same zeal as Bacon, he returns to his own mountains to put himself under their tutelage, and by their help first discovers the great relations of the earth and the air: struck at last with mortal disease; gloomy, enthusiastic, and superstitious, with a conscience burning like lava, and inflexible like iron, the clouds gather about the majesty of him, fold after fold; and, with his spirit buried in ashes, and rent by earthquake, yet fruitful of true thought and faithful affection, he stands like that mound of desolate scoria that crowns the hill ranges of his native land, with its sable summit far in heaven, and its foundations green with the ordered garden and the trellised vine.

When, however, our inquiry thus branches into the successive analysis of individual characters, it is time for us to leave it; noting only one or two points respecting Shakespeare. He seems to have been sent essentially to take universal and equal grasp of the *human* nature; and to have been removed, therefore, from all influences which could in the least warp or bias his thoughts. It was necessary that he should lean *no* way; that he should contemplate, with absolute equality of judgment, the life of the court, cloister, and tavern, and be able to sympathize so completely with all creatures as to deprive himself, together with his personal identity, even of his conscience, as he casts himself

into their hearts. He must be able to enter into the soul of FalstafF or Shylock with no more sense of contempt or horror than Falstaff or Shylock themselves feel for or in themselves; otherwise his own conscience and indignation would make him unjust to them; he would turn aside from something, miss some good, or overlook some essential palliation. He must be utterly without anger, utterly without purpose; for if a man has any serious purpose in life, that which runs counter to it, or is foreign to it, will be looked at frowningly or carelessly by him. Shakespeare was forbidden of Heaven to have any *plans.* To *do* any good or *get* any good, in the common sense of good, was not to be within his permitted range of work. Not, for him, the founding of institutions, the preaching of doctrines, or the repression of abuses. Neither he, nor the sun, did on any morning that they rose together, receive charge from their Maker concerning such things. They were both of them to shine on the evil and good; both to behold unoffendedly all that was upon the earth, to burn unappalled upon the spears of kings, and undisdaining upon the reeds of the river.

Therefore, so far as nature ha I influence over the early training of this man, it was essential to his perfectness that the nature should be quiet. No mountain passions were to be allowed in him. Inflict upon him but one pang of the monastic conscience ; cast upon him but one cloud of the mountain gloom; and his serenity had been gone for

ever—his equity—his infinity. You would have* made another Dante of him; and all that he would have ever uttered about poor, soiled, and frail humanity would have been the quarrel between Simon and Adam of Brescia,—speedily retired from, as not worthy a man's hearing, nay, not to be heard without heavy fault. All your Falstaffs, Slenders, Quicklys, Sir Tobys, Lances, Touchstones, and Quinces, would have been lost in that. Shakespeare could be allowed no mountains; nay, not even any supreme natural beauty. He had to be left with his kingcups and clover;—pansies—the passing clouds —the Avon's flow—and the undulating hills and woods of Warwick; nay, he was not to love even these in any exceeding measure, lest it might make him in the least overrate their power upon the strong, full-fledged minds of men.

JOHN RUSKIN : *Modern Painters.* 1856.

8. A COUNTRY HOUSE

IT lies on the side of a hill (upon which the house stands), but not very steep. The length of the house, where the best rooms, and of most use or pleasure are, lies upon the breadth of the garden; the great parlour opens into the middle of a terrace gravel-walk that lies even with it, and which may be, as I remember, about three hundred paces long, and broad in proportion; the border set with standard laurels, and at large distances, which have the

beauty of orange-trees out of flower and fruit: from this walk are three descents by many stone steps, in the middle and at each end, into a very large parterre: this is divided into quarters by gravel-walks, and adorned with two fountains and eight statues in the several quarters; at the end of the terrace-walk are two summer-houses, and the sides of the parterre are ranged with two large cloisters, open to the garden, upon arches of stone, and ending with two other summer-houses even with the cloisters, which are paved with stone, and designed for walks of shade, there being none other in the whole parterre. Over these two cloisters are two terraces covered with lead, and fenced with balusters; and the passage into these airy walks is out of the two summer-houses, at the end of the first terrace-walk. The cloister facing the south is covered with vines, and would have been proper for an orange-house, and the other for myrtles, or other more common greens; and had, I doubt not, been cast for that purpose, if this piece of gardening had then been in as much vogue as it is now.

From the middle of this parterre is a descent by many steps flying on each side of a grotto that lies between them (covered with lead, and flat) into the lower garden, which is all fruit-trees, ranged about the several quarters of a wilderness which is very shady; the walks here are all green, the grotto embellished with figures of shell-rock-work, fountains, and water-works. If the hill had not ended with the

lower garden, and the wall were not bounded by a common way that goes through the park, they might have added a third quarter of all greens; but this want is supplied by a garden on the other side the house, which is all of that sort, very wild, shady, and adorned with rough rock-work and fountains.

This was Moor-Park when I was acquainted with it, and the sweetest place, I think, that I have seen in my life, either before or since, at home or abroad: what it is now, I can give little account, having passed through several hands that have made great changes in gardens as well as house; but the remembrance of what it was is too pleasant ever to forget; and therefore I do not believe to have mistaken the figure of it, which may serve for a pattern to the best gardens of our manner, and that are most proper for our country and climate.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE:. *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus. 1*685.

9. THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGLISH GARDENING

I WAS very glad to learn that you had room for me at Coleorton, and far more so, that your health was so much mended. Lady Beaumont's last letter to my sister has made us wish that you were fairly through your present engagements with workmen and builders, and, as to improvements, had smoothed over the first difficulties, and gotten things into a way of improving themselves. I do not

suppose that any man ever built a house, without finding in the progress of it obstacles that were unforeseen, and something that might have been better planned; things teazing and vexatious when they come, however the mind may have been made up at the outset to a general expectation of the kind.

With respect to the grounds, you have there the advantage of being in good hands, namely, those of Nature; and, assuredly, whatever petty crosses from contrariety of opinion or any other cause you may now meet with, these will soon disappear, and leave nothing behind but satisfaction and harmony. Setting out from the distinction made by Coleridge which you mentioned, that your house will belong to the country, and not the country be an appendage to your house, you cannot be wrong. Indeed, in the present state of society, I see nothing interesting either to the imagination or the heart, and, of course, nothing which true taste can approve, in any interference with Nature, grounded upon any other principle. In times when the feudal system was in its vigor, and the personal importance of every chieftain might be said to depend entirely upon the extent of his landed property and rights of seignory; when the king, in the habits of people's minds, was considered as the primary and true proprietor of the soil, which was granted out by him to different lords, and again by them to their several tenants under them, for the joint defence of all; there might have been something imposing to the imagination

in the whole face of a district, testifying, obtrusively sven, its dependence upon its chief. Such an image would have been in the spirit of the society, implying power, grandeur, military state, and security; and, less directly, in the person of the chief, high birth, and knightly education and accomplishments ; in short, the most of what was then deemed interesting or affecting. Yet, with the exception of large parks and forests, nothing of this kind was known at that time, and these were left in their wild state, so that such display of ownership, so far from taking from the beauty of Nature, was itself a chief cause of that beauty being left unspoiled and unimpaired. The *improvements,* when the place was sufficiently tranquil to admit of any, though absurd and monstrous in themselves, were confined (as our present Laureate has observed, I remember, in one of his essays) to an acre or two about the house in the shape of garden with terraces, &c. So that Nature had greatly the advantage in those days, when what has been called English gardening was unheard of. This is now beginning to be perceived, and we are setting out to travel backwards. Painters and poets have had the credit of being reckoned the fathers of English gardening; they will also have, hereafter, the better praise of being fathers of a better taste. Error is in general nothing more than getting hold of good things, as everything has two handles, by the wrong one. It was a misconception of the meaning and principles of poets and painters

which gave countenance to the modern system of gardening, which is now, I hope, on the decline; in other words, we are submitting to the rule which you at present are guided by, that of having our houses belong to the country, which will of course lead us back to the simplicity of Nature. And leaving your own individual sentiments and present work out of the question, what good can come of any other guide, under any circumstances? We have, indeed, distinctions of rank, hereditary legislators, and large landed proprietors; but from numberless causes the state of society is so much altered, that nothing of that lofty or imposing interest, formerly attached to large property in land, can now exist; none of the poetic pride, and pomp, and circumstance; nor anything that can be considered as making amends for violation done to the holiness of Nature. Let us take an extreme case, such as a residence of a Duke of Norfolk, or Northumberland: of course you would expect a mansion, in some degree answerable to their consequence, with all conveniences. The names of Howard and Percy will always stand high in the regards of Englishmen; but it is degrading, not only to such families as these, but to every really interesting one, to suppose that their importance will be most felt where most displayed, particularly in the way I am now alluding to. This is contracting a general feeling into a local one. Besides, were it not so, as to what concerns the Past, a man would be sadly astray, who

should go, for example, to modernize Alnwick and its dependencies, with his head full of the ancient Percies: he would find nothing there which would remind him of them, except by contrast; and of that kind of admonition he would, indeed, have enough. But this by the by, for it is against the principle itself I am contending, and not the misapplication of it. After what was said above, I may ask, if anything connected with the families of Howard and Percy, and their rank and influence, and thus with the state of government and society, could, in the present age, be deemed a recompence for their thrusting themselves in between us and Nature. Surely it is a substitution of little things for great when we would put a whole country into a nobleman's livery. I know nothing which to me would be so pleasing or affecting, as to be able to say when I am in the midst of a large estate—This man is not the victim of his condition; he is not the spoiled child of worldly grandeur; the thought of himself does not take the lead in his enjoyments; he is, where he ought to be, lowly-minded, and has human feelings; he has a true relish of simplicity, and therefore stands the best chance of being happy; at least, without it there is no happiness, because there can be no true sense of the bounty and beauty of the creation, or insight into the constitution of the human mind. Let a man of wealth and influence show, by the appearance of the country in his neighbourhood, that he treads in the steps of the good

sense of the age, and occasionally goes foremost; let him give countenance to improvements in agriculture, steering clear of the pedantry of it, and showing that its grossest utilities will connect themselves harmoniously with the more intellectual arts, and even thrive the best under such connexion; let him do his utmost to be surrounded with tenants living comfortably, which will bring always with it the best of all graces which a country can have—flourishing fields and happy-looking houses; and, in that part of his estate devoted to park and pleasure-ground, let him keep himself as much out of sight as possible; let Nature be all in all, taking care that everything done by man shall be in the way of being adopted by her. If people choose that a great mansion should be the chief figure in a country, let this kind of keeping prevail through the picture, and true taste will find no fault.

I am writing now rather for writing's sake than anything else, for I have many remembrances beating about in my head which you would little suspect. I have been thinking of you, and Coleridge, and our Scotch Tour, and Lord Lowther's grounds, and Heaven knows what. I have had before me the tremendously long ell-wide gravel walks of the Duke of Athol, among the wild glens of Blair, Brunar Water, and Dunkeld, brushed neatly, without a blade of grass or weed upon them, or anything that bore traces of a human footstep; much indeed of human hands, but wear or tear of foot was none.

Thence I passed to our neighbour, Lord Lowtner. You know that his predecessor, greatly, without doubt, to the advantage of the place, left it to take care of itself. The present lord seems disposed to do something, but not much. He has a neighbour, a Quaker, an amiable, inoffensive man,[1] and a little of a poet too, who has amused himself, upon his own small estate upon the Emont, in twining pathways along the banks of the river, making little cells and bowers with inscriptions of his own writing, all very pretty as not spreading far. This man is at present Arbiter Elegantiarum, or master of the grounds, at Lowther, and what he has done hitherto is very well, as it is little more than making accessible what could not before be got at. You know something of Lowther. I believe a more delightful spot is not under the sun. Last summer I had a charming walk along the river, for which I was indebted to this man, whose intention is to carry the walk along the river-side till it joins the great road at Lowther Bridge, which you will recollect, just under Brougham, about a mile from Penrith. This to my great sorrow! for the manufactured walk, which was absolutely necessary in many places, will in one place pass through a few hundred yards of forest ground, and will there efface the most beautiful specimen of a forest pathway ever seen by human eyes, and which I have paced many an hour, when I was a youth, with some of those I best love. This path

[1] Mr. Thomas Wilkinson. See poem, "To his Spade."

winds on under the trees with the wantonness of a river or a living creature; and even if I may say so with the subtlety of a spirit, contracting or enlarging itself, visible or invisible as it likes. There is a continued opening between the trees, a narrow slip of green turf besprinkled with flowers, chiefly daisies, and here it is, if I may use the same kind of language, that this pretty path plays its pranks, wearing away the turf and flowers at its pleasure. When I took the walk I was speaking of, last summer, it was Sunday. I met several of the people of the country posting to and from church, in different parts; and in a retired spot by the river-side were two musicians (belonging probably to some corps of volunteers) playing upon the hautboy and clarionet. You may guess I was not a little delighted; and as you had been a visitor at Lowther, I could not help wishing you were with me. And now I am brought to the sentiment which occasioned this detail; I may say, brought back to my subject, which is this, —that all just and solid pleasure in natural objects rests upon two pillars, God and Man. Laying out grounds, as it is called, may be considered as a liberal art, in some sort like poetry and painting; and its object, like that of all the liberal arts, is, or ought to be, to move the affections under the control of good sense; that is, those of the best and wisest: but, speaking with more precision, it is to assist Nature in moving the affections, and, surely, as I have said, the affections of those who have the

deepest perception of the beauty of Nature; who have the most valuable feelings, that is, the most permanent, the most independent, the most ennobling, connected with Nature and human life. No liberal art aims merely at the gratification of an individual or a class: the painter or poet is degraded in proportion as he does so; the true servants of the Arts pay homage to the human kind as impersonated in unwarped and enlightened'minds. If this be so when we are merely putting together words or colours, how much more ought the feeling to prevail when we are in the midst of the realities of things; of the beauty and harmony, of the joy and happiness of living creatures; of men and children, of birds and beasts, of hills and streams, and trees and flowers; with the changes of night and day, evening and morning, summer and winter; and all their unwearied actions and energies, as benign in the spirit that animates them as they are beautiful and grand in that form and clothing which is given to them for the delight of our senses! But I must stop, for you feel these things as deeply as I do; more deeply, if it were only for this, that you have lived longer. What then shall we say of many great mansions with their unqualified expulsion of human creatures from their neighbourhood, happy or not; houses, which do what is fabled of the upas tree, that they breathe out death and 'desolation! I know you will feel with me here, both as a man and a lover and professor of the arts. I was glad to hear

from Lady Beaumont that you did not think of removing your village. Of course much here will depend upon circumstances, above all, with what kind of inhabitants, from the nature of the employments in that district, the village is likely to be stocked. But, for my part, strip my neighbourhood of human beings, and I should think it one of the greatest privations I could undergo. You have all the poverty of solitude, nothing of its elevation. In a word, if I were disposed to write a sermon (and this is something like one) upon the subject of taste in natural beauty, I should take for my texi the little pathway in Lowther Woods, and all which I had to say would begin and end in the human heart, as under the direction of the Divine Nature, conferring value on the objects of the senses, and pointing out what is valuable in them.

I began this subject with Coleorton in my thoughts, and a confidence, that whatever difficulties or crosses (as of many good things it is not easy to choose the best) you might meet with in the practical application of your principles of Taste, yet, being what they are, you will soon be pleased and satisfied. Only (if I may take the freedom to say so) do not give way too much to others: considering what your studies and pursuits have been, your own judgement must be the best: professional men may suggest hints, but I would keep the decision to myself.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: *Letter to Sir George H. Beaumont.* 1805.

IO. ENGLISH COMFORT

IF some stranger from abroad asked me to point out to him the most noteworthy things in England, I should first of all consider his intellect. Were he a man of everyday level, I might indicate for his wonder and admiration Greater London, the Black Country, South Lancashire, and other features of our civilization which, despite eager rivalry, still maintain our modern pre-eminence in the creation of ugliness. If, on the other hand, he seemed a man of brains, it would be my pleasure to take him to one of those old villages, in the midlands or the west, which lie at some distance from a railway station, and in aspect are still untouched by the baser tendencies of the time. Here, I would tell my traveller, he saw something which England alone can show. The simple beauty of the architecture, its perfect adaptation to the natural surroundings, the neatness of everything though without formality, the general cleanness and good repair, the grace of cottage gardens, that tranquillity and security which make a music in the mind of him who gazes—these are what a man must see and feel if he would appreciate the worth and the power of England. The people which has made for itself such homes as these is distinguished, above all things, by its love of order; it has understood, as no other people, the truth that "order is heaven's first law." With order it is natural to find stability, and the combination of

these qualities, as seen in domestic life, results in that peculiarly English product, our name for which—though but a pale shadow of the thing itself—has been borrowed by other countries: comfort.

The Englishman's need of "comfort" is one of his best characteristics; the possibility that he may change in this respect, and become indifferent to his old ideal of physical and mental ease, is the gravest danger manifest in our day. For "comfort," mind you, does not concern the body alone; the beauty and orderliness of an Englishman's home derive their value, nay, their very existence, from the spirit which directs his whole life. Walk from the village to the noble's mansion. It, too, is perfect of its kind; it has the dignity of age, its walls are beautiful, the gardens, the park about it are such as can be found only in England, lovely beyond compare; and all this represents the same moral characteristics as the English cottage, but with greater activities and responsibilities. If the noble grow tired of his mansion, and, letting it to some crude owner of millions, go to live in hotels and hired villas; if the cottager sicken of his village roof, and transport himself to the sixth floor of a "block" in Shoreditch; one sees but too well that the one and the other have lost the old English sense of comfort, and, in losing it, have suffered degradation alike as men and as citizens. It is not a question of exchanging one form of comfort for another; the instinct which made an Englishman has in these cases perished. Perhaps it is

perishing from among us altogether, killed by new social and political conditions; one who looks at villages of the new type, at the working-class quarters of towns, at the rising of "flats" among the dwellings of the wealthy, has little choice but to think so. There may soon come a day when, though the word "comfort" continues to be used in many languages, the thing it signifies will be discoverable nowhere at all.

If the ingenious foreigner found himself in some village of manufacturing Lancashire, he would be otherwise impressed. Here something of the power of England might be revealed to him, but of England's worth, little enough. Hard ugliness would everywhere assail his eyes; the visages and voices of the people would seem to him thoroughly akin to their surroundings. Scarcely could one find, in any civilized nation, a more notable contrast than that between these two English villages and their inhabitants.

Yet Lancashire is English, and there among the mill chimneys, in the hideous little street, folk are living whose domestic thoughts claim undeniable kindred with those of the villagers of the kinder south. But to understand how "comfort" and the virtues it implies, can exist amid such conditions, one must penetrate to the hearthside; the door must be shut, the curtain drawn; here "home" does not extend beyond the threshold. After all, this grimy row of houses, ugliest that man ever conceived, is

more representative of England to-day than the lovely village among the trees and meadows. More than a hundred years ago, power passed from the south of England to the north. The vigorous race on the other side of Trent only found its opportunity when the age of machinery began; its civilization, long delayed, differs in obvious respects from that of older England. In Sussex or in Somerset, however dull and clownish the typical inhabitant, he plainly belongs to an ancient order of things, represents an immemorial subordination. The rude man of the north is—by comparison—but just emerged from barbarism, and under any circumstances would show less smooth a front. By great misfortune, he has fallen under the harshest lordship the modern world has known—that of scientific industrialism, and all his vigorous qualities are subdued to a scheme of life based upon the harsh, the ugly, the sordid. His racial heritage, of course, marks him to the eye; even as ploughman or shepherd, he differs notably from him of the same calling in the weald or on the downs. But the frank brutality of the man in all externals has been encouraged, rather than mitigated, by the course his civilization has taken, and hence it is that, unless one knows him well enough to respect him, he seems even yet stamped with the half-savagery of his folk as they were a century and a half ago. His fierce shyness, his arrogant self-regard, are notes of a primitive state. Naturally, he never learnt to house himself as did the Southerner,

for climate, as well as social circumstance, was unfavourable to all the graces of life. And now one can only watch the encroachment of his rule upon that old, that true England whose strength and virtue were so differently manifested. This fair broad land of the lovely villages signifies little save to the antiquary, the poet, the painter. Vainly, indeed, should I show its beauty and its peace to the observant foreigner; he would but smile, and, with a glance at the traction-engine just coming along the road, indicate the direction of his thoughts.

GEORGE GISSING: *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.* 1903.

UPBRINGING

I I . AN ENGLISH SCHOOL

PERHAPS there is not a foundation in the country so truly English, taking that word to mean what Englishmen wish it to mean—something solid, unpretending, of good character, and free to all. More boys are to be found in it, who issue from a greater variety of ranks, than in any school in the kingdom; and as it is the most various, so it is the largest, of all the free schools. Nobility do not go there, except as boarders. Now and then a boy of a noble family may be met with, and he is reckoned an interloper, and against the charter; but the sons of poor gentry and London citizens abound; and with them an equal share is given to the sons of tradesmen of the very humblest description, not omitting servants. I would not take my oath—but I have a strong recollection, that in my time there were two boys, one of whom went up into the drawing-room to his father, the master of the house; and the other, down into the kitchen to *his* father, the coachman. One thing, however, I know to be certain, and it is the noblest of all, namely, that the boys themselves (at least it was so in my time) had no sort of feeling of the difference of one another's ranks out of doors. The cleverest boy was the

noblest, let his father be who he might. Christ Hospital is a nursery of tradesmen, of merchants, of naval officers, of scholars; it has produced some of the greatest ornaments of their time; and the feeling among the boys themselves is, that it is a medium between the patrician pretension of such schools as Eton and Westminster, and the plebeian submission of the charity schools. In point of university honours it claims to be equal with the best; and though other schools can show a greater abundance of eminent names, I know not where many will be found who are a greater host in themselves.

In the time of Henry the Eighth, Christ Hospital was a monastery of Franciscan friars. Being dissolved among the others, Edward the Sixth, moved by a sermon of Bishop Ridley's, assigned the revenues of it to the maintenance and education of a certain number of poor orphan children, born of citizens of London. I believe there has been no law passed to alter the letter of this intention; which is a pity, since the alteration has taken place. An extension of it was probably very good, and even demanded by circumstances. I have reason, for one, to be grateful for it. But tampering with matters-of-fact among children is dangerous. They soon learn to distinguish between allowed poetical fiction and that which they are told, under severe penalties, never to be guilty of; and this early sample of contradiction between the thing asserted and the obvious fact, can do no good even in an

establishment so plain-dealing in other respects as Christ Hospital. The place is not only designated as an Orphan-house in its Latin title, but the boys, in the prayers which they repeat every day, implore the pity of heaven upon "us poor orphans."[53] I remember the perplexity this caused me at a very early period. It is true, the word orphan may be used in a sense implying destitution of any sort; but this was not its Christ Hospital intention; nor do the younger boys give it the benefit of that scholarly interpretation. There was another thing (now, I believe, done away) which existed in my time, and perplexed me still more. It seemed a glaring instance of the practice likely to result from the other assumption, and made me prepare for a hundred falsehoods and deceptions, which, mixed up with contradiction, as most things in society are, I sometimes did find, and oftener dreaded. I allude to a foolish custom they had in the ward which I first entered, and which was the only one that the company at the public suppers were in the habit of going into, of hanging up, by the side of each bed, a clean white napkin, which was supposed to be the one used by the occupiers. Now these napkins were only for show, the real towels being of the largest and coarsest kind. If the masters had been asked about them, they would doubtless have told the truth; perhaps the nurses would have done so. But the boys were not aware of this. There they saw these "white lies" hanging before them, a conscious

imposition; and I well remember how alarmed I used to feel, lest any of the company should direct their inquiries to me.

Christ Hospital (for this is its proper name, and not Christ's Hospital) occupies a considerable portion of ground between Newgate Street, Giltspur Street, St. Bartholomew's, and Little Britain. There is a quadrangle with cloisters; and the square inside the cloisters is called the Garden, and most likely was the monastery garden. Its only delicious crop, for many years, has been pavement. Another large area, presenting the Grammar and Navigation Schools, is also misnomered the Ditch; the town-ditch having formerly run that way. In Newgate Street is seen the Hall, or eating-room, one of the noblest in England, adorned with enormously long paintings by Verrio and others, and with an organ. A portion of the old quadrangle once contained the library of the monks, and was built or repaired by the famous Whittington, whose arms were to be seen outside; but alterations of late years have done it away.

In the cloisters a number of persons lie buried, besides the officers of the house. Among them is Isabella, wife of Edward the Second, the " She-wolf of France." I was not aware of this circumstance then; but many a time, with a recollection of some lines in "Blair's Grave" upon me, have I run as hard as I could at night-time from my ward to another, in order to borrow the next volume of

some ghostly romance. In one of the cloisters was an impression resembling a gigantic foot, which was attributed by some to the angry stamping of the ghost of a beadle's wife! A beadle was a higher sound to us than to most, as it involved ideas of detected apples in churchtime, "skulking" (as it was called) out of bounds, and a power of reporting us to the masters. But fear does not stand upon rank and ceremony.

The wards, or sleeping-rooms, are twelve, and contained, in my time, rows of beds on each side, partitioned off, but connected with one another, and each having two boys to sleep in it. Down the middle ran the binns for holding bread and other things, and serving for a table when the meal was not taken in the hall; and over the binns hung a great homely chandelier.

To each of these wards a nurse was assigned, who was the widow of some decent liveryman of London, and who had the charge of looking after us at night-time, seeing to our washing, &c., and carving for us at dinner; all of which gave her a good deal of power, more than her name warranted. The nurses, however, were almost invariably very decent people, and performed their duty; which was not always the case with the young ladies, their daughters. There were five schools; a grammar-school, a mathematical or navigation-school (added by Charles the Second, through the zeal of Mr. Pepys), a writing, a drawing, and a reading school. Those

who could not read when they came on the foundation, went into the last. There were few in the last-but-one, and I scarcely know what they did, or for what object. The writing-school was for those who were intended for trade and commerce; the mathematical, for boys who went as midshipmen into the naval and East India service; and the grammar-school for such as were designed for the Church, and to go to the University. The writing-school was by far the largest; and, what is very curious (it has been altered since), all the schools were kept quite distinct; so that a boy might arrive at the age of fifteen in the grammar-school, and not know his multiplication-table; which was the case with myself. Nor do I know it to this day! Shades of Horace Walpole, and Lord Lyttelton! come to my assistance, and enable me to bear the confession: but so it is. The fault was not my fault at the time; but I ought to have repaired it when I went out into the world: and great is the mischief which it has done me.

Most of these schools had several masters; besides whom there was a steward, who took care of our subsistence, and who had a general superintendence over all hours and circumstances not connected with teaching. The masters had almost all been in the school, and might expect pensions or livings in their old age. Among those in my time, the mathematical master was Mr. Wales, a man well known for his science who had been round the world with Captain Cook; for which we highly venerated him.

He was a good man, of plain, simple manners, with a heavy large person and a benign countenance. When he was at Otaheite, the natives played him a trick while bathing, and stole his small-clothes; which we used to think a liberty scarcely credible. The name of the steward, a thin stiff man of invincible formality of demeanour, admirably fitted to render encroachment impossible, was Hathaway. We of the grammar-school used to call him "the Yeoman," on account of Shakespeare having married the daughter of a man of that name, designated as "a substantial yeoman."

Our dress was of the coarsest and quaintest kind, but was respected out of doors, and is so. It consisted of a blue drugget gown, or body, with ample skirts to it; a yellow vest underneath in wintertime ; small-clothes of Russia duck; worsted yellow stockings; a leathern girdle; and a little black worsted cap, usually carried in the hand, I believe it was the ordinary dress of children in humble life during the reign of the Tudors. We used to flatter ourselves that it was taken from the monks; and there went a monstrous tradition, that at one period it consisted of blue velvet with silver buttons. It was said, also, that during the blissful era of the blue velvet, we had roast mutton for supper; but that the small-clothes not being then in existence, and the mutton suppers too luxurious, the eatables were given up for the ineffables.

A malediction, at heart, always followed the

memory of him who had taken upon himself to decide so preposterously. To say the truth, we were not too well fed at that time, either in quantity or quality; and we could not enter with our hungry imaginations into these remote philosophies. Our breakfast was bread and water, for the beer was too bad to drink. The bread consisted of the half of a three-halfpenny loaf, according to the prices then current. This was not much for growing boys, who had had nothing to eat from six or seven o'clock the preceding evening. For dinner we had the same quantity of bread, with meat only every other day, and that consisting of a small slice, such as would be given to an infant three or four years old. Yet even that, with all our hunger, we very often left half-eaten—the meat was so tough. On the other days we had a milk-porridge, ludicrously thin; or rice-milk, which was better. There were no vegetables or puddings. Once a month we had roast beef; and twice a year (I blush to think of the eagerness with which it was looked for!) a dinner of pork. One was roast, and the other boiled; and on the latter occasion we had our only pudding, which was of peas. I blush to remember this, not on account of our poverty, but on account of the sordidness of the custom. There had much better have been none. For supper we had a like piece of bread, with butter or cheese; and then to bed, "with what appetite we might."

Our routine of life was this. We rose to the call of

a bell, at six in summer, and seven in winter; and after combing ourselves, and washing our hands and faces, went, at the call of another bell, to breakfast. All this took up about an hour. From breakfast we proceeded to school, where we remained till eleven, winter and summer, and then had an hour's play. Dinner took place at twelve. Afterwards was a little play till one, when we again went to school, and remained till five in summer, and four in winter. At six was the supper. We used to play after it in summer till eight. In winter, we proceeded from supper to bed. On Sundays, the school-time of the other days was occupied in church, both morning and evening; and as the Bible was read to us every day before every meal, and on going to bed, besides prayers and graces, we rivalled the monks in the religious part of our duties.

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I am grateful to Christ Hospital for having bred me up in old cloisters, for its making me acquainted with the languages of Homer and Ovid, and for its having secured to me, on the whole, a well-trained and cheerful boyhood. It pressed no superstition upon me. It did not hinder my growing mind from making what excursions it pleased into the wide and healthy regions of general literature. I might buy as much Collins and Gray as I pleased, and get novels to my heart's content from the circulating libraries. There was nothing prohibited but what would have been prohibited by all good fathers;

and everything was encouraged which would have been encouraged by the Steeles, and Addisons, and Popes; by the Warburtons, and Atterburys, and Hoadleys. Boyer was a severe, nay, a cruel master; but age and reflection have made me sensible that I ought always to add my testimony to his being a laborious and a conscientious one. When his severity went beyond the mark, I believe he was always sorry for it: sometimes I am sure he was. He once (though the anecdote at first sight may look like a burlesque on the remark) knocked out one of my teeth with the back of a Homer, in a fit of impatience at my stammering. The tooth was a loose one, and I told him as much; but the blood rushed out as I spoke: he turned pale, and, on my proposing to go out and wash the mouth, he said, "Go, child," in a tone of voice amounting to the paternal. Now "Go, child," from Boyer, was worth a dozen tender speeches from any one else; and it was felt that I had got an advantage over him, acknowledged by himself.

If I had reaped no other benefit from Christ Hospital, the school would be ever dear to me from the recollection of the friendships I formed in it, and of the first heavenly taste it gave me of that most spiritual of the affections. I use the word "heavenly" advisedly; and I call friendship the most spiritual of the affections, because even one's kindred, in partaking of our flesh and blood, become, in a manner, mixed up with our entire being.

Not that I would disparage any other form of affection, worshipping, as I do, all forms of it, love in particular, which, in its highest state, is friendship and something more. But if ever I tasted a disembodied transport on earth, it was in those friendships which I entertained at school, before I dreamt of any maturer feeling. I shall never forget the impression it first made on me. I loved my friend for his gentleness, his candour, his truth, his good repute, his freedom even from my own livelier manner, his calm and reasonable kindness. It was not any particular talent that attracted me to him, or anything striking whatsoever. I should say, in one word, it was his goodness. I doubt whether he ever had a conception of a tithe of the regard and respect I entertained for him; and I smile to think of the perplexity (though he never showed it) which he probably felt sometimes at my enthusiastic expressions; for I thought him a kind of angel. It is no exaggeration to say, that, take away the unspiritual part of it—the genius and the knowledge—and there is no height of conceit indulged in by the most romantic character in Shakespeare, which surpassed what I felt towards the merits I ascribed to him, and the delight which I took in his society. With the other boys I played antics, and rioted in fantastic jests; but in his society, or whenever I thought of him, I fell into a kind of Sabbath state of bliss; and I am sure I could have died for him.

LEIGH HUNT: *Autobiography*. 1850.

12. ETON AND CAMBRIDGE

OUR sister at Cambridge, the other college of our Founder, has her own right and natural aspirations, and they aren't of necessity the same as Eton's. At Cambridge, very properly, study is disinterested: it looks beyond the moment to the vast of truth, to the discovery of the undiscovered ; and what you may find in those uncharted spaces, the nature and the use of the trophy you bring back, this is of secondary concern to Cambridge—whose first and chief anxiety is that light should be shed where no light was before. Cambridge, therefore, loves to think that a man should throw his mind into his researches without reserve, for their own sake only; and whether their effect upon himself is to civilise and beautify him, or whether they have not this effect but some other, anyhow the man is honoured in the mere fact that the cause of discovery is advanced. That is quite clear. It means that the task of the university—(or rather one side of its task, for of course there are the undergraduates to be beautified, not only the dons to be honoured, and it is a question how the two sides of the task are to be smoothly and practically adjusted; so it may be that at Cambridge the cult of learning has its own embarrassment, and can't pursue a single end with all that lofty indifference, that disdain of the world that I was wishful to admire)—but at any rate it means, as I was saying,

mat thq task of Eton can never be disinterested exploration. The blank light of open inquiry won't be admissible at Eton; for there, whatever happens, the little victims mustn't be discharged in a ferocious condition. The school exists for no other purpose than to form their ways, and no mind that is bent upon them can be cleared of that reserve. The studies of the young folk must lead them naturally into the world that awaits them, not away from it, whatever happens.

Our tearful prayerful Founder, flourishing his sceptre in school-yard, may wonder indeed what has come to the poor scholars and sad priests of his college, what profane ambition has possessed them. If he watches the faces of the children as they assemble for absence, he must shrink in shyness, not to say in horror, before the easy assurance of their looks; all too clear it is that they aren't taught to dread the world. Our talk of grateful homage to Henry the gentle and hapless, the star-crossed king, must truly sound ironic; what has he to say to this bouncing progeny, born to England in such amplitude of all the good things of the earth, that inundates the retreat which his charity and piety designed for a very different brood? It is written all over our Eton that life is not to be refused, not to be despised when it is ample and honourable. Don't be deceived, I say again, by the unworldly airs of ancient romance that breathe on us at Eton in the shade of the huge grey chapel. Our virtue, what-

ever it may be, is neither fugitive nor cloistered; no painful yearning for the unknowable and ineffable torments us here. The good earth is open to -us, good enough for us; and there we are to accept our destiny—why indeed should we quarrel with it? Our masters at Eton won't help us to quarrel with it, not even the most retiring, the most twilight-loving amongst them. I seem in truth to remember that not many of them in my time had an appearance of loving the twilight; on the whole they were plainly attached to the sun and the holiday afternoon. But even the most enshaded had their view of the great fortunate world, a view in which its palms and prizes weren't disparaged; or perhaps I should rather call it a view of hopeful and heroic youth—youth that will win the palms of the world and wear them with modesty and grace. Success before men —however lightly you hold it in the void you must desire it for the youthful hero whom it crowns so becomingly; and in one way or another there is honour at Eton for success, no doubt.

PERCY LUBBOGK: *Shades of Eton.* 1929.

CHARACTERISTICS

13- THE GOOD YEOMAN

Is a gentleman in ore, whom the next age may see refined, and is the wax capable of a gentle impression, when the prince shall stamp it. Wise Solon, who accounted Tellus the Athenian the most happy man for living privately on his own lands,[1] would surely have pronounced the English yeomanry a fortunate condition, living in the temperate zone, betwixt greatness and want, an estate of people almost peculiar to England. France and Italy are like a die, which hath no points between sink and ace, nobility and peasantry. Their walls, though high, must needs be hollow, wanting filling stones. Indeed Germany hath her boors, like our yeomen, but by a tyrannical appropriation of nobility to some few ancient families, their yeomen are excluded from ever rising higher to clarify their bloods. In England, the temple of honour is bolted against none who have passed through the temple of virtue; nor is a capacity to be gentle denied to our yeoman, who thus behaves himself.

i. *He wears russet clothes, but makes golden payment,* having tin in his buttons, and silver in his pocket. If he chance to appear in clothes above his rank, it is

[1] Herodotus, lib. i, p. 12.

to grace some great man with his service, and then he blusheth at his own bravery. Otherwise he is the surest landmark, whence foreigners may take aim of the ancient English customs; the gentry more floating after foreign fashions.

2. *In his house he is bountiful both to strangers and poor people.* Some hold when hospitality died in England, she gave her last groan amongst the yeomen of Kent. And still at our yeoman's table you shall have as many joints as dishes; no meat disguised with strange sauces; no straggling joint of a sheep in the midst of a pasture of grass, beset with salads on every side, but solid substantial food; no servitors (more nimble with their hands than the guests with their teeth) take away meat before stomachs are taken away. Here you have that which in itself is good made better by the store of it, and best by the welcome to it.

3. *He hath a great stroke in making a knight of the shire.* Good reason, for he makes a whole line in the subsidy book, where, whatsoever he is rated, he pays without any regret, not caring how much his purse is let blood, so it be done by the advice of the physicians of the state.

4. *He seldom goes far abroad, and his credit stretcheth further than his travel.* He goes not to London, but *se defendendo,* to save himself of a fine, being returned of a jury, where, seeing the king once, he prays for him ever afterwards.

5. *In his own country he is a main man in juries.*

Where, if the judge please to open his eyes in matter of law, he needs not to be led by the nose in matters of fact. He is very observant of the judge's *item*, when it follows the truths *imprimis;* otherwise, though not mutinous in a jury, he cares not whom he displeaseth, so he pleaseth his own conscience.

6. *He improveth his land to a double value, by his good husbandry.* Some grounds that wept with water, or frowned with thorns, by draining the one and clearing the other, he makes both to laugh and sing with corn. By marl and limestones burnt, he bettereth his ground, and his industry worketh miracles, by turning stones into bread. Conquest and good husbandry both enlarge the king's dominions: the one by the sword, making the acres more in number; the other by the plough, making the same acres more in value. Solomon saith, *The king himself is maintained by husbandry.*

7. *In time of famine he is the Joseph of the country, and keeps the poor from starving.* Then he tameth his stacks of corn, which not his covetousness but providence hath reserved for time of need, and to his poor neighbours abateth somewhat of the high price of the market, The neighbour gentry court him for his acquaintance, which either he modestly waveth, or thankfully accepteth, but no way greedily desireth. He insults not on the ruins of a decayed gentleman, but pities and relieves him; and as he is called *Goodman*, he desires to answer to the name, and to be so indeed.

8. *In war, though he serveth on foot, he is ever mounted on a high spirit:* as being a slave to none, and a subject only to his own prince. Innocence and independence make a brave spirit: whereas otherwise, one must ask his leave to be valiant on whom he depends. Therefore if a state run up all to noblemen and gentlemen, so that the husbandmen be only mere labourers or cottagers, which one calls but housed beggars,[1] it may have good cavalry, but never good bands of foot; so that their armies will be like those birds called *Apodes*, without feet, always only flying on their wings of horse. Wherefore, to make good infantry, it requireth men bred, not in a servile or indigent fashion, but in some free and plentiful manner. Wisely, therefore, did that knowing prince, King Henry the Seventh, provide laws for the increase of his yeomanry, that his kingdom should not be like to coppice-woods, where the staddles being left too thick, all runs to bushes and briers, and there is little clean underwood. For, enacting that houses used to husbandry should be kept up with a competent proportion of land, he did secretly sow hydras' teeth, whereupon, according to the poet's fiction, should rise up armed men for the service of this kingdom.

THOMAS FULLER : *The Holy State*. 1648.

[1] Bacon's *Henry VII*, p. 74.

14. THE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN

IN the *Faery Qyeen*, Spenser has brought out, not the image of the great Gloriana, but in its various aspects, a form of character which was then just coming on the stage of the world, and which has played a great part in it since. As he has told us, he aimed at presenting before us, in the largest sense of the word, the English gentleman. It was as a whole a new character in the world. It had not really existed in the days of feudalism and chivalry, though features of it had appeared, and its descent was traced from those times: but they were too wild and coarse, too turbulent and disorderly, for a character which, however ready for adventure and battle, looked to peace, refinement, order, and law as the true conditions of its perfection. In the days of Elizabeth it was beginning to fill a large place in English life. It was formed amid the increasing cultivation of the nation, the increasing varieties of public service, the awakening responsibilities to duty and calls to self-command. Still making much of the prerogative of noble blood and family honours, it was something independent of nobility and beyond it. A nobleman might have in him the making of a gentleman: but it was the man himself of whom the gentleman was made. Great birth, even great capacity, were not enough; there must be added a new delicacy of conscience, a new appreciation of what is beautiful and worthy of honour,

a new measure of the strength and nobleness of self-control, of devotion to unselfish interests. This idea of manhood, based not only on force and courage, but on truth, on refinement, on public spirit, on soberness and modesty, on consideration for others, was taking possession of the younger generation of Elizabeth's middle years. Of course the idea was very imperfectly apprehended, still more imperfectly realised. But it was something which on the same scale had not been yet, and which was to be the seed of something greater. It was to grow into those strong, simple, noble characters, pure in aim and devoted to duty, the Falklands, the Hampdens, who amid so much evil form such a remarkable feature in the Civil Wars, both on the Royalist and the Parliamentary sides. It was to grow into that high type of cultivated English nature, in the present and the last century, common both to its monarchical and its democratic embodiments, than which, with all its faults and defects, our western civilisation has produced few things more admirable.

R. W. CHURCH: *Spenser*. 1879.

15. A DEFINITION OF A GENTLEMAN

IT is almost a definition of a gentleman to say he is one who never inflicts pah}. This description is both refined and, as far as it goes, accurate. He is mainly occupied in merely removing the obstacles which hinder the free and unembarrassed

action of those about him; and he concurs with their movements rather than takes the initiative himself. His benefits may be considered as parallel to what are called comforts or conveniences in arrangements of a personal nature: like an easy chair or a good fire, which do their part in dispelling cold and fatigue, though nature provides both means of rest and animal heat without them. The true gentleman in like manner carefully avoids whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in the minds of those with whom he is cast;—all clashing of opinion, or collision of feeling, all restraint, or suspicion, or gloom, or resentment; his great concern being to make everyone at their ease and at home. He has his eyes on all his company; he is tender towards the bashful, gentle towards the distant, and merciful towards the absurd; he can recollect to whom he is speaking; he guards against unseasonable allusions, or topics which may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation, and never wearisome. He makes light of favours while he does them, and seems to be receiving when he is conferring. He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort, he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say

out. From a long-sighted prudence, he observes the maxim of the ancient sage, that we should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend. He has too much good sense to be affronted at insults, he is too well employed to remember injuries, and too indolent to bear malice. He is patient, forbearing, and resigned, on philosophical principles; he submits to pain, because it is inevitable, to bereavement, because it is irreparable, and to death, because it is his destiny. If he engages in controversy of any kind, his disciplined intellect preserves him from the blundering discourtesy of better, though less educated minds; who, like blunt weapons, tear and hack instead of cutting clean, who mistake the point in argument, waste their strength on trifles, misconceive their adversary, and leave the question more involved than they find it. He may be right or wrong in his opinion, but he is too clear-headed to be unjust; he is as simple as he is forcible, and as brief as he is decisive. Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence; he throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes. He knows the weakness of human reason as wel] as its strength, its province and its limits. If he be an unbeliever, he will be too profound and large-minded to ridicule religion or to act against it; he is too wise to be a dogmatist or fanatic in his infidelity. He respects piety and devotion; he even supports institutions as venerable,

beautiful, or useful, to which he does not assent; he honours the ministers of religion, and he is contented to decline its mysteries without assailing or denouncing them. He is a friend of religious toleration, and that, not only because his philosophy has taught him to look on all forms of faith with an impartial eye, but also from the gentleness and effeminacy of feeling, which is the attendant on civilisation.

Not that he may not hold a religion too, in his own way, even when he is not a Christian. In that case his religion is one of imagination and sentiment; it is the embodiment of those ideas of the sublime, majestic, and beautiful, without which there can be no large philosophy. Sometimes he acknowledges the being of God, sometimes he invests an unknown principle or quality with the attributes of perfection. And this deduction of his reason, or creation of his fancy, he makes the occasion of such excellent thoughts, and the starting-point of so varied and systematic a teaching, that he even seems like a disciple of Christianity itself. From the very accuracy and steadiness of his logical powers, he is able to see what sentiments are consistent in those who hold any religious doctrine at all, and he appears to others to feel and to hold a whole circle of theological truths which exist in his mind no otherwise than as a number of deductions.,

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN: *On the Scope and Nature of University Education.* 1852

16. A NATURAL GENTLEMAN

I SHALL not trouble myself to inquire whether Fox was a man of strict virtue and principle; or in other words, how far he was one of those who screw themselves up to a certain pitch of ideal perfection, who, as it were, set themselves in the stocks of morality, and make mouths at their own situation. He was not one of that tribe, and shall not be tried by their self-denying ordinances. But he was endowed with one of the most excellent natures that ever fell to the lot of any of God's creatures. It has been said, that "an honest man's the noblest work of God." There is indeed a purity, a rectitude, an integrity of heart, a freedom from every selfish bias, and sinister motive, a manly simplicity and noble disinterestedness of feeling, which is in my opinion to be preferred before every other gift of nature or art. There is a greatness of soul that is superior to all the brilliancy of the understanding. This strength of moral character, which is not only a more valuable but a rarer quality than strength of understanding (as we are oftener led astray by the narrowness of our feelings, than want of knowledge) Fox possessed in the highest degree. He was superior to every kind of jealousy, of suspicion, of malevolence; to every narrow and sordid motive. He was perfectly above every species of duplicity, of low art and cunning. He judged of everything in the downright sincerity of his nature, without being

able to impose upon himself by any hollow disguise, or to lend his support to anything unfair or dishonourable. He had an innate love of truth, of justice, of probity, of whatever was generous or liberal. Neither his education, nor his connexions, nor his situation in life, nor the low intrigues and virulence of party, could ever alter the simplicity of his taste, nor the candid openness of his nature. There was an elastic force about his heart, a freshness of social feeling, a warm glowing humanity, which remained unimpaired to the last. He was by nature a gentleman. By this I mean that he felt a certain deference and respect for the person of every man; he had an unaffected frankness and benignity in his behaviour to others, the utmost liberality in judging of their conduct and motives. A refined humanity constitutes the character of a gentleman. He was the true friend of his country, as far as it is possible for a statesman to be so. But his love of his country did not consist in his hatred of the rest of mankind.

WILLIAM HAZLITT: *Winterslow.* 1807.

17. THE OLD ENGLISH GUISE

HE was of Stature somewhat Tall, exceeding the meane, with a proportionable bigness to become it, but in no way inclining to Corpulency ; of an exact Straightnesse of the whole Body, and a perfect Symmetry in every part thereof. He

was of a Sanguine constitution, which beautified his Face with a pleasant Ruddinesse, but of so Grave and serious an aspect, that it Awed and Discountenanced the smiling Attracts of that complexion. His Head Adorned with a comely Light-Coloured Haire, which was so, by Nature exactly Curled (an Ornament enough of it self in this Age to Denominate a handsome person, and wherefore all Skill and Art is used) but not suffered to overgrow to any length unseeming his modesty and Profession.

His Gate and Walking was very upright and graceful, becoming his wellshapen Bulke: approaching something near to that we terme Majesticall; but that the Doctor was so well known to be void of any affectation or pride. Nay so Regardlesse was he of himselfe in his Garb and Rayment, in which no doubt his Vanity would have appeared, as well as in his stately pace: that it was with some trouble to himselfe, to be either Neat or Decent; it matter'd not for the outside, while he thought himself never too Curious and Nice in the Dresses of his mind.

Very Careless also he was to seeming inurbanity in the modes of Courtship and demeanour, deporting himself much according to the old *English* Guise, which for its ease and simplicity suited very well with the Doctor, whose time was designed for more Elaborate businesse: and whose MOTTO might have been sincerity.

As inobservant he was of persons, unless businesse

with them, or his concerns pointed them out and adverted him; seeing and discerning were two things: often in several places, hath he met with Gentlemen of his nearest and greatest Acquaintance, at a full rencounter and stop, whom he hath endeavoured to passe by, not knowing, that is to say, not minding of them, till rectifyed and recalled by their familiar compellations.

This will not (it may be presumed) and justly cannot be imputed unto any indisposednesse and unaptnesse of his Nature, which was so far from Rude and untractable, that it may be confidently averred, he was the most complacent person in the Nation, as his Converse and Writings, with such a freedome of Discourse and quick Jocundity of style, do sufficiently evince.

ANONYMOUS: *The Life of That Reverend Divine, and Learned Historian, Dr. Thomas Fuller.* 1661.

18. THE EQUABLE SENSE

AMONG the disciples of Carlyle it is considered that having been a Puritan is the next best thing to having been in Germany. But though we cannot sympathise with everything that the expounders of the new theory allege, and though we should not select for praise the exact peculiarities most agreeable to the slightly grim "gospel of earnestness," we acknowledge the great service which they have rendered to English history. No

one will now ever overlook, that in the greater, in the original Puritans—in Cromwell, for example—the whole basis of the character was a passionate, deep, rich, religious organisation.

This is not Mr. Macaulay's way. It is not that he is sceptical; far from it. "Divines of all persuasions," he tells us, "are agreed that there is a religion;" and he acquiesces in their teaching. But he has no passionate self-questionings, no indomitable fears, no asking perplexities. He is probably pleased at the exemption. He has praised Lord Bacon for a similar want of interest. "Nor did he ever meddle with those enigmas which have puzzled hundreds of generations, and will puzzle hundreds more. He said nothing about the grounds of moral obligation, or the freedom of the human will. He had no inclination to employ himself in labours resembling those of the damned in the Grecian Tartarus—to spin for ever on the same wheel round the same pivot. He lived in an age in which disputes on the most subtle points of divinity excited an intense interest throughout Europe; and nowhere more than in England. He was placed in the very thick of the conflict. He was in power at the time of the Synod of Dort, and must for months have been daily deafened with talk about election, reprobation, and final perseverance. Yet we do not remember a line in his works from which it can be inferred that he was either a Calvinist or an Arminian. While the world was resounding with the noise of a disputa-

tious philosophy and a disputatious theology, the Baconian school, like Alworthy seated between Square andThwackum, preserved a calm neutrality, —half-scornful, half-benevolent,—and, content with adding to the sum of practical good, left the war of words to those who liked it." This may be the writing of good sense, but it is not the expression of an anxious or passionate religious nature.

Such is the explanation of his not prizing so highly as he should prize the essential excellences of the Puritan character. He is defective in the one point in which they were very great; he is eminent in the very point in which they were most defective. A spirit of easy cheerfulness pervades his writings, a pleasant geniality overflows in history: the rigid asceticism, the pain for pain's sake of the Puritan is altogether alien to him. Retribution he would deny; sin is hardly a part of his creed. His religion is one of thanksgiving. His notion of philosophy— it would be a better notion of his own writing— is *illustrans commoda vitte.*

The English Revolution is the very topic for a person of this character. It is eminently an unimpassioned movement. It requires no appreciation of the Cavalier or of the zealot; no sympathy with the romance of this world; no inclination to pass beyond, and absorb the mind's energies in another. It had neither the rough enthusiasm of barbarism nor the delicate grace of high civilisation; the man who conducted it had neither the deep spirit of

Cromwell's Puritans nor the chivalric loyalty of the enjoying English gentleman. They were hard-headed sensible men, who knew that politics were a kind of business, that the essence of business is compromise, of practicality concession. They drove no theory to excess; for they had no theory. Their passions did not hurry them away; for their temperament was still, their reason calculating and calm. Locke is the type of the best character of his era. There is nothing in him which a historian such as we have described could fail to comprehend, or could not sympathise with when he did comprehend. He was the very reverse of a Cavalier; he came of a Puritan stock; he retained through life a kind of chilled Puritanism: he had nothing of its excessive, overpowering, interior zeal, but he retained the formal decorum which it had given to the manners, the solid earnestness of its intellect, the heavy respectability of its character. In all the nations across which Puritanism has passed you may notice something of its indifference to this world's lighter enjoyments; no one of them has been quite able to retain its singular interest in what is beyond the veil of time and sense. The generation to which we owe our revolution was in the first stage of the descent. Locke thought a zealot a dangerous person, and a poet little better than a rascal. It has been said, with perhaps an allusion to Macaulay, that our historians have held that "all the people who lived before 1688 were either

knaves or fools." This is, of course, an exaggeration, but those who have considered what sort of person a historian is likely to be, will not be surprised at his preference for the people of that era. They had the equable sense which he appreciates; they had not the deep animated passions to which his nature is insensible.

WALTER BAGEHOT: *Literary Studies, "Mr. Macaulay."* 1856.

19. COMMON SENSE

I HAVE said that had it not been for constant reading of the Bible, I might probably have taken Johnson for my model of English. To a useful extent I have always done so; in these first essays, partly because I could not help it, partly of set, and well set, purpose.

On our foreign journeys, it being of course desirable to keep the luggage as light as possible, my father had judged that four little volumes of Johnson —the *Idler* and the *Rambler*—did, under names wholly appropriate to the circumstances, contain more substantial literary nourishment than could be, from any other author, packed into so portable compass. And accordingly, in spare hours, and on wet days, the turns and returns of reiterated *Rambler* and iterated *Idler* fastened themselves in my ears and mind; nor was it possible for me, till long afterwards, to quit myself of Johnsonian symmetry and

balance in sentences intended, either with swordsman's or paviour's blow, to cleave an enemy's crest, or drive down the oaken pile of a principle. I never for an instant compared Johnson to Scott, Pope, Byron, or any of the really great writers whom I loved. But I at once and for ever recognized in him a man entirely sincere, and infallibly wise in the view and estimate he gave of the common questions, business, and ways of the world. I valued his sentences not primarily because they were symmetrical, but because they were just, and clear; it is a method of judgment rarely used by the average public, who ask from an author always, in the first place, arguments in favour of their own opinions, in elegant terms; and are just as ready with their applause for a sentence of Macaulay's, which may have no more sense in it than a blot pinched between doubled paper, as to reject one of Johnson's, telling against their own prejudice,—though its symmetry be as of thunder answering from two horizons.

I hold it more than happy that, during those continental journeys, in which the vivid excitement of the greater part of the day left me glad to give spare half-hours to the study of a thoughtful book, Johnson was the one author accessible to me. No other writer could have secured me, as he did, against all chance of being misled by my own sanguine and metaphysical temperament. He taught me carefully to measure life, and distrust fortune; and he secured me, by his adamantine common-

sense, for ever, from being caught in the cobwebs of German metaphysics, or sloughed in the English drainage of them.

I open, at this moment, the larger of the volumes of the *Idler* to which I owe so much. After turning over a few leaves, I chance on the closing sentence of No. 65, whicH transcribing, I may show the reader in sum what it taught me,—in words which, writing this account of myself, I conclusively obey.

"Of these learned men, let those who aspire to the same praise imitate the diligence, and avoid the scrupulosity. Let it always be remembered that life is short, that knowledge is endless, and that many doubts deserve not to be cleared. Let those whom nature and study have qualified to teach mankind, tell us what they have learned while they are yet able to tell it, and trust their reputation only to themselves."

It is impossible for me now to know how far my own honest desire for truth, and compassionate sense of what is instantly helpful to creatures who are every instant perishing, might have brought me, in their own time, to think and judge as Johnson thought and measured,—even had I never learned of him. He at least set me in the straight path from the beginning, and, whatever time I might waste in vain pleasure, or weak effort, he saved me for ever from false thoughts and futile speculations.

JOHN RUSKIN: *Praterita.* 1885.

2O. ENGLISH YOUTH

WHAT it first and foremost really comes to, I think, is the fact that at an hour when the civilised peoples are on exhibition, quite finally and sharply on show, to each other and to the world, as they absolutely never in all their long history have been before, the English tradition (both of amenity and of energy, I naturally mean) should have flowered at once into a specimen so beautifully producible. Thousands of other sentiments are of course all the while, in different connections, at hand for us; but it is of the exquisite ivility, the social instincts of the race, *poetically* xpressed, that I speak; and it would be hard to jverstate the felicity of his fellow-countryman's being able just now to say: "Yes, this, with the imperfection of so many of our arrangements, with the persistence of so many of our mistakes, with the waste of so much of our effort and the weight of the many-coloured mantle of time that drags so redundantly about us, this natural accommodation of the English spirit, this frequent extraordinary beauty of the English aspect, this finest saturation of the English intelligence by its most immediate associations, tasting as they mainly do of the long past, this ideal image of English youth, in a word, at once radiant and reflective, are things that appeal to us as delightfully exhibitional beyond a doubt, yet as drawn, to the last fibre, from the very wealth of our

own conscience and the very force of our own history. We haven't, for such an instance of our genius, to reach out to strange places or across other, and otherwise productive, tracts; the exemplary instance himself has well-nigh as a matter of course reached and revelled, for that is exactly our way in proportion as we feel ourselves clear. But the kind of experience so entailed, of contribution so gathered, is just what we wear easiest when we have been least stinted of it, and what our English use of makes perhaps our vividest reference to our thick-growing native determinants."

HENRY JAMES: *Rupert Brooke.* 1916.

21. ENGLISH PRIDE

I HAVE above noticed the farther and incalculable good it was to me that Acland took me up in my first and foolishest days, and with pretty irony and loving insight,—or, rather, sympathy with what was best, and blindness to what was worst in me,—gave me the good of seeing a noble young English life in its purity, sagacity, honour, reckless daring, and happy piety; its English pride shining prettily through all, like a girl's in her beauty. It is extremely interesting to me to contrast the Englishman's silently conscious pride in what he *is*, with the vexed restlessness and wretchedness of the Frenchman, on his thirst for "gloire," to be gained by agonized effort to become something he is *not*.

One day when the Cherwell was running deep over one of its most slippery weirs, question arising between Acland and me whether it were traversable, and I declaring it too positively to be impassable, Acland instantly took off boot and sock, and walked over and back. He ran no risk but of a sound ducking, being, of course, a strong swimmer: and I suppose him wise enough not to have done it had there been real danger. But he would certainly have run the margin fine, and possessed in its quite highest, and in a certain sense, most laughable degree, the constitutional English serenity in danger, which, with the foolish of us, degenerates into delight in it, but with the wise, whether soldier or physician, is the basis of the most fortunate action and swiftest decision of deliberate skill. When, thirty years afterwards, Dr. Acland was wrecked in the steamer *Tyne*, off the coast of Dorset, the steamer having lain wedged on the rocks all night,—no one knew what rocks,—and the dawn breaking on half a mile of dangerous surf between the ship and shore,—the officers, in anxious debate, the crew, in confusion, the passengers, in hysterics or at prayers, were all astonished, and many scandalized, at the appearance of Dr. Acland from the saloon in punctilious morning dress, with the announcement that "breakfast was ready." To the impatient clamour of indignation with which his unsympathetic conduct was greeted, he replied by pointing out that not a boat could go on shore, far less

come out from it, in that state of the tide, and that in the meantime, as most of them were wet, all cold, and at the best must be dragged ashore through the surf, if not swim for their lives in it, they would be extremely prudent to begin the day, as usual, with breakfast. The hysterics ceased, the confusion calmed, what wits anybody had became available to them again, and not a life was ultimately lost.

JOHN RUSKIN: *Pr&terita.* 1885.

HISTORICAL IDEALS

22. HERALDS OF FAME

'Tis scarce a quarter of an age since such a happy balance of power was settled between our prince and people as has firmly secured our hitherto precarious liberties, and removed from us the fear of civil commotions, wars and violence, either on account of religion and worship, the property of the subject, or the contending titles of the Crown. But as the greatest advantages of this world are not to be bought at easy prices, we are still at this moment expending both our blood and treasure to secure to ourselves this inestimable purchase of our free government and national constitution. And as happy as we are in this establishment at home, we are still held in a perpetual alarm by the aspect of affairs abroad, and by the terror of that Power which, ere mankind had well recovered the misery of those barbarous ages consequent to the Roman yoke, has again threatened the world with a universal monarchy and a new abyss of ignorance and superstition.

The British Muses, in this din of arms, may well lie abject and obscure, especially being as yet in their mere infant state. They have hitherto scarce arrived to anything of shapeliness or person. They

lisp as in their cradles; and their stammering tongues, which nothing besides their youth and rawness can excuse, have hitherto spoken in wretched pun and quibble. Our dramatic Shakspere, our Fletcher, Jonson, and our epic Milton preserve this style. And even a latter race, scarce free of this infirmity, and aiming at a false sublime, with crowded simile and mixed metaphor (the hobby-horse and rattle of the Muses), entertain our raw fancy and unpractised ear, which has not as yet had leisure to form itself and become truly musical.

But those reverend bards, rude as they were, according to their time and age, have provided us, however, with the richest ore. To their eternal honour they have withal been the first of Europeans who, since the Gothic model of poetry, attempted to throw off the horrid discord of jingling rhyme. They have asserted ancient poetic liberty, and have happily broken the ice for those who are to follow them, and who, treading in their footsteps, may at leisure polish our language, lead our ear to finer pleasure, and find out the true rhythmus and harmonious numbers, which alone can satisfy a just judgment and muse-like apprehension.

. . . . . .

We are now in an age when Liberty is once again in its ascendant. And we are ourselves the happy nation who not only enjoy it at home, but by our greatness and power give life and vigour to it

abroad; and are the head and chief of the European League, founded on this common cause. Nor can it, I presume, be justly feared that we should lose this noble ardour, or faint under the glorious toil, though, like ancient Greece, we should for succeeding ages be contending with a foreign power, and endeavouring to reduce the exorbitancy of a *Grand Monarch*. 'Tis with us at present as with the Roman people in those early days, when they wanted only repose from arms to apply themselves to the improvement of arts and studies. We should in this case need no ambitious monarch to be allured, by hope of fame or secret views of power, to give pensions abroad as well as at home, and purchase flattery from every profession and science. We should find a better fund within ourselves, and might, without such assistance, be able to excel by our own virtue and emulation.

Well it would be, indeed, and much to the honour of our nobles and princes, would they freely help in this affair, and by a judicious application of their bounty facilitate this happy birth, of which I have ventured to speak in a prophetic style. 'Twould be of no small advantage to them during their life, and would, more than all their other labours, procure them an immortal memory. For they must remember that their fame is in the hands of penmen; and that the greatest actions lose their force and perish in the custody of unable and mean writers.

Let a nation remain ever so rude or barbarous,

it must have its poets, rhapsoders, historiographers, antiquaries of some kind or other, whose business it will be to recount its remarkable transactions, and record the achievements of its civil and military heroes. And though the military kind may happen to be the farthest removed from any acquaintance with Letters or the Muses, they are yet, in reality, the most interested in the cause and party of these remembrances. The greatest share of fame and admiration falls naturally on the armed worthies. The great in council are second in the Muses' favour. But if worthy poetic geniuses are not found, nor able penmen raised, to rehearse the lives and celebrate the high actions of great men, they must be traduced by such recorders as chance presents. We have few modern heroes who, like Xenophon or Caesar, can write their own *Commentaries*. And the raw memoir-writings and unformed pieces of modern statesmen, full of their interested and private views, will in another age be of little service to support their memory or name, since already the world begins to sicken with the kind. 'Tis the learned, the able and disinterested historian, who takes place at last. And when the signal poet or herald of fame is once heard, the inferior trumpets sink in silence and oblivion.

ANTHONY EARL OF SHAFTESBURY:
Soliloquy, or Advice to an Author. 1710.

23. RETROSPECTIVE IMMORTALITY

WHAT a thing it is to grasp the nature of the whole firmament and of its stars, all the movements and changes of the atmosphere, whether it strikes terror into ignorant minds by the majestic roll of thunder or by fiery comets, or whether it freezes into snow or hail, or whether again it falls softly and gently in showers or dew; then perfectly to understand the shifting winds and all the exhalations and vapours which earth and sea give forth; next to know the hidden virtues of plants and metals and understand the nature and the feelings, if that may be, of every living creature; next the delicate structure of the human body and the art of keeping it in health; and, to crown all, the divine might and power of the soul, and any knowledge we may have gained concerning thost beings which we call spirits and genii and daemons. There is an infinite number of subjects besides these, a great part of which might be learnt in less time than it would take to enumerate them all. So at length, gentlemen, when universal learning has once completed its cycle, the spirit of man, no longer confined within this dark prison-house, will reach out far and wide, till it fills the whole world and the space far beyond with the expansion of its divine greatQess. Then at last most of the chances and changes of the world will be so quickly perceived that to him who holds this stronghold of wisdom

hardly anything can happen in his life which is unforeseen or fortuitous. He will indeed seem to be one whose rule and dominion the stars obey, to whose command earth and sea harken, and whom winds and tempests serve; to whom, lastly, Mother Nature herself has surrendered, as if indeed some god had abdicated the throne of the world and entrusted its rights, laws, and administration to him as governor.

Besides this, what delight it affords to the mind to take its flight through the history and geography of every nation and to observe the changes in the conditions of kingdoms, races, cities, and peoples, to the increase of wisdom and righteousness. This, my hearers, is to live in every period of the world's history, and to be as it were coeval with time itself. And indeed, while we look to the future for the glory of our name, this will be to extend and stretch our lives backward before our birth, and to wrest from grudging Fate a kind of retrospective immortality. I pass over a pleasure with which none can compare—to be the oracle of many nations, to find one's home regarded as a kind of temple, to be a man whom kings and states invite to come to them, whom men from near and far flock to visit, while to others it is a matter for pride if they have but set eyes on him once. These are the rewards of study, these, are the prizes which learning can and often does bestow upon her votaries in private life.

JOHN MILTON: *Prolusiones Oratoria.* 1632 (trans. Phyllis B. Tillyard).

24. THE PATRIOT KING

No completer incarnation could be shown us of the militant Englishman—*Anglais pur sang;* but it is not only, as some have seemed to think, with the highest, the purest, the noblest quality of English character that his just and far-seeing creator has endowed him. The godlike equity of Shakespeare's judgment, his implacable and impeccable righteousness of instinct and of insight, was too deeply ingrained in the very core of his genius to be perverted by any provincial or pseudo-patriotic prepossessions; his patriotism was too national to be provincial. Assuredly no poet ever had more than he: not even the king of men and poets who fought at Marathon and sang of Salamis: much less had any or has any one of our own, from Milton on to Campbell and from Campbell even to Tennyson. In the mightiest chorus *of King Henry V* we hear the pealing ring of the same great English trumpet that was yet to sound over the battle of the Baltic, and again in our later day over a sea-fight of Shakespeare's own, more splendid and heart-cheering in its calamity than that other and all others in their triumph; a war-song and a sea-song divine and deep as death or as the sea, making thrice more glorious at once the glorious three names of England, of Grenville, and of Tennyson for ever. From the affectation of cosmopolitan indifference not ^Eschylus, not Pindar, not Dante's very self was more alien

or more free than Shakespeare; but there was nothing of the dry Tyrtaean twang, the dull mechanic resonance as of wooden echoes from a platform, in the great historic chord of his lyre. "He is very English, too English, even," says the Master on whom his enemies alone—assuredly not his most loving, most reverent, and most thankful disciples—might possibly and plausibly retort that he was "very French, too French, even"; but he certainly was not "too English" to see and cleave to the main fact, the radical and central truth, of personal or national character, of typical history or tradition, without seeking to embellish, to degrade, in either or in any way to falsify it. From king to king, from cardinal to cardinal, from the earliest in date of subject to the latest of his histories, we find the same thread running, the same link of honourable and righteous judgment, of equitable and careful equanimity, connecting and combining play with play in an unbroken and infrangible chain of evidence to the singleness of the poet's eye, the identity of the workman's hand, which could do justice and would do no more than justice, alike to Henry and to Wolsey, to Pandulph and to John. His typical English hero or historic protagonist is a man of their type who founded and built up the empire of England in India; a hero after the future pattern of Hastings and of Clive; not less daringly sagacious and not more delicately scrupulous, not less indomitable or more impeccable than they.

A type by no means immaculate, a creature not at all too bright and good for English nature's daily food in times of mercantile or military enterprise; no whit more if no whit less excellent and radiant than reality. *Arnica Britannia, sed magis arnica veritas.* The master poet of England—all Englishmen may reasonably and honourably be proud of it—has not two weights and two measures for friend and foe.

A. C. SWINBURNE: *A Study of Shakespeare.* 1880.

25. PATRIOTIC REMINISCENCE

UT this Richard II. O God forbid that however unsuited for the stage yet even there it should fall dead on the hearts of jacobinized Englishmen. Then indeed *prateriit gloria mundi.* The spirit of patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating spirit of this drama.

It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakespeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts *of Henry IV,* by presenting, as it were, our very selves. Shakespeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that, namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together.

. . . . . .

The popularity of *Richard II* is owing, in a great measure, to the masterly delineation of the principal character; but were there no other ground for admiring it, it would deserve the highest applause, from the fact that it contains the most magnificent, and, at the same time, the truest eulogium of our native country that the English language can boast, or which can be produced from any other tongue, not excepting the proud claims of Greece and Rome. When I feel, that upon the morality of Britain depends the safety of Britain, and that her morality is supported and illustrated by our national feeling, I cannot read these grand lines without joy and triumph. Let it be remembered, that while this country is proudly pre-eminent in morals, her enemy has only maintained his station by superiority in mechanical appliances. Many of those who hear me will, no doubt, anticipate the passage I refer to, and it runs as follows:—

"This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise;
This fortress, built by nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
Feared by their breed, and famous by their birth,
Renowned for their deeds as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,

As is the Sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's Son:
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out, I die pronouncing it,
Like to a tenement, or pelting farm.
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds."

Act II., Scene i.

Every motive to patriotism, every cause producing it, is here collected, without one of those cold abstractions so frequently substituted by modern poets. If this passage were recited in a theatre with due energy and understanding, with a proper knowledge of the words, and a fit expression of their meaning, every man would retire from it secure in his country's freedom, if secure in his own constant virtue.

S. T. COLERIDGE: *Notes on the History Plays of Shakespeare* (1818) *and Lectures* (1811-12).

26. NATIONAL BROTHERHOOD

OF all human affections, the noblest and most becoming human nature is that of love to one's country. This, perhaps, will easily be allowed by all men who have really a country, and are of the number of those who may be called a people, as enjoying the happiness of a real constitution and polity by which they are free and inde-

pendent. There are few such countrymen or freemen so degenerate as directly to discountenance or condemn this passion of love to their community and national brotherhood. The indirect manner of opposing this principle is the most usual. We hear it commonly as a complaint, "That there is little of this love extant in the world." From whence 'tis hastily concluded, "That there is little or nothing of friendly or social affection inherent in our nature or proper to our species." 'Tis however apparent that there is scarce a creature of human kind who is not possessed at least of some inferior degree or meaner sort of this natural affection to a country.

> Nescioqua natale solura dulcedine captos
> Ducit.[1]

'Tis a wretched aspect of humanity which we figure to ourselves when we would endeavour to resolve the very essence and foundation of this generous passion into a relation to mere clay and dust, exclusively of anything sensible, intelligent, or moral. 'Tis, I must own, on certain relations or respective proportions that all natural affection does in some measure depend. And in this view it cannot, I confess, be denied that we have each of us a certain relation to the mere earth itself, the very mould or surface of that planet in which, with other animals of various sorts, we (poor reptiles!) were also bred and nourished. But had it happened to

[1] Ovid, *Pont.* i. iii. 35. ("Our own country charms and draws us with a certain sweetness.")

one of us British men to have been born at sea, could we not therefore properly be called British men? Could we be allowed countrymen of no sort, as having no distinct relation to any certain soil or region? no original neighbourhood but with the watery inhabitants and sea-monsters? Surely, if we were born of lawful parents, lawfully employed, and under the protection of law, wherever they might be then detained, to whatever colonies sent, or whithersoever driven by any accident, or in expeditions or adventures in the public service or that of mankind, we should still find we had a home and country ready to lay claim to us. We should be obliged still to consider ourselves as fellow-citizens, and might be allowed to love our country or nation as honestly and heartily as the most inland inhabitant or native of the soil. Our political and social capacity would undoubtedly come in view, and be acknowledged full as natural and essential in our species as the parental and filial kind, which gives rise to what we peculiarly call natural affection. Or supposing that both our birth and parents had been unknown, and that in this respect we were in a manner younger brothers in society to the rest of mankind, yet from our nurture and education we should surely espouse some country or other, and joyfully embracing the protection of a magistracy, should of necessity and by force of nature join ourselves to the general society of mankind, and those in particular with whom we had entered into a

nearer communication of benefits and closer sympathy of affections. It may therefore be esteemed no better than a mean subterfuge of narrow minds to assign this natural passion for society and a country to such a relation as that of a mere fungus or common excrescence to its parent-mould or nursing dunghill.

The relation of countryman, if it be allowed anything at all, must imply something moral and social. The notion itself presupposes a naturally civil and political state of mankind, and has reference to that particular part of society to which we owe our chief advantages as men and rational creatures, such as are naturally and necessarily united for each other's happiness and support, and for the highest of all happinesses and enjoyments, "the intercourse of minds, the free use of our reason, and the exercise of mutual love and friendship."

ANTHONY EARL OF SHAFTESBURY :
Miscellaneous Reflections. 1711.

27. THE VIRTUES OF INSULARITY

THE importance of the history of a country depends, not upon the splendour of its exploits, but upon the degree to which its actions are due to causes springing out of itself. If, therefore, we could find some civilized people who had worked out their civilization entirely by themselves; who had escaped all foreign influence, and who had been

neither benefited nor retarded by the personal peculiarities of their rulers,—the history of such a people would be of paramount importance; because it would present a condition of normal and inherent development; it would show tjie laws of progress acting in a state of isolation; it would be, in fact, an experiment ready-made, and would possess all the value of that artificial contrivance to which natural science is so much indebted.

To find such a people as this is obviously impossible; but the duty of the philosophic historian is, to select for his especial study the country in which the conditions have been most closely followed. Now, it will be readily admitted, not only by ourselves, but by intelligent foreigners, that in England, during, at all events, the last three centuries, this has been done more constantly and more successfully than in any other country. I say nothing of the number of our discoveries, the brilliancy of our literature, or the success of our arms. These are invidious topics; and other nations may perhaps deny to us those superior merits which we are apt to exaggerate. But I take up this single position, that of all European countries, England is the one where, during the longest period, the government has been most quiescent, and the people most active; where popular freedom has been settled on the widest basis; where each man is most able to say what he thinks, and do what he likes: where every one can follow his own bent, and propagate his own

opinions: where, religious persecution being little known, the play and flow of the human mind may be clearly seen, unchecked by those restraints to which it is elsewhere subjected; where the profession of heresy is least dangerous, and the practice of dissent most common; where hostile creeds flourish side by side, and rise and decay without disturbance, according to the wants of the people, unaffected by the wishes of the church, and uncontrolled by the authority of the state; where all interests, and all classes, both spiritual and temporal, are most left to take care of themselves; where that meddlesome doctrine called Protection was first attacked, and where alone it has been destroyed; and where, in a word, those dangerous extremes to which interference gives rise having been avoided, despotism and rebellion are equally rare, and concession being recognized as the groundwork of policy, the national progress has been least disturbed by the power of privileged classes, by the influence of particular sects, or by the violence of arbitrary rulers.

That these are the characteristics of English history is notorious: to some men a matter of boast, to others of regret. And when to these circumstances we add, that England, owing to its insular formation, was, until the middle of the last century, rarely visited by foreigners, it becomes evident tha., in our progress as a people, we have been less affected than any other by the two main sources of interference,

namely, the authority of government, and the influence of foreigners. In the sixteenth century, it became a fashion, among the English nobility, to travel abroad; but it was by no means the fashion for foreign nobility to travel in England. In the seventeenth century, the custom of travelling for amusement spread so much, that, among the rich and idle classes, there were few Englishmen who did not, at least once in their life, cross the Channel; while the same classes in other countries, partly because they were less wealthy, partly from an inveterate dislike to the sea, hardly ever entered our island, unless compelled to do so on some particular business. The result was, that in other countries, and particularly in France and Italy, the inhabitants of the great cities became gradually accustomed to foreigners, and, like all men, were imperceptibly influenced by what they often saw. On the other hand, there were many of our cities in which none but Englishmen ever set their feet; and inhabitants, even of the metropolis, might grow old without having once seen a single foreigner, except, perhaps, some dull and pompous ambassador taking his airing on the banks of the Thames. And although it is often said that, after the restoration of Charles I I , our national character began to be greatly influenced by French example, this, as I shall fully prove, was confined to that small and insignificant part of society which hung about the court: nor did it produce any marked effect upon

the two most important classes,—the intellectual class, and the industrious class. The movement may, indeed, be traced in the most worthless parts of our literature,—in the shameless productions of Buckingham, Dorset, Etherege, Killigrew, Mulgrave, Rochester, and Sedley. But neither then, nor at a much later period, were any of our great thinkers influenced by the intellect of France: on the contrary, we find in their ideas, and even in their style, a certain rough and native vigour, which, though offensive to our more polished neighbours, has at least the merit of being the indigenous product of our own country. The origin and extent of that connexion between the French and English intellects which subsequently arose, is a subject of immense importance; but, like most others of real value, it has been entirely neglected by historians. In the present work, I shall attempt to supply this deficiency: in the mean time I may say, that although we have been, and still are, greatly indebted to the French for our improvement in taste, in refinement, in manners, and indeed in all the amenities of life, we have borrowed from them nothing absolutely essential, nothing by which the destinies of nations are permanently altered. On the other hand, the French have not only borrowed from us some very valuable political institutions, but even the most important event in French history is due, in no small degree, to our influence. Their revolution of 1789 was, as is well known,

brought about, or, to speak more properly, was mainly instigated by a few great men, whose works, and afterwards whose speeches, roused the people to resistance; but what is less known, and nevertheless is certainly true, is, that these eminent leaders learnt in England that philosophy and those principles by which, when transplanted into their own country, such fearful and yet such salutary results were effected.

It will not, I hope, be supposed, that by these remarks I mean to cast any reflection on the French, a great and admirable people; a people in many respects superior to ourselves; a people from whom we have still much to learn, and whose deficiencies, such as they are, arise from the perpetual interference of a long line of arbitrary rulers. But, looking at this matter historically, it is unquestionably true that we have worked out our civilization with little aid from them, while they have worked out theirs with great aid from us. At the same time, it must also be admitted, that our governments have interfered less with us than their governments have interfered with them. And without in the least prejudging the question as to which is the greater country, it is solely on these grounds that I consider our history more important than theirs: and I select for especial study the progress of English civilization, simply because, being less affected by agencies not arising from itself, we can the more clearly discern in it the normal march of society,

and the undisturbed operation of those great laws by which the fortunes of mankind are ultimately regulated.

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE : ***History of Civilization in England.*** 1857.

28. THE TWO ENGLANDS

OF all countries England is at once the most national and insular in its cultural tradition and the most cosmopolitan in its economic and imperial position. In this it resembles Rome, the peasant state that became the organiser of a world empire and the centre of a cosmopolitan civilisation.

And as the development of Roman culture was late and backward in comparison with the Hellenic world, so was it with the English national culture as compared with that of continental Europe. The development of a native English culture was checked by the Norman Conquest, and during the best part of the Middle Ages England was under the dominion of an alien culture that had its roots across the channel. England first began to become herself in the fourteenth century, when the mediaeval unity was passing away, and it was only in the three centuries that followed the Renaissance and the Reformation that the English national culture acquired its characteristic form.

At that time civilisation on the Continent was

following in a remarkable way the footsteps of the great Mediterranean civilisation of the past. Renaissance Italy inherited the traditions of Hellenism, while Spain and Baroque Austria and the France of Louis XIV inherited the Roman-Byzantine tradition of state absolutism and sacred monarchy. But in England there is no room for such comparisons. Partly, though not entirely, as a result of the Reformation, she remained apart from the main current of European life, following her own part and jealously guarding against any influence from outside, somewhat after the fashion of Japan in the Far East during this very period. Her development was in fact the exact opposite to that of Germany during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, open as the latter was to all the cultural and political currents in Europe, receiving French influence from across the Rhine, Italian influence through Austria, and Swedish influence from the Baltic.

It was this accentuation of her island position which was the essential condition of England's achievement. She was a little world, secure behind the guardian barrier of the narrow seas, the most peaceful land in Europe, almost the only spot in the world that was free from the constant menace of war and invasion. Hence there was a general relaxation of tension in the social organism. There was no need for the rigid centralisation, the standing armies, the bureaucratic organisation, which on the

Continent were absolutely necessary for national survival. And so, while in other countries culture concentrated itself in cities and in the courts of kings, in England it spread itself abroad over the open country. A new type of civilisation grew up that was not urban or courtly, but essentially rural and based upon the life of the family.

It was this characteristic that was the source of the exceptional stability and strength of the English social organism which so impressed continental observers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. On the Continent ever since the time of the Roman Empire every people and every state was divided against itself by a duality of culture. On the one hand there were the traditions of the court and the city which, finally, after the Renaissance, fused with one another; on the other the peasant tradition, which to a greater or less extent preserved an older and more primitive culture and possessed its own art, its own costume, its own social customs, almost its own laws. We have an extreme instance of this in Russia during the last two centuries, where the contrast of the French-speaking official or courtier of Petersburg, living by the culture of modern Europe, and the patriarchal peasant, living in a half-Slavonic, half-Byzantine, wholly mediaeval world, was so intense as to be unbearable, and ultimately caused the dissolution of Russian society. But in England, at least since the close of the Middle Ages, there has been no such contrast. Our society and

culture have been single and homogeneous. We have not had a special peasant art and costume because our whole culture has been a rural culture. That characteristic figure, the eighteenth-century squire, was not the member of a noble class as was even the smallest German baron or French count; he was a glorified yeoman. No doubt he, too, was sometimes an oppressor, but he was never a stranger, and when he was most high-handed, as in the enclosure of the commons, he was fighting the last stage of the peasant's long battle for the Plough against the Waste. Like Tennyson's Lincolnshire farmer, he thought that a few moral deficiencies would be overlooked in the man who ' 'stubbed Thurnaby Waste."

Thus the English culture and the social discipline that went with it were not a civilisation imposed from above, but grew up from below out of the very soil of England. When all the great states of the Continent were shaken by revolution and disorder, England alone stood firm and preserved an unbroken continuity with her past. Her constitution was not a paper document, based on the most admirable abstract principles and entirely altered every few years, it was herself; she could not throw it aside any more than a man can discard his own personality.

One of the most original Catholic sociologists of the nineteenth century, Frederic Leplay, devoted a work to the study of English society. He had been

impressed when first he visited England in 1836 by the stability of the social organism and by the weakness of the forces of irreligion and disorder which were then in the ascendant throughout Western Europe; and he found the source of England's greatness in the characteristics that we have just described. It was not simply the strength of family life and the home, but the way in which a whole culture and social order had been built up on these foundations. Elsewhere in those households that he studied so devotedly in the six volumes of his *Ouvriers Europfons,* he has seen family life that was as strong or stronger, from a moral and economic point of view, but nowhere else was it the centre of the national culture and polity to the same extent as it was in England.

This development had its roots far back in the Middle Ages. Long before the Reformation English society had begun to acquire its characteristic rural aspect. The English village, with its pacific manor-house and its richly adorned parish church, was already far different from those of the war-harried castle-studded countrysides of France and Germany. But it was only in the centuries which followed the Renaissance that this English society began to bear fruit in an equally distinctive style and culture. How incomparably English are the typical Tudor and Jacobean manor and farmhouse, and how rich is their social content. They make us understand how it was possible for England to produce men like

Herrick and Herbert and Henry Vaughan, poets who lived out of the world, far from the possibilities of the city and its culture, but whose art had a purity and freshness as far from that of the poets of the same period in Italy and France as an English meadow from a Neapolitan street.

And with the following century the contrast between English and continental culture becomes even stronger. It is true that the hard brilliance and rationalism of the French eighteenth century had its parallel here in Pope and Bolingbroke, and later in Chesterfield and Gibbon, but the victory was not with them. More and more their spirit was felt to be alien, their spiritual home was at Paris and Lausanne. The heart of England was with the solid traditionalism of Dr. Johnson or the intense pietism of Cowper and the Wesleys. Moreover, the coming of the house of Hanover, so far from introducing continental influences, served rather to weaken the prestige of the court and to make the country more obstinately English than ever. Neither our society nor our art served the court and the capital, both alike centred in the family, in the country houses or in the homes of the merchants. And this is true of both the chief manifestations of English art during this period, the great portrait painters and the late Georgian school of architecture and decoration, of which the typical representatives are the brothers Adam.

In the latter the English tradition has reached

maturity. It is no longer purely rural, it has begun to impress its image on the town and on urban life. The ordinary London house of this type, with the reserved severity of its exterior and the intimate refinement and grace of the interior, is a true type of the society which produced it. A society whose civilisation was essentially private, bound up with the family and the home, and which brings with it even into the city and its suburbs something of the quiet and retirement of the countryside. It is the complete antithesis of the Latin social ideal, which is communal and public, which finds its artistic expression in the baroque town square, with its fountains and statuary and monumental facades, a fitting background to the open-air life of a many-coloured voluble crowd.

So if one compares the London of a hundred years ago, when this English culture was still practically intact, with the great cities of the Continent with their ancient tradition of a splendid civic life, the comparison is at first all in their favour. In England there was a rustic individualism and a boorishness which sink at times to downright callousness and brutality, as in the penal code and the treatment of the poor. But as soon as we leave public life and look behind the severe and sometimes dingy facade, what treasures does the interior life of that late Georgian London reveal! The harvest of Renaissance Florence was greater, may be, but there the resources of a brilliant court

called together the talent of all Italy. In London it was a spontaneous flowering from the poorest and most unpromising soil. Blake, Keats, Charles Lamb, Thomas Girtin, and the Varleys, Turner and Dickens, were all of them poor men, for the most part completely without any of the advantages of birth or education. Yet each of them is unique, each of them is a voice of England, and some of their work possesses the same unearthly beauty and spirituality which marked English poetry in the seventeenth century.

But with the close of the Georgian period a profound change begins to pass over English society. England ceases to be an agrarian state, and the new industry, which had been developing for more than half a century, becomes the dominant element in the life of the nation. The centre of gravity shifts from the village and the country house to the industrial town, the mine and the factory.

This change was not a gradual modification of the older non-industrial civilisation, it was an independent growth. For the new industry developed in just those districts of England that were most backward and farthest removed from the centres of the old culture. Great masses of population began to settle on the wild moorland of north-western England and in the valleys of the Welsh hills, and new cities grew up, like mushrooms, without plan and forethought, without corporate

responsibility or civic tradition. Thus two Englands stood over against one another without social contact. As long as the Georgian era lasted the old England still ruled, and the new nation of industrial workers lived a disenfranchised existence as a mere wealth-producing caste. Then came the ferment of the years after the Napoleonic War, the rise of Liberalism and the passing of the Reform Bill. Finally, with the repeal of the Corn Laws, the old rural England passed into the background, and a new financial industrial state took its place.

CHRISTOPHER DAWSON: *Enquiries.* 1933.

29. JUST PREJUDICE

WHEN I assert anything else, as concerning the people of England, I speak from observation, not from authority; but I speak from the experience I have had in a pretty extensive and mixed communication with the inhabitants of this kingdom, of all descriptions and ranks, and after a course of attentive observation, begun in early life, and continued for nearly forty years. I have often been astonished, considering that we are divided from you but by a slender dyke of about twenty-four miles, and that the mutual intercourse between the two countries has lately been very great, to find how little you seem to know of us. I suspect that this is owing to your forming a judgment of this nation from certain publications which do, very

erroneously, if they do at all, represent the opinions and dispositions generally prevalent in England. The vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue, of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise and puffing and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a general mark of acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that, of course, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour.

I almost venture to affirm that not one in a hundred amongst us participates in the " triumph" of the Revolution Society. If the King and Queen of France, and their children, were to fall into our hands by the chance of war, in the most acrimonious of all hostilities (I deprecate such an event, I deprecate such hostility), they would be treated with another sort of triumphal entry into London. We formerly have had a king of France in that situation; you have read how he was treated by the victor in the field; and in what manner he was

afterwards received in England. Four hundred years have gone over us; but I believe we are not materially changed since that period. Thanks to our sullen resistance to innovation, thanks to the cold sluggishness of our national character, we still bear the stamp of our forefathers. We have not (as I conceive) lost the generosity and dignity of thinking of the fourteenth century; nor as yet have we subtilized ourselves into savages. We are not the converts of Rousseau; we are not the disciples of Voltaire; Helvetius has made no progress amongst us. Atheists are not our preachers; madmen are not our lawgivers. We know that *we* have made no discoveries; and we think that no discoveries are to be made, in morality; nor many in the great principles of government, nor in the ideas of liberty, which were understood long before we were born, altogether as well as they will be after the grave has heaped its mould upon our presumption, and the silent tomb shall have imposed its law on our pert loquacity. In England we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails: we still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active monitors of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed, in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still

native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity. We have real hearts of flesh and blood beating in our bosoms. We fear God; we look up with awe to kings; with affection to parliaments; with duty to magistrates; with reverence to priests; and with respect to nobility. Why? Because when such ideas are brought before our minds, it is *natural* to be so affected; because all other feelings are false and spurious, and tend to corrupt our minds, to vitiate our primary morals, to render us unfit for rational liberty; and by teaching us a servile, licentious, and abandoned insolence, to be our low sport for a few holidays, to make us perfectly fit for, and justly deserving of, slavery, through the whole course of our lives.

You see, sir, that in this enlightened age I am bold enough to confess, that we are generally men of untaught feelings; that, instead of casting away all our old prejudices, we cherish them to a very considerable degree, and, to take more shame to ourselves, we cherish them because they are prejudices; and the longer they have lasted and the more generally they have prevailed, the more we cherish them. We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that the stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations and of ages. Many of our men of speculation, instead of exploding general prejudices,

employ their sagacity to discover the latent wisdom which prevails in them. If they find what they seek, and they seldom fail, they think it more wise to continue the prejudice, with the reason involved, than to cast away the coat of prejudice, and to leave nothing but the naked reason; because prejudice, with its reason, has a motive to give action to that reason, and an affection which will give it permanence. Prejudice is of ready application in the emergency; it previously engages the mind in a steady course of wisdom and virtue, and does not leave the man hesitating in the moment of decision, sceptical, puzzled, and unresolved. Prejudice renders a man's virtue his habit: and not a series of unconnected acts. Through just prejudice, his duty becomes a part of his nature.

EDMUND BURKE: *Reflections on the Revolution in France, in a Letter intended to have been sent to a Gentleman in Paris.* 1790.

30. A REPUBLICAN FIRMNESS

I CAN more readily admire the liberal spirit and integrity, than the sound judgment, of any man who prefers a republican form of government, in this or any other empire of equal extent, to a monarchy so qualified and limited as ours. I am convinced, that neither is it in theory the wisest system of government, nor practicable in this country. Yet, though I hope the English constitu-

tion will for ever preserve its original monarchical form, I would have the manners of the people purely and strictly republican. I do not mean the licentious spirit of anarchy and riot. I mean a general attachment to the common-weal, distinct from any partial attachment to persons or families; an implicit submission to the laws only, and an affection to the magistrate, proportioned to the integrity and wisdom with which he distributes justice to his people, and administers their affairs. The present habit of our political body appears to me the very reverse of what it ought to be. The form of the constitution leans rather more than enough to the popular branch; while, in effect, the manners of the people (of those at least who are likely to take a lead in the country) incline too generally to a dependence upon the Crown. The real friends of arbitrary power combine the facts, and are not inconsistent with their principles when they strenuously support the unwarrantable privileges assumed by the House of Commons. In these circumstances, it were much to be desired, that we had many such men as Mr. Sawbridge to represent us in Parliament. I speak from common report and opinion only, when I impute to him a speculative predilection in favour of a republic.—In the personal conduct and manners of the man, I cannot be mistaken. He has shown himself possessed of that republican firmness which the times require; and by which an English gentleman may be as usefully

and as honourably distinguished, as any citizen of ancient Rome, of Athens, or Lacedaemon.

JUNIUS : *Letter to the Printer of the Public Advertiser.* October 5, 1771.

31. FILIAL FEARS

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
No singing skylark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely: but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks, at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
O ! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook!
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly, as had made
His early manhood more securely wise!
Here he might lie on fern or withered heath,
While from the singing lark (that sings unseen
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found

Religious meanings in the forms of Nature!
And so, his senses gradually wrapt
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren—O my God!
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict—even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!
We have offended, oh! my countrymen,
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,

His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulfed in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations and societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,
One benefit-club for mutual flattery,
We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preached,
Are muttered o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
O! blasphemous! the book of life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear—all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,

Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace,
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas)
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all
Its ghastlier workings (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows),
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! No guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation or contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth
(Stuffed out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in heaven),
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,

Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats.
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch.
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Passed off to heaven, translated and not killed;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!
And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings?

Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God! O ! spare us yet awhile.
Oh! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burden of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laughed at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grew up with you round the same fireside,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells

Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!
Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder: and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes,
And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy!

I have told,
O Britons! O my brethren! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagged
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe

Pulled off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!

Such have I been deemed—
But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bonds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,
Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?

There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrowed from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the-which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!—

May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roared and died away
In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard
In this low dell, bowed not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell awhile, O soft and silent spot!
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recalled
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me,
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main,
Dim-tinted, there the mighty majesty
Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—

Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!
And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
And quickened footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell.
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is softened, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for human kind.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE: *Fears in Solitude: Written in April* 1798, *during the Alarm of an Invasion.*

32. CIVIL LIBERTY

IF an honest, and, I may truly affirm, a laborious zeal for the public service, has given me any weight in Your esteem, let me exhort and conjure You never to suffer an invasion of Your political constitution, however minute the instance may appear, to pass by, without a determined, persevering resistance. One precedent creates another. They soon accumulate, and constitute law. What yesterday was fact, to-day is doctrine.

Examples are supposed to justify the most dangerous measures; and where they do not suit exactly, the defect is supplied by analogy. Be assured that the laws, which protect us in our civil rights, grow out of the constitution, and that they must fall or flourish with it. This is not the cause of faction or of party, or of any individual, but the common interest of every man in Britain. Although the King should continue to support his present system of government, the period is not very distant at which you will have the means of redress in your own power. It may be nearer perhaps than any of us expect, and I would warn You to be prepared for it. The King may possibly be advised to dissolve the present parliament a year or two before it expires of course, and precipitate a new election, in hopes of taking the nation by surprise. If such a measure be in agitation, this very caution may defeat or prevent it.

I cannot doubt that You will unanimously assert the freedom of election, and vindicate your exclusive right to chuse your representatives. But other questions have been started, on which your determination should be equally clear and unanimous. Let it be impressed upon your minds, let it be instilled into your children, that the liberty of the press is the Palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman; and that the right of juries to return a general verdict, in all cases whatsoever, is an essential part of our constitution,

not to be controlled or limited by the judges, nor in any shape questionable by the Legislature. The power of King, Lords, and Commons, is not an arbitrary power. They are the trustees, not the owners, of the estate. The fee-simple is in us. They cannot alienate, they cannot waste. When we say that the Legislature is *supreme*, we mean, that it is the highest power known to the constitution;—that it is the highest in comparison with the other subordinate powers established by the laws. In this sense, the word *supreme* is relative, not absolute. The power of the Legislature is limited, not only by the general rules of natural justice, and the welfare of the community, but by the forms and principles of our particular constitution. If this doctrine be not true, we must admit, that King, Lords, and Commons have no rule to direct their resolutions, but merely their own will and pleasure. They might unite the Legislative and Executive Power in the same hands, and dissolve the constitution by an act of Parliament. But I am persuaded You will not leave it to the choice of seven hundred persons, notoriously corrupted by the Crown, whether seven millions of their equals shall be freemen or slaves. The certainty of forfeiting their own rights, when they sacrifice those of the nation, is no check to a brutal, degenerate mind. Without insisting upon the extravagant concession made to Harry the Eighth, there are instances, in the history of other countries, of a formal, deliberate surrender of the

public liberty into the hands of the Sovereign. If England does not share the same fate, it is because we have better resources than in the virtue of either house of parliament.

I said that the liberty of the press is the Palladium of all your rights, and that the right of the juries to return a general verdict is part of your constitution. To preserve the whole system, You must correct your Legislature. With regard to any influence of the constituent over the conduct of the representative, there is little difference between a seat in parliament for seven years and a seat for life. The prospect of your resentment is too remote; and although the last session of a septennial parliament be usually employed in courting the favour of the people, consider, that at this rate your representatives have six years for offence, and but one for atonement. A death-bed repentance seldom reaches to restitution. If you reflect, that in the changes of administration which have marked and disgraced the present reign, although your warmest patriots have in their turn been invested with the lawful and unlawful authority of the Crown, and though other reliefs or improvements have been held forth to the people, yet that no one man in office has ever promoted or encouraged a bill for shortening the duration of parliaments, but that (whoever was minister) the opposition to the measure, ever since the septennial act passed, has been constant

and uniform on the part of government—You cannot but conclude, without the possibility of a doubt, that long parliaments are the foundation of the undue influence of the Crown. This influence answers every purpose of arbitrary power to the Crown, with an expence and oppression to the people, which would be unnecessary in an arbitrary government. The best of our ministers find it the easiest and most compendious mode of conducting the King's affairs; and all ministers have a general interest in adhering to a system, which of itself is sufficient to support them in office, without any assistance from personal virtue, popularity, labour, abilities, or experience. It promises every gratification to avarice and ambition, and secures impunity. These are truths unquestionable. If they make no impression, it is because they are too vulgar and notorious. But the inattention or indifference of the nation has continued too long. You are roused at last to a sense of your danger. The remedy will soon be in your power. *Ifjunius* lives, You shall often be reminded of it. If, when the opportunity presents itself, You neglect to do your duty to yourselves and to posterity, to God and to your country, I shall have one consolation left, in common with the meanest and basest of mankind: Civil liberty may still last the life of

JUNIUS : *The Letters ofjunius: Dedication to the English Nation.* 1772.

33. THE INSTITUTION OF JURIES

GENTLEMEN of the Grand Jury,

There is no part in all the excellent frame of our constitution, which an Englishman can, I think, contemplate with such delight and admiration; nothing, which must fill him with such gratitude to our earliest ancestors, as that branch of British liberty, from which, gentlemen, you derive your authority of assembling here on this day.

The institution of Juries, gentlemen, is a privilege which distinguishes the liberty of Englishmen from those of all other nations: for as we find no traces of this in the antiquities of the Jews, or Greeks, or Romans; so it is an advantage, which is at present solely confined to this country: not so much, I apprehend, from the reasons assigned by Fortescue, in his book *de Laudibus, cap. 29*, namely, .'because there are more husbandmen, and fewer freeholders, in other countries"; as because other countries have less of freedom than this: and being for the most part subjected to tfre absolute will of their governors, hold their lives, liberties, and properties at the discretion of those governors, and not under the protection of certain laws. In such countries, it would be absurd to look for any share of power in the hands of the people.

And if juries in general be so very signal a blessing to this nation, as Fortescue, in the book I have just cited, thinks it: "A method," says he, "much

more available and effectual for the trial of truth, than is the form of any other laws of the world, as it is farther from the danger of corruption and subornation"; what, gentlemen, shall we say of the institution of grand juries, by which an Englishman, so far from being convicted, cannot be even tried, not even put on his trial in any capital case, at the suit of the crown, unless, perhaps, in one or two very special instances, till twelve men at the least have said on their oaths, that there is a probable cause for his accusation! Surely we may in a kind of rapture cry out with Fortescue, speaking of the second jury, "Who then can unjustly die in England for any criminal offence, seeing he may have so many helps for the favour of his life, and that none may condemn him, but his neighbours, good and lawful men, against whom he hath no manner of exception ?"

To trace the original of this great and singular privilege, or to say when and how it began, is not an easy task; so obscure indeed are the footsteps of it through the first ages of our history, that my Lord Hale, and even my Lord Coke, seem to have declined it. Nay, this latter, in his account of his second or petty jury, is very succinct; and contents himself with saying, *Co. Lit.* 155, i, that it is very ancient and before the conquest. . . . So just a value have our ancestors always set on this great branch of our liberties, and so jealous have they been of any attempt to diminish it, that when a

commission to punish rioters in a summary way was awarded in the second year of Richard the Second, "It was," says Mr. Lambard in his *Eirenarcha*, fol. 305, "even in the selfsame year of the same king, resumed as a thing over hard (says that writer) to be borne, that a freeman should be imprisoned without an indictment, or other trial, by his peers, as Magna Charta speaketh; until that the experience of greater evils had prepared and made the stomach of the commonwealth able and fit to digest it."

And a hard morsel surely it must have been, when the commonwealth could not digest it in that turbulent reign, which of all others in our history, seems to have afforded the most proper ingredients to make it palatable; in a reign moreover when the commonwealth seemed to have been capable of swallowing and digesting almost any thing; when judges were so prostitute as to acknowledge the king to be aboye the law; and when a parliament, which even Echard censures, and for which Mr. Rapin, with a juster indignation, tells us, he knows no name odious enough, made no scruple to sacrifice to the passions of the king, and his ministers, the lives of the most distinguished lords of the kingdom, as well as the liberties and privileges of the people. Even in that reign, gentlemen, our ancestors could not, as Mr. Lambard remarks, be brought by any necessity of the times, to give up, in any single instance, this their invaluable privilege. . . .

And, gentlemen, if we have just reason to admire the great bravery and steadiness of those our ancestors, in defeating all the attempts of tyranny against this excellent branch of our constitution, we shall have no less reason, I apprehend, to extol that great wisdom, which they have from time to time demonstrated, in well ordering and regulating their juries, so as to preserve them as clear as possible from all danger of corruption. In this light, gentlemen, we ought to consider the several laws by which the morals, the character, the substance, and good demeanor of jurors are regulated. These jurors, gentlemen, must be good and lawful men, of reputation and substance in their county, chosen at the nomination of neither party, absolutely disinterested and indifferent in the cause which they are to try. Upon the whole, the excellence of our constitution, and the great wisdom of our laws, which Fortescue, my Lord Coke, and many other great writers, have so highly extolled, is in no one instance so truly admirable as in this institution of our juries. . . .

To conclude, gentlemen, you will consider yourselves as now summoned to the execution of an office of the utmost importance to the well-being of this community: nor will you, I am confident, suffer that establishment, so wisely and carefully regulated, and so stoutly and zealously maintained by your wise and brave ancestors, to degenerate into mere form and shadow. Grand juries, gentlemen, are in reality the only censors of this nation. As

such, the manners of the people are in your hands, and in yours only. You, therefore, are the only correctors of them. If you neglect your duty, the certain consequences to the public are too apparent, for as in a garden, however well cultivated at first, if the weeder's care be omitted, the whole must in time be over-run with weeds, and will resemble the wildness and rudeness of a desert; so if those immoralities of the people, which will sprout up in the best constitution, be not from time to time corrected by the hand of justice, they will at length grow up to the most enormous vices, will overspread the whole nation, and in the end must produce a downright state of wild and savage barbarism.

To this censorial office, gentlemen, you are called by our excellent constitution. To execute this duty with vigilance, you are obliged by the duty you owe both to God and to your country. You are invested with full power for the purpose. This you have promised to do, under the sacred sanction of an oath; and you are all met, I doubt not, with disposition and resolution to perform it with that zeal which I have endeavoured to recommend, and which the peculiar licentiousness of the age so strongly requires.

HENRY FIELDING: *A Charge delivered to the Grand Jury, Westminster.* 1794.

34. LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY

ONE of the most curious peculiarities of the English people is its dislike of the executive government. We are not in this respect *"un vraie peuple moderne"* like the Americans. The Americans conceive of the executive as one of their appointed agents; when it intervenes in common life, it does so, they consider, in virtue of the mandate of the sovereign people, and there is no invasion or dereliction of freedom in that people interfering with itself. The French, the Swiss, and all nations who breathe the full atmosphere of the nineteenth century, think so too. The material necessities of this age require a strong executive; a nation destitute of it cannot be clean, or healthy, or vigorous, like a nation possessing it. By definition, a nation calling itself free should have no jealousy of the executive, for freedom means that the nation, the political part of the nation, wields the executive. But our history has reversed the English feeling: our freedom is the result of centuries of resistance, more or less legal, or more or less illegal, more or less audacious, or more or less timid, to the executive government. We have, accordingly, inherited the traditions of conflict, and preserve them in the fulness of victory. We look on State action, not as our own action, but as alien action; as an imposed tyranny from without, not as the consummated

result of our own organised wishes. I remember at the Census of 1851 hearing a very sensible old lady say that the "liberties of England were at an end'.; if Government might be thus inquisitorial, if they might ask who slept in your house, or what your age was, what, she argued, might they not ask and what might they not do?

The natural impulse of the English people is to resist authority. The introduction of effectual policemen was not liked; I know people, old people I admit, who to this day consider them an infringement of freedom, and an imitation of the *gendarmes* of France. If the original policemen had been started with the present helmets, the result might have been dubious; there might have been a cry of military tyranny, and the inbred insubordination of the English people might have prevailed over the very modern love *of perfect* peace and order. The old notion that the Government is an extrinsic agency still rules our imaginations, though it is no longer true, and though in calm and intellectual moments we well know it is not. Nor is it merely our history which produces this effect; we might get over that; but the results of that history co-operate. Our double Government so acts: when we want to point the antipathy to the executive, we refer to the jealousy of the Crown, so deeply imbedded in the very substance of constitutional authority; so many people are loth to admit the Queen, in spite of law and fact, to be the people's appointee and

agent, that it is a *gre*d rhetorical emphasis to speak of her. prerogative as something *non-popular,* and therefore to be distrusted. By the very nature of our Government our executive cannot be liked and trusted as the Swiss or the American is liked and trusted.

Out of the same history and the same results proceed our tolerance of those "local authorities" which so puzzle many foreigners. In the struggle with the Crown these local centres served as props and fulcrums. In the early parliaments it was the local bodies who sent members to parliament, the counties, and the boroughs; and in that way, and because of *their* free life, the parliament was free too. If active real bodies had not sent the representatives, they would have been powerless. This is very much the reason why our old rights of suffrage were so various; the Government let whatever people happened to be the strongest in each town choose the members. They applied to the electing bodies the test of "natural selection"; whatever set of people were locally strong enough to elect, did so. Afterwards, in the civil war, many of the corporations, like that of London, were important bases of resistance. The case of London is typical and remarkable. Probably, if there is any body more than another which an educated Englishman nowadays regards with little favour, it is the Corporation of London. He connects it with hereditary abuses perfectly preserved, with large revenues imperfectly

accounted for, with a system which stops the principal city government at an old archway, with the perpetuation of a hundred detestable parishes, with the maintenance of a horde of luxurious and useless bodies. For the want of all which makes Paris nice and splendid we justly reproach the Corporation of London; for the existence of much of what makes London mean and squalid we justly reproach it too. Yet the Corporation of London was for centuries a bulwark of English liberty. The conscious support of the near and organised capital gave the Long Parliament a vigour and vitality which they could have found nowhere else. Their leading patriots took refuge in the City, and the nearest approach to an English "sitting in permanence" is the committee at Guildhall, where all members "that came were to have voices." Down to George Ill's time the City was a useful centre of popular judgment. Here, as elsewhere, we have built into our polity pieces of the scaffolding by which it was erected.

WALTER BAGEHOT: *The English Constitution.* 1872.

35. THE DOCTRINE OF ECCENTRICITY

IN sober truth, whatever homage may be professed, or even paid, to real or supposed mental superiority, the general tendency of things throughout the world is to render mediocrity the

ascendant power among mankind. In ancient history, in the middle ages, and in a diminishing degree through the long transition from feudality tp the present time, the individual was a power in himself; and if he had either great talents or a high social position, he was a considerable power. At present individuals are lost in the crowd. In politics it is almost a triviality to say that public opinion now rules the world. The only power deserving the name is that of masses, and of governments while they make themselves the organ of the tendencies and instincts of masses. This is as true in the moral and social relations of private life as in public transactions. Those whose opinions go by the name of public opinion are not always the same sort of public: in America they are the whole white population; in England, chiefly the middle class. But they are always a mass, that is to say, collective mediocrity. And what is a still greater novelty, the mass do not now take their opinions from dignitaries in Church or State, from ostensible leaders, or from books. Their thinking is done for them by men much like themselves, addressing them or speaking in their name, on the spur of the moment, through the newspapers. I am not complaining of all this. I do not assert that anything better is compatible, as a general rule, with the present low state of the human mind. But that does not hinder the government of mediocrity from being mediocre government. No government by a democracy or a

numerous aristocracy, either in its political acts or in the opinions, qualities, and tone of mind which it fosters, ever did or could rise above mediocrity, except in so far as the sovereign Many have let themselves be guided (which in their best times they always have done) by the counsels and influence of a more highly gifted and instructed One or Few. The initiation of all wise or noble things, comes and must come from individuals; generally at first from some one individual. The honour and glory of the average man is that he is capable of following that initiative; that he can respond internally to wise and noble things, and be led to them with his eyes open. I am not countenancing the sort of .'hero-worship" which applauds the strong man of genius for forcibly seizing on the government bf the world and making it do his bidding in spite of itself. All he can claim is, freedom to point out the way. The power of compelling others into it, is not only inconsistent with the freedom and development of all the rest, but corrupting to the strong man himself. It does seem, however, that when the opinions of masses of merely average men are everywhere become or becoming the dominant power, the counterpoise and corrective to that tendency would be, the more and more pronounced individuality of those who stand on the higher eminences of thought. It is in these circumstances most especially, that exceptional individuals, instead of being deterred, should be encouraged in acting differently from the mass.

In other Jimes there was no advantage in their doing so, unless they acted, not only differently, but better. In this age the mere example of nonconformity, the mere refusal to bend the knee to custom, is itself a service. Precisely because the tyranny of opinion is such as to make eccentricity a reproach, it is desirable, in order to break through that tyranny, that people should be eccentric. Eccentricity has always abounded when and where strength of character has abounded; and the amount of eccentricity in a society has generally been proportional to the amount of genius, mental vigour, and moral courage which it contained. That so few now dare to be eccentric, marks the chief danger of the time.

There is one characteristic of the present direction of public opinion, peculiarly calculated to make it intolerant of any marked demonstration of individuality. The general average of mankind are not only moderate in intellect, but also moderate in inclinations: they have no tastes or wishes strong enough to incline them to do anything unusual, and they consequently do not understand those who have, and class all such with the wild and intemperate whom they are accustomed to look down upon. Now, in addition to this fact which is general, we have only to. suppose that a strong movement has set in towards the improvement of morals, and it is evident what we have to expect. In these days

such a movement has set in; much has actually been effected in the way of increased regularity of conduct, and discouragement of excesses; and there is a philanthropic spirit abroad, for the exercise of which there is no more inviting field than the moral and prudential improvement of our fellow-creatures. These tendencies of the times cause the public to be more disposed than at most former periods to prescribe general rules of conduct, and endeavour to make every one conform to the approved standard. And that standard, express or tacit, is to desire nothing strongly. Its ideal of character is to be without any marked character; to maim by compression, like a Chinese lady's foot, every part of human nature which stands out prominently, and tends to make the person markedly dissimilar in outline to commonplace humanity.

As is usually the case with ideals which exclude one-half of what is desirable, the present standard of approbation produces only an inferior imitation of the other half. Instead of great energies guided by vigorous reason, and strong feelings strongly controlled by a conscientious will, its result is weak feelings and weak energies, which therefore can be kept in outward conformity to rule without any strength either of will or of reason. Already energetic characters on any large scale are becoming merely traditional. There is now scarcely any outlet for energy in this country except business. The energy expended in that may still be regarded as

considerable. What little is left from that employment, is expended on some hobby; which may be a useful, even a philanthropic hobby, but is always some one thing, and generally a thing of small dimensions. The greatness of England is now all collective: individually small, we only appear capable of anything great by our habit of combining; and with this our moral and religious philanthropists are perfectly contented. But it was men of another stamp than this that made England what it has been; and men of another stamp will be needed to prevent its decline.

The despotism of custom is everywhere the standing hindrance to human advancement, being in unceasing antagonism to that disposition to aim at something better than customary, which is called, according to circumstances, the spirit of liberty, or that of progress or improvement. The spirit of improvement is not always a spirit of liberty, for it may aim at forcing improvements on an unwilling people; and the spirit of liberty, in so far as it resists such attempts, may ally itself locally and temporarily with the opponents of improvement; but the only unfailing and permanent source of improvement is liberty, since by it there are as many possible independent centres of improvement as there are individuals. The progressive principle, however, in either shape, whether as the love of liberty or of improvement, is antagonistic to the sway of Custom, involving at least emancipation

from that yoke; and the contest between the two constitutes the chief interest of the history of mankind. The greater part of the world has, properly speaking, no history, because the despotism of Custom is complete. This is the case over the whole East. Custom is there, in all things, the final appeal; justice and right mean conformity to custom; the argument of custom no one, -unless some tyrant intoxicated with power, thinks of resisting. And we see the result. Those nations must once have had originality; they did not start out of the ground populous, lettered, and versed in many of the arts of life; they made themselves all this, and were then the greatest and most powerful nations in the world. What are they now? The subjects or dependents of tribes whose forefathers wandered in the forests when theirs had magnificent palaces and gorgeous temples, but over whom custom exercised only a divided rule with liberty and progress. A people, it appears, may be progressive for a certain length of time, and then stop: when does it stop? When it ceases to possess individuality. If a similar change should befall the nations of Europe, it will not be in exactly the same shape: the despotism of custom with which these nations are threatened is not precisely stationariness. It proscribes singularity, but it does not preclude change, provided all change together. We have discarded the fixed costumes of our forefathers; every one must still dress like other people, but the fashion may change once or twice a

year. We thus take care that when there is change, it shall be for change's sake, and not from any idea of beauty or convenience; for the same idea of beauty or convenience would not strike all the world at the same moment, and be simultaneously thrown aside by all at another moment. But we are progressive as well as changeable: we continually make new inventions in mechanical things, and keep them till they are again superseded by better; we are eager for improvement in politics, in education, even in morals, though in this last our idea of improvement chiefly consists in persuading or forcing other people to be as good as ourselves. It is not progress that we object to; on the contrary, we flatter ourselves that we are the most progressive people who ever lived. It is individuality that we war against: we should think we had done wonders if we had made ourselves all alike; forgetting that the unlikeness of one person to another is generally the first thing which draws the attention of either to the imperfection of his own type, and the superiority of another, or the possibility, by combining the advantages of both, of producing something better than either. We have a warning example in China—a nation of much talent, and, in some respects, even wisdom, owing to the rare good fortune of having been provided at an early period with a particularly good set of customs, the work, in some measure, of men to whom even the most enlightened European must accord, under certain

limitations, the title of sages and philosophers. They are remarkable, too, in the excellence of their apparatus for impressing, as far as possible, the best wisdom they possess upon every mind in the community, and securing that those who have appropriated most of it shall occupy the posts of honour and power. Surely the people who did this have discovered the secret of human progressiveness, and must have kept themselves steadily at the head of the movement of the world. On the contrary they have become stationary—have remained so for thousands of years; and if they are ever to be farther improved, it must be by foreigners. They have succeeded beyond all hope in what English philanthropists are so industriously working at—at making a people all alike, all governing their thoughts and conduct by the same maxims and rules; and these are the fruits. The modern regime of public opinion is, in an unorganized form, what the Chinese educational and political systems are in an organized; and unless individuality shall be able successfully to assert itself against this yoke, Europe, not withstanding its noble antecedents and its professed Christianity, will tend to become another China.

JOHN STUART MILL: *On Liberty.* 1859.

36. INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY

1

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS,
August 1802

FAIR Star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my Country's emblem; and shouldst wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

2

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING

Here, on our native soil, we breathe once more.
The cock that crows, the smoke that curls, that sound
Of bells;—those boys who in yon meadow-ground

In white-sleeved shirts are playing; and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore;—
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in bonds; but let that pass
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

3

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

4

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
Anc^I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

5

COMPOSED BY THE SIDE OF GRASMERE LAKE

Clouds, lingering yet, extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove, Venus, and the ruddy crest of Mars
Amid his fellows beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror?—or the nether Sphere
Opening to view the abyss in which she feeds

Her own calm fires?—but list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
"Be thankful, thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: from *Poems dedicated to National Independence and Liberty.* 1802-1807.

NATIONAL TEMPER

37. THE RACIAL BLEND

EVERYONE knows how well the Greek and Latin races, with their direct sense for the visible, palpable world, have succeeded in the plastic arts. The sheer German races, too, with their honest love of fact, and their steady pursuit of it,—their fidelity to nature, in short,—have attained a high degree of success in these arts; few people will deny that Albert Diirer and Rubens, for example, are to be called masters in painting, and in the high kind of painting. The Celtic races, on the other hand, have shown a singular inaptitude for the plastic arts; the abstract, severe character of the Druidical religion, its dealing with the eye of the mind rather than the eye of the body, its having no elaborate temples and beautiful idols, all point this way from the first; its sentiment cannot satisfy itself, cannot even find a resting-place for itself, in colour and form; it presses on to the impalpable, the ideal. The forest of trees and the forest of rocks, not hewn timber and carved stones, suit its aspirations for something not to be bounded or expressed. With this tendency, the Celtic races have, as I remarked before, been necessarily almost impotent in the higher branches of the plastic arts. Ireland,

that has produced so many powerful spirits, has produced no great sculptors or painters. Cross into England. The inaptitude for the plastic art strikingly diminishes, as soon as the German, not the Celtic element, preponderates in the race. And yet in England, too, in the English race, there is something which seems to prevent our reaching real mastership in the plastic arts, as the more unmixed German races have reached it. Reynolds and Turner are painters of genius, who can doubt it? but take a European jury, the only competent jury in these cases, and see if you can get a verdict giving them the rank of masters, as this rank is given to Raphael and Correggio, or to Albert Diirer and Rubens. And observe in what points our English pair succeed, and in what they fall short. They fall short in *architectonic*^ in the highest power of composition, by which painting accomplishes the very uttermost which it is given to painting to accomplish; the highest sort of composition, the highest application of the art of painting, they either do not attempt, or they fail in it. Their defect, therefore, is on the side of art, of plastic art. And they succeed in magic, in beauty, in grace, in expressing almost the inexpressible; here is the charm of Reynolds' children and Turner's seas; the impulse to express the inexpressible carries Turner so far, that at last it carries him away, and even long before he is quite carried away, even in works that are justly extolled, one can see the stamp-mark, as the French say, of

insanity. The excellence, therefore, the success, is on the side of spirit. Does not this look as if a Celtic stream met the main German current in us, and gave it a somewhat different course from that which it takes naturally? We have Germanism enough in us, enough patient love for fact and matter, to be led to attempt the plastic arts, and we make much more way in them than the pure Celtic races make; but at a certain point our Celtism comes in, with its love of emotion, sentiment, the inexpressible, and gives our best painters a bias. And the point at which it comes in is just that critical point where the flowering of art into its perfection commences; we have plenty of painters who never reach this point at all, but remain always mere journeymen, in bondage to matter; but those who do reach it, instead of going on to the true consummation of the masters in painting, are a little overbalanced by soul and feeling, work too directly for these, and so do not get out of their art all that may be got out of it.

The same modification of our Germanism by another force which seems Celtic, is visible in our religion. Here, too, we may trace a gradation between Celt, Englishman, and German, the difference which distinguishes Englishman from German appearing attributable to a Celtic element in us. Germany is the land of exegesis, England is the land of Puritanism. The religion of Wales is more emotional and sentimental than English Puritanism;

Romanism has indeed given way to Calvinism among the Welsh,—the one superstition has supplanted the other,—but the Celtic sentiment which made the Welsh such devout Catholics, remains, and gives unction to their Methodism; theirs is not the controversial, rationalistic, intellectual side of Protestantism, but the devout, emotional, religious side. Among the Germans, Protestantism has been carried on into rationalism and science. The English hold a middle place between the Germans and the Welsh; their religion has the exterior forms and apparatus of a rationalism, so far their Germanic nature carries them; but long before they get to science, their feeling, their Celtic element catches them, and turns their religion all towards piety and unction. So English Protestantism has the outside appearance of an intellectual system, and the inside reality of an emotional system: this gives it its tenacity and force, for what is held with the ardent attachment of feeling is believed to have at the same time the scientific proof of reason. The English Puritan, therefore (and Puritanism is the characteristic form of English Protestantism), stands between the German Protestant and the Celtic Methodist; his real affinity, indeed, at present, being rather with his Welsh kinsman, if kinsman he may be called, than with his German.

Sometimes one is left in doubt from whence the check and limit to Germanism in us proceeds, whether from a Celtic source or from a Norman

source. Of the true steady-going German nature the bane is, as I remarked, flat commonness; there seems no end to its capacity for platitude; it has neither the quick perception of the Celt to save it from platitude, nor the strenuousness of the Norman ; it is only raised gradually out of it by science, but it jogs through almost interminable platitudes first. The English nature is not raised to science, but something in us, whether Celtic or Norman, seems to set a bound to our advance in platitude, to make us either shy of platitude, or impatient of it.

. . . just what constitutes special power and genius in a man seems often to be his blending with the basis of his national temperament, some additional gift or grace not proper to that temperament; Shakespeare's greatness is thus in his blending an openness and flexibility of spirit, not English, with the English basis; Addison's, in his blending a moderation and delicacy, not English, with the English basis; Burke's, in his blending a largeness of view and richness of thought, not English, with the English basis. In Germany itself, in the same way, the greatness of their great Frederic lies in his blending a rapidity and clearness, not German, with the German basis; the greatness of Goethe in his blending a love of form, nobility, and dignity,—the grand style,—with the German basis. But the quick, sure, instinctive perception of the incongruous and absurd not even genius seems to give in

Germany; at least, I can think of only one German of genius, Lessing (for Heine was a Jew, and the Jewish temperament is quite another thing from the German), who shows it in an eminent degree.

If we attend closely to the terms by which foreigners seek to hit off the impression which we and the Germans make upon them, we shall detect in these terms a difference which makes, I think, in favour of the notion I am propounding. Nations in hitting off one another's characters are apt, we all know, to seize the unflattering side rather than the flattering ; the mass of mankind always do this, and indeed they really see what is novel, and not their own, in a disfiguring light. Thus we ourselves, for instance, popularly say "the phlegmatic Dutchman" rather than "the sensible Dutchman," or "the grimacing Frenchman" rather than "the polite Frenchman." Therefore neither we nor the Germans should exactly accept the description strangers give of us, but it is enough for my purpose that strangers, in characterising us with a certain shade of difference, do at any rate make it clear that there appears this shade of difference, though the character itself, which they give us both, may be a caricature rather than a faithful picture of us. Now it is to be noticed that those sharp observers, the French,—who have a double turn for sharp observation, for they have both the quick perception of the Celt and the Latin's gift for coming plump upon the fact,—it is to be noticed, I say, that the French put a curious

distinction in their popular, depreciating, we will hope inadequate, way of hitting off us and the Germans. While they talk of the *"bttise* allemande," they talk of the *"gaucherie* anglaise"; while they talk of the "Allemand *balourd"* they talk of the "Anglais *empirе";* while they call the German *"niais,"* they call the Englishman *"melancolique"* The difference between the epithets *balourd* and *emptt're* exactly gives the difference in character I wish to seize; *balourd* means heavy and dull, *empfart* means hampered and embarrassed. This points to a certain mixture and strife of elements in the Englishman; to the clashing of a Celtic quickness of perception with a Germanic instinct for going steadily along close to the ground. The Celt, as we have seen, has not at all, in spite of his quick perception, the Latin talent for dealing with the fact, dexterously managing it and making himself master of it; Latin or Latinised people have felt contempt for him on this account, have treated him as a poor creature, just as the German, who arrives at fact in a different way from the Latins, but who arrives at it, has treated him. The couplet of Chrestien of Troyes about the Welsh—

. . . Gallois sont tous, par nature,
Plus fous que bêtes en pâture—

is well known, and expresses the genuine verdict of the Latin mind on the Celts. But the perceptive instinct of the Celt feels and anticipates, though he

has that in him which cuts him off from command of the world of fact; he sees what is wanting to him well enough; his mere eye is not less sharp, nay, it is sharper, than the Latin's, He is a quick genius, checkmated for want of strenuousness or else patience. The German has not the Latin's sharp precise glance on the world of fact, and dexterous behaviour in it; he fumbles with it much and long, but his honesty and patience give him the rule of it in the long run,—a surer rule, some of us think, than the Latin gets;—still, his behaviour in it is not quick and dexterous. The Englishman, in so far as he is German,—and he is mainly German,—proceeds in the steady-going German fashion; if he were all German he would proceed thus for ever without self-consciousness or embarrassment; but, in so far as he is Celtic, he has snatches of quick instinct which often make him feel he is fumbling, show him visions of an easier, more dexterous behaviour, disconcert him and fill him with misgiving. No people, therefore, are so shy, so self-conscious, so embarrassed as the English, because two natures are mixed in them, and natures which pull them such different ways. The Germanic part, indeed, triumphs in us, we are a Germanic people; but not so wholly as to exclude hauntings of Celtism, which clash with our Germanism, producing, as I believe, our *humour*, neither German nor Celtic, and so affect us that we strike people as odd and singular, not to be referred to any known type, and like nothing but

ourselves. "Nearly every Englishman," says an excellent and by no means unfriendly observer, George Sand, "nearly every Englishman, however good-looking he may be, has always something singular about him which easily comes to seem comic;—a sort of typical awkwardness *(gaucherie typique)* in his looks or appearance, which hardly ever wears out." I say this strangeness is accounted for by the English nature being iriixed as we have seen, while the Latin nature is all of a piece, and so is the German nature, and the Celtic nature.

MATTHEW ARNOLD \ *The Study of Celtic Literature.* 1867.

38. OUR EARTHLY INSTINCT

THERE is one strange, but quite essential, character in us: ever since the Conquest, if not earlier:—a delight in the forms of burlesque which are connected in some degree with the foulness of evil. I think the most perfect type of a true English mind in its best possible temper, is that of Chaucer; and you will find that, while it is for the most part full of thoughts of beauty, pure and wild like that of an April morning, there are even in the midst of this, sometimes momentarily jesting passages which stoop to play with evil—while the power of listening to and enjoying the jesting of entirely gross persons, whatever the feeling may be which permits it, afterwards degenerates into

forms of humour which render some of quite the greatest, wisest, and most moral of English writers now almost useless for our youth. And yet you will find whenever Englishmen are wholly without this instinct, their genius is comparatively weak and restricted.

Now; the first necessity for the doing of any great work in ideal art, is the looking upon all foulness with horror, as a contemptible though dreadful enemy. You may easily understand what I mean, by comparing the feelings with which Dante regards any form of obscenity or of base jest, with the temper in which the same things are regarded by Shakespeare. And this strange earthly instinct of ours, coupled as it is, in our good men, with great simplicity and common sense, renders them shrewd and perfect observers and delineators of actual nature, low or high; but precludes them from that speciality of art which is properly called sublime. If ever we try anything in the manner of Michael Angelo or of Dante, we catch a fall, even in literature, as Milton in the battle of the angels, spoiled from Hesiod; while in art, every attempt in this style has hitherto been the sign either of the presumptuous egotism of persons who had never really learned to be workmen, or it has been connected with very tragic forms of the contemplation of death,—it has always been partly insane, and never once wholly successful.

But we need not feel any discomfort in these

limitations of our capacity. We can do much that others cannot, and more than we have ever yet ourselves completely done. Our first great gift is in the portraiture of living people—a power already so accomplished in both Reynolds and Gainsborough that nothing is left for future masters but to add the calm of perfect workmanship to their vigour and felicity of perception. And of what value a true school of portraiture may becomfe in the future, when worthy men will desire only to be known, and others will not fear to know them, for what they truly were, we cannot from any past records of art influence yet conceive. But in my next address it will be partly my endeavour to show you how much more useful, because more humble, the labour of great masters might have been, had they been content to bear record of the souls that were dwelling with them on earth, instead of striving to give a deceptive glory to those they dreamed of in heaven.

Secondly, we have an intense power of invention and expression in domestic drama; *(King Lear* and *Hamlet* being essentially domestic in their strongest motives of interest). There is a tendency at this moment towards a noble development of our art in this direction, checked by many adverse conditions, which may be summed in one,—the insufficiency of generous civic or patriotic passion in the heart of the English people; a fault which makes its domestic affection selfish, contracted, and, therefore, frivolous.

Thirdly, in connection with our simplicity and

good-humour, and partly with that very love of the grotesque which debases our ideal, we have a sympathy with the lower animals which is peculiarly our own; and which, though it has already found some exquisite expression in the works of Bewick and Landseer, is yet quite undeveloped. This sympathy, with the aid of our now authoritative science of physiology, and in association with our British love of adventure, will, I hope, enable us to give to the future inhabitants of the globe an almost perfect record of the present forms of animal life upon it, of which many are on the point of being extinguished.

Lastly, but not as the least important of our special powers, I have to note our skill in landscape, of which I will presently speak more particularly.

JOHN RUSKIN : *Lectures on Art.* 1870.

39- GROWN CHILDREN

"THEY" (the English), says Froissart, "amused themselves sadly after the fashion of their country"—*Us se rejouissoient tristement selon la coutume de leurpays.* They have indeed a way of their own. Their mirth is a relaxation from gravity, a challenge to dull care to be gone; and one is not always clear at first, whether the appeal is successful. The cloud may still hang on the brow; the ice may not thaw at once. To help them out in their new character is an act of charity. Any thing short

of hanging or drowning is something to begin with. They do not enter into their amusements the less doggedly because they may plague others. They like a thing the better for hitting them a rap on the knuckles, for making their blood tingle. They do not dance or sing, but they make good cheer—"eat, drink, and are merry." No people are fonder of field-sports, Christmas gambols, or practical jests. Blindman's-buff, hunt-the-slipper, hot-cockles, and snap-dragon, are all approved English games, full of laughable surprises and "hair-breadth 'scapes," and serve to amuse the winter fireside after the roast-beef and plum-pudding, the spiced ale and roasted crab, thrown (hissing-hot) into the foaming tankard. Punch (not the liquor, but the puppet) is not, I fear, of English origin; but there is no place, I take it, where he finds himself more at home or meets a more joyous welcome, where he collects greater crowds at the corners of streets, where he opens the eyes or distends tlie cheeks wider, or where the bangs and blows, the uncouth gestures, ridiculous anger and screaming voice of the chief performer excite more boundless merriment or louder bursts of laughter among all ranks and sorts of people. An English theatre is the very throne of pantomime; nor do I believe that the gallery and boxes of Drury-lane or Covent-garden filled on the proper occasions with holiday folks (big or little) yield the palm for undisguised, tumultuous, inextinguishable laughter to any spot in Europe. I do

not speak of the refinement of the mirth (this is no fastidious speculation) but of its cordiality, on the return of these long-looked-for and licensed periods; and I may add here, by way of illustration, that the English common people are a sort of grown children, spoiled and sulky perhaps, but full of glee and merriment when their attention is drawn off by some sudden and striking object. The May-pole is almost gone out of fashion among us: but May-day, besides its flowering hawthorns and its pearly dews, has still its boasted exhibition of painted chimney-sweepers and their Jack-o'-the-Green, whose tawdry finery, bedizened faces, unwonted gestures, and short-lived pleasures call forth good-humoured smiles and looks of sympathy in the spectators. There is no place where trap-ball, prison-base, foot-ball, quoits, bowls are better understood or more successfully practised; and the very names of a cricket bat and ball make English fingers tingle. What happy days must "Long Robinson" have passed in getting ready his wickets and mending his bats, who when two of the fingers of his right hand were struck off by the violence of a ball, had a screw fastened to it to hold the bat, and with the other hand still sent the ball thundering against the boards that bounded *Old Lord's cricket-ground!* What delightful hours must have been his in looking forward to the matches that were to come, in recounting the feats he had performed in those that were past! I have myself whiled away whole morn-

ings in seeing him strike the ball (like a countryman mowing with a scythe) to the farthest extremity of the smooth, level, sun-burnt ground, and with long awkward strides count the notches that made victory sure! Then again, cudgel-playing, quarter-staff, bull and badger-baiting, cock-fighting are almost the peculiar diversions of this island, and often objected to us as barbarous and cruel; horse-racing is the delight and the ruirf of numbers; and the noble science of boxing is all our own. Foreigners can scarcely understand how we can squeeze pleasure out of this pastime; the luxury of hard blows given or received; the joy of the ring; nor the perseverance of the combatants. The English also excel, or are not excelled, in wiring a hare, in stalking a deer, in shooting, fishing, and hunting. England to this day boasts her Robin Hood and his merry men, that stout archer and outlaw, and patron-saint of the sporting-calendar. What a cheerful sound is that of the hunters, issuing forth from the autumnal wood and sweeping over hill and dale!

. . . "A cry more tuneable
Was never halloo'd to by hound or horn."

What sparkling richness in the scarlet coats of the riders, what a glittering confusion in the pack, what spirit in the horses, what eagerness in the followers on foot, as they disperse over the plain, or force their way over hedge and ditch! Surely, the coloured prints and pictures of these, hung up in

gentlemen's halls and village alehouses, however humble as works of art, have more life and health and spirit in them, and mark the pith and nerve of the national character more creditably than the mawkisk, sentimental, affected designs of Theseus and Pirithous, and -dEneas and Dido, pasted on foreign *salons d manger,* and the interior of country-houses. If our tastes are not epic, nor our pretensions lofty, they are simple and our own; and we may possibly enjoy our native rural sports, and the rude remembrances of them, with the truer relish on this account, that they are suited to us and we to them. The English nation, too, are naturally "brothers of the angle." This pursuit implies just that mixture of patience and pastime, of vacancy and thoughtfulness, of idleness and business, of pleasure and of pain, which is suited to the genius of an Englishman, and as I suspect, of no one else in the same degree. He is eminently gifted to stand in the situation assigned by Dr. Johnson to the angler, "at one end of a rod, with a worm at the other." I should suppose no language can show such a book as an often-mentioned one, *Walton's Complete Angler,* —so full of *naivete,* of unaffected sprightliness, of busy trifling, of dainty songs, of refreshing brooks, of shady arbours, of happy thoughts and of the herb called *Heart's Ease!* Some persons can see neither the wit nor wisdom of this genuine volume, as if a book as well as a man might not have a personal character belonging to it, amiable, venerable from

the spirit of joy and thorough goodness it manifests, independently of acute remarks or scientific discoveries: others object to the cruelty of Walton's theory and practice of trout-fishing—for my part, I should as soon charge an infant with cruelty for killing a fly, and I feel the same sort of pleasure in reading his book as I should have done in the company of this happy, child-like old man, watching his ruddy cheek, his laughing eye, the kindness of his heart, and the dexterity of his hand in seizing his finny prey! It must be confessed, there is often an odd sort of *materiality* in English sports and recreations. I have known several persons, whose existence consisted wholly in manual exercises, and all whose enjoyments lay at their finger-ends. Their greatest -happiness was in cutting a stick, in mending a cabbage-net, in digging a hole in the ground, in hitting a mark, turning a lathe, or in something else of the same kind, at which they had a certain *knack.* Well is it when we can amuse ourselves with such trifles and without injury to others! This class of character, which the *Spectator* has immortalised in the person of Will Wimble, is still common among younger brothers and gentlemen of retired incomes in town or country. The *Cockney* character is of our English growth, as this intimates a feverish fidgety delight in rural sights and sounds, and a longing wish, after the turmoil and confinement of a city-life, to transport one's-self to the freedom and breathing sweetness of a country

retreat. London is half suburbs. The suburbs of Paris are a desert; and you see nothing but crazy wind-mills, stone-walls, and a few straggling visitants in spots where in England you would find a thousand villas, a thousand terraces crowned with their own delights, or be stunned with the noise of bowling-greens and tea-gardens, or stifled with the fumes of tobacco mingling with fragrant shrubs, or the clouds of dust raised by half the population of the metropolis panting and toiling in search of a mouthful of fresh air. The Parisian is, perhaps, as well (or better) contented with himself wherever he is, stewed in his shop orchis garret; the Londoner is miserable in these circumstances, and glad to escape from them. Let no one object to the gloomy appearance of a London Sunday, compared with a Parisian one. It is a part of our politics and our religion: we would not have James the First's *Book of Sports* thrust down our throats: and besides, it is a part of our character to do one thing at a time, and not be dancing a jig and on our knees in the same breath.

WILLIAM HAZLITT : *Merry England.* 1825.

40. THE ENGLISH RENASCENCE

THE defeat of the Armada, the deliverance from Catholicism and Spain, marked the critical moment in our political development. From that hour England's destiny was fixed. She was to

be a Protestant power. Her sphere of action was to be upon the seas. She was to claim her part in the New World of the West. But the moment was as critical in her intellectual development. As yet English literature had lagged behind the literature of the rest of Western Christendom. It was now to take its place among the greatest literatures of the world. The general awakening of national life, the increase of wealth, of refinement, 'and leisure that characterized the reign of Elizabeth, was accompanied by a quickening of intelligence. The Renascence had done little for English letters. The overpowering influence of the new models both of thought and style which it gave to the world in the writers of Greece and Rome was at first felt only as a fresh check to the revival of English poetry or prose. Though England shared more than any European country in the political and ecclesiastical results of the New Learning, its literary results were far less than in the rest of Europe, in Italy, or Germany, or France. More alone ranks among the great classical scholars of the sixteenth century. Classical learning indeed all but perished at the Universities in the storm of the Reformation, nor did it revive there till the close of Elizabeth's reign. Insensibly however the influences of the Renascence fertilized the intellectual soil of England for the rich harvest that was to come. The court poetry which clustered round Wyatt and Surrey, exotic and imitative as it was, promised a new life for

English verse. The growth of grammar-schools realized the dream of Sir Thomas More, and brought the middle-classes, from the squire to the petty tradesman, into contact with the masters of Greece and Rome. The love of travel, which became so remarkable a characteristic of Elizabeth's age, quickened the temper of the wealthier nobles. .'Home-keeping youths," says Shakespere in words that mark the time, "have ever homely wits;" and a tour over the Continent became part of the education of a gentleman. Fairfax's version of Tasso, Harrington's version of Ariosto, were signs of the influence which the literature of Italy, the land to which travel led most frequently, exerted on English minds. The classical writers told upon England at large when they were popularized fay a crowd of translations. Chapman's noble version of Homer stands high above its fellows, but all the greater poets and historians of the ancient world were turned into English before the close of the sixteenth century.

It is characteristic of England that the first kind of literature to rise from its long death was the literature of history. But the form in which it rose marked the difference between the world in which it had perished and that in which it reappeared. During the Middle Ages the world had been without a past, save the shadowy and unknown past of early Rome; and annalist and chronicler told the story of the years which went before as a preface to

their tale of the present without a sense of any difference between them. But the religious, social, and political change which passed over England under the New Monarchy broke the continuity of its life; and the depth of the rift between the two ages is seen by the way in which History passes on its revival under Elizabeth from the mediaeval form of pure narrative to its modern form of an investigation and reconstruction of the past. The new interest which attached to the bygone world led to the collection of its annals, their reprinting and embodiment in an English shape.

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A far higher development of our literature sprang from the growing influence which Italy was exerting, partly through travel and partly through its poetry and romances, on the manners and taste of the time. Men made more account of a story of Boccaccio's, it was said, than of a story from the Bible. The dress, the speech, the manners of Italy became objects of almost passionate imitation, and of an imitation not always of the wisest or noblest kind. To Ascham it seemed like "the enchantment of Circe brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England." "An Italianate Englishman," ran the harderproverb of Italy itself, "is an incarnate devil." The literary form which this imitation took seemed at any rate ridiculous. John Lyly, distinguished both as a dramatist and a poet, laid aside the tradition of English style for a style modelled on the

decadence of Italian prose. Euphuism, as the new fashion has been named from the prose romance of *Euphues* which Lyly published in 1579, is best known to modern readers by the pitiless caricature in which Shakespere quizzed its pedantry, its affectation, the meaningless monotony of its far-fetched phrases, the absurdity of its extravagant conceits. Its representative, Armado in *Love's Labour Lost,* is "a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight," "that hath a mint of phrases in his brain; one whom the music of his own vain tongue doth ravish like enchanting harmony." But its very extravagance sprang from the general burst of delight in the new resources of thought and language which literature felt to be at its disposal; and the new sense of literary beauty which it disclosed in its affectation, in its love of a "mint of phrases," and the "music of its ever vain tongue," the new sense of pleasure which it revealed in delicacy or grandeur of expression, in the structure and arrangement of sentences, in what- has been termed the atmosphere of words, was a sense out of which style was itself to spring.

For a time Euphuism had it all its own way. Elizabeth was the most affected and detestable of Euphuists; and "that beauty in Court who could not parley Euphuism," a courtier of Charles the First's time tells us, "was as little regarded as she that now there speaks not French." The fashion however passed away, but the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip

Sidney shows the wonderful advance which prose had made under its influence. Sidney, the nephew of Lord Leicester, was the idol of his time, and perhaps no figure reflects the age more fully and more beautifully. Fair as he was brave, quick of wit as of affection, noble and generous in temper, dear to Elizabeth as to Spenser, the darling of the Court and of the camp, his learning and his genius made him the centre of the literary world which was springing into birth on English soil. He had travelled in France and Italy, he was master alike of the older learning and of the new discoveries of astronomy. Bruno dedicated to him as to a friend his metaphysical speculations; he was familiar with the drama of Spain, the poems of Ronsard, the sonnets of Italy. Sidney combined the wisdom of a grave councillor with the romantic chivalry of a knight-errant. "I never heard the old story of Percy and Douglas," he says, "that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." He flung away his life to save the English army in Flanders, and as he lay dying they brought a cup of water to his fevered lips. He bade them give it to a soldier who was stretched on the ground beside him. "Thy necessity," he said, "is greater than mine." The whole of Sidney's nature, his chivalry and his learning, his thirst for adventures, his freshness of tone, his tenderness and childlike simplicity of heart, his affectation and false sentiment, his keen sense of pleasure and delight, pours itself out in the pastoral

medley, forced, tedious, and yet strangely beautiful, of his *Arcadia.* In his *Defence of Poetry* the youthful exuberance of the romancer has passed into the earnest vigour and grandiose stateliness of the rhetorician. But whether in the one work or the other, the flexibility, the music, the luminous clearness of Sidney's style remain the same.

But the quickness and vivacity of English prose was first developed in a school of Italian imitators which appeared in Elizabeth's later years. The origin of English fiction is to be found in the tales and romances with which Greene and Nash crowded the market, models for which they found in the Italian novels. The brief form of these novelettes soon led to the appearance of the "pamphlet"; and a new world of readers was seen in the rapidity with which the stories or scurrilous libels that passed under this name were issued, and the greediness with which they were devoured. It was the boast of Greene that in the eight years before his death he had produced forty pamphlets. "In a night or a day would he have yarked up a pamphlet, as well as in seven years, and glad was that printer that might be blest to pay him dear for the very dregs of his wit." Modern eyes see less of the wit than of the dregs in the books of Greene and his compeers; but the attacks which Nash directed against the Puritans and his rivals were the first English works which shook utterly off the pedantry and extravagance of Euphuism. In his lightness, his facility,

his vivacity, his directness of speech, we have the beginning of popular literature. It had descended from the closet to the street, and the very change implied that the street was ready to receive it. The abundance indeed of printers and of printed books at the close of the Queen's reign shows that the world of readers and writers had widened far beyond the small circle of scholars and courtiers with which it began.

But to the national and local influences which were telling on English literature was added that of the restlessness and curiosity which characterized the age. At the moment which we have reached the sphere of human interest was widened as it has never been widened before or since by the revelation of a new heaven and a new earth. It was only in the later years of the sixteenth century that the discoveries of Copernicus were brought home to the general intelligence of mankind by Kepler and Galileo, or that the daring of the Buccaneers broke through the veil which greed of Spain had drawn across the New World of Columbus. Hardly inferior to these revelations as a source of intellectual impulse was the sudden and picturesque way in which the various races of the world were brought face to face with one another through the universal passion for foreign travel. While the red tribes of the West were described by Amerigo Vespucci, and the strange civilization of Mexico and Peru disclosed by Cortes and Pizarro, the voyages of the

Portuguese threw open the older splendours of the East, and the story of India and China was told for the first time to Christendom by Maffei and Mendoza. England took her full part in this work of discovery. Jenkinson, an English traveller, made his way to Bokhara. Willoughby brought back Muscovy to the knowledge of Western Europe. English mariners penetrated among the Esquimaux, or settled in Virginia. Drake circumnavigated the globe. The *Collection of Voyages* which was published by Hakluyt in 1582 disclosed the vastness of the world itself, the infinite number of the races of mankind, the variety of their laws, their customs, their religions, their very instincts. We see the influence of this new and wider knowledge of the world, not only in the life and richness which it gave to the imagination of the time, but in the immense interest which from this moment attached itself to Man. Shakspere's conception of Caliban, like the questioning of Montaigne, marks the beginning of a new and a truer, because a more inductive, philosophy of human nature and human history. The fascination exercised by the study of human character showed itself in the essays of Bacon, and yet more in the wonderful popularity of the drama.

And to these larger and world-wide sources of poetic power was added in England, at the moment which we have reached in its story, the impulse which sprang from national triumph, from the

victory over the Armada, the deliverance from Spain, the rolling away of the Catholic terror which had hung like a cloud over the hopes of the new people. With its new sense of security, its new sense of national energy and national power, the whole aspect of England suddenly changed. As yet the interest of Elizabeth's reign had been political and material; the stage had been crowded with statesmen and warriors, with Cecils and Walsinghams and Drakes. Literature had hardly found a place in the glories of the time. But from the moment when the Armada drifted back broken to Ferrol the figures of warriors and statesmen were dwarfed by the grander figures of poets and philosophers. Amidst the throng in Elizabeth's antechamber the noblest form is that of the singer who lays the *Faerie Queen* at her feet, or of the young lawyer who muses amid the splendours of the presence over the problems of the *Novum Organum.* The triumph at Cadiz, the conquest of Ireland, pass unheeded as we watch Hooker building up his *Ecclesiastical Polity* among the sheepfolds, or the genius of Shakspere rising year by year into supremer grandeur in a rude theatre beside the Thames.

The glory of the new literature broke on England with Edmund Spenser. . . . The appearance of the *Faerie Qyeen* in 1590 is the one critical event in the annals of English poetry; it settled in fact the question whether there was to be such a thing as English poetry or no. The older national verse

which had blossomed and died in Caedmon sprang suddenly into a grander life in Chaucer, but it closed again in a yet more complete death. Across the Border indeed the Scotch poets of the fifteenth century preserved something of their master's vivacity and colour, and in England itself the Italian poetry of the Renascence had of late found echoes in Surrey and Sidney. The new English drama too was beginning to display its wonderful powers, and the work of Marlowe had already prepared the way for the work of Shakspere. But bright as was the promise of coming song, no great imaginative poem had broken the silence of English literature for nearly two hundred years when Spenser landed at Bristol with the *Faerie Queen*. From that moment the stream of English poetry has flowed on without a break. There have been times, as in the times which immediately followed, when England has "become a nest of singing birds"; there have been times when song was scant and poor; but there never has been a time when England was wholly without a singer.

The new English verse has been true to the source from which it sprang, and Spenser has always been "the poet's poet." But in his own day he was the poet of England at large. The *Faerie Queen* was received with a burst of general welcome. It became "the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, the solace of every soldier." The poem expressed indeed the

very life of the time. It was with a true poetic instinct that Spenser fell back for the framework of his story on the faery world of Celtic romance, whose wonder and mystery had in fact become the truest picture of the wonder and mystery of the world around him. In the age of Cortes and of Raleigh dreamland had ceased to be dreamland, and no marvel or adventure that befell lady or knight was stranger than the tales which weather-beaten mariners from the Southern Seas were telling every day to grave merchants upon 'Change. The very incongruities of the story of Arthur and his knighthood, strangely as it had been built up out of the rival efforts of bard and jongleur and priest, made it the fittest vehicle for the expression of the world of incongruous feeling which we call the Renascence. To modern eyes perhaps there is something grotesque in the strange medley of figures that crowd the canvas of the *Faerie Qyeen,* in its fauns dancing on the sward where knights have hurtled together, in its alternation of the salvage-men from the New World with the satyrs of classic mythology, in the giants, dwarfs, and monsters of popular fancy who jostle with the nymphs of Greek legend and the damosels of mediaeval romance. But, strange as the medley is, it reflects truly enough the stranger medley of warring ideals and irreconcileable impulses which made up the life of Spenser's contemporaries. It was not in the *Faerie Qyeen* only, but in the world which it pourtrayed,

that the religious mysticism of the Middle Ages stood face to face with the intellectual freedom of the Revival of Letters, that asceticism and self-denial cast their spell on imaginations glowing with the sense of varied and inexhaustible existence, that the dreamy and poetic refinement of feeling which expressed itself in the fanciful unrealities of chivalry co-existed with the rough practical energy that sprang from an awakening sense of human power, or the lawless extravagance of an idealized friendship and love lived side by side with the moral sternness and elevation which England was drawing from the Reformation and the Bible.

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If the *Faerie Queen* expressed the higher elements of the Elizabethan age, the whole of that age, its lower elements and its higher alike, was expressed in the English drama. . . . The real origin of the English drama, in fact, lay not in any influence from without but in the influence of England itself. The temper of the nation was dramatic. . . . It was the people itself that created its Stage. The theatre indeed was commonly only the courtyard of an inn, or a[y] mere booth such as is still seen at a country fair. The bulk of the audience sate beneath the open sky in the "pit" or yard; a few covered seats in the galleries which ran round it formed the boxes of the wealthier spectators, while patrons and nobles found seats upon the actual boards. All the

appliances were of the roughest sort: a few flowers served to indicate a garden, crowds and armies were represented by a dozen scene-shifters with swords and bucklers, heroes rode in and out on hobby-horses, and a scroll on a post told whether the scene was at Athens or London. There were no female actors, and the grossness which startles us in words which fell from women's lips took a different colour when every woman's part was acted by a boy. But difficulties such as these were more than compensated by the popular character of the drama itself. Rude as the theatre might be, all the world was there. The stage was crowded with nobles and courtiers. Apprentices and citizens thronged the benches in the yard below. The rough mob of the pit inspired, as it felt, the vigorous life, the rapid transitions, the passionate energy, the reality, the lifelike medley and confusion, the racy dialogue, the chat, the wit, the pathos, the sublimity, the rant and buffoonery, the coarse horrors and vulgar bloodshedding, the immense range over all classes of society, the intimacy with the foulest as well as the fairest developments of human temper, which characterized the English stage. The new drama represented "the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure." The people itself brought its nobleness and its vileness to the boards. No stage was ever so human, no poetic life so intense. Wild, reckless, defiant of all past tradition, of all conventional laws, the English dramatists owned no

teacher, no source of poetic inspiration, but the people itself.

JOHN RICHARD GREEN: *History of the English People.* 1878.

41. THE SPIRIT OF THE REFORMATION

LORDS and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are, and whereof ye are the governors: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discourse, not beneath the reach of any point, the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of Learning in her deepest sciences have been so ancient and so eminent among us, that writers of good antiquity and ablest judgment have been persuaded that even the school of Pythagoras and the Persian wisdom took beginning from the old philosophy of this island. And that wise and civil Roman, Julius Agricola, who governed once here for Caesar, preferred the natural wits of Britain before the laboured studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal Transylvanian sends out yearly from as far as the mountainous borders of Russia, and beyond the Hercynian wilderness, not their youth, but their staid men, to learn our language and our theologic arts.

Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of Heaveri, we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propend-

ing towards us. Why else was this Nation chosen before any other, that out of her, as out of Sion, should be proclaimed and sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all Europe?, And had it not been the obstinate perverseness of our prelates against the divine and admirable spirit of Wickliff, to suppress him as a schismatic and innovator, perhaps neither the Bohemian Huss and Jerome, no nor the name of Luther or of Calvin, had been ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been completely ours. But now, as our obdurate clergy have with violence demeaned the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and backwardest scholars, of whom God offered to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the general instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in His Church, even to the reforming of Reformation itself: what does He then but reveal himself to His servants, and as His manner is, first to His Englishmen? I say, as His manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of His counsels, and are unworthy.

Behold now this vast City: .a city of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguered Truth, than there

be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty, the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soil, but wise and faithful labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies? We reckon more than five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks; had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already.

JOHN MILTON: *Areopagitica.* 1644.

42. A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

O THOU, that, after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations, and the succeeding sword of intestine war, soaking the land in her own gore, didst pity the sad and ceaseless revolution of our swift and thick-coming sorrows; when we were quite breathless, of thy free grace didst motion peace and terms of covenant with us; and having first well-nigh freed us from anti-christian thraldom, didst build up this Britannic empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter-islands about her; stay us in this felicity, let not the obstinacy of our half-obedience and will-worship

bring forth that viper of sedition, that for these fourscore years hath been breeding to eat through the entrails of our peace; but let her cast her abortive spawn without the danger of this travailing and throbbing kingdom: that we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings, how for us the northern ocean even to the frozen Thule was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish armada, and the very maw of hell ransacked, and matfe to give up her concealed destruction, ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

O how much more glorious will those former deliverances appear, when we shall know them not only to have saved us from greatest miseries past, but to have reserved us for greatest happiness to come! Hītherto thou hast but freed us, and that not fully, from the unjust and tyrannous claim of thy foes; now unite us entirely, and appropriate us to thyself, tie us everlastingly in willing homage to the prerogative of thy eternal throne.

And now we know, O thou our most certain hope and defence, that thine enemies have been consulting all the sorceries of the great whore, and have joined their plots with that sad intelligencing tyrant that mischiefs the world with his mines of Ophir, and lies thirsting to revenge his naval ruins that have larded our seas: but let them all take counsel together, and let it come to nought; let them decree and do thou cancel it; let them gather themselves, and be scattered; let them embattle themselves, and

be broken; let them embattle, and be broken, for thou art with us.

Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measure to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent aijd continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her whole vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones into their glorious titles, and in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in overmeasure for ever

JOHN MILTON: *Of Reformation in England.* 1641.

43. THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

ON the morning of Wednesday the thirteenth of February [1689], the court of Whitehall and all the neighbouring streets were filled with gazers. The magnificent Banqueting House, the masterpiece of Inigo, embellished by masterpieces of Rubens, had been prepared for a great ceremony. The walls were lined by the yeomen of the guard. Near the northern door, on the right hand, a large number of Peers had assembled. On the left were the Commons with their Speaker, attended by the mace. The southern door opened: and the Prince and Princess of Orange, side by side, entered, and took their place under the canopy of state.

Both Houses approached bowing low. William and Mary advanced a few steps. Halifax on the right, and Powle on the left, stood forth; and Halifax spoke. The Convention, he said, had agreed to a resolution which he prayed Their Highnesses to hear. They signified their assent; and the clerk of the House of Lords read, in a loud voice, the Declaration of Right. When he had concluded, Halifax, in the name of all the Estates of the Realm, requested the Prince and Princess to accept the crown.

William, in his own name and in that of his wife, answered that the crown was, in their estimation, the more valuable because it was presented to them

as a token of the confidence of the nation. "We thankfully accept," he said, "what you have offered us." Then, for himself, he assured them that the laws of England, which he had once already vindicated, should be the rules of his conduct, and that it should be his study to promote the welfare of the kingdom, and that, as to the means of doing so, he should constantly recur to the advice of the Houses, and should be disposed to trust their judgment rather than his own. These words were received with a shout of joy which was heard in the streets below, and was instantly answered by huzzas from many thousands of voices. The Lords and Commons then reverently retired from the Banqueting House and went in procession to the great gate of Whitehall, where the heralds and pursuivants were waiting in their gorgeous tabards.

All the space as far as Charing Cross was one sea of heads. The kettle drums struck up: the trumpets pealed; and Garter King at Arms, in a loud voice, proclaimed the Prince and Princess of Orange King and Qiieen of England, charged all Englishmen to bear, from that moment, true allegiance to the new sovereigns, and besought God, who had already wrought so signal a deliverance for our Church and nation, to bless William and Mary with a long and happy reign.

Thus was consummated the English Revolution. When we compare it with those revolutions which have, during the last sixty years, overthrown so

many ancient governments, we cannot but be struck by its peculiar character. Why that character was so peculiar is sufficiently obvious, and yet seems not to have been always understood either by eulogists or by censors.

The Continental revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries took place in countries where all trace of the limited monarchy of the middle ages had long been effaced. The right of the prince to make laws and to levy money had, during many generations, been undisputed. His throne was guarded by a great regular army. His administration could not, without extreme peril, be blamed even in the mildest terms. His subjects held their personal liberty by no other tenure than his pleasure. Not a single institution was left which had, within the memory of the oldest man, afforded efficient protection to the subject against the utmost excess of tyranny. Those great councils which had once curbed the regal power had sunk into oblivion. Their composition and their privileges were known only to antiquaries. We cannot wonder, therefore, that, when men who had been thus ruled succeeded in wresting supreme power from a government which they had long in secret hated, they should have been impatient to demolish and unable to construct, that they should have been fascinated by every specious novelty, that they should have proscribed every title, ceremony, and phrase associated with the old system, and that, turning away with

disgust from their own national precedents and traditions, they should have sought for principles of government in the writings of theorists, or aped, with ignorant and ungraceful affectation, the patriots of Athens and Rome. As little can we wonder that the violent action of the revolutionary spirit should have been followed by reaction equally violent, and that confusion should speedily have engendered despotism sterner than that from which it had sprung.

Had we been in the same situation; had Strafford succeeded in his favourite scheme of Thorough; had he formed an army as numerous and as well disciplined as that which, a few years later, was formed by Cromwell; had a series of judicial decisions, similar to that which was pronounced by the Exchequer Chamber in the case of ship-money, transferred to the crown the right of taxing the people; had the Star Chamber and the High Commission continued to fine, mutilate, and imprison every man who dared to raise his voice against the government; had the press been as completely enslaved here as at Vienna or at Naples; had our Kings gradually drawn to themselves the whole legislative power; had six generations of Englishmen passed away without a single session of Parliament; and had we then at length risen up in some moment of wild excitement against our masters, what an outbreak would that have been! With what a crash, heard and felt to the farthest ends of

the world, would the whole vast fabric of society have fallen! How many thousands of exiles, once the most prosperous and the most refined members of this great community, would have begged their bread in Continental cities, or have sheltered their heads under huts of bark in the uncleared forests of America! How often should we have seen the pavement of London piled up in barricades, the houses dinted with bullets, the gutters foaming with blood! How many times should we have rushed wildly from extreme to extreme, sought refuge from anarchy in despotism, and been again driven by despotism into anarchy! How many years of blood and confusion would it have cost us to. learn the very rudiments of political science! How many childish theories would have duped us! How many rude and ill-poised constitutions should we have set up, only to see them tumble down! Happy would it have been for us if a sharp discipline of half a century had sufficed to educate us into a capacity of enjoying true freedom.

These calamities our Revolution averted. It was a revolution strictly defensive, and had prescription and legitimacy on its side. Here, and here only, a limited monarchy of the thirteenth century had come down unimpaired to the seventeenth century. Our parliamentary institutions were in full vigour. The main principles of our government were excellent. They were not, indeed, formally and exactly set forth in a single \vritten instrument: but

they were to be found scattered over our ancient and noble statutes; and, what was of far greater moment, they had been engraven on the hearts of Englishmen during four hundred years. That, without the consent of the representatives of the nation, no legislative act could be passed, no tax imposed, no regular soldiery kept up, that no man could be imprisoned, even for a day, by the arbitrary will of the sovereign, that no tool of power could plead the royal command as a justification for violating any right of the humblest subject, were held, both by Whigs and Tories, to be fundamental laws of the realm. A realm of which these were the fundamental laws stood in no need of a new constitution.

But, though a new constitution was not needed, it was plain that changes were required. The misgovernment of the Stuarts, and the troubles which that misgovernment had produced, sufficiently proved that there was somewhere a defect in our polity; and that defect it was the duty of the Convention to discover and supply.

Some questions of great moment were still open to dispute. Our constitution had begun to exist in times when statesmen were not much accustomed to frame exact definitions. Anomalies, therefore, inconsistent with its principles and dangerous to its very existence, had sprung up almost imperceptibly, and, not having, during many years, caused any serious inconvenience, had gradually acquired the

force of prescription. The remedy for these evils was to assert the rights of the people in such language as should terminate all controversy, and to declare that no precedent could justify any violation of those rights.

When this had been done it would be impossible for our rulers to misunderstand the law: but, unless something more were done, it was by no means improbable that they might violate it. Unhappily the Church had long taught the nation that hereditary monarchy, alone among our institutions, was divine and inviolable; that the right of the House of Commons to a share in the legislative power was a right merely human, but that the right of the King to the obedience of his people was from above; that the Great Charter was a statute which might be repealed by those who had made it, but the rule which called the princes of the blood royal to the throne in order of succession was of celestial origin, and that any Act of Parliament inconsistent with that rule was a nullity. It is evident that, in a society in which such superstitions prevail, constitutional freedom must ever be insecure. A power which is regarded merely as the ordinance of man cannot be an efficient check on a power which is regarded as the ordinance of God. It is vain to hope that laws, however excellent, will permanently restrain a king who, in his own opinion, and in the opinion of a great part of his people, has an authority infinitely higher in kind than the authority which

belongs to those laws. To deprive royalty of these mysterious attributes, and to establish the principle that Kings reigned by a right in no respect differing from the right by which freeholders chose knights of the shire, or from the right by which Judges granted writs of Habeas Corpus, was absolutely necessary to the security of our liberties.

Thus the Convention had two great duties to perform. The first was to clear the fundamental laws of the realm from ambiguity. The second was to eradicate from the minds, both of the governors and of the governed, the false and pernicious notion that the royal prerogative was something more sublime and holy than those fundamental laws. The former object was attained by the solemn recital and claim with which the Declaration of Right commences; the latter by the resolution which pronounced the throne vacant, and invited William and Mary to fill it.

The change seems small. Not a single flower of the crown was touched. Not a single new right was given to the people. The whole English law, substantive and adjective, was, in the judgment of all the greatest lawyers, of Holt and Treby, of Maynard and Somers, almost exactly the same after the Revolution as before it. Some controverted points had been decided according to the sense of the best jurists; and there had been a slight deviation from the ordinary course of succession. This was all; and this was enough.

As our Revolution was a vindication of ancient rights, so it was conducted with strict attention to ancient formalities. In almost every word and act may be discerned a profound reverence for the past. The Estates of the Realm deliberated in the old halls and according to the old rules. Powle was concjucted to his chair between his mover and his seconder with the accustomed forms. The Serjeant with his mace brought .up the messengers of the Lords to the table of the Commons; and the three obeisances were duly made. The conference was held with all the antique ceremonial. On one side of the table, in the Painted Chamber, the managers for the Lords sate covered and robed in ermine and gold. The managers for the Commons stood bare-headed on the other side. The speeches present an almost ludicrous contrast to the revolutionary oratory of every other country. Both the English parties agreed in treating with solemn respect the ancient constitutional traditions of the state. The only question was, in what sense those traditions were to be understood. The assertors of liberty said not a word about the natural equality of men and the inalienable sovereignty of the people, about Harmodius or Timoleon, Brutus the elder or Brutus the younger. When they were told that, by the English law, the crown, at the moment of a demise, must descend to the next heir, they answered that, by the English law, a living man could have no heir. When they were told that there was no

precedent for declaring the throne vacant, they produced from among the records in the Tower a roll of parchment, near three hundred years old, on which, in quaint characters and barbarous Latin, it was recorded that the Estates of the Realm had declared vacant the throne of a perfidious and tyrannical Plantagenet. When at length the dispute had been accommodated, the new sovereigns were proclaimed with the old pageantry. All the fantastic pomp of heraldry was there, Clarencieux and Norroy, Portcullis and Rouge Dragon, the trumpets, the banners, the grotesque coats embroidered with lions and lilies. The title of King of France, assumed by the conqueror of Gressy, was not omitted in the royal style. To us, who have lived in the year 1848, it may seem almost an abuse of terms to call a proceeding, conducted with so much deliberation, with so much sobriety, and with such minute attention to prescriptive etiquette, by the terrible name of Revolution.

And yet this revolution, of all revolutions the least violent, has been of all revolutions the most beneficent. It finally decided the great question whether the popular element which had, ever since the age of Fitzwalter and De Montfort, been found in the English polity, should be destroyed by the monarchical element, or should be suffered to develop itself freely, and to become dominant. The strife between the two principles had been long, fierce, and doubtful. It had lasted through four

reigns. It had produced seditions, impeachments, rebellions, battles, sieges, proscriptions, judicial massacres. Sometimes liberty, sometimes royalty, had seemed to be on the point of perishing. During many years one half of the energy of England had been employed in counteracting the other half. The executive power and the legislative power had so effectually impeded each other that the state had been of no account in Europe. The King at Arms, who proclaimed William and Mary before Whitehall Gate, did in truth announce that this great struggle was over; that there was entire union between the throne and the Parliament; that England, long dependent and degraded, was again a power of the first rank; that the ancient laws by which the prerogative was bounded would thenceforth be held as sacred as the prerogative itself, and would be followed out to all their consequences; that the executive administration would be conducted in conformity with the sense of the representatives of the nation; and that no reform, which the two Houses should, after mature deliberation, propose, would be obstinately withstood by the sovereign. The Declaration of Right, though it made nothing law which had not been law before, contained the germ of the law which gave religious freedom to the Dissenter, of the law which secured the independence of the judges, of the law which limited the duration of Parliaments, of the law which placed the liberty of the press under the pro-

tection of juries, of the law which prohibited the slave trade, of the law which abolished the sacramental test, of the law which relieved the Roman Catholics from civil disabilities, of the law which reformed the representative system, of every good law which has been passed during more than a century and a half, of every good law which may hereafter, in the course of ages, be found necessary to promote the public weal, and to satisfy the demands of public opinion.

The highest eulogy which can be pronounced on the revolution of 1688 is this, that it was our last revolution. Several generations have now passed away since any wise and patriotic Englishman has meditated resistance to the established government. In all honest and reflecting minds there is a conviction, daily strengthened by experience, that the means of effecting every improvement which the constitution requires may be found within the constitution itself.

Now, if ever, we ought to be able to appreciate the whole importance of the stand which was made by our forefathers against the House of Stuart. All around us the world is convulsed by the agonies of great nations. Governments which lately seemed likely to stand during ages have been on a sudden shaken and overthrown. The proudest capitals of Western Europe have streamed with civil blood. All evil passions, the thirst of gain and the thirst of vengeance, the antipathy of class to class, the

antipathy of race to race, have broken loose from the control of divine and human laws. Fear and anxiety have clouded the faces and depressed the hearts of millions. Trade has been suspended, and industry paralysed. The rich have become poor; and the poor have become poorer. Doctrines hostile to all sciences, to all arts, to all industry, to all domestic charities, doctrines which, if carried into effect, would in thirty years undo all that thirty centuries have done for mankind, and would make the fairest provinces of France and Germany as savage as Congo or Patagonia, have been avowed from the tribune and defended by the sword. Europe has been threatened with subjugation by barbarians, compared with whom the barbarians who marched under Attila and Alboin were enlightened and humane. The truest friends of the people have with deep sorrow owned that interests more precious than any political privileges were in jeopardy, and that it might be necessary to sacrifice even liberty in order to save civilisation. Meanwhile in our island the regular course of government has never been for a day interrupted. The few bad men who longed for licence and plunder have not had the courage to confront for one moment the strength of a loyal nation, rallied in firm array round a parental throne. And, if it be asked what has made us to differ from others, the answer is that we never lost what others are wildly and blindly seeking to regain. It is because we had

a preserving revolution in the seventeenth century that we have not had a destroying revolution in the nineteenth. It is because we had freedom in the midst of servitude that we have order in the midst of anarchy. For the authority of law, for the security of property, for the peace of our streets, for the happiness of our homes, our gratitude is due, under Him who raises and pulls down nations at His pleasure, to the Long Parliament, to the Convention, and to William of Orange.

LORD MACAULAV i *History o̤f'England.* 1848.

44. THE EPIC OF JOHN BULL

T H E English are a dumb people. They can do great acts, but not describe them. Like the old Romans, and some few others, *their* Epic Poem is written on the Earth's surface: England her mark! It is complained that they have no artists: one Shakespeare indeed; but for Raphael only a Reynolds; for Mozart nothing but a Mr. Bishop: not a picture, not a song. And yet they did produce one Shakespeare: consider how the element of Shakespearian melody does lie imprisoned in their nature; reduced to unfold itself in mere Cotton-mills, Constitutional Governments, and such like—all the more interesting when it does become visible, as even in such unexpected shapes it succeeds in doing! Goethe spoke of the Horse, how impressive, almost

affecting it was that an animal of such qualities should stand obstructed so; its speech nothing but an inarticulate neighing, its handiness mere *hoofi*-ness, the fingers all constricted, tied together, the finger-nails coagulated into a mere hoof, shod with iron. The more significant, thinks he, are those eye-flashings of the generous noble quadruped; those prancings, curvings of the neck clothed with thunder. . . .

Of all the Nations in the world at present the English are the stupidest in speech, the wisest in action. As good as a "dumb" Nation, I say, who cannot speak, and have never yet spoken—spite of the Shakespeares and Miltons who show us what possibilities there are! Oh, Mr. Bull, I look in that surly face of thine with a mixture of pity and laughter, yet also with wonder and veneration. Thou complainest not, my illustrious friend; and yet I believe the heart of thee is full of sorrow, of unspoken sadness, seriousness—profound melancholy (as some have said) the basis of thy being. Unconsciously, for thou speakest of nothing, this great Universe is great to thee. Not by levity of floating, but by the stubborn force of swimming, shalt thou make thy way. The Fates sing of thee that thou shalt many times be thought an ass and a dull ox, and shalt with a godlike indifference believe it. My friend—and it is all untrue, nothing ever falser in point of fact! Thou art of those great ones whose greatness the small passer-by does not dis-

cern. Thy very stupidity is wiser than their wisdom. A grand *vis inertia* is in thee; how many grand qualities unknown to small men! Nature alone knows thee, acknowledges the bulk and strength of thee: thy Epic, unsung in words, is written in huge characters on the face of this Planet—sea-moles, cotton-trades, railways, fleets and cities, Indian Empires, Americas, New Hollands; legible throughout the Solar System!

But the dumb Russians too, as I said, they, drilling all wild Asia and wild Europe into military rank and file, a terrible yet hitherto a prospering enterprise, are still dumber. The old Romans also could not *speak,* for many centuries: not till the world was theirs; and so many speaking Greekdoms, their logic-arrows all spent, had been absorbed and abolished. The logic-arrows, how they glanced futile from obdurate thick-skinned Facts; Facts to be wrestled down only by the real vigour of Roman thews! As for me, I honour, in these loud-babbling days, all the Silent rather. A grand Silence that 'of Romans; nay, the grandest of all, is it not that of the gods! Even Triviality, Imbecility that can sit silent, how respectable is it in comparison! The "talent of silence" is our fundamental one. Great honour to him whose Epic is a melodious hexameter Iliad; not a jingling Sham-Iliad, nothing true in it but the hexameters and forms merely. But still greater honour, if his Epic be a mighty Empire slowly built together, a mighty Series of

Heroic Deeds—a mighty Conquest over Chaos; *which* Epic the "Eternal Melodies" have, and must have, informed and dwelt in, as *it* sung itself! There is no mistaking that latter Epic. Deeds are greater than Words. Deeds have such a life, mute but undeniable, and grow as living trees and fruit-trees do; they people the vacuity of Time, and make it green and worthy. Why should the oak prove logically that it ought to grow, and will grow? Plant it, try it; what gifts of diligent judicious assimilation and secretion it has, of progress and resistance, of *force* to grow, will then declare themselves. My much-honoured, illustrious, extremely inarticulate Mr. Bull!

Ask Bull his spoken opinion of any matter—oftentimes the force of dullness can no further go. You stand silent, incredulous, as over a platitude that borders on the Infinite. The man's Churchisms, Dissenterisms, Puseyisms, Benthamisms, College Philosophies, Fashionable Literatures, are unexampled in this world. Fate's prophecy is fulfilled; you call the man an ox and an ass. But set him once to work—respectable man! His spoken sense is next to nothing, nine-tenths of it palpable wowsense: but his unspoken sense, his inner silent feeling of what is true, what does agree with fact, what is doable and what is not doabh—this seeks its fellow in the world. A terrible worker; irresistible against marshes, mountains, impediments, disorder, incivilisation; everywhere vanquishing disorder, leaving

it behind him as method and order. He "retires to his bed three days," and considers!

Nay, withal, stupid as he is, our dear John—ever, after infinite tumblings, and spoken platitudes innumerable from barrel-heads and parliament-benches, he does settle down somewhere about the just conclusion; you are certain that his jumblings and tumblings will end, after years or centuries, in the stable equilibrium. Stable equilibrium, I say; centre-of-gravity lowest—not the unstable, with centre-of-gravity highest, as I have known it done by quicker people! For, indeed, do but jumble and tumble, sufficiently, you avoid that worst fault, of settling with your centre-of-gravity highest; your centre-of-gravity is certain to come lowest, and to stay there. If slowness, what we in our impatience call "stupidity," be the price of stable equilibrium over unstable, shall we grudge a little slowness? Not the least admirable quality of Bull is, after all, that of remaining insensible to logic; holding out for considerable periods, ten years or more, as in this of the Corn-Laws, after all arguments and shadow of arguments have faded away from him, till the very urchins on the street titter at the arguments he brings. Logic—*Aoyitq*, the "Art of Speech"—does indeed speak so and so; clear enough: nevertheless Bull still shakes his head; will see whether nothing else *illogical*, not yet "spoken," not yet able to be "spoken," do not lie in the business, as there so often does! My firm belief is, that,

finding himself now enchanted, hand-shackled, foot-shackled, in Poor-Law Bastilles and elsewhere, he will retire three days to his bed, and *arrive Sit* a conclusion or two! His three-years "total stagnation of trade," alas! is not that a painful enough "lying in bed to consider himself[55]? Poor Bull!

Bull is a born Conservative; for this too I inexpressibly honour him. All great Peoples are conservative; slow to believe in novelties; patient of much error in actualities; deeply and for ever certain of the greatness that is in Law, in Custom once solemnly established, and now long recognised as just and final.

THOMAS CARLYLE: *Past and Present.* 1843.

45. ENGLISH RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

ALTHOUGH England before the Reformation was culturally an integral part of the civilized West, our insular position, our distance from Rome, and the character of our people encouraged many assertions of independence on the part of the National Church, long before the final breach in the sixteenth century. In the reign of Edward I the Pope, supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury, claimed that the clergy should be exempt from the King[5]s taxes, and those who paid were excommunicated. The King outlawed the Archbishop and his

supporters, seized their lands, and obliged the clergy to pay their share to the national exchequer. The standing quarrel with the Papacy was aggravated while the Popes lived at Avignon, and actively supported France against England, and also by the shameless extortions connected with the sale of ecclesiastical offices. The Kings began to confiscate monastic lands on a large scale; Winchester, Eton, and some colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, were endowed in this way. A new imperialistic theory was advocated, by which the temporal sovereign was supreme over the spiritual power; this theory was acted upon later, under the Tudors. .Wyclif preached bolder doctrines. The temporal power might take away Church property if it was no longer usefully employed; excommunication does no harm to a man who does not deserve to be excommunicated. The Great Schism, which broke out at this time and lasted for two generations, encouraged Wyclif to ask why, if there were two Popes, there should be a Pope at all. Wyclif was condemned and the Schism was terminated, but the scandals and extortions of the Papacy became worse than ever. The breach with Rome under Henry VIII was popular, and it was truly said at the time that if the King had wished to go back, he would have found it impossible to do so.

In spite of the burnings under Mary, religious persecution in England was mild as compared with

the continental nations. Cruelty was even then odious to the conscience of Englishmen. In Scotland, for example, torture was far more common, and was continued later, than in the southern part of the island, and England saw none of the holocausts of victims who died for their faith in France and the Low Countries.

The multiplications of quaint religious sects in England must be regarded as characteristic, since on the Continent Protestantism was fairly successful in avoiding these disruptions. The Englishman, as has already been said, likes to find his own way to heaven, and has no scruple in leaving the beaten track with a few friends to accompany him. Freak-religions have been more bizarre in the United States; but such books as Sir Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* show what strange vagaries of belief are or were possible even to men of high intellectual distinction. Faddism of every kind is a national defect; the English mind is singularly ill-protected against it. The Church of England, which cannot bring to bear the coercive and terrorist methods of the Roman Church, loses, and generally loses permanently, any body of recalcitrants against her authority. The Methodist secession was unnecessary ; but having taken place, it cannot be undone.

The spirit of compromise has guided the Church of England at all times. It has aimed at being the nation on its spiritual side, and has not thought it necessary to be more logical or consistent than the

people as a whole. For this reason, it has been abused and valued like any other English institution. It has been, on the whole, Conservative or at least anti-revolutionary; in time of national danger it is always vehemently patriotic; but it allows the utmost latitude of divergence in all questions upon which good citizens are divided. It has kept the *via medii* between "the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome, and the squalid sluttery of fanatical conventicles," to quote a seventeenth-century divine. It has tended to produce good men and women rather than saints. Professional holiness has not been held in much esteem among us, and the saintly type is not altogether agreeable to our taste.

Such being the character of the established Church, there has seldom been any strong anti-clerical feeling such as exists on the Continent. There is no Church party in politics, and no anti-Church party. The interests of the Church are consciously bound up with the welfare of the people of England; but its critics complain of inertia and want of enthusiasm of any reform, . . .

England has been singularly rich in religious, or semi-religious poetry. The tradition has been that poetry should exercise a moral influence; and in the Elizabethan age it was almost the mode for poets like Spenser and Sidney to express penitence for the "lewd lays" (in reality quite innocuous love poetry) which they had written before they became Platonic

idealists. Three at least of the greatest names in English poetry, Spenser, Milton, and Wordsworth, have claimed to be and are religious teachers. Much of our prose has also been characterized by a prophetic spirit of moral earnestness, with denunciation of social evils. The England of the last century, which in action avoided revolutionary violence, in its literature often copies the pessimism and the menaces of the Jewish prophets. It is quite in accordance with the anti-professional prejudices of the English people that for the last hundred years our most influential religious teachers have been laymen.

Boutmy's statement that the English temper is alien to mysticism needs some qualification. We have produced no Suso or John of the Cross; but that type of mysticism which is related on one side to the philosophy of Plato and on the other to the love of nature has been well represented among us. There was a school of English mystics in the late middle ages, of whom Julian of Norwich is the most attractive. Later, there are the poets George Herbert, Vaughan, Traherne, Quarles, and Crashaw; the Cambridge Platonists, and the devotional works of William Law in the unmystical eighteenth century. All these belong to the mystical type of religious faith, which is indeed very congenial to the inwardness and individualism of English piety. The tradition has been well maintained till our own day, especially in our great poets.

The freedom of our social life from sacerdotal influences has kept England relatively immune from superstition. The curious belief that epilepsy can be cured by the royal touch, was fostered by the Stuarts for political reasons, and died a natural death when that dynasty was expelleds.rLecky and other writers have told the shameful story of trials and executions for witchcraft, a form of superstition which was at first rather encouraged than checked by the Reformation. Beliefs of this kind are not quite extinct in remote country districts, but are now interesting only as survivals. The new working-class population of the large towns is not superstitious ; the extreme materialism of their outlook has had at least this advantage. Not much importance need be attached to the fashionable recrudescence of necromancy among men and women of the richer class. It has been made easier by the decay of militant rationalism since the beginning of the century, and by the spread of anti-rationalistic philosophies; but the main cause has been the pathetic desire to establish communications with beloved husbands, sons, and brothers who gave their lives for the country in the Great War. The phenomenon, nevertheless, has its importance in reminding us that the improvement in education has not been accompanied by any intrinsic advance in the intelligence of the people.

When we turn from religion to philosophy, we find that a few English names, such as Hobbes, Hume,

and Berkeley, are prominent in continental histories of metaphysics, and that the usual verdict is that the English are thorough-going empiricists. The national character of English philosophy is not apparent till the Renaissance, when Bacon and, after him, Hobbes were both pioneers. The course of English philosophy after Hobbes may be represented as a reaction against Descartes, in which the antagonism between the English and French genius is very apparent. Descartes, with his clear-cut French intellect, had so separated the sphere of extension from the sphere of thought, that they could not be brought together, and Hegel's criticism that he had cut the world in two with a hatchet was justified. Nature seemed to be divorced from man, and man from nature; the lower animals, he even taught, were mere automata. He put his faith in "reason," which may be recognised by the clearness and distinctness of its ideas. This criterion led to an undue simplification, which precluded the study of anything so complex as human psychology. Under the influence of Cartesian methods, congenial at all times to the French temperament, we find, from Racine to Victor Hugo, a literature in which men appear as character types, walking. It is admirably lucid, while the real springs of action are always foggy and mysterious. The genius of Shakespeare had already held up the mirror of life in a very different fashion; and from the time of Addison a new dignity began to be given to the *imagination,* as

the revealer of the deep things of God and of nature. This reverence for the imagination opens a door into those chambers of experience which to rationalism are an illusion or a scandal—to the sphere of half-lights, "worlds not realised" but discerned in symbol and shadow; so that to Wordsworth the imagination is "reason in her most exalted mood." Some may fancifully suggest that a philosophy of dim lights and blurred outlines was likely to arise in such a climate as ours.

WILLIAM RALPH INGE, C.V.O., D.D.: *England.* 1926.

NATIVE GENIUS
LITERATURE

46. WE TOO SERVE PHCEBUS

I , THEREFORE, though a stranger youth, who come
ChilPd by rude blasts that freeze my northern home,
Thee dear to Clio, confident proclaim,
And thine, for Phoebus' sake, a deathless name.
Nor thou, so kind, wilt view with scornful eye
A muse scarce rear'd beneath our sullen sky,
Who fears not, indiscreet as she is young,
To seek in Latium hearers of her song.
We too, where Thames with its unsullied waves
The tresses of the blue-hair'd Ocean laves,
Hear oft by night, or, slumbering, seem to hear,
O'er his wide stream, the swan's voice warbling clear;
And we could boast a Tityrus of yore
Who trod, a welcome guest, your happy shore.
Yes—dreary as we own our northern clime,
E'en we to Phoebus raise the polish'd rhyme,
We too serve Phoebus; Phoebus has received
(If legends old may claim to be believed)
No sordid gifts from us, the golden ear,
The burnish'd apple, ruddiest of the year,
The fragrant crocus, and, to grace his fane,
Fair damsels chosen from the Druid train;

Druids, our native bards in ancient time,
Who gods and heroes praised in hallow'd rhyme!
Hence, often as the maids of Greece surround
Apollo's shrine with hymns of festive sound,
They name the virgins who arrived of yore
With British offerings on the Delian shore,
Loxo, from giant Corineus sprung,
Upis, on whose blest lips the future hung,
And Hacaerage, with the golden hair,
All deck'd with Pictish hues, and all with bosoms bare.

WILLIAM COWPER: *Translations from Milton's Latin Poems: To Giovanni Battista Manso.*

47. THESE ISLANDS MY WORLD

LASTLY, I should not chuse this manner of writing, wherein knowing *my* self inferior to my self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet since it will be such a folly as wisest men, going about to commit, have only confest and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon. For although a Poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies, with his garland and singing robes about him, might without apology speak more of himself than I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a

mortall thing among many readers of no Empyreall conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of my selfe, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say therefore that after I had from my first yeeres by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father, whom God recompence, bin exercis'd to the tongues, and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was impos'd me by them that had the overlooking, or betak'd to of mine own choise, in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the stile, by certain vital signes it had, was likely to live. But much latelier in the privat Academies of *Italy*, whither I was favor'd to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, compos'd at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there), met with acceptance above what was lookt for, and other things which I had shifted in scarsity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them were receiv'd with written Encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the *Alps*, I began thus farre to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not lesse to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life), joyn'd with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave some-

thing so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possest me, and these other: That if I were certain to write as men buy Leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory by the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latines, I apply'd my selfe to that resolution which *Ariosto* follow'd against the perswasions of *BembOy* to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue: not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toylsom vanity), but to be an interpreter & relater of the best and sagest things among mine own Citizens throughout this Hand in the mother dialect: That what the greatest and choycest wits of *Athens, Rome,* or modern *Italy,* and those Hebrews of old, did for their country, I in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might doe for mine; not caring to be once nam'd abroad, though perhaps I could attaine to that, but content with these British Hands as my world, whose fortune hath hitherto bin, that if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, *England* hath had her noble atchievements made small by the unskilfull handling of monks and mechanicks.

JOHN MILTON: *The Reason of Church Government.* 1641,

48. GOOD ENGLISH WORDS

UNCOUTHE unkiste, Sayde the olde famous Poete Chaucer; whom for his excellencie and wonderfull skil in making, his scholler Lidgate, a worthy scholler of so excellent a maister, calleth the Loadestarre of our Language: and whom our Colin clout in his AEglogue calleth Tityrus the God of shepheards, comparing hym to the worthiness of the Roman Tityrus Virgile. Which proverbe, myne owne good friend Ma. Harvey, as in that good old Poete it served well Pandares purpose, for the bolstering of his baudy brocage, so very well taketh place in this our new Poete, who for that he is uncouthe (as said Chaucer) is unkist, and unknown to most men, is regarded but of few. But I dout not, so soone as his name shall come into the knowledg of men, and his worthines be sounded in the tromp of fame, but that he shall be not onely kiste, but also beloved of all, embraced of the most, and wondred at of the best. No lesse I thinke, deserveth his wittinesse in devising, his pithinesse in uttering, his complaints of love so lovely, his discourses of pleasure so pleasantly, his pastorall rudenesse, his morall wisenesse, his deue observing of Decorum everye where, in personages, in seasons, in matter, in speach, and generally in al seemely simplycitie of handeling his matter, and framing his words: the which of many thinges whfch in him be straunge, I know will

seeme the straungest, the words them selves being so auncient, the knitting of them so short and intricate, and the whole Periode and compasse of speache so delightsome for the roundnesse, and so grave for the straungenesse. And firste of the wordes to speake, I graunt they be something hard, and of most men unused, yet both English, and also used of most excellent Authors and most famous Poetes. In whom whenas this our Poet hath bene much travelled and throughly redd, how could it be, (as that worthy Oratour sayde) but that walking in the sonne although for other cause he walked, yet needes he mought be sunburnt; and having the sound of those auncient Poetes still ringing in his eares, he mought needes in singing hit out some of theyr tunes. But whether he useth them by such casualtye and custome, or of set purpose and choyse, as thinking them fittest for .such rusticall rudenessc of shepheards, eyther for that theyr rough sounde would make his rymes more ragged and rustical, or els because such olde and obsolete wordes are most used of country folke, sure I think, and think I think not amisse, that they bring great grace and, as one would say, auctoritie to the verse. For albe amongst many other faultes it specially be objected of Valla against Livie, and of other against Saluste, that with over much studie they affect antiquitie, as coveting thereby credence and honor of elder yeeres, yet I am of opinion, and eke the best learned are of the lyke, that those

auncient solemne wordes are a great ornament both in the one and in the other; the one labouring to set forth in hys worke an eternall image of antiquitie, and the other carefully discoursing matters of gravitie and importaunce. For if my memory fayle not, Tullie in that booke, wherein he endevoureth to set forth the paterne of a perfect Oratour, sayth that oft-times an auncient worde maketh the style seeme grave, and as it were reverend: no otherwise then we honour and reverence gray heares for a certein religious regard, which we have of old age. Yet nether every where must old words be stuffed in, nor the commen Dialecte and maner of speaking so corrupted thereby, that as in old buildings it seme disorderly and ruinous. But all as in most exquisite pictures they use to blaze and portraict not onely the daintie lineaments of beautye, but also rounde about it to shadow the rude thickets and craggy clifts, that by the basenesse of such parts, more excellency may accrew to the principall; for oftimes we finde ourselves, I knowe not how, singularly delighted with the shewe of such naturall rudenesse, and take great pleasure in that disorderly order. Even so doe those rough and harsh termes enlumine and make more clearly to appeare the brightnesse of brave and glorious words. So oftentimes a dischorde in Musick maketh a comely concordaunce; so great delight tooke the worthy Poete Alceus to behold a blemish in the joynt of a wel shaped body. But if

any will rashly blame such his purpose in choyse of old and unwonted words, him may I more justly blame and condemne, or of witlesse headinesse in judging, or of heedelesse hardinesse in condemning for not marking the compasse of hys bent, he wil judge of the length of his cast. For in my opinion it is one special prayse, of many whych are dew to this Poete, that he hath laboured to restore, as to theyr rightfull heritage, such good and naturall English words as have ben long time out of use and almost cleane disherited. Which is the onely cause, that our Mother tonge, which truely of it self is both ful enough for prose and stately er\pugh for verse, hath long time ben counted most bare and barrein of both. Which default when as some endevoured to salve and recure, they patched up the holes with peces and rags of other languages, borrowing here of the french, there of the Italian, every where of the Latine, not weighing how il those tongues accorde with themselves, but much worse with ourfe: So now they have made our English tongue, a gallimaufray or hodge-podge of al 6ther speches. Other some not so wel scene in the English tonge as perhaps in other languages, if they happen to here an olde word albeit very naturall and significant, crye out streight way, that we speak no English, but gibbrish, or rather such, as in old time Evanders mother spake. Whose first shame is, that they are not ashamed, in their own mother tonge straungers to be counted and aliens.

The second shame no lesse then the first, that what so they understand not, they streight way deeme to be sencelesse, and not at al to be understode. Much like to the Mole in AEsopes fable, that being blynd her selfe, would in no wise be perswaded, that any beast could see. The last more shameful then both, that of their owne country and natural speach, which together with their Nources milk they sucked, they have so base regard and bastard judgement, that they will not onely themselves not labor to garnish and beautifie it, but also repine, that of other it shold be embellished. Like to the dogge in the maunger, that him selfe can eate no hay, and yet barketh at the hungry bullock, that so faine would feeder whose currish kind though it cannot be kept from barking, yet I conne them thanke that they refrain from byting.

E. K.: *Epistle to Gabriel Harvey, commending Spenser's* The Shepheardes Calendar. 1579.

49. THE VULGAR TONGUE

THEN as there was no art in the world till by experience found out, so if Poesie be now an Art, & of al antiquitie hath bene among the Greeks and Latines, & yet were none untill by studious persons fashioned and reduced into a method of rules and precepts, then no doubt may there be the like with us. And if th'art of Poesie be but a skill appertaining to utterance, why may not

the same be with us aswel as with them, our language being no lesse copious, pithie, and significative then theirs, our conceipts the same, and our wits no lesse apt to devise and imitate than theirs were? If againe Art be but a certaine order of rules prescribed by reason, and gathered by experience, why should not Poesie be a vulgar Art with us as well as with the Greeks and Latines, our language admitting no fewer rules and nice diversities than theirs? but peradventure moe by a peculiar, which our speech hath in many things differing from theirs; and yet, in the generall points of that Art, allowed to go in common with them: so as if one point perchance, which is their feete whereupon their measures stand, and in deede is all the beautie of their Poesie, and which feete we have not, nor as yet never went about to frame (the nature of our language and wordes not permitting it), we have in stead thereof twentie other curious points in that skill more then they ever had, by reason of our rime and tunable concords or simphonie, which they never observed. Poesie therefore may be an Art in our vulgar, and that verie methodicall and commendable.

GEORGE PUTTENHAM! *The Arte of English Poesie.* 1589.

50. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (1)

I HAVE somewhere read of an eminent Person, who used in his private Offices of Devotion to give Thanks to Heaven that he was Born a *Frenchman:* For my own part I look upon it as a peculiar Blessing that I was born an *Englishman.* Among many other Reasons, I think my self very happy in my Country, as the *Language* of it is wonderfully adapted to a Man who is sparing of his Words, and an Enemy to Loquacity.

As I have frequently reflected on my good Fortune in this Particular, I shall communicate to the Publick my Speculations upon the *English* Tongue, not doubting but that they will be acceptable to all my curious Readers.

The *English* delight in Silence more than any other *European* Nation, if the Remarks which are made on us by Foreigners are true. Our Discourse is not kept up in Conversation, but falls into more Pauses and Intervals than in our Neighbouring Countries; as it is observed, that the matter of our Writings is thrown much closer together, and lies in a narrower Compass than is usual in the Works of Foreign Authors: For, to favour our Natural Taciturnity, when we are obliged to utter our Thoughts, we do it in the shortest way we are able, and give as quick a Birth to our Conceptions as possible.

This Humour shews it self in several Remarks

that we may make upon the *English* Language. As first of all by its abounding in Monosyllables, which gives us an Opportunity of delivering our Thoughts in few Sounds. This indeed takes off from the Elegance of our Tongue, but at the same time expresses our Ideas in the readiest manner, and consequently answers the first Design of Speech better than the Multitude of Syllables, which make the Words of other Languages more Tunable and Sonorous. The Sounds of our *English* Words are commonly like those of String Musick, short and transient, which rise and perish upon a single Touch; Those of other Languages are like the Notes of Wind Instruments, sweet and swelling, and lengthen'd out into variety of Modulation.

In the next place we may observe, that where the Words are not Monosyllables, we often make them so, as much as lies in our Power, by our Rapidity of Pronunciation; as it generally happens in most of our long Words which are derived from the *Latin,* where we contract the length of the Syllables that gives them a grave and solemn Air in their own Language, to make them more proper for Dispatch, and more conformable to the Genius of our Tongue. This we may find in a Multitude of Words, as *Liberty, Conspiracy, Theatre, Orator,* &c.

The same natural Aversion to Loquacity has of late Years made a very considerable Alteration in our Language, by closing in one Syllable the Termination of the Praeterperfect Tense, as in these

words, *drowrfd, walked, arrived,* for *drowned, walked, arrived,* which has very much disfigured the Tongue, and turned a tenth part of our smoothest Words into so many Clusters of Consonants. This is the more remarkable, because the want of Vowels in our Language has been the general Complaint of our politest Authors, who nevertheless are the Men that have made these Retrenchments, and consequently very much increased our former Scarcity.

This Reflection on the Words that end in *ed, I* have heard in Conversation from one of the greatest Genius's this Age has produced. I think we may add to the foregoing Observation, the Change which has happened in our Language, by the Abbreviation of several Words that are terminated in *eth,* by substituting an *s* in the room of the last Syllable, as in *drowns, walks, arrives,* and innumerable other Words, which in the Pronunciation of our Fore-fathers were *drowneth, walketh, arriveth.* This has wonderfully multiplied a Letter which was before too frequent in the *English* Tongue, and added to that *hissing* in our Language, which is taken so much notice of by Foreigners; but at the same time humours our Taciturnity, and eases us of many superfluous Syllables.

I might here observe, that the same single Letter on many occasions does the Office of a whole Word, and represents the *His* and *Her* of our Forefathers. There is no doubt butrthe Ear of a Foreigner, which is the best Judge in this Case, would very much

disapprove of such Innovations, which indeed we do our selves in some measure, by retaining the old Termination in Writing, and in all the Solemn Offices of our Religion.

As in the Instances I have given we have epitomized many of our particular Words to the Detriment of our Tongue, so on other Occasions we have drawn two Words into one, which has likewise very much untuned our Language, and clogged it with Consonants, as *mayn't, can't, shan't, wo'rft,* and the like, for *may not, can not, shall not, will not,* &c.

It is perhaps this Humour of speaking no more than we needs must, which has so miserably curtailed some of our Words, that in familiar Writings and Conversations, they often lose all but their first Syllables, as in *mob., rep., pos., incog,* and the like; and as all ridiculous Words make their first Entry into a Language by familiar Phrases, I dare not answer for these that they will not in time be looked upon as a part of our Tongue. We see some of our Poets have been so indiscreet as to imitate *Hudibras's* Doggrel Expressions in their serious Compositions, by throwing out the Signs of our Substantives, which are essential to the *English* Language. Nay, this Humour of shortning our Language had once run so far, that some of our celebrated Authors, among whom we may reckon *Sir Roger L? Estrange* in particular, began to prune their Words of all superfluous Letters, as they termed them, in order to adjust the Spelling to the Pronunciation; which

would have confounded all our Etymologies, and have quite destroyed our Tongue.

JOSEPH ADDISON: *The Spectator*. 1711.

51. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (2)

HERE then is the explanation of the fact that language should be thus instructive for us, that it should yield us so much, when we come to analyse and probe it; and the more, the more deeply and accurately we do so. It is full of instruction, because it is the embodiment, the incarnation, if I may so speak, of the feelings and thoughts and experiences of a nation, yea, often of many nations, and of all which through long centuries they have attained to and won. It stands like the pillars of Hercules, to mark how far the moral and intellectual conquests of mankind have advanced, only not like those pillars, fixed and immovable, but ever itself advancing with the progress of these. The mighty moral instincts which have been working in the popular mind have found therein their unconscious voice; and the single kinglier spirits that have looked deeper into the heart of things have oftentimes gathered up all they have seen into some one word, which they have launched upon the world, and with which they have enriched it for ever—making in that new word a new region of thought to be hence-

forward in some sort the common heritage of all. Language is the amber in which a thousand precious and subtle thoughts have been safely embedded and preserved. It has arrested ten thousand lightning flashes of genius, which, unless thus fixed and arrested, might have been as bright, but would have also been as quickly passing and perishing, as the lightning. " Words convey the mental treasures of one period to the generations that follow; and laden with this, their precious freight, they sail safely across gulfs of time in which empires have suffered shipwreck, and the languages of common life have sunk into oblivion." And for all these reasons, far more and mightier in every way is a language than any one of the works which may have been composed in it. For that work, great as it may be, is but the embodying of the mind of a single man, this of a nation. The *Iliad* is great, yet not so great in strength 01. power or beauty as the Greek language. *Paradise Lost* is a noble possession for a people to have inherited, but the English language is a nobler heritage yet.

Great then will be our gains, if, having these treasures of wisdom and knowledge lying round about us, so far more precious than mines of Californian gold, we determine that we will make what portion of them we can our own, that we will ask the words which we use to give an account of themselves, to say whence they are, and whither they tend. Then shall we often rub off the dust and rust

from what seemed but a common token, which we had taken and given a thousand times, esteeming it no better, but which now we shall perceive to be a precious coin, bearing the "image and superscription" of the great King: then shall we often stand in surprise and in something of shame, while we behold the great spiritual realities which underlie our common speech, the marvellous truths which we have been witnessing *for* in oiir words, but, it may be, witnessing *against* in our lives. And as you will not find, for so I venture to promise, that this study of words will be a dull one when you undertake it yourselves, as little need you fear that it will prove dull and unattractive when you seek to make your own gains herein the gains also of those who may be hereafter committed to your charge. Only try your pupils, and mark the kindling of the eye, the lighting up of the countenance, the revival of the flagging attention, with which the humblest lecture upon words, and on the words especially which they are daily using, which are familiar to them in their play or at their church, will be welcomed by them. There is a sense of reality about children which makes them rejoice to discover that there is also a reality about words, that they are not merely arbitrary signs, but living powers; that, to reverse the words of one of England's "false prophets," they may be the fool's counters, but are the wise man's money; not, like the sands of the sea, innumerable disconnected atoms, but growing

out of roots, clustering in families, connecting and intertwining themselves with all that men have been doing and thinking and feeling from the beginning of the world till now.

And it is of course our English tongue, out of which mainly we should seek to draw some of the hid treasures which it contains, from which we should endeavour to remove the veil which custom and familiarity have thrown over it. We cannot employ ourselves better. There is nothing that will help more to form an English heart in ourselves and in others than will this. We could scarcely have a single lesson on the growth of our English tongue, we could scarcely follow up one of its significant words, without having unawares a lesson in English history as well, without not merely falling on some curious fact illustrative of our national life, but learning also how the great heart which is beating at the centre of that life was gradually shaped and moulded. We should thus grow too in our feeling of connexion with the past, of gratitude and reverence to it; we should estimate more truly, and therefore more highly, what it has done for us, all that it has bequeathed us, all that it has made ready to our hands. It was something for the children of Israel, when they came into Canaan, to enter upon wells which they digged not, and vineyards which they had not planted, and houses which they had not built; but how much greater a boon, how much more glorious a prerogative,

for any one generation to enter upon the inheritance of a language which other generations by their truth and toil have made already a receptacle of choicest treasures, a storehouse of so much unconscious wisdom, a fit organ for expressing the subtlest distinctions, the tenderest sentiments, the largest thoughts, and the loftiest imaginations, which at any time the heart of men can conceive.

RICHARD CHENEVTX TRENCH : *On the Study of Words.* 1851.

52. IMPORTATIONS

L A Y by Virgil, I beseech your Lordship, and all my better sort of judges, when you take up my version; and it will appear a passable beauty when the original Muse is absent. But, like Spenser's false Florimel made of snow, it melts and vanishes when the true one comes in sight. I will not excuse, but justify myself, for one pretended crime, with which I am liable to be charged by false critics, not only in this translation, but in many of my original poems; that I latinize too much. 'Tis true, that, when I find an English word significant and sounding, I neither borrow from the Latin, nor any other language; but, when I want at home, I must seek abroad.

If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them

from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation, which is never to return; but what I bring from Italy, I spend in England: here it remains, and here it circulates; for, if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity; but, if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get -them by commerce. Poetry requires ornament ; and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables: therefore, if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalized, by using it myself; and, if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish between pedantry and poetry: every man, therefore, is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter, a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin, and is to consider, in the next place, whether it will agree with the English idiom: after this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages: and, lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this licence very sparingly; for if too many foreign, words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed not to assist the natives, but to conquer them.

JOHN DRYDEN: *Dedication of the dEneis.* 1697.

53. ENGLISH ELOQUENCE

IN after years, when an under-graduate at Oxford, I had an opportunity of reading as it were in a mirror the characteristic pretensions and the average success of many celebrated schools. Such a mirror I found in the ordinary conversation and in the favourite reading of young gownsmen belonging to the many different colleges of Oxford. Generally speaking, each college had a filial connection (strict or not strict) with some one or j^iore of our great public schools. These, fortunately for England, are diffused through all her counties: and, as the main appointments to the capital offices in such *public* schools are often vested by law in Oxford or Cambridge, this arrangement guarantees a sound system of teaching; so that any failures in the result must presumably be due to the individual student. Failures, on the whole, I do not suppose that there were. Classical attainments, that might be styled even splendid, were not then, nor are now, uncommon. And yet in one great feature many of those schools, even the very best, when thus tried by their fruits, left a painful memento of failure; or rather not of failure as in relation to any purpose that they steadily recognised, but of *wilful* and *intentional* disregard, as towards a purpose alien from any duty of theirs or any task which they had ever undertaken—a

failure, namely, in relation to *modern* literature—a neglect to unroll its mighty charts: and amongst this modern literature a special neglect (such as seems almost brutal) of our own English literature, though pleading its patent of precedency in a voice so trumpet-tongued. To myself, whose homage ascended night and day towards the great altars of English Poetry or Eloquence, it was shocking and revolting to find in high-minded young countrymen, burning with sensibility that sought vainly for a corresponding object, deep unconsciousness of an all-sufficient object—namely, in that great inheritance of our literature which sometimes kindled enthusiasm in our public enemies. How painful to see or to know that vast revelations of grandeur and beauty are wasting themselves for ever—forests teeming with gorgeous life, floral wildernesses hidden inaccessibly; whilst, at the same time, in contraposition to that evil, behold a corresponding evil—viz., that with equal prodigality the great capacities of enjoyment are running also to waste, and are everywhere burning out unexercised—waste, in short, in the world of things *enjoyable*, balanced by an equal waste in the organs and the machineries of enjoyment! This picture—would it not fret the heart of an Englishman? Some years (say twenty) after the era of my own entrance at that Oxford which then furnished me with records so painful of slight regard to our national literature, behold at the court of London a French ambassador, a

man of genius blazing (as some people thought) with nationality, but, in fact, with something inexpressibly nobler and deeper—viz., patriotism. For true and unaffected patriotism will show its love in a noble form by sincerity and truth. But nationality, as I have always found, is mean; is dishonest; is ungenerous; is incapable of candour; and, being continually besieged with temptations to falsehood, too often ends by becoming habitually mendacious. This Frenchman above all things valued literature: his own trophies of distinction were all won upon that field: and yet, when called upon to review the literature of Europe, he found himself conscientiously coerced into making his work a mere monument to the glory of one man, and that man the son of a hostile land. The name of Milton, in *his* estimate, swallowed up all others. This Frenchman was Chateaubriand. The personal splendour which surrounded him gave a corresponding splendour to his act. And, because he, as an ambassador, was a representative man, this act might be interpreted as a representative act. The tutelary genius of France in this instance might be regarded as bending before that of England. But homage so free, homage so noble, must be interpreted and received in a corresponding spirit of generosity. It was not, like the testimony of Balaam on behalf of Israel, an unwilling submission to a hateful truth: it was a concession, in the spirit of saintly magnanimity, to an interest of human nature

that, *as* such, transcended by many degrees all considerations merely national.

Now, then, with this unlimited devotion to one great luminary of our literary system emblazoned so conspicuously in the testimony of a Frenchman —that is, of one trained, and privileged to be a public enemy—contrast the humiliating spectacle of young Englishmen suffered (so far as their training is concerned) to ignore the very existence of this mighty poet. Do I mean, then, that it would have been advisable to place the *Paradise Lost,* and the *Paradise Regained,* and the *Samson,* in the library of schoolboys ? By no means. That mode of sensibility which deals with the Miltonic sublimity is rarely developed in boyhood. And these divine works should in prudence be reserved to the period of mature manhood. But then it should be made known that they *are* so reserved, and upon what principle of reverential regard for the poet himself. In the meantime, selections from Milton, from Dryden, from Pope, and many other writers, though not everywhere appreciable by those who have but small experience of life, would not generally transcend the intellect or sensibility of a boy sixteen or seventeen years old. And, beyond all other sections of literature, the two which I am going to mention are fitted (or might be fitted by skilful management) to engage the interest of those who are no longer boys, but have reached the age which is presumable in English university matricu-

lation—viz., the close of the eighteenth year. Search through all languages, from Benares the mystical, and the banks of the Ganges, travelling westwards to the fountains of the Hudson, I deny that any two such *bibliotheca* for engaging youthful interest could be brought together as these two which follow:—

First, In contradiction to M. Cousin's recent audacious assertion (redeemed from the suspicion of mendacity simply by the extremity of ignorance on which it reposes) that we English have no tolerable writer of prose subsequent to Lord Bacon, it so happens that the seventeenth century, and specially that part of it concerned in this case—viz., the latter seventy years (A.D. 1628-1700)—produced the highest efforts of eloquence (philosophic, but at the same time rhetorical and impassioned, in a degree unknown to the prose literature of France) which our literature possesses, and not a line of it but is posterior to the death of Lord Bacon. Donne, Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, Jeremy Taylor, Milton, South, Barrow, form a *pleiad*, a constellation of seven golden stars, such as no literature can match in their own class. From these seven writers, taken apart from all their contemporaries, I would undertake to build up an entire body of philosophy [1] upon the supreme inter-

[1] *"Philosophy:*—At this point it is that the main misconception would arise. Theology, and not philosophy, most people will fancy, is likely to form the staple of these writers. But I have elsewhere maintained that the main bulk of English

ests of humanity. **One** error of M. Cousin's doubtless lay in overlooking the fact that all conceivable problems of philosophy can reproduce themselves under a theological mask: and thus he had absolved himself from reading many English books, as presumably mere professional pleadings of Protestant polemics, which are in fact mines inexhaustible of eloquence and philosophic speculation.

Secondly, A full abstract of the English Drama from about the year 1580 to the period (say 1635) at which it was killed by the frost of the Puritanical spirit seasoning all flesh for the Parliamentary War. No literature, not excepting even that of Athens, has ever presented such a multiform theatre, such a carnival display, mask and anti-mask, of impassioned life—breathing, moving, acting, suffering, laughing:

> Quicquid agunt homines—votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> Gaudia, discursus ;[1]

—all this, but far more truly and adequately than was or could be effected in that field of composition which the gloomy satirist contemplated

philosophy has always hidden itself in the English divinity. In Jeremy Taylor, for instance, are exhibited all the *practical* aspects of philosophy; of philosophy as it bears upon Life, upon Ethics, and upon Transcendent Prudence—*i.e.* briefly upon the Greek *summum bonum.*

[1] "All that is done by men—movements of prayer, panic, wrath, revels of the voluptuous, festivals of triumph, or gladiatorship of the intellect"—*Juvenal*, in the prefatory lines which rehearse the prevailing themes of his own Satires gathered in the great harvests of Rome.

—whatsoever, in fact, our mediaeval ancestors exhibited in their "Dance of Death," drunk with tears and laughter—may here be reviewed, scenically grouped, draped, and gorgeously coloured. What other national drama can pretend to any competition with this? The Athenian has in a great proportion perished; the Roman was killed prematurely by the bloody realities of the amphitheatre, as candlelight by daylight; the Spanish, even in the hands of Calderon, offers only undeveloped sketchings ; and the French, besides other and profounder objections, to which no justice had yet been done, lies under the signal disadvantage of not having reached its meridian until sixty years (or two generations) after the English. In reality, the great period of the English Drama was exactly closing as the French opened: consequently the French lost the prodigious advantage for scenical effects of a romantic and picturesque age. This had vanished when the French theatre culminated; and the natural result was that the fastidiousness of French taste, by this time too powerfully developed, stifled or distorted the free movements of French genius.

I beg the reader's pardon for this disproportioned digression, into which I was hurried by my love for our great national literature, my anxiety to see it amongst educational resources invested with a ministerial agency of far ampler character, but at all events to lodge a protest against that wholesale neglect of our supreme authors which leaves us

open to the stinging reproach of "treading daily with our clouted shoon" (to borrow the words of Comus) upon that which high-minded foreigners regard as the one paramount jewel in our national diadem.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY '. ***Confessions*** *of an English Opium-Eater.* 1821.

54. THE TURN FOR STYLE

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

Any German with penetration and tact in matters of literary criticism will own that the principal deficiency of German poetry is in style; that for style, in the highest sense, it shows but little feeling. Take the eminent masters of style, the poets who best give the idea of what the peculiar power which lies in style is,—Pindar, Virgil, Dante, Milton. An example of the peculiar effect which these poets produce, you can hardly give from German poetry. Examples enough you can give from German poetry

of the effect produced by genius, thought, and feeling expressing themselves in clear language, simple language, passionate language, eloquent language, with harmony and melody; but not of the peculiar effect exercised by eminent power of style. . . . In poetical races and epochs this turn for style is peculiarly observable; and perhaps it is only on condition of having this somewhat heightened and difficult manner, so different from the plain manner of prose, that poetry gets the privilege of being loosed, at its best moments, into that perfectly simple, limpid style, which is the supreme style of all, but the simplicity of which is still not the simplicity of prose. The simplicity of Menander's style is the simplicity of prose, and is the same kind of simplicity as that which Goethe's style . . . exhibits; but Menander does not belong to a great poetical moment, he comes too late for it; it is the simple passages in poets like Pindar or Dante which are perfect, being masterpieces of *poetical* simplicity. One may say the same of the simple passages in Shakspeare; they are perfect, their simplicity being a *poetical* simplicity. They are the golden, easeful, crowning moments of a manner which is always pitched in another key from that of prose, a manner changed and heightened; the Elizabethan style, regnant in most of our dramatic poetry to this day, is mainly the continuation of this manner of Shakspeare's. It was a manner much more turbid and strewn with

blemishes than the manner of Pindar, Dante, or Milton; often it was detestable; but it owed its existence to Shakspeare's instinctive impulse towards *style* in poetry, to his. native sense of the necessity for it; and without the basis of style everywhere, faulty though it may in some places be, we should not have had the beauty of expression, unsurpassable for effectiveness and charm, which is reached in Shakspeare's best passages. The turn for style is perceptible all through English poetry, proving, to my mind, the genuine poetical gift of the race; this turn imparts to our poetry a stamp of high distinction, and sometimes it doubles the force of a poet not by nature of the very highest order, such as Gray, and raises him to a rank beyond what his natural richness and power seem to promise.

MATTHEW ARNOLD: *The Study of Celtic Literature.* 1867.

55. THE FIRST OF THE ENGLISH

It is a very extraordinary fact, when considered historically, that Chaucer should have been so unmistakably English almost before the existence of England. It is the details of language, like the details of landscape, that give this entirely unique and unmistakable touch. It is an elvish touch, to use a term that was actually used about the poet. It almost suggests that the other name of England is Elfland. Yet it has nothing whatever of

the thin ethereal spirit of faerie; as we see it, for instance, in the Celtic myths and the poems of Mr. W. B. Yeats. It is a solid and almost smug sort of goblin market; a real town where the goblins are really marketing. The nearest we can come to a more serious definition is that it is a certain spirit of nonsense even in landscape. We find it in the names of some real English villages, which might have come out of the wild geography books of Mr. Edward Lear. We feel it in some of the impossible places invented by Mr. Edward Lear, which might have been the names of real English villages, valleys or downs; such as that typical title, "The Hills of the Chankly Bore."

Now this touch is instantly felt in Chaucer. The Pilgrims' Way does not run merely, in the mediaeval manner, through meadows patterned with flowers or forests dark with enchantment. But neither does it run merely through reasonable and recognizable places like Southwark and Sittingbourne. There is something selective in the eye of Chaucer, which is already open for other and special things. Nobody at home with the nonsense element I mean can read that phrase, in the account of the pilgrimage, about passing a town "which that i-clepd is Bob-Up-and-Down," without his heart leaping with joy, and bobbing up and down with that buoyant and unconquerable city. I do not know exactly what it means; and there have been all sorts of speculations about it. I do not know whether Chaucer made it

up out of his own head, which is quite possible; or whether it was a real English village, which is also quite possible; or whether it was a nickname connected with some local jest, which is perhaps most probable. Some have suggested that it was so called because something in the winding, rising and falling road made it appear to be on different levels at different stages; and that sort of rambling road probably was then, and certainly is now, rather specially characteristic of the English countryside. But the feeling of the curious primeval kinship between England and Chaucer is justified in either case. I do not care whether it was something that England invented and Chaucer glorified; or whether it was something that Chaucer invented and England glorified. The spirit of a man who loves that landscape can sometimes run so close to the land, that it invents something that exists already. I remember composing, when I was quite young, the first rough form of a song about the round hills and rolling, almost revolving roads, of which a man dreams after a day in Sussex. In that song I invented an entirely imaginary town of Roundabout as the mystic centre of this rotatory landscape. And it was some time afterwards that I discovered that there really is a town in Sussex called Roundabout, because the men of Sussex had seen the same scenes and dreamed the same dream.

Therefore there is, it seems, something primitive about this poet, because he is as large as the land

and as old as the nation. There was little enough in him of the mystic, in the narrow or special sense; yet it is impossible not to feel something mystical about his magnitude as an emblem of England. He had somehow got into his head and into his note-book a certain national quality, centuries before the nation attempted to understand or describe its own quality. He had, for instance, the humour that is at once broadened and blunted by good humour. He had the particular *sort* of soft-heartedness that can be seen in the English; sometimes an incomplete and illogical sort; but not far removed from that of Chaucer's Prioress, who might have been frightened of a mouse, but wept over its being in a trap. He had the same type of tolerance and in some things the English type of irresponsible individualism; there is that amount of truth in Matthew Arnold's view that he was lacking in "seriousness." He was not the stuff of which Reformers are made. He took things as they came, and the world as he found it, and men as God had made them, or even as they had made themselves. He had a curious sort of abstract liberality underlying concrete conservatism, which was very national, and can be seen in many Tories who are devoted to a Monarchy and explain that it is just as republican as a Republic. In all this he is the First of the English; and his figure has therefore this quality of a type and even an archetype. That figure is seen in the sunlight of history walking

among the gay pavilions and palaces of French kings and French-speaking knights and nobles; negotiating war and peace in what was practically a French quarrel about a French pedigree; he'is seen learning a thousand things from the sonneteers of Italy and the troubadours of Provence; but within him something is born, and it is the name by which we live. He may or may not have made the somewhat dreary attempt to translate *Le Roman de la Rose* into English. But nobody could possibly translate *The Canterbury Tales* into French.

There is something personal about England. Rome or France or Bolshevist Russia or Republican America, each in its own way, is a principle; but England is a person. And it is very like the very indescribable sort of person this book has to describe. I will not be so daring as to define what William Blake meant by The Giant Albion; but we n>ay agree that if the country called by poets Albion could be conceived as a single figure, it would be a giant. And when I think of Chaucer in this primary and general fashion, I do not think of a Court poet receiving a laurel from the King or a flagon from the King's butler, nor even of a stout and genial gentleman with a forked beard setting forth from the Tabard upon the Canterbury road; but of some such elemental and emblematic giant, alive at our beginnings and made out of the very elements of the land. Perhaps if we were caught up by that eagle that whirled away the poet to the

gates of The House of Fame, we might begin to see spread out beneath us the titanic outlines of such a prehistoric or primordial Anak or Adam, with our native hills for his bone and our native forests for his beard; and see for an instant a single figure outlined against the sea and a great face staring at the sky.

G. K. CHESTERTON: *Chaucer*. 1932.

56. TOWN AND COUNTRY POETS

THERE are certain principles, causes, passions, affections, acting on and influencing communities at large, permeating their life, ruling their principles, directing their history, working as a subtle and wandering principle over all their existence. These have a somewhat abstract character, as compared with the soft ideals and passionate incarnations of purely individual character, and seem dull beside the stirring lays of eventful times, in which the earlier and bolder poets delight. The tendency of civilisation is to pare away the oddness and licence of personal character, and to leave a monotonous agreeableness as the sole trait and comfort of mankind. And this very effect obviously tends to increase the efficacy of general principles, to bring to view the daily efficacy of constant causes, to suggest the hidden agency of subtle abstractions. Accord-

ingly, as civilisation augments and philosophy grows, we commonly find a school of "common-sensepoets," as they may be called, arise and develop, who proceed to describe what they see around them, to describe its *natura naturans,* to delineate its *natura naturatdy* to evolve its productive agencies, to pursue their subtle ramifications. Complete, as the most characteristic specimen of this class of poets, stands Pope. He was the sort of person we cannot even conceive existing in a barbarous age. His subject was not life at large, but fashionable life. He described the society in which he was thrown—the people among whom he lived. His mind was a hoard of small maxims, a quintessence of petty observations. When he described character, he described it not dramatically, not as it is in itself; but observantly and from without, calling up in the mind not so much a vivid conception of the man, of the real, corporal, outward substantial being, as an idea of the idea which a metaphysical bystander in an elaborate moment might refine and excruciate concerning him. Society in Pope is scarcely a society of people, but of pretty little atoms, coloured and painted with hoops or in coats —a miniature of metaphysics, a puppet-show of sylphs. Yet exactly on this account it the more elucidates the doctrine, that the tendency of civilised poetry is towards an analytic sketch of the existing civilisation. Nor is the effect diminished by the pervading character of keen judgment and

minute intrusive sagacity; for no great painter of English life can be without a rough sizing of strong sense; or he would fail from want of sympathy with his subject. In short, Pope does but the more represent the class and type of "common-sense" poets who substitute an animated *"catalogue raisonnè"* of working thoughts and operative principles—a sketch of the then present society, as a whole and as an object, for the κλέα ανδρῶν, the tale of which is one subject of early verse and the stage effect of living, loving, passionate, impetuous men and women, which are special topics of another.

What Pope is to our fashionable and town life, Cowper is to our domestic and rural life. This is perhaps the reason why he is so national. It has been said no foreigner can live in the country. We doubt whether any people, who felt their whole heart and entire exclusive breath of their existence to be concentrated in a great capital, could or would appreciate such intensely provincial pictures as are the entire scope of Cowper's delineation. A good many imaginative persons are really plagued with him. Everything is so comfortable; the tea-urn hisses so plainly, the toast is so warm, the breakfast so neat, the food so edible, that one turns away, in excitable moments, a little angrily from anything so quiet, tame, and sober. Have we not always hated this life? What can be worse than regular meals, clock-moving servants, a time for everything, and everything then done, a place for everything

without the Irish alleviation, "Sure, and I'm rejiced to say, that's jist and exactly where it isn't," a common gardener, a slow parson, a heavy assortment of near relations, a placid house flowing with milk and sugar—all that the fates can stuff together of substantial comfort, and fed and fatted monotony? Aspiring and excitable youth stoutly maintains it can endure anything much better than the "gross fog Boeotian"—the torpid, in-door, tea-tabular felicity. Still a great deal of tea is really consumed in the English nation. A settled and practical people are distinctly in favour of heavy relaxations, placid prolixities, slow comforts. A state between the mind and the body, something intermediate, half-way from the newspaper to a nap—this is what we may call the middle-life theory of the influential English gentleman—the true aspiration of the ruler of the world.

> "'Tis then the understanding takes repose
> In indolent vacuity of thought,
> And sleeps and is refreshed. Meanwhile the face
> Conceals the mood lethargic with a mask
> Of deep deliberation."

It is these in-door scenes, this common world, this gentle round of "calm delights," the trivial course of slowly-moving pleasures, the petty detail of quiet relaxation, that Cowper excels in. The post-boy, the winter's evening, the newspaper, the knitting needles, the stockings, the waggon—these are his subjects. His sure popularity arises from his

having held up to the English people exact delineations of what they really prefer.

WALTER BAGEHOT: *Literary Studies. "William Cowper."* 1855.

57. LICENSED FOOLING

THE humour of English writing and description has often been wondered at; and it flows from the same source as the merry *traits* of our character. A degree of barbarism and rusticity seems necessary to the perfection of humour. The droll and laughable depend on peculiarity and incongruity of character. But with the progress of refinement, the peculiarities of individuals and of classes wear out or lose their sharp, abrupt edges; nay, a certain slowness and dulness of understanding is required to be struck with odd and unaccountable appearances, for which a greater facility of apprehension can sooner assign an explanation that breaks the force of the seeming absurdity, and to which a wider scope of imagination is more easily reconciled. Clowns and country people are more amused, are more disposed to laugh and make sport of the dress of strangers, because from their ignorance the surprise is greater, and they cannot conceive any thing to be natural or proper to which they are unused. Without a given portion of hardness and repulsiveness of feeling the ludicrous cannot well exist. Wonder, and curiosity, the

attributes of inexperience, enter greatly into its composition. Now it appears to me that the English are (or were) just at that mean point between intelligence and obtuseness, which must produce the most abundant and happiest crop of humour. Absurdity and singularity glide over the French mind without jarring or jostling with it; or they evaporate in levity:—with the Italians they are lost in indolence or pleasure. The ludicrous takes hold of the English imagination, and clings to it with all its ramifications. We resent any difference or peculiarity of appearance at first, and yet, not having much malice at our hearts, we are glad to turn it into a jest—we are liable to be offended, and as willing to be pleased—struck with oddity from not knowing what to make of it, we wonder and burst out a laughing at the eccentricity of others, while we follow our own bent from wilfulness or simplicity, and thus afford them, in our turn, matter for the indulgence of the comic vein. It is possible that a greater refinement of manrtfers may give birth to finer distinctions of satire and a nicer tact for the ridiculous: but our insular situation and character are, I should say, most likely to foster, as they have in fact fostered, the greatest quantity of natural and striking humour, in spite of our plodding tenaciousness, and want both of gaiety and quickness of perception. A set of raw recruits with their awkward movements and unbending joints are laughable enough: but they

cease to be so, when they have once been drilled into discipline and uniformity. So it is with nations that lose their angular points and grotesque qualities with education and intercourse: but it is in a mixed state of manners that comic humour chiefly flourishes, for, in order that the drollery may not be lost, we must have spectators of the passing scene who are able to appreciate and embody its most remarkable features,—wits as well *as butts* for ridicule. I shall mention two names in this department, which may serve to redeem the national character from absolute dulness and solemn pretence,—Fielding and Hogarth. These were thorough specimens of true English humour; yet both were grave men. In reality, too high a pitch of animal spirits runs away with the imagination, instead of helping it to reach the goal; is inclined to take the jest for granted when it ought to work it out with patient and marked touches, and it ends in vapid flippancy and impertinence. Among our neighbours on the Continent, Moli&re and Rabelais carried the freedom of wit and humour to an almost incredible height; but they rather belonged to the old French school, and even approach and exceed the English licence and extravagance of conception. I do not consider Congreve's wit (though it belongs to us) as coming under the article here spoken of; for his genius is anything but *merry*. Lord Byron was in the habit of railing at the spirit of our good old comedy, and of abusing Shakspeare's Clowns and Fools, which

he said the refinement of the French and Italian stage would not endure, and which only our grossness and puerile taste could tolerate. In this I agree with him; and it is *pat* to my purpose. I flatter myself that we are almost the only people left who understand and relish *nonsense.* We are not "merry and wise," but indulge our mirth to excess and folly. When we trifle, we trifle in good earnest; and having once relaxed our hold of the helm, drift idly down the stream, and delighted with the change are tossed about "by every little breath" of whim or caprice

"That under Heaven is blown."

All we then want is to proclaim a truce with reason, and to be pleased with as little expense of thought or pretension to wisdom as possible. This licensed fooling is carried to its very utmost length in Shakspeare, and in some other of our elder dramatists, without, perhaps, sufficient warrant or the same excuse. Nothing can justify this extreme relaxation but extreme tension. Shakspeare's trifling does indeed tread upon the very borders of vacancy.: his meaning often hangs by the very slenderest threads, For this he might be blamed if it did not take away our breath to follow his eagle flights, or if he did not at other times make the cordage of our hearts crack. After our heads ache with thinking, it is fair to play the fool. The clowns were as proper an appendage to the gravity of our antique literature, as fools and dwarfs were to the

stately dignity of courts and noble houses in former days. Of all people, they have the best right to claim a total exemption from rules and rigid formality, who, when they have any thing of importance to do, set about it with the greatest earnestness and perseverance, and are generally grave and sober to a proverb. Poor Swift, who wrote more idle or *nonsense* verses than any man, was the severest of moralists; and his feelings and observations morbidly acute. Did not Lord Byron himself follow up his *Childe Harold* with his *Don Juan?*—not that I insist on what he did as an illustration of the English character. He was one of the English Nobility, not one of the English People; and his occasional ease and familiarity were in my mind equally constrained and affected, whether in relation to the pretensions of his rank or the efforts of his genius.

WILLIAM HAZLITT : *Merry England.* 1825.

NATIVE GENIUS
DRAMA

D E A R SIR..

You write to me that you have Entertained your self two or three days with reading several Comedies of several Authors; and your Observation is that there is more of *Humour* in our English Writers than in any of the other Comick Poets, Ancient or Modern. You desire to know my Opinion, and at the same time my Thought, of that which is generally calPd . *Humour* in Comedy.

I agree with you in an Impartial Preference of our English Writers in that Particular. But if I tell you my Thoughts of *Humour, I* must at the same time confess that what I take for true *Humour* has not been so often written even by them as is generally believed: And some who have valued themselves and have been esteem'd by others for that kind of Writing have seldom touch'd upon it. To make this appear to the World would require a long and labour'd Discourse, and such as 1 neither am able nor willing to undertake. But such little Remarks as may be contained within the Compass of a Letter, and such unpremeditated Thoughts as may be Communicated between Friend and Friend without incurring the Censure of the World

or setting up for a *Dictator,* you shall have from me, since you have enjoyn'd it.

To Define *Humour* perhaps were as difficult as to Define *Wit*\ for like that it is of infinite variety. To Enumerate the several *Humours* of Men were a Work as endless as to sum up their several Opinions. And in my mind the *Quot homines tot Sententia* might have been more properly interpreted of *Humour,* since there are many Men of the same Opinion in many things who are yet quite different in Humours. But tho we cannot certainly tell what *Wit* is, or what *Humour* is, yet we may go near to shew something which is not *Wit* or not *Humour,* and yet often mistaken for both. And since I have mentioned *Wit* and *Humour* together, let me make the first Distinction between them, and observe to you that *Wit is often mistaken for Humour.*

I have observed that when a few things have been Wittily and Pleasantly spoken by any Character in a Comedy, it has been very usual for those who make their Remarks on a Play while it is acting to say, *Such a thing is very Humorously spoken; There is a great Deal of Humour in that Part.* Thus the Character of the Person speaking, may be, Surprizingly and Pleasantly is mistaken for a Character of *Humour,* which indeed is a Character of *Wit.* But there is a great Difference between a Comedy wherein there are many things *Humorously,* as they call it, which is *Pleasantly* spoken, and one where there are several Characters of *Humour,*

distinguish'd by the Particular and Different Humours appropriated to the several Persons represented, and which naturally arise from the different Constitutions, Complexions, and Dispositions of Men. The saying of Humorous Things does not distinguish Characters; For every Person in a Comedy may be allow'd to speak them. From a Witty Man they are expected; and even a *Fool* may be permitted to stumble on 'em by chance. Tho I make a Difference betwixt *Wit* and *Humour*, yet I do not think that Humorous Characters exclude Wit: No, but the Manner of *Wit* should be adapted to the *Humour*. As, for Instance, a Character of a Splenetick and Peevish *Humour* should have a Satyrical Wit. A Jolly and Sanguine *Humour* should have a Facetious Wit. The Former should speak Positively; the Latter, Carelessly: For the former observes and shews things as they are; the latter rather overlooks Nature, and speaks things as he would have them, and his *Wit* and *Humour* have both of them a less Alloy of Judgment than the others.

As *Wit*, so its opposite, *Folly, is sometimes mistaken for Humour*.

When a Poet brings a *Character* on the Stage committing a thousand Absurdities, and talking Impertinencies, roaring Aloud, and Laughing immoderately on every or rather upon no occasion, this is a Character of Humour.

Is any thing more common than to have a

pretended Comedy stufFd with such Grotesques, Figures, and Farce Fools? Things that either are not in Nature, or, if they are, are Monsters and Births of Mischance, and consequently, as such, ' should be stifled and huddled out of the way, like *Sooterkins,* that Mankind may not be shock'd with an appearing Possibility of the Degeneration of a God-like *Species.* For my part, I am as willing to Laugh as any body, and as easily diverted with an Object truly ridiculous; but at the same time I can never care for seeing things that force me to entertain low thoughts of my Nature. I dont know how it is with others, but I confess freely to you I could never look long upon a Monkey without very Mortifying Reflections, tho I never heard any thing to the Contrary why that Creature is not Originally of a distinct *Species.* As I dont think *Humour* exclusive of *Wit,* neither do I think it inconsistent with *Folly;* but I think the Follies should be only such as Mens Humours may incline 'em to, and not Follies intirely abstracted from both Humour and Nature.

Sometimes *Personal Defects are misrepresented for Humours.*

I mean, sometimes Characters are barbarously exposed on the Stage, ridiculing Natural Deformities, Casual Defects in the Senses, and Infirmities of Age. Sure the Poet must both be very Ill-natur'd himself, and think his Audience so, when he proposes by shewing a Man Deform'd or Deaf, or Blind, to give them an agreeable

Entertainment, and hopes to raise their Mirth by what is truly an object of Compassion. But much need not be said upon this Head to any body especially to you, who, in one of your Letters to me concerning Mr. *Johnson's Fox*, have justly excepted against this Immoral part of *Ridicule* in *Corbaccio's* Character; and there I must agree with you to blame him whom otherwise I cannot enough admire for his great Mastery of true Humour in Comedy.

External Habit of Body is often mistaken for Humour.

By *External Habit* I do not mean the Ridiculous Dress or Cloathing of a Character, tho that goes a good way in some received Characters. (But undoubtedly a Man's Humour may incline him to dress differently from other People.) But I mean a Singularity of Manners, Speech, and Behaviour, peculiar to all or most of the same Country, Trade, Profession, or Education. I cannot think that a *Humour* which is only a Habit or Disposition contracted by Use or Custom; for by a Disuse, or Complyance with other Customs, it may be worn off or diversify'd.

Affectation is generally mistaken for Humour.

These are indeed so much alike that at a Distance they may be mistaken one for the other. For what is *Humour* in one may be *Affectation* in another; and nothing is more common than for some to affect particular ways of saying and doing things, peculiar to others whom they admire and would

imitate. *Humour* is the Life, *Affectation* the Picture. He that draws a Character of *Affectation* shews *Humour* at the Second Hand; he at best but publishes a Translation, and his Pictures are but Copies.

But as these two last distinctions are the Nicest, so it may be most proper to Explain them by Particular Instances from some Author of Reputation. *Humour* I take either to be born with us, and so of a Natural Growth, or else to be grafted into us by some accidental change in the Constitution, or revolution of the Internal Habit of Body, by which it becomes, if I may so call it, Naturaliz'd.

Humour is from Nature, *Habit* from Custom, and *Affectation* from Industry.

Humour shews us as we *are*.

Habit shews us as we appear under a forcible Impression.

Affectation shews what we would be under a Voluntary Disguise.

Tho here I would observe by the way that a continued Affectation may in time become a Habit.

The Character of *Morose* in the *Silent Woman* I take to be a Character of Humour. And I choose to instance this Character to you from many others of the same Author, because I know it has been Condemn'd by many as Unnatural and Farce: And you have yourself hinted some dislike of it for the same Reason, in a Letter to me concerning some *of Johnson's* Plays.

Let us suppose *Morose* to be a Man Naturally Splenetick and Melancholly; is there anything more offensive to one of such a Disposition than Noise and Clamour? Let any Man that has the Spleen (and there are enough in *England]* be Judge. We see common Examples of this Humour in little every day. 'Tis ten to one but three parts in four of the Company that you dine with are Discompos'd and Startled at the Cutting of a Cork or Scratching a Plate with a Knife. It is a Proportion of the same Humour that makes such or any other Noise offensive to the Person that hears it; for there are others who will not be disturb'd at all by it. Well, But *Morose,* you will say, is so Extravagant, he cannot bear any Discourse or Conversation above a Whisper. Why, It is his excess of this Humour that makes him become Ridiculous, and qualifies his Character for Comedy. If the Poet had given him but a Moderate proportion of that Humour, 'tis odds but half the Audience would have sided with the Character and have Condemn'd the Author for Exposing a Humour which was neither Remarkable nor Ridiculous. Besides, the distance of the Stage requires the Figure represented 10 be something larger than the Life; and sure a Picture may have Features larger in Proportion, and yet be very like the Original. If this Exactness of Quantity were to be observed in Wit, as some would have it in Humour, what would become of those Characters that are de-

sign'd for Men of Wit? I believe if a Poet should steal a Dialogue of any Length from the *Extempore* Discourse of the two Wittiest Men upon Earth, he would find the Scene but coldly receiv'd by the Town. But to the purpose.

The Character of Sir *John Daw* in the same Play is a Character of Affectation. He everywhere discovers an Affectation of Learning, when he is not only Conscious to himself, but the Audience also plainly perceives, that he is Ignorant. Of this kind are the Characters of *Thraso* in the Eunuch of *Terence,*and *Pyrgopolinices* in the *Miles Gloriosus ofPlautus.* They affect to be thought Valiant, when both themselves and the Audience know they are not. Now, such a boasting of Valour in Men who were really Valiant would undoubtedly be a *Humour,* for a Fiery Disposition might naturally throw a Man into the same Extravagance, which is only affected in the Characters I have mentioned.

The Character of *Cob* in *Every Man in his Humour* and as most of the under Characters in *Bartholomew Fair* discover only a Singularity of Manners, appropriated to the several Educations and Professions of the Persons represented. They are not Humours but Habits contracted by Custom. Under this Head may be ranged all Country-Clowns, Sailors, Tradesmen, Jockeys, Gamesters, and such like, who make use of *Cants* or peculiar *Dialects* in their several Arts and Vocations. One may almost give a Receipt for the Composition of such a

Character: For the Poet has nothing to do but to collect a few proper Phrases and terms of Art, and to make the Person apply them by ridiculous Metaphors in his Conversation with Characters of different Natures. Some late Characters of this kind have been very successful; but in my mind they may be Painted without much Art or Labour, since they require little more than a good Memory and Superficial Observation. But true *Humour* cannot be shewn without a Dissection of Nature, and a Narrow Search to discover the first Seeds from whence it has its Root and growth.

If I were to write to the World, I should be obliged to dwell longer upon each of these Distinctions and Examples, for I know that they would not be plain enough to all Readers. But a bare hint is sufficient to inform you of the Notions which I have on this Subject: And I hope by this time you are of my Opinion, that Humour is neither Wit, nor Folly, nor Personal defect, nor Affectation, nor Habit, and yet that each and all of these have been both written and received for Humour.

I should be unwilling to venture even on a bare Description of Humour, much more to make a Definition of it, but now my hand is in, He tell you what serves me instead of either. I take it to be *A singular and unavoidable manner of doing or saying any thing, Peculiar and Natural to one Man only, by which his Speech and Actions are distinguished from those of other men.*

Our *Humour* has relation to us and to what proceeds from us, as the Accidents have to a Substance; it is a Colour, Taste, and Smell, Diffused through all; tho our Actions are never so many and different in Form, they are all Splinters of the same Wood, and have Naturally one Complexion, which tho it may be disguised by Art, yet cannot be wholly changed: We may Paint it with other Colours, but we cannot change the Grain. So the Natural sound of an Instrument will be distinguish'd, tho the Notes expressed by it are never so various, and the Divisions never so many. Dissimulation may by Degrees become more easy to our practice; but it can never absolutely Transubstantiate us into what we would seem: It will always be in some proportion a Violence upon Nature.

A Man may change his Opinion, but I believe he will find it a Difficulty to part with his Humour, and there is nothing more provoking than the being made sensible of that difficulty. Sometimes one shall meet with those who perhaps Innocently enough, but at the same time impertinently, will ask the Question, *Why are you not Merry? Why are you not Gay, Pleasant, and Cheerful?* then, instead of answering, could I ask such a one, *Why are you not handsome? Why have you not Black Eyes and a better Complexion?* Nature abhors to be forced.

The two Famous Philosophers of *Ephesus* and *Abdera* have their different Sects at this day.

Some Weep and others Laugh at one and the same thing.

I dont doubt but you have observed several Men Laugh when they are Angry, others who are Silent, some that are Loud: Yet I cannot suppose that it is the passion of *Anger* which is in it self different, or more or less in one than t'other, but that it is the *Humour* of the Man that is Predominant, and urges him to express it in that manner. Demonstrations of pleasure are as Various: one Man has a Humour of retiring from all Company, when any thing has happened to please him beyond expectation ; he hugs himself alone, and thinks it an Addition to the pleasure to keep it Secret. Another is upon Thorns till he has made Proclamation of it, and must make other people sensible of his happiness before he can be so himself. So it is in Grief and other Passions. Demonstrations of Love and the Effects of that Passion upon several Humours are infinitely different; but here the Ladies who abound in Servants are the best Judges. Talking of the Ladies, methinks something should be observed of the Humour of the Fair Sex, since they are sometimes so kind as to furnish out a Character for Comedy. But I must confess I have never made any observation of what I Apprehend to be true Humour in Women. Perhaps Passions are too powerful in that Sex to let Humour have its Course; or may be by Reason of their Natural Coldness, Humour cannot Exert it self to that extravagant

Degree which it often does in the Male Sex. For if ever any thing does appear Comical or Ridiculous in a Woman, I think it is little more than an acquir'd Folly or an Affectation. We may call them the weaker Sex, but I think the true Reason is because our Follies are Stronger and our Faults are more prevailing.

One might think that the Diversity of Humour, which must be allowed to be diffused throughout Mankind, might afford endless matter for the support of Comedies. But when we come closely to consider that point, and nicely to distinguish the Difference of Humours, I believe we shall find the contrary. For tho we allow every Man something of his own, and a peculiar Humour, yet every Man has it not in quantity to become Remarkable by it: Or, if many do become Remarkable by their Humours, yet all those Humours may not be Diverting. Nor is it only requisite to distinguish what Humour will be diverting, but also how much of it, what part of it to shew in Light, and what to cast in Shades, how to set it off by preparatory Scenes, and by opposing other humours to it in the same Scene. Thro a wrong Judgment, sometimes, Mens Humours may be opposed when there is really no specific Difference between them, only a greater proportion of the same in one than t'other, occasion'd by his having more Flegm, or Choller, or whatever the Constitution is from whence their Humours derive their Source.

tho perhaps I have already said too much; but I have said it to a Friend, who I am sure will not expose it, if he does not approve of it. I believe the Subject is intirely new, and was never touch'd upon before; and if I would have any one to see this private Essay, it should be some one who might be provoked by my Errors in it to Publish a more Judicious Treatise on the Subject. Indeed I wish it were done, that the World, being a little acquainted with the scarcity of true Humour and the difficulty of finding and shewing it, might look a little more favourably on the Labours of them who endeavour to search into Nature for it and lay it open to the Publick View.

I dont say but that very entertaining and useful Characters, and proper for Comedy, may be drawn from Affectations and those other Qualities which I have endeavoured to distinguish from Humour; but I would not have such imposed on the World for Humour, nor esteem'd of Equal value with it. It were perhaps the Work of a long Life to make one Comedy true in all its Parts, and to give every Character in it a True and Distinct Humour. Therefore every Poet must be beholding to other helps to make out his Number of ridiculous Characters. But I think such a One deserves to be broke, who makes all false Musters; who does not shew one true Humour in a Comedy, but entertains his Audience to the end of the Play with every thing out of Nature.

I will make but one Observation to you more,

and have done; and that is grounded upon an Observation of your own, and which I mention'd at the beginning of my letter, *viz.* That there is more of Humour in our English Comick Writers than in any others. I do not at all wonder at it, for I look upon Humour to be almost of English Growth; at least, it does not seem to have found such Encrease on any other Soil. And what appears to me to be reason of it is the greater Freedom, Privilege, and Liberty which the Common People of *England* enjoy. Any Man that has a Humour is under no restraint or fear of giving it Vent; they have a Proverb among them> which may be will shew the Bent and Genius of the People as well as a longer Discourse: *He that will have a Maypole shall have a Maypole.* This is a Maxim with them, and their Practice is agreeable to it. I believe something Considerable too may be ascribed to their feeding so much on Flesh, and the Crossness of their Diet in general. But I have done; let the Physicians agree that. Thus you have my Thoughts of *Humour,* to my Power of Expressing them in so little Time and Compass. You will be kind to shew me wherein I have Err'd; and as you are very Capable of giving me Instruction, so I think I have a very Just title to demand it from you, being without Reserve,

Tour real Friend,, and humble Servant,

W. CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE *i Letter to Mr. Dennis Concerning Humour in Comedy.* 1695.

59. THE ENGLISH STAGE

I SHALL grant Lisideius, without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us; for I acknowledge that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage (to speak generally), with more exactness than the English. Further, I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours, which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion that neither our faults nor their virtues are considerable enough to place them above us.

For the lively imitation of Nature being in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law ought to be esteemed superior to the others. 'Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of Poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humours of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He that will look upon theirs which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has

he produced except *The Liar*, and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted to so much advantage by Mr. Hart as I am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Johnson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself, his way is, first to show two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

But of late years Molière, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of Cardinal Richelieu; which Lisideius and many others not observing, have commended that in them for a virtue which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego, who drolls much after the rate of the *Adventures*. But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thin-sown, that never above one of them comes up in any play. I dare take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Johnson's, than in all theirs together; as he who has

seen *The Alchymist, The Silent Woman,* or *Bartholomew-Fairy* cannot but acknowledge with me.

I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular: but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often; which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Lisideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant in a much shorter time than is required to this? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logic might have convinced him, that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our music has betwixt the acts; and that we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long. I must therefore have stronger

arguments, ere I am convinced that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other; and in the mean time cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragi-comedy.

And this leads me to wonder why Lisideius and many others should cry up the barrenness of the French plots, above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single; they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it. Our plays, besides the main design, have under-plots or by-concernments, of less considerable persons and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot: just as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, though they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *Primum Mobile,* in which they are contained. That similitude expresses much of the English stage; for if contrary motions may be found in nature to agree; if a planet can go east and west at the same time, one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the First Mover, it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it.

Eugenius has already shown us, from the confession of the French poets, that the Unity of Action

is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of the play are conducing to the main design; but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill ordered that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that Lisideius has reason to tax that want of due connexion; for co-ordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the mean time he must acknowledge, our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he could bring from them would make it good; for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read. Neither, indeed, is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length; so that instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in the tedious visits of bad company; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the *Cinna* and the *Pompey*; they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of reason of state; and *Polieucte* in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs.

Since that time it is grown into a custom, and their actors speak by the hour-glass, as our parsons do; nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred or two hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious: and this I conceive to be one reason why comedy is more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally: it cannot be denied that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions and beget concernment in us, than the other; for it is unnatural for any one in a gust of passion to speak long together, or for another in the same condition to suffer him, without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up; and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us: but a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for Comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chace of wit, kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays, to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can arrive at.

There is another part of Lisideius his discourse, in which he has rather excused our neighbours, than commended them; that is, for aiming only to make one person considerable in their plays. 'Tis very true what he has urged, that one character in all plays, even without the poet's care, will have advantage of all the others; and that the design of the whole drama will chiefly depend on it. But this hinders not that there may be more shining characters in the play: many persons of a second magnitude, nay, some so verv near, so almost equal to the first, that greatness may be opposed to greatness, and all the persons be made considerable, not only by their quality, but their action. 'Tis evident that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the plot. If then the parts are managed so regularly, that the beauty of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce for examples many of our English plays: as *The Maid's Tragedy*', *The Alchymist, The Silent Woman:* I was going to have named *The Fox,* but that the unity of design seems not exactly observed in it; for there appear two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act; the second forced from it in the fifth: which yet is the less to be condemned in him,

because the disguise of Volpone, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary; and by it the poet gained the end he aimed at, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, which that disguise produced. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former.

But to leave this, and pass to the latter part of Lisideius his discourse, which concerns relations: I must acknowledge with him, that the French have reason when they hide that part of the action which would occasion too much tumult on the stage, and choose rather to have it made known by narration to the audience. Further, I think it very convenient, for the reasons he has given, that all incredible actions were removed; but, whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them. And indeed, the indecency of tumults is all which can be objected against fighting: for why may not our imagination as well suffer itself to be deluded with the probability of it, as with any other thing in the play? For my part, I can with as great ease persuade myself that the blows which are struck, are given in good earnest, as I can, that they who strike them are kings or princes, or those persons which they represent. For objects of incredibility, I would be

satisfied from Lisideius, whether we have any so removed from all appearance of truth, as are those of Corneille's *Andromede*\ a play which has been frequented the most of any he has writ. . . .—To conclude on this subject of relations; if we are to be blamed for showing too much of the action, the French are as faulty for discovering too little of it: a mean betwixt both should be observed by every judicious writer, so as the audience may neither be left unsatisfied by not seeing what is beautiful, or shocked by beholding what is either incredible or undecent.

I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French, in observing the laws of Comedy, yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly tied up by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the Three Unities:—*// est facile aux speculatifs d'estre severes, &c.* "'Tis easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when, by experience, they had known how much we are bound up and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the

stage they banished from it." To illustrate a little what he has said: by their servile observations of the Unities of Time and Place, and integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination, which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive with any probability in the compass of twenty-four hours? There is time to be allowed also for maturity of design, which, amongst great and prudent persons, such as are often represented in Tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther; by tying themselves strictly to the Unity of Place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shown where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities; for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shown that act; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there. As, suppose it were the king's bed-chamber; yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby or courtyard (which is fitter for him), for fear the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by it

in a greater inconvenience; for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend; he sees him with his man, coming out from his father's house; they talk together, and the first goes out: the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress; she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress; presently her father is heard from within; the young lady is afraid the servingman should be discovered, and thrusts him in through a door, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house; for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego, who is heard from within, drolling, and breaking many a miserable conceit upon his sad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes on, the st^ge being never empty all the while: so that the street, the window, the houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakespeare?

If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make

every way regular, as easily as they; but whene'er they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counterturns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous, why no French plays, when translated, have, or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit; and therefore 'tis a strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters which are derived to us from Shakespeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knitting of the intrigues we have from Johnson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. . . .

But to return from whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama;—First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Johnson's are for the most part regular) there ic a more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing, than there is in any of the

French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's Works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *The Scornful Lady:* but because (generally speaking) Shakespeare, who writ first, did not perfectly observe the laws of Comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Johnson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select *The Silent Woman*; of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe.

As Neander was beginning to examine *The Silent Woman,* Eugenius, looking earnestly upon him; "I beseech you, Neander," said he, "gratify the company, and me in particular, so far, as before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him."

"I fear," replied Neander, "that in obeying your commands I shall draw a little envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.

"To begin, then, with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All

the images of Nature were still present to him, and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is every where alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him; no man can say he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eaton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better treated of in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Johnson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last King's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

"Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to

speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study: Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays, that Ben Johnson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and, 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther. of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem was their *Philaster;* for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully, as the like is reported of Ben Johnson, before he writ *Every Man in his Humour*. Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done. Humour, which Ben Johnson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection: what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Johnson's: the reason is, because there is a certain

gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Johnson's wit comes short of theirs.

"As for Johnson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit, and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the Drama, till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the Ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times whom he has not translated in *Sejanus* and *Catiline*. But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any

law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rites, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, 'twas that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his serious plays: perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he learnedly followed the idiom of their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit. Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Johnson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing; I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his *Discoveries*, we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us.

"Having thus spoken of the author, I proceed to the examination of his comedy, *The Silent Woman.*

"Examen of the SILENT WOMAN.

"To begin first with the length of the action; it is so far from exceeding the compass of a natural day,

that it takes not up an artificial one. 'Tis all included in the limits of three hours and a half, which is no more than is required for the presentment on the stage. A beauty perhaps not much observed; if it had, we should not have looked on the Spanish translation *of Five Hours* with so much wonder. The scene of it is laid in London; the latitude of place is almost as little as you can imagine; for it lies all within the compass of two houses, and after the first act, in one. The continuity of scenes is observed more than in any of our plays, except his own *Fox* and *Alchymist.* They are not broken above twice .or thrice at most in the whole comedy; and in the two best of Corneille's plays, the *Cid* and *Cinna,* they are interrupted once apiece. The action of the play is entirely one; the end or aim of which is the settling Morose's estate on Dauphine. The intrigue of it is the greatest and most noble of any pure unmixed comedy in any language; you see in it many persons of various characters and humours, and all delightful: as first, Morose, or an old man, to whom all noise but his own talking is offensive. Some who would be thought critics, say this humour of his is forced: but to remove that objection, we may consider him first to be naturally of a delicate hearing, as many are, to whom all sharp sounds are unpleasant; and secondly, we may attribute much of it to the peevishness of his age, or the wayward authority of an old man in his own house, where he may make himself obeyed; and this the poet seems

to allude to in his name Morose. Besides this, I am assured from divers persons, that Ben Johnson was actually acquainted with such a man, one altogether as ridiculous as he is here represented. Others say, it is not enough to find one of such an humour; it must be common to more, and the more common the more natural. To prove this, they instance in the best of comical characters, Falstaff: there are many men resembling him; old, fat, merry, cowardly, drunken, amorous, vain, and lying. But to convince these people, I need but tell them, that humour is the ridiculous extravagance of conversation, wherein one man differs from all others. If then it be common, or communicated to many, how differs it from other men's? or what indeed causes it to be ridiculous so much as the singularity of it? As for Falstaff, he is not properly one humour, but a miscellany of humours or images, drawn from so many several men: that wherein he is singular is his wit, or those things he says *prater expectatum*, unexpected by the audience; his quick evasions, when you imagine him surprised, which, as they are extremely diverting of themselves, so receive a great addition from his person; for the very sight of such an unwieldy old debauched fellow is a comedy alone. . . .

"If this comedy and some others of his were translated into French prose (which would now be no wonder to them, since Moltere has lately given them plays out of verse, which have not displeased

them), I believe the controversy would soon be decided betwixt the two nations, even making them the judges. But we need not call our heroes to our aid; be it spoken to the honour of the English, our nation can never want in any age such who are able to dispute the empire of wit with any people in the universe. And though the fury of a civil war, and power for twenty years together abandoned to a barbarous race of men, enemies of all good learning, had buried the Muses under the ruins of monarchy; yet, with the restoration of our happiness, we see revived Poesy lifting up its head, and already shaking off the rubbish which lay so heavy on it. We have seen since his Majesty's return, many dramatic poems which yield not to those of any foreign nation, and which deserve all laurels but the English. I will set aside flattery and envy: it cannot be denied but we have had some little blemish either in the plot or writing of all those plays which have been made within these seven years (and perhaps there is no nation in the world so quick to discern them, or so difficult to pardon them, as ours): yet if we can persuade ourselves to use the candour of that poet, who, though the most severe of critics, has left us this caution by which to moderate our censures—

> *. . . ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis*
> *Offendar masculis;—*

if, in consideration of their many and great beauties,

we can wink at some slight and little imperfections, if we, I say, can be thus equal to ourselves, I ask no favour from the French. And if I do not venture upon any particular judgment of our late plays, 'tis out of the consideration which an ancient writer gives me: *vivorum, ut magna admiratio, its censura dtfficilis:* betwixt the extremes of admiration and malice, 'tis hard to judge uprightly of the living. Only I think it may be permitted me to say, that as it is no lessening to us to yield to some plays, and those not many, of our own nation in the last age, so can it be no addition to pronounce of our present poets, that they have far surpassed all the Ancients, and the modern writers of other countries."

JOHN DRYDEN: *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy.* 1668.

NATIVE GENIUS
PAINTING

60. THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

IN the study of our art, as in the study of all arts, something is the result of *our own* observation of Nature; something, and that not a little, the effect of the example of those who have studied the same Nature before us, and who have cultivated before us the same art, with diligence and success. The less we confine ourselves in the choice of those examples, the more advantage we shall derive from them, and the nearer we shall bring our performances to a correspondence with nature and the great general rules of art. When we draw our examples from remote and revered antiquity,—with some advantage undoubtedly in that selection,—we subject ourselves to some inconveniences. We may suffer ourselves to be too much led away by great names, and to be too much subdued by overbearing authority. Our learning, in that case, is not so much an exercise of our judgment, as a proof of our docility. We find ourselves, perhaps, too much overshadowed; and the character of our pursuits is rather distinguished by the tameness of the follower, than animated by the spirit of emulation. It is sometimes of service, that our examples should be *near* us; and such as raise a reverence, sufficient to induce us carefully to observe them, yet not so great

as to prevent us from engaging with them in something like a generous contention.

We have lately lost Mr. Gainsborough, one of the greatest ornaments of our Academy. It is not our business here, to make panegyrics on the living, or even on the dead, who were of our body. The praise of the former, might bear appearance of adulation; and the latter, of untimely justice; perhaps, of envy to those whom we have still the happiness to enjoy, by an oblique suggestion of invidious comparisons. In discoursing, therefore, on the talents of the late Mr. Gainsborough, my object is, not so much to praise or to blame him, as to draw from his excellences and defects, matter of instruction to the students in our academy. If ever this nation should produce genius sufficient to acquire to us the honourable distinction of an English School, the name of Gainsborough will be transmitted to posterity, in the history of the art, among the very first of that rising name. That our reputation in the arts is now only rising, must be acknowledged; and we must expect our advances to be attended with old prejudices, as adversaries, and not as supporters; standing in this respect, in a very different situation from the late artists of the Roman School, to whose reputation ancient prejudices have certainly contributed : the way was prepared for them, and they may be said rather to have lived in the reputation of their country, than to have contributed to it; whilst whatever celebrity is obtained by English

artists, can arise only from the operation of a fair and true comparison. And when they communicate to their country a share of their reputation, it is a portion of fame not borrowed from others, but solely acquired by their own labour and talents. As Italy has, undoubtedly, a prescriptive right to an administration bordering on prejudice, as a soil peculiarly adapted, congenial, and, we may add, destined to the production of men of great genius in our art, we may not unreasonably suspect that a portion of the great fame of some of their late artists has been owing to the general readiness and disposition of mankind, to acquiesce in their original prepossessions in favour of the productions of the Roman School.

On this ground, however unsafe, I will venture to prophesy, that two of the last distinguished painters of that country, I mean Pompeio Battoni and Raffaelle Mengs, however great their names may at present sound in our ears, will very soon fall into the rank of Imperiale, Sebastian Concha, Placido Constanza, Masuccio, and the rest of their immediate predecessors; whose names, though equally renowned in their lifetime, are now fallen into what is little short of total oblivion. I do not say that those painters were not superior to the artist I allude to, and whose loss we lament, in a certain routine of practice, which, to the eyes of common observers, has the air of a learned composition, and bears a sort of superficial resemblance to the manner of the

great men who went before them. I know this perfectly well, but I know likewise, that a man, looking for real and lasting reputation, must unlearn much of the common-place method so observable in the works of the artists whom I have named. For my own part, I confess, I take more interest in, and am more captivated with the powerful impression of nature, which Gainsborough exhibited in his portraits and in his landscapes, and the interesting simplicity and elegance of his little ordinary beggar-children, than with any of the works of that school, since the time of Andrea Sacchi, or perhaps we may say Carlo Maratti; two painters, who may truly be said to be Ultimi Romanorum.

I am well aware how much I lay myself open to the censure and ridicule of the academical professors of other nations, in preferring the humble attempts of Gainsborough to the works of those regular graduates in the great historical style. But we have the sanction of all mankind in preferring genius in a lower rank of art, to feebleness and insipidity in the highest.

It would not be to the present purpose, even if I had the means and materials, which I have not, to enter into the private life of Mr. Gainsborough. The history of his gradual advancement, and the means by which he acquired such excellence in his art, would come nearer to our purposes and wishes, if it were by any means attainable; but the slow progress of advancement is in general imperceptible to the man himself who makes it; it is the conse-

quence of an accumulation of various ideas which his mind has received, he does not perhaps know how or when. Sometimes, indeed, it happens, that he may be able to mark the time when from the sight of a picture, a passage in an author, or a hint in conversation, he has received, as it were, some new and guiding light, something like inspiration, by which his mind has been expanded; and is morally sure that his whole life and conduct have been affected by that accidental circumstance. Such interesting accounts we may, however, sometimes obtain from a man who has acquired an uncommon habit of self-examination, and has attended to the progress of his own improvement.

It may not be improper to make mention of some of the customs and habits of this extraordinary man; points which come more within the reach of an observer; I, however, mean such only as are connected with his art, and indeed were, as I apprehend, the causes of his arriving .to that high degree of excellence, which we see and acknowledge in his works. Of these causes we must state, as the fundamental, the love which he had to his art; to which, indeed, his whole mind appears to have been devoted, and to which everything was referred; and this we may fairly conclude from various circumstances of his life, which were known to his intimate friends. Among others he had a habit of continually remarking to those who happened to be about him whatever peculiarity of countenance, whatever accidental combination of

figure, or happy effects of light and shadow, occurred in prospects, in the sky, in walking the streets, or in company. If, in his walks, he found a character that he liked, and whose attendance was to be obtained, he ordered him to his house: and from the fields he brought into his painting-room, stumps of trees, weeds, and animals of various kinds; and designed them, not from memory, but immediately from the objects. He even framed a kind of model of landscapes on his table; composed of broken stones, dried herbs, and pieces of looking-glass, which he magnified and improved into rocks, trees, and water. How far this latter practice may be useful in giving hints, the professors of landscape can best determine. Like every other technical practice, it seems to me wholly to depend on the general talent of him who uses it. Such methods may be nothing better than contemptible and mischievous trifling; or they may be aids. I think upon the wfiole, unless we constantly refer to real nature, the practice may be more likely to do harm than good. I mention it only, as it shows the solicitude and extreme activity which he had about everything that related to his art; that he wished to have his objects embodied, as it were, and distinctly before him; that he neglected nothing which could keep his faculties in exercise, and derived hints from every sort of combination.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS *I The Fourteenth Discourse.* 1788.

61. STAY AT HOME

I HAVE already spoken of my brother's taste for painting, and the progress he had made in that beautiful art. It is probable that, if circumstances had not eventually diverted his mind from the pursuit, he would have attained excellence, and left behind him some enduring monument of his powers, for he had an imagination to conceive, and that yet rarer endowment, a hand capable of giving life, body, and reality to the conceptions of his mind; perhaps he wanted one thing, the want of which is but too often fatal to the sons of genius, and without which genius is little more than a splendid toy in the hands of the possessor—perseverance, dogged perseverance, in his proper calling; otherwise, though the grave had closed over him, he might still be living in the admiration of his fellow-creatures. O ye gifted ones, follow your calling, for, however various your talents may be, ye can have but one calling capable of leading ye to eminence and renown; follow resolutely the one straight path before you, it is that of your good angel, let neither obstacles nor temptations induce ye to leave it; bound along if you can; if not, on hands and knees follow it, perish in it, if needful; but ye need not fear that: no one ever yet died in the true path of his calling before he had attained the pinnacle. Turn into other paths, and for a momentary advantage or gratification ye had sold your inheritance,

your immortality. Ye will never be heard of after death.

"My father has given me a hundred and fifty pounds," said my brother to me one morning, "and something which is better—his blessing. I am going to leave you."

"And where are you going?"

"Where? to the great city; to London, to be sure."

"I should like to go with you."

"Pooh," said my brother, "what should you do there? But don't be discouraged, I dare say a time will come when you too will go to London."

And, sure enough, so it did, and all but too soon.

"And what do you purpose doing there?" I demanded.

"Oh, I go to improve myself in art, to place myself under some master of high name, at least I hope to do so eventually. I have, however, a plan in my head, which I should wish first to execute; indeed, I do not think I can rest till I have done so; every one talks so much about Italy, and the wondrous artists which it has produced, and the wondrous pictures which arc to be found there; now I wish to see Italy, or rather Rome, the great city, for I am told that in a certain room there is contained the grand miracle of art."

"And what do you call it?"

"The Transfiguration, painted by one Rafael, and it is said to be the greatest work of the greatest

painter which the world has ever known. I suppose it is because everybody says so, that I have such a strange desire to see it. I have already made myself well acquainted with its locality, and think that I could almost find my way to it blindfold. When I have crossed the Tiber, which, as you are aware, runs through Rome, I must presently turn to the right, up a rather shabby street, which communicates with a large square, the farther end of which is entirely occupied by the front of an immense church, with a dome, which ascends almost to the clouds, and this church they call St. Peter's."

"Ay, ay," said I, "I have read about that in Keysler's Travels."

"Before the church, in the square, are two fountains, one on either side, casting up water in showers; between them, in the midst, is an obelisk, brought from Egypt, and covered with mysterious writing; on your right rises an edifice, not beautiful nor grand, but huge and bulky, where lives a strange kind of priest whom men call the Pope, a very horrible old individual, who would fain keep Christ in leading-strings, calls the Virgin Mary the Queen of Heaven, and himself God's Lieutenant-General upon earth."

"Ay, ay," said I, "I have read of him in Fox's Book of Martyrs."

"Well, I do not go straight forward up the flight of steps conducting into the church, but I turn to

the right, and, passing under the piazza, find myself in a court of the huge bulky house; and then ascend various staircases, and pass along various corridors and galleries, all of which I could describe to you, though I have never seen them; at last a door is unlocked, and we enter a room rather high, but not particularly large, communicating with another room, into which, however, I do not go, though there are noble things in that second room —immortal things, by immortal artists; amongst others, a grand piece of Corregio; I do not enter it, for the grand picture of the world is not there: but I stand still immediately on entering the first room, and I look straight before me, neither to the right nor left, though there are noble things both on the right and left, for immediately before me at the farther end, hanging against the wall, is a picture which arrests me, and I can see nothing else, for that picture at the farther end hanging against the wall is the picture of the world. ..."

Yes, go thy way, young enthusiast, and, whether to London town or to old Rome, may success attefld thee; yet strange fears assail me and misgivings on thy account. Thou canst not rest, thou say'st, till thou hast seen the picture in the chamber at old Rome hanging over against the wall; ay, and thus thou dost exemplify thy weakness—thy strength too, it may be—for the one idea, fantastic yet lovely, which now possesses thee, could only have originated in a genial and fervent brain. Well, go, if thou must

go; yet it perhaps were better for thee to bide in thy native land, and there, with fear and trembling, with groanings, with straining eyeballs, toil, drudge, slave, till thou hast made excellence thine own; thou wilt scarcely acquire it by staring at the picture over against the door in the high chamber of old Rome. Seekest thou inspiration? thou needest it not, thou hast it already; and it was never yet found by crossing the sea. What hast thou to do with old Rome, and thou an Englishman? "Did thy blood never glow at the mention of thy native land?" as an artist merely? Yes, I trow, and with reason, for thy native land need not grudge old Rome her "pictures of the world"; she has pictures of her own, "pictures of England"; and is it a new thing to toss up caps and shout—England against the world? Yes, against the world in all, in all; in science and in arms, in minstrel strain, and not less in the art "which enables the hand to deceive the intoxicated soul by means of pictures." (Klopstock.) Seek'st models? to Gainsborough and Hogarth turn, not names of the world, may be, but English names—and England against the world! A living master? why, there he comes! thou hast had him long, he has long guided thy young hand towards the excellence which is yet far from thee, but which thou canst attain if thou shouldst persist and wrestle, even as he has done, midst gloom and despondency—ay, and even contempt; he who now comes up the creaking stair to thy little studio in the second floor

to inspect thy last effort before thou departest, the little stout man whose face is very dark, and whose eye is vivacious; that man has attained excellence, destined some day to be acknowledged, though not till he is cold, and his mortal part returned to its kindred clay. He has painted, not pictures of the world, but English pictures, such as Gainsborough himself might have done; beautiful rural pieces, with trees which might tempt the wild birds to perch upon them: thou needest not run to Rome, brother, where lives the old Mariolater, after pictures of the world, whilst at home there are pictures of England; nor needest thou even go to London, the big city, in search of a master, for thou hast one at home in the old East Anglian town who can instruct thee whilst thou needest instruction: better stay at home, brother, at least for a season, and toil and strive 'midst groanings and despondency till thou has attained excellence even as he has done —the little dark man with the brown coat and the top-boots, whose name will one day be considered the chief ornament of the old town, and whose works will at no distant period rank amongst the proudest pictures of England—and England against the world!—thy master, my brother, thy, at present, all too little considered master—Crome.

GEORGE BORROW: *Lavengro.* 1851.

NATIVE GENIUS

MUSIC

62. AN ENGLISH COMPOSER

IN this time Mr. Jno. Jenkins began to be famous, and his compositions much sought after: he was a lutinist profest, & used the Lyra way upon ye violl, which followed the manner of the lute, and he had a very great hand upon ye consort viol, and encouraged & probably assisted Mr. Sympson in his edition of thedevision violist; he was once carryed to play on ye viol before King Charles I. which he did in his voluntary way, with wonderful agillity, and odd humours, as (for instance) touching ye Great strings with his thumb, while ye rest were held imployed in another way. And when he had done the King sayd he did wonders upon an inconsiderable instrument. But this gentleman made himself more famous for his compositions of all sorts. There were more consorts of his composing went about among the performers in his time then of all the rest of his contemporarys, till he had got almost the monopoly of consort musick; he lived to a great age, and had composed so much that he knew not half of what he had done: a Spanish Don sent over to ye late Sir Peter Lely, the leaves of one part of a three part consort of his, with a desire to procure the rest, costa che costa, for his musick had got

abroad and was more esteemed there then at home; I shewed him ye papers, but he could tell nothing of them, when or where they were made, or might be found, onley he knew they were his owne.

He was a great Reformer of musick in his time, for he got the better of ye dullness of ye old fancys, and introduced a pleasing air in everything he composed, interspersing frequent devisions & triplas, in his fancys as well as lessons, & composed for the hand divers devision consorts, and condiscended to humor very much, as in his Newgate Cryes & his famous bell-consort to the great solace of ye country fidlers. In his fancys his points were for the most part elegant & wrought with no small industry yet easy & familiar, but never insipid as had bin then lately ye musick cheifly in request. His early compositions, done in his full strength, and being likely to pass among his owne faculty, were his best, & parcells of them may yet be extant in some gentlemens collections, whereof the greatest part would bear ye test of ye present time, if a violent prejudice did not prepossess it. The greatest disadvantages of his works is, that most of his early peices are lost, & his latter consorts chiefly remain; and those were calculated for low hands little better then scollars who were not composers of anything more masterly, & for ye same reason, they were moulded in ye way of Lessons rather then fancys. But in all that plaine-ness, adapted to ye capacity of his scollars; there is to be observed a genuine air, according to ye true

modes of conducting ye keys & changing, as might be owned in consort at this day, & if in the performance by a good moderne hand an agreeable spirit were infused, as ye manner is at present, and an ample Orchester to set it off, the most ordinary of his musick would make a lively appearance.

But to do right in shewing what was most amiss in ye manner of Mr. Jenkins, it was wholly devoid of fire & fury, such as the Itallian musick affects, in their stabbs & stoccatas, which defect is onely excusable upon ye humour of ye times, those were pleased with ye sedate, which these will not bear, and for that matter, as to reall vertue, or goodness of the musick, I referrc to what hath bin sayd. Another more considerable failing is the manner of movement, which he & his contemporarys used & others since. It was cheifly (as it were) going up and downe staires, and had less of the sault or Itterations then ye Itallians have, in which respect it must be allowed the latter style is better as more conforme to mens ordinary behaviour. And it may be alledged also as a defect, that Jenkins did not dash upon harsh notes, as ye Itallians doe, which makes their consorts more Saporite, than the musick was when the parts did but hunt one and other, from concord to concord. As to that, its allowd ye English rules of composition did not permit such freedoms but Jenkins used his discords always properly & with sincopation, according to law, yet in that he dared more & rather outwent

then came short of his contemporarys. But to conclude Mr. Jenkins was a very gentile & well bred gentleman, and was always, not onely wellcome, but greatly valued by ye familys wherever he had taught & converst. He was constantly complaisant in every thing desired of him and wherever he went mirth & solace (as ye song hath it) attended him; after his whole profession was driven from ye Court, he past his time mostly in ye country at gentlemens houses, and then he composed numerous consorts, & in his effete age was no less acceptable, where he chose to reside, then when he was in his vigor, and at last layd his old bones at Kimberly in Norfolk, leaving an old freind a competent legacy to be remembered by. He was not morose nor puft at other mens works as at noveltys. I shewed him the piece of old Nichola[1] which begins ye second booke & consists of double notes in G #; he touched them over & pulling off his spectacles clapt his hand on ye book & declared he had never heard so good a peice of musick, in all his life. He had a vivacious spirit & often proffered at poetry, and his talent that way may be seen in his verses before Mr. Sympsons piece. At ye Restauration he had his place at Court restored, but ye masters indulged his non attendance, on account of his Great Age, for they were (to a man) all kind to him, but there was a particular freindship cultivated between old Mr. Stephkins & him, & he often sent him kind

[1] *i.e.* Nicholas Mateis.

tokens, which were pieces of fresh musick, & ye old gentleman (Stephkins) very much esteemed them. In short Mr. Jenkins was a most happy person for he lived & dyed beloved & unenvyed: and was sensible that he was capitall of his profession, during most of his life; ai>d that made hirp amends for his living so long to be sensible, of his being left behind & almost wholly layd aside: and if ye moderne musick is improved upon him, it is not more, I was saying nothing near so much, as he improved musick upon those who went before him.

ROGER NORTH: *The Musicall Grammarian.* 1728.

63. ENGLISH MELODY

How pleasant it is, in reviewing one's life, to look back on the circumstances that originated or encouraged any kindly tendency! I behold, at this moment, with lively distinctness, the handsome face of Miss C., who was the first person I remember seeing at a pianoforte; and I have something of a like impression of that of Miss M., mother, if I mistake not, or, at all events, near relation, of my distinguished friend Sheridan Knowles. My parents and his were acquainted. My mother, though fond of music, and a gentle singer in her way, had missed the advantage of a musical education, partly from her coming of a half-quaker stock, partly (as I have said before) from her having been too diffident to avail herself of the kindness

of Dr. Franklin, who offered to teach her the guitar.

The reigning English composer at that time was "Mr. Hook," as he was styled at the head of his songs. He was the father of my punctilious editor of the magazine, and had a real, though small vein of genius, which was none the better for its being called upon to flow profusely for Ranelagh and Vauxhall. He was composer of the "Lass of Richmond Hill" (an allusion to & *penchant* of George IV.), and of another popular song more lately remembered "'Twas within a mile of Edinborough town." The songs of that day abounded in Strephons and Delias, and the music partook of the gentle inspiration. The association of early ideas with that kind of commonplace, has given me more than a toleration for it. I find something even touching in the endeavours of an innocent set of ladies and gentlemen, my fathers and ihothers, to identify themselves with shepherds and shepherdesses, even in the most impossible hats and crooks. I think of the many heartfelt smiles that must have welcomed love letters and verses containing that sophisticate imagery, and of the no less genuine tears that were shed over the documents when faded; and criticism is swallowed up in those human drops. This is one of the reasons why I can read even the most faded part of the works of Shenstone, and why I can dip again and again into such correspondence as that of the Countesses of Hertford and Pomfret, and of

my Lady Luxborough, who raises monuments in her garden to the united merits of Mr. Somerville and the god Pan. The feeling was true, though the expression was sophisticate and a fashion; and they who cannot see the feeling for the mode, do the very thing which they think they scorn; that is, sacrifice the greater consideration for the less.

But Hook was not the only, far less the most fashionable composer. There were (if not all personally, yet popularly contemporaneous) Mr. Lampe, Mr. Oswald, Dr. Boyce, Linley, Jackson, Shield, and Storace, with Paesiello, Sacchini, and others at the King's Theatre, whose delightful airs wandered into the streets out of the English operas that borrowed them, and became confounded with English property. I have often, in the course of my life, heard "Wither, my love?" and "For tenderness formed," boasted of, as specimens of English melody. For many years I took them for such myself, in common with the rest of our family, with whom they were great favourites. The first, which Stephen Storace adapted to some words in the *Haunted Tower,* is the air of "La Rachelina" in Paesiello's opera *La Molinara.* The second, which was put by General Burgoyne to a song in his comedy of the *Heiress,* is "lo sono Lindoro" in the same enchanting composer's *Barbiere di Seviglia.* The once popular English songs and duets, &c., "How imperfect is expression"; "For me, my fair a wreath has wove"; "Henry culPd the flow'ret's

bloom"; "Oh, thou wert born to please me"; "Here's a health to all good lasses"; "Youth's the season made for joys"; "Gently touch the warbling lyre"; "No, 'twas neither shape nor feature"; "Pray, Goody, please to moderate"; "Hope told a flattering tale"; and a hundred others, were all foreign compositions, chiefly Italian. Every burlesque, or *buffo* song, of any pretension, was pretty sure to be Italian.

When Edwin, Fawcett, and others, were rattling away in the happy comie songs of O'Keeffe, with his triple rhymes and illustrative jargon, the audience little suspected that they were listening to some of the finest animal spirits of the south—to Piccini, Paesiello, and Cimarosa. Even the wild Irishman thought himself bound to go to Naples, before he could get a proper dance for his gaiety. The only genuine English compositions worth anything at that time, were almost confined to Shield, Dibdin, and Storace, the last of whom, the author of "Lullaby," who was an Italian born in England, formed the golden link between the music of the two countries, the only one, perhaps, in which English accentuation and Italian flow were ever truly amalgamated; though I must own that I am heretic enough (if present fashion is orthodoxy) to believe, that Arne was a real musical genius, of a very pure, albeit not of the very first water. He has set, indeed, two songs of Shakspeare's (the "Cuckoo song," and "Where the bee sucks") in a spirit of

perfect analogy to the words, as well as of the liveliest musical invention; and his air of "Water parted," in *Artaxerxes*, winds about the feelings with an earnest and graceful tenderness of regret, worthy in the highest degree of the affecting beauty of the sentiment.

LEIGH HUNT: *Autobiography*. 1850.

THE ULTIMATE IDEAL

64. ALBION'S LAND

T H E fields from Islington to Marylebone,
To Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood,
Were builded over with pillars of gold,
And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.

Her Little-ones ran on the fields,
The Lamb of God among them seen,
And fair Jerusalem his Bride,
Among the little meadows green.

Pancras and Kentish-town repose
Among her golden pillars high,
Among her golden arches which
Shine upon the starry sky.

The Jew's-harp-house and the Green Man,
The Pond where Boys to bathe delight,
The fields of Cows by Willan's farm,
Shine in Jerusalem's pleasant sight.

She walks upon our meadows green,
The Lamb of God walks by her side,
And every English Child is seen
Children of Jesus and his Bride.

Forgiving trespasses and sins
Lest Babylon with cruel Og
With Moral and Self-righteous Law
Should Crucify in Satan's Synagogue!

What are those golden Builders doing
Near mournful ever-weeping Paddington,
Standing above that mighty Ruin
Where Satan the first victory won,

Where Albion slept beneath the Fatal Tree,
And the Druids' golden Knife
Rioted in human gore,
In Offerings of Human Life?

They groan'd aloud on London Stone,
They groan'd aloud on Tyburn's Brook,
Albion gave his deadly groan,
And all the Atlantic Mountains shook.

Albion's Spectre from his Loins
Tore forth in all the pomp of War:
Satan his name: in flames of fire
Hf stretch'd his Druid Pillars far.

Jerusalem fell from Lambeth's Vale
Down thro' Poplar and Old Bow,
Thro' Maiden and across the Sea,
In War and howling, death and woe.

The Rhine was red with human blood.
The Danube rolPd a purple tide,
On the Euphrates Satan stood,
And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

He wither'd up sweet Zion's Hill
From every Nation of the Earth;
He wither'd up Jerusalem's Gates,
And in a dark Land gave her birth.

He wither'd up the Human Form
By laws of sacrifice for sin,
Till it became a Mortal Worm,
But O! translucent all within.

The Divine Vision still was seen,
Still was the Human Form Divine,
Weeping in weak and mortal clay,
O Jesus, still the Form was thine.

And thine the Human Face, and thine
The Human Hands and Feet and Breath,
Entering thro' the Gates of Birth
And passing thro' the Gates of Death.

And O thou Lamb of God, whom I
Slew in my dark self-righteous pride,
Art thou returned to Albion's Land?
And is Jerusalem thy Bride?

Come to my arms and never more
Depart, but dwell for ever here:
Create my Spirit to thy Love:
Subdue my Spectre to thy Fear.

Spectre of Albion! warlike Fiend!
In clouds of blood and ruin rolPd,
I here reclaim thee as my own,
My Selfhood! Satan! arm'd in gold.

Is this thy soft Family-Love,
Thy cruel Patriarchal pride,
Planting thy Family alone,
Destroying all the World beside?

A man's worst enemies are those
Of his own house and family;
And he who makes his law a curse,
By his own law shall surely die.

In my Exchanges every Land
Shall walk, and mine in every Land,
Mutual shall build Jerusalem,
Both heart in heart and hand,

WILLIAM BLAKE: from *Jerusalem.* 1804-1820.

65. THE NEW AGE

THE Stolen and Perverted Writings of Homer and Ovid, of Plato and Cicero, which all men ought to contemn, are set up by artifice against the Sublime of the Bible; but when the New Age is at leisure to Pronounce, all will be set right, and those Grand Works of the more ancient and consciously and professedly Inspired Men will hold their proper rank, and the Daughters of Memory shall become the Daughters of Inspiration. Shakspeare and Milton were both curb'd by the general malady and infection from the silly Greek and Latin slaves of the Sword.

Rouze up, O Young Men of the New Age! set your foreheads against the ignorant Hirelings! For we have Hirelings in the Camp, the Court and the University, who would, if they could, for ever depress Mental and prolong Corporeal War. Painters! on you I call. Sculptors! Architects! Suffer not the fashionable Fools to depress your powers by the prices they pretend to give for contemptible works, or the expensive advertizing boasts that they make of such works; believe Christ and his Apostles that there is a Class of Men whose whole delight is in Destroying. We do not want either Greek or Roman Models if we are but just and true to our own Imaginations, those Worlds of Eternity in which we shall live for ever in JESUS OUR LORD.

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold :
Bring me my Arrows of desire :
Bring me my Spear : O clouds unfold !
Bring me my Chariot of fire.

I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant Land.

.. Would to God that all the Lord's people were Prophets."
NUMBERS, xi. ch., 29 v.

WILLIAM BLAKE: *Preface to Milton.* 1804-8.

66. ONE GREAT FEDERATION

IF I have insisted so much on the course which criticism must take where politics and religion are concerned, it is because, where these burning matters are in question, it is most likely to go astray. In general, its course is determined for it by the idea which is the law of its being; the idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and

thus to establish a current of fresh and true ideas. By the very nature of things, as England is not all the world, much of the best that is known and thought in the world cannot be of English growth, must be foreign; by the nature of things, again, it is just this that we are least likely to know, while English thought is streaming in upon us from all sides and takes excellent care that we shall not be ignorant of its existence; the English critic, therefore, must dwell much on foreign thought, and with particular heed on any part of it, which, while significant and fruitful in itself, is for any reason specially likely to escape him. Again, judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business; and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it,—but insensibly, and in the second place not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract law-giver, —that he will generally do most good to his readers. Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature, and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done how are we to get at our *best in the world?),* criticism may have to deal with a subject-matter so familiar that fresh knowledge is out of the question, and then it must be all judgment; an enunciation and detailed

application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying, and, the moment this fails us, to be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles is, in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics it is tautological, and cannot well give us, like fresh learning, the sense of creative activity.

But stop, some one will say; all this talk is of no practical use to us whatever; this criticism of yours is not what we have in our minds when we speak of criticism; when we speak of critics and criticism, we mean critics and criticism of the current English literature of the day; when you offer to tell criticism its function, it is to this criticism that we expect you to address yourself. I am sorry for it, for I am afraid I must disappoint these expectations. I am bound by my own definition of criticism: *a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world.* How much of current English literature comes into this "best that is known and thought in the world"? Not very much, I fear; certainly less, at this moment, than of the current literature of France or Germany. Well, then, am I to alter my definition of criticism, in order to meet the requirements of a number of practising English critics, who, after all, are free in their choice of a business? That would be making criticism lend

itself just to one of those alien practical considerations, which, as I have said, are so fatal to it. One may say, indeed, to those who have to deal with the mass,—so much better disregarded,—of current English literature, that they may at all events endeavour, in dealing with this, to try it, so far as they can, by the standard of the best that is known and thought in the world; one may say, that to get anywhere near this standard, every critic should try and possess one great literature, at least, besides his own; and the more unlike his own, the better. But, after all, the criticism I am really concerned with, —the criticism which alone can much help us for the future, the criticism which, throughout Europe, is at the present day meant, when so much stress is laid on the importance of criticism and the critical spirit,—is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another. Special, local, and temporary advantages being put out of account, that modern nation will in the intellectual and spiritual sphere make most progress, which most thoroughly carries out this programme. And what is that but saying that we too, all of us, as individuals, the more thoroughly we carry it out, shall make the more progress?

MATTHEW ARNOLD : *Essays in Criticism.* 1865.

67. ENGLAND AND EUROPE

You say that the war does not prevent personal life from going on, that the individual can still love and be complete. It isn't true. The one quality of love is that it universalises the individual. If I love, then I am extended over all people, but particularly over my own nation. It is an extending in concentric waves over all people. This is the process of love. And if I love, I, the individual, then necessarily the love extends from me to my nearest neighbour, and outwards, till it loses itself in vast distance. This *is* love, there is no love but this. So that if I love, the love must beat upon my neighbours, till they too live in the spirit of the love, and so on, further and further. And how can this be, in war, when the spirit is against love?

The spirit of war is, that I am a unit, a single entity that has no *intrinsic* reference to the rest: the reference is extrinsic, a question of living, not of *being.* In war, in my being I am a detached entity, and every one of my actions is an act of further detaching my own single entity from all the rest.

If I love, then, I am in direct opposition to the principle of war. If war prevails, I do not love. If love prevails, there is no war. War is a great and necessary disintegrating autumnal process. Love is the great creative process, like spring, the making of an integral unity out of many disintegrated factors. We have had enough of the disintegrating

process. If it goes on any further, we shall so thoroughly have destroyed the unifying force from among us, we shall have become each one of us so completely a separate entity, that the whole will be an amorphous heap, like sand, sterile, hopeless, useless, like a dead tree. This is true, and it is so great a danger, that one almost goes mad facing it.

That is why I almost went away out of the country: I may still have to go: because in myself I can never agree to the complete disintegration, never stand witness to it, never.

Then the Prussian rule. The Prussian rule would be-an external evil. The disintegrating process of the war has become an internal evil, so vast as to be almost unthinkable, so nearly overwhelming us, that we stand on the very brink of oblivion. Better *anything* than the utter disintegration. And it is *England* who is the determining factor for Europe: if England goes, then Europe goes: for we are at this time the vital core of the whole organism. Let the leaves perish, but let the tree stand, living and bare. For the tree, the living organism of the soul of Europe is good, only the external forms and growths are bad. Let all the leaves fall, and many branches. But the quick of the tree must not perish. There are unrevealed buds which can come forward into another epoch of civilisation, if only we can shed this dead form and be strong in the spirit of love and creation.

D. H. LAWRENCE: *Letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith,* 2nd November, 1915.

68. THE TIME RETURNS

ENGLAND! awake! awake! awake!
Jerusalem thy Sister calls!
Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death
And close her from thy ancient walls?

Thy hills and valleys felt her feet
Gently upon their bosoms move:
Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways:
Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again:
Our souls exult, and London's towers
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

WILLIAM BLAKE: from *Jerusalem.* 1804-1820.