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VOL. V

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- V. DEFOE'S *TRUE-BORN ENGLISHMAN*. A. C. GUTHRIE.
- VI. THE PLAYS OF MR. JOHN GALSWORTHY. A. R. SKEMP.
- VII. DRAMATIC TECHNIQUE IN MARLOWE. G. P. BAKER.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. RHYTHM IN ENGLISH VERSE, PROSE, AND SPEECH	7
D. S. MACCOLL.	
II. THE NOVELS OF MARK RUTHERFORD	51
A. E. TAYLOR.	
III. ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES AND TEUTONIC SAGAS	75
F. W. MOORMAN.	
IV. SHELLEY'S <i>TRIUMPH OF LIFE</i> . . .	105
F. MELIAN STAWELL.	
V. EMILY BRONTË	132
J. C. SMITH.	
VI. TRANSLATION FROM OLD INTO MODERN ENGLISH	153
A. BLYTH WEBSTER.	

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RHYTHM IN ENGLISH VERSE, PROSE AND SPEECH

Quum sine temporum aequalitate, quam nostri tactum vocant [i. e. *Takt*, 'bar'], rhythmica compositio ulla nec recitari queat nec cantari, nedum saltari, nisi primam rhythmī legem, hoc est unitatem variorum temporis articulorum, violare et confusam inconditamque syllabarum prolationem, qua et animus et motus corporis disturbetur magis quam regatur, rhythmum contenderis esse: necesse est, ut versibus per varia rhythmī genera compositis adhibitum sit remedium qualecunque, quo iis aequalis insereretur temporum divisio (Boeckh, *de metr. Pindar.*, p. 105).

CRITICS, the most learned and the most ingenious, are, on the theory of English Prosody, as widely discordant as the poets themselves. Yet from a free-lance, entering the lists set (or strewn) with so many professional warriors, an apology may be called for. I appear, then, to continue a discussion privately conducted with the Editor at intervals since Oxford days. In 1886 I came across Sidney Lanier's book, *The Science of English Verse*,¹ and it seemed to me to dispel a fog that had hung thickly over its subject. It occurred to me, further, that the principle Lanier had established or recovered for verse would hold good also in the case of prose; but I took for granted that at least for verse chaos had been reduced to order; I found, moreover, in the course of giving lectures on English Poetry shortly afterwards in various places, that Lanier's principle, expounded to innocent minds, was understood and readily applied to fresh examples. But what was clear to babes and sucklings remained dark to the wise and prudent; when I turned to the acutest critic among my friends, who is now Professor Elton, he refused to receive the light, and has remained

¹ Charles Scribner & Sons, 1880 and 1886.

obstinately sceptical ever since. He seems at times to come very near to accepting the theory, but much as in geometry the 'asymptote' approaches indefinitely near to a certain curve, on condition of never actually touching it. The discussion was revived by the appearance of his own interesting paper, 'English Prose Numbers,' in the last issue of this publication; he made me the very sporting offer of space in the present volume of essays; greatly daring, I accepted, and now engage on the slippery ground.

My contentions will be (1) that the distinction between 'quantitative' and 'accentual' verse is a false one; that the current theory of English prosody is unintelligible save by reference to the classical, and that the classical is itself a musical theory; (2) that the musical law of rhythm alone can explain the structure of English verse; (3) that it also underlies the structure not only of 'numerous' prose, but of all prose and speech.

1. THE RHYTHM OF ENGLISH VERSE; THE CURRENT THEORY

When I turned to books to pick up the threads of discussion after a gap of nearly thirty years I was astonished to discover how little progress the true gospel had made. I had heard, in the interval, that Mr. T. S. Omond, a student distinguished by his knowledge of metrical lore, had taken the side of Lanier, and I supposed that no other champion was called for. But when I read his book¹ I was dismayed to learn how largely he had neutralized its effect by a strange heresy about 'duple time' in heroic verse, reducing once more to confusion what Lanier had, to my thinking, perfectly established. Two American writers had appeared on the same side, Professor Raymond and Miss Julia Dabney; but they also had darkened counsel by various misunderstandings. Only one righteous man was

¹ *A Study of Metre*, 1903.

to be found, Mr. William Thomson of Glasgow.¹ His differences with Lanier do not touch the essence, and consist chiefly in refinements of measuring. He gave a few examples also of prose scansion, but his 'Appendix', with corrections, throws some doubt on these.² Advance elsewhere is not perceptible.

Let me recall the fog in which these matters were enveloped by the teaching we received in the schools. It lay thickest over Greek and Latin hexameters. These, we were taught, rightly enough, were written in longs and shorts, the shorts being half the longs, but no one habitually read them in that way, so that 'long' and 'short' in pronunciation differed chiefly, if not entirely, by being accented or unaccented syllables; a 'false quantity' was a false accent, and quantity a mysterious essence to be learned, not by ear, but by heart. Further, we were told that at some dark moment in the history of language the laws of rhythm mysteriously changed, and the Latin hexameter, from being 'quantitative' became 'accentual', became in fact the hexameter as we were allowed to read it. And this was said also to be the difference between classical and English verse, namely, that while the former depended on quantity, the latter depended on accent.³ Thus was the truth obscured, that all verse must have both quantity and accent, but that in the mediaeval hexameter and in the English reading of the classic hexameter quantities are not the original quan-

¹ *The Basis of English Rhythm* (W. and R. Holmes, Glasgow, 1904 and 1906; in *Rhythm and Scansion*, 1911, received too late to discuss, he shifts his ground).

² Mr. Omond has disinterred an earlier prophet of musical theory for verse and prose in Joshua Steele (1775). Lanier mentions the *Prosodia Rationalis* in his preface, but curiously enough, with disappointment.

³ This strange myth had been encouraged by a hasty phrase of Coleridge's about the metre of *Christabel*. I believe that the point he wished to make was that the line 'Tu-whit-tu-whoo' was to have four accents, like the other lines of the opening, and thus form four feet; the method of printing suggests this.

tities, certain longs being shortened, so that the measure becomes a 3-time instead of a 4-time rhythm.¹ It may even be doubted to what extent the hexameter was in ancient times for ordinary readers a 4-time measure; a special chanting or declamatory delivery was evidently associated with the true dactyl and spondee.

But this extraordinary fiction about the two rhythms still prevails; it governs Mr. Bridges' prosody, and is repeated as accepted truth in Mr. Edmund Gosse's article on 'Verse' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ninth edition, 1911. In this, the only article dealing with verse-rhythm, Lanier's name does not appear, and there is only a vague slighting reference to musical theories.

But the protagonist on the anti-musical side is Professor Saintsbury. He is the author of an *Historical Manual of English Prosody* (1910), and of a *History of English Prosody* in 3 volumes (1906-10). The latter is the most substantial performance on the subject since Guest's *History of English Rhythms*, and may be taken to represent the prevailing view in the schools. Before attacking what I must consider its shaky theoretical foundations, I would pay my tribute to its wide learning, the unfailing vigour and interest of its pages, and to the justice and discrimination that are rarely absent from its appreciation of the *effects* of rhythm; the *principles* of rhythm indeed occupy but a small part of the book. It is not likely, I may add, that the quarrel lies between different *hearings* of verse; it is a question of how we account for what we hear. Taking, then, Professor Saintsbury's account as more than any other the established or official doctrine, I propose to compare it with Lanier's.

Professor Saintsbury dismisses, of course, the syllabic system, and he is quite sound on the impossibility of making a system out of accent or stress only; he admits quantity

¹ i. e. | ♪. ♪♪ | ♪ ♪ | instead of | ♪ ♪♪ | ♪ ♪ |.

as a necessary element of English verse. He takes his stand on 'feet'; the 'line' is made up of 'feet', and it is implicit in his view, and really of the first importance, though I do not think he states it clearly, that each kind of 'line' has a fixed number of 'feet'. So far so good: we have here a principle of rhythmical recurrence. Further, he defines the 'foot' as made up of 'longs' and 'shorts' in various numbers and permutations. All this is in accordance with the classical system from which 'feet', with their names and constitutions, are derived. But he proceeds to throw this system into confusion by refusing to recognize not only the fixed classical relation of 'long' and 'short' in his English 'feet', but any fixed relation. As he is aware, the 'short' in any foot was, for the classic metrist, always exactly half the 'long'. But when we ask Professor Saintsbury, what, if not this, is the relation of 'short' to 'long' in English feet, he refuses to say. Nay, having accepted 'long' and 'short' as the names of the foot-elements, he makes the astonishing statement that they are not really long and short at all.

'I call the two classes "longs" and "shorts" without the very slightest innuendo or insinuation that I believe the source of difference to be the greater length of time, the greater *quantity* in the technical sense, of the one as compared with the other. I do not, if any one cares for my opinion, think that "length" and "shortness" always or strictly *do* constitute the difference.' (*Hist. Eng. Prosody*, i. 5.)

What, then, is the difference? It is not, he goes on to say, one of 'weight' or 'lightness', 'stress' or 'slur', 'sharpness' or 'flatness', 'strength' or 'weakness'. In fact, he rules out *all* possible differences between his 'longs' and 'shorts' (length, intensity, pitch) except vowel-and-consonant quality or 'colour', which he would certainly not accept as the criterion. He might as well, he admits, call them 'abracadabra' and 'abraxas'; indeed (*History*, iii. 524), he

confesses that he does not know what a 'foot' means. Now a foot must at least mean a relation of value as well as number among the shorts and longs composing it, but Professor Saintsbury's 'short' may conceivably be longer than a 'long'; so the 'foot' has become an unknown quantity, and the marks for 'long' and 'short' mean nothing.

Elsewhere he is less nihilistic, and relents towards the natural meaning of his adopted terms. Thus:

'Literal "length", i.e. time of pronunciation, *is*, perhaps, the test which fails most seldom, and that is why I like the quantity range of terms best.' (iii. 520.)

But he destroys this approach to accepting time as the basis of the foot by adding that:

'Accent will give "acting" quantity; so will emphasis, so will probable loudness or sharpness in actual speech; so will sometimes the mere will and skill of the poet.'

Now, 'acting' quantity either is quantity or it is not; quantity (by which here we must understand a 'long') may coincide with an accent (loudness or intensity), or sharpness (higher pitch); but neither of these things can *be* quantity, and no craft of the poet can turn one of them into another. It is true that we tend to lengthen an accented syllable, but if the tendency is followed the syllable becomes actually longer; if we only accent we do not lengthen it.

Professor Saintsbury really has small patience with the whole inquiry: he thinks it has as little to do with prosody as the attempt to define beauty has to do with our appreciation of beautiful things, and that the attempt for prosody must be equally useless and hopeless (iii. 523). But the analogy does not hold; we may not be able to explain why the proportions of a building appeal to us as beautiful, but we can certainly say what these proportions are; we can measure them, and to measure them we must have a unit. Professor Saintsbury, in adopting the conception of 'feet' made of 'longs' and 'shorts', is dealing with poetic

'measure', with the conception of measurable quantities, or with nothing; and to be measurable, these quantities must have a fixed unit. A Greek iambus is intelligible, it is a higher unit out of whose repetition a line can be built, since the lower units, out of which itself is built, are constant; i. e. the 'long' in it is always equal to two 'shorts'. Otherwise the 'foot', an indefinite quantity, crumbles, and the 'line' with it.

It is easy enough to conjecture why Professor Saintsbury fights shy of this constant unit of time. It would get him into trouble when he takes his next step. Grant him the 'foot' on his own nebulous terms, he has next to deal with the transformations which the 'foot' suffers in English verse. Thus, besides the 'iamb' in blank verse, we frequently find not only trochees and tribrachs, which present no problem, since they are equivalent quantities, but also three-syllabled feet which Professor Saintsbury calls anapaests. The anapaest consists of two 'shorts' and a 'long', and Professor Saintsbury's system requires us to admit the 'substitution' of this foot for the iamb as, in some sense, 'equivalent'. Now if a short is always the same short, and a long always the same long, this would mean that a short and long were the equivalent of two shorts and a long, or that $3 = 4$. That is absurd, and to avoid the absurdity Professor Saintsbury denies that the 'short' and 'long' have any fixed relation, or even that they are short and long. What could induce him to adopt so strange a way out of a difficulty, reducing, as it does, the whole system of 'longs' and 'shorts' to irrationality?

The reason is a very simple one. This irrational system of substitution, this treatment of 3 as the equivalent of 4, has been a part of the traditional classic prosody with which thousands of puzzled boys have been put off at school. We were allowed to suppose that the Greek or Latin 'short' was always the same 'short', the 'long' always the same

'long', and thus we were given to understand that, for example, a Sapphic line was to be scanned as follows :

$$- \cup | - \cup | - \cup \cup | - \cup | - \cup$$

i. e. that 3 = 4.

No one in the world speaks the line like that, or would recognize it for rhythmical if so spoken.¹ We actually read it:

$$- \cup | - \cup | - \cup \cup | - \cup | - \cup$$

where $-\cup\cup$ means a dactyl taken in the time of a trochee; the long and shorts in this foot are no longer the same long and shorts; the *tempo* (in Greek *ἀγωγή*) has changed, so that the length of the feet remains the same, and the relation of short to long; but not the value of short and long.

The Greek theorists themselves are not too clear about all this, so there is a good excuse for our confusion: they were so certain that within each foot the short of that foot was half the long that it is only through stray admissions in their fragmentary writings and the logic of the texts that one learns the truth. We hear about a dactyl taken in the time of a trochee, exactly as Professor Saintsbury's 'anapaest' is the 'equivalent' of an 'iamb'. And a whole century of German students, from Apel and Voss to Ross-

¹ Since the Sapphic verse was a *sung* and not a spoken verse, it is conceivable that the rhythm was actually altered in this bar; just as in Schumann's *Allnächtlich im Traume* or in Brahms's *Agnes* (op. 59, 2), where there are changes from $\frac{2}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ time for a single bar, or for two bars; or in the modern Greek songs printed by Bourgault-Ducoudray, where the alternation is frequent. But it is unlikely that Greek lyric verse could not also be spoken: in any case an ordinary dactyl among trochees would mean a change in the rhythm, not 'equivalence'. The possibility of regarding such alternating rhythms as 'rhythm' in a wider sense depends on their recurrence in a pattern; the line including them must be taken as a larger unit. Swinburne's 'Sapphics', a remarkable *tour de force* in real foot-composition with few resolutions, gives the natural rhythmical reading of the measure.

bach and Westphal, J. H. H. Schmidt,¹ and W. von Christ, working on the remains of Aristoxenus and other Greek rhythmists, has rationalized Greek verse-rhythm by admitting this variation in the values of 'short' and 'long'. The very puzzle, in a word, that drove Professor Saintsbury to make his English 'feet' unmeaning was equally making nonsense of Greek and Latin feet, and is solved by the common-sense application of the universal laws of musical rhythm to both.²

Before pursuing that point further I must return to Professor Saintsbury and the actual use he makes of his 'feet'. He says, in effect: 'No one can define a foot, or a long and short, but we all, or I at least, do know them well enough when I see or rather hear them. In a blank verse line, for example, there are five feet, why then bother about the mystery of how these essences are constituted? I can point to the longs and shorts and to the feet and always find five.' Very well; but how does Professor Saintsbury know where one foot begins and another ends? If he is infallibly right

¹ Schmidt anticipated Lanier in applying to English verse the musical principle already applied to Greek. In his *Leitfaden* (1869) the symbols applied to German examples are ambiguous, but in the translation by Professor J. W. White of Harvard and Karl Riemenschneider, made with his corrections in 1874 and published in 1879, the English examples are correctly noted. Westphal had not taken this step. Lanier's book was published in the following year. In 1879 was also published the book by Becq de Fouquières, which applies, though very badly, the musical law to French prosody.

² There has been, after this century of effort, some reaction lately against the complete uniformity postulated by these writers, and against the authority of Aristoxenus himself (see Louis Laloy, *Aristoxène de Tarante*, 1904; he is followed by certain American scholars). It is strange how barren nineteenth-century England was in this branch of scholarship: Bentley had no successors. Even now there is no English book giving an account of German research. Probably the severance, in this country, of literary from musical culture has been the chief reason for our stagnation, and also explains the disdain of the literary for Lanier's appearance in the English field.

about the division it must hold for others besides himself, and it must be possible to explain the principle of division. For such a principle we look in vain. If we had asked the same question of a Greek metrist he would have answered that in every foot there is a rhythmical strong accent (*thesis*) at a fixed position in that foot: these accents therefore give us the position and number of the feet, and the quantities, reckoned from one of these fixed points to another, are constant and equal. But Professor Saintsbury cuts himself off from this means of dividing the line. His 'tribrach', for instance, has no accent at all, and is therefore, according to Greek theory, not a tribrach, nor a foot of any sort.

Indeed, Professor Saintsbury's views on 'accent' are as difficult to fix as his views on quantity. He says (*Hist. Manual of Eng. Prosody*, ii. 1) that the classics had 'accent':

'The later Greeks certainly, and Latins probably—which was independent of and perhaps sometimes opposed to quantity: but except in what we call the ante-classical times of Latin and the post-classical times of both Latin and Greek, it had nothing to do with rhythmical arrangement.'

How accent can be 'opposed to' quantity Professor Saintsbury must explain; but it is probable that he is here using 'accent' in the original and proper sense in which we speak of 'Greek accents', i.e. differences not of stress but of pitch. Unfortunately 'accent' has come to be used in verse and music as equivalent to *thesis*, *ictus*, or stress. Professor Saintsbury confounds the two, and thinks that the Greek or Latin 'accent', which did not necessarily fall on the same syllable as the rhythmical stress, would set up a second stress and compete with the first.¹ Yet this

¹ The confusion is natural enough, because both the Greek and Latin 'accent' came later to be associated with stress, so that the modern Greek pronounces *ἄθροπος*, with stress on the first syllable, just as we pronounce 'Itália', with the stress on the second. By the time of

interpretation is doubtful, for further on (p. 2) he says that the English verse principle 'has no analogy to classic "feet" or "sections" *with no accent in them*', i. e. he thinks that classic verse had quantity but no accent (stress), an impossible conception, since there would be nothing to group the quantities: we know, moreover, as a matter of fact, that all classic feet had a strong and a weak accent,¹ *thesis* and *arsis* (the names were inverted by later Latin writers). His third statement (p. 2) is that 'accent' is the habitual stress on a syllable in ordinary speech, 'stress' the special accent logical, rhetorical, or prosodic. These are real distinctions, but no one ever applies the terms in this way, and three, not two, distinctions are needed; to be clear we must say 'word-accent' (or stress), 'foot-accent' (or stress), 'logical-accent' (or stress).

Having analysed the theory, we must now turn to the application, for Professor Saintsbury tells us that this is all that really matters. A characteristic example of scansion by which he sets some store occurs on p. 24 of the *Manual*, the line of Tennyson's *Brook* which he analyses as follows:

Twīnkĭĕd | thĕ ĭnnū|mĕrā|blĕ ēār | ānd tāil.

'Twīnkĭĕd,' he tells us, is a trochee 'substituted in full right for an iamb', 'thĕ ĭnnū' 'an anapaest in like case';

Cicero the actors were evidently beginning to make accents into stresses; 'Comicorum senarii propter similitudinem sermonis sic saepe sunt abiecti, ut nonnunquam vix in eis numerus et versus intellegi possit' (*Orat.* 55, 184); in fact they spoke their lines as Bentley scanned them.

¹ I am aware that Kawczyński (*Essai comparatif sur l'origine et l'histoire des Rythmes*, 1889) has maintained that Greek verse had no rhythmical accent, because the Greek theorists nowhere lay it down expressly that *thesis* = stress. But it is fantastic to suppose that measures derived from the march and the dance were devoid of stress, that Greek choruses were danced but not accented, and that time was beaten to all lyric music and the marks of beating (*thesis* and *arsis*) recognized in every spoken foot with no effect on the intensity of the sounds produced.

'mērā' is 'raised to a sufficiently long quantity for its position, and the other two feet pure iambs'. Let us observe, first, that by this statement about 'mērā' Professor Saintsbury admits (1) that it is not an iamb; it obviously is not, since 'a' is not long, as 'ear' or 'tail' is; 'sufficiently long' merely means, 'I am going to put a long mark over "a" to make out another iamb': he admits (2) that 'long' does mean long, i. e. that we are using the classic feet in the classic sense; why else trouble about the length of 'a'? We will proceed, therefore, on this supposition; on no other is it possible to deal with these 'feet' at all. Next, we observe the monstrous assumption that a trochee can be substituted for an iamb. Such a substitution upsets the accentual basis of the foot. The accentual relations of the iamb are $\circ \dot{\quad}$, where the single dot means a weak accent (*arsis*), the triple dot a strong accent (*thesis*), and the rule of resolution is that two shorts may become a long or one long two shorts, but that in such substitution the relation of the accents to the elements of the foot must not be altered, any more than its total quantity. The reason for this is that if the place of the accent in the foot is altered, the division of the quantities is altered, and the feet are no longer equal. Let us write the iambus $\circ \circ$ (\circ meaning two shorts making a long), omit for simplicity the weak accent, suppose a series of iambic feet:

| $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ |

and then substitute a trochee ($\circ \circ$) in the first foot. The result is:

| $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ | $\circ \circ$ |

where the quantity between the first two accents exceeds that between the second and third by \circ ; the rhythm is therefore broken. This point is fundamental and crucial; and it is only because of the plausibility at first sight of this substitution, this 'reversing' or 'wrenching' or 'invert-

ing' of accent, that Professor Saintsbury's scansion can pretend to represent the facts. I will therefore deal with the point more particularly.

Let us take, as an iambic line, Milton's

| and swims, | or sinks, | or wades, | or creeps, | or flies |
and then form a trochaic line by omitting 'and'. It is clear that the relation of the second line to the first is

A. and | swíms or | sínks or | wádes or | créeps | or flíes
| Swíms or | sínks or | wádes or | créeps | or flíes

and not

B. | and swíms | or sínks | or wádes | or créeps | or flíes |
Swíms or | sínks or | wádes or | créeps or | flíes |

The accents, that is to say, are not displaced; trochees do not take the place of iambs, but of *the latent trochees already there*. The first line contains the second, and their relation may be represented thus:

Iambs.

| and swíms | or sínks | or wádes | or créeps | or flíes |
 ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪ — ∪

Trochees.

To make up for the 'and' taken away from the beginning, a rest equal to it is added at the end. If any one spoke the second line simultaneously with the first as in the arrangement B, there would be a clash of accents; to put it generally, for two lines to be metrically the same it must be possible to superpose one on the other so that the accents coincide.

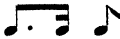
But now take Professor Saintsbury's case, where a single trochee is supposed to take the place of a single iamb. This would arise if the line were:

Swims it, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies,

and his scansion would be :

| Swíms it | or sínks | or wádes | or créeps | or flíes |
 - ∪ | ∪ - | ∪ - | ∪ - | ∪ - |

where the accent on 'swíms' is at a greater distance from that on 'sínks' than that accent is from the next. We have seen that 'swims it', if a trochee, must take the place of a 'latent trochee', not of an iamb, but this leaves no room for 'or'. But *is* 'swims it' a trochee? We have only to use our ear to recognize that 'swims' is not now so long as it was, nor so long as 'sinks'. What we have really done is not to substitute a trochee for an iamb, which is impossible, but to resolve a trochee. There are various ways in which this may be done (tribrach, dactyl in time of trochee, a long and two half shorts), but the right solution here seems to be :

| Swims it or | sinks or | wades or | creeps or | flies ^ |
 - ∪ ∪ | - ∪ | - ∪ | - ∪ | - ∪ |
 where | - ∪ ∪ | means $1\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} + 1 = 3$, or  in modern musical notation.

Suppose we did take it as a dactyl in time of a trochee¹ (sometimes called, in interpretation of a passage in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a 'cyclic dactyl'), or suppose that Professor Saintsbury's 'anapaest' were an anapaest in the time of an iamb, this passing substitution of 4-time for 3-time, while not disturbing the position of the strong accent, would displace the weak accent. The accentual relations of the dactyl are $\dot{\cup} \cup \cup$, those of the trochee $\dot{\cup} \cup$. The strong accent falls as before, and therefore keeps its distance, but through the shortening of the - and ∪ in the dactyl, the secondary accent falls a little earlier. There is really no difficulty, for what has happened is precisely the substitution we make when we dance in 2-time to a waltz, which is a 3-time measure. With the dactyl or anapaest

¹ This would place the weak accent on 'it', which is unnatural.

we change over for a bar (or foot) into 4-time, *taken in the time of 3*.

After this theoretic digression let us pick up Professor Saintsbury's line :

Twinklĕd | thĕ ĩnnū|mĕrā|blĕ ēār | ānd tāil.

It looks like a scansion till we begin to test it, and then it falls to pieces.

The first syllable of 'twinkled' is accented, but it is certainly not twice as long as the second, and obviously not so long as 'ear' or 'tail'. In the second place the ear tells us that the syllables 'the in-' are pronounced still more rapidly, so much so that they represent what used to be called, absurdly enough, 'elision', and spelled 'th' in', which means that they are together pronounced in the time of one short syllable. The effect, so far as quantity is concerned, is as if the line were :

Twinkled innumerable ear and tail.

The rest is plain sailing, except 'mera'. The 'ra' is accented, but it is evidently not longer than 'me'; we therefore must not pretend with Professor Saintsbury that it is 'sufficiently long' to make 'mera' an iamb. The true scansion is 'mĕrā', and the foot-quantity necessary at this point is completed by a rest. We can prove this by inserting another short syllable instead, the word 'of' :

Twinkled innumerable of ear and tail.

The true scansion of the line therefore is :

Twinkled	the	in nume	rable	ear and	tail	
∪ ∪	ω	∟ ∪	∪ ∪ ∧	∟ ∪	∟ ∧	
or						
—∪						

where ω means two shorts together = ∪, and ∧ means a pause = ∪. Here we have five sections equal to one another in quantity, and having the same accentual relations. Professor Saintsbury, by the way, admits the 'rest' as a constituent of English verse, and thereby once more

implies that 'short' and 'long' do mean short and long; for a pause must mean a space of time and nothing else, and stands for a 'short' or 'long'. If Professor Saintsbury objects to this scansion that 'and' properly goes with 'tail', not with 'ear', and should therefore group with it as an iamb, we can rewrite as follows :

Twinkled $\wedge \quad \acute{\cup} \quad \cup$	the innu merable $\omega \quad \acute{\cup} \quad \cup$	ear $\wedge \quad \acute{\cup}$	and tail $\cup \quad \acute{\cup}$
--	--	------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

which is rhythmically the same thing.

So far we have used the classic notation. But at this point we must break it to Professor Saintsbury and those with him who believe that they are defending an anti-musical system of prosody, that this is not so: they are really employing the ancient Greek musical notation. The musical theory of verse holds good whether we employ the ancient or the modern symbols; it is implied in iambs and trochees, in longs and shorts, *thesis* (stress) and *κενός* (rest). For every element in the modern musical notation of rhythm, the Greek verse-notation had an equivalent, except that in Greek verse subdivision of values was not carried so far. Their unit, what we call the 'beat', was the *χρόνος πρώτος* (not the short syllable, observe, because they were aware that the short syllable had no constant value); their higher unit, the 'foot', originally called *μέτρον* or 'measure', contained, like our 'bar', a number of those 'beats', two, three, four, five, and so on; hence the pyrrhic (2 beats), trochee, iamb, and tribrach (3 each), spondee, dactyl, and anapaest (4 each), paeon (5), and so on. Each of these feet, like our bar, had its strong and weak accents in a fixed position; and the line was made up of a fixed number of these higher units, or their resolutions. Only, instead of reducing all bars to one form, with accent on the first beat, as we do, the Greeks held by the traditional groupings that had doubtless arisen in the dance. An iamb, $\cup \acute{\cup}$, means that the dancer starts off with the left foot on the light up-beat

(*arsis*) of the conductor, taking a short step, and then follows with a long slide of the right foot on the heavy down-beat (*thesis*). If any one likes to retain this ancient notation he may, but he is using a musical notation, and he must at least make it adequate to the facts, which are admitted by the Greek theorists themselves. Thus to the symbols \cup and $-$ must be added \mathbb{L} to stand for a long and a half, \sqcup = two longs, ω = five shorts, and the signs for rest, \wedge = \cup , $\bar{\wedge}$ = $-$, and so on.

These additional forms are given in the anonymous Greek treatise published by J. H. Bellermann, and their application in Greek verse, having been theoretically established by writers like Westphal, has been proved by the discovery of the Oxyrhynchus Papyri, where the form \mathbb{L} , meaning a dotted crotchet, is written over a number of long syllables. The question, then, is not between musical and non-musical systems, but between the convenience and applicability of old and new. Most people, I think, will be ready to fly to the simplicity and clearness of the new in place of the clumsy old symbols, which require a separate notation for the accents. Thus the line we have been dealing with becomes :

Twin-kled	the in-	nu - mer-	a - ble	ear and	tail
♪	♪	♪	♪	♪	♪
or	♪	♪			

Is anything lost by this change from foot to bar? Professor Saintsbury would say, yes; that the bar frequently cuts across the natural attachments of syllables to one another, which are sometimes better represented by the foot in iambs and anapaests. There is a real point involved here. If I cannot satisfy Professor Saintsbury on that point, the modern musical notation is to that extent inadequate. But I hope to satisfy him. I admit that in the line we have been discussing, 'and tail' is the natural collocation of

words rather than 'ear and', and to write 'and tail' as an iamb satisfies rhythm and preserves that collocation. But does Professor Saintsbury's system preserve the natural collocation of syllables in other parts of the line? What about 'the innu' as a collocation, or 'ble ear'? Surely, so far as natural collocation is concerned, the line breaks up as follows:

Twinkled | the innumerable | ear | and tail.

These are the natural mouthfuls we take. But they do not correspond with the rhythmical sections, they are, in fact, logical groupings, not rhythmical. In many cases the logical and rhythmical sections do coincide, but the development of English verse has increased the freedom with which the logical woof plays across the rhythmical warp. Greek verse was much stricter than English in requiring the coincidence; consider, for example, the rules limiting the breaking of a resolution over two words. For this reason the 'foot' answered more nearly to the logical as well as rhythmical facts than it can with us. We must not then regard our bar-marks as representing logical grouping. Both rhythmical and logical groups pivot about the same point, namely, the strong accent which must find a place in each of them, on the same syllable; but their boundaries either side of this point may vary. The root of Professor Saintsbury's objection is the idea that the bar-mark means some sort of check or pause—a discontinuity. That is not so.

ear and	tail	is exactly the same as	ear	and	tail
♪ ♪	♪		—	∪	—

Well, then, it will be said, if you recognize the existence and importance of the logical grouping, is it not a defect in the musical notation that it has no symbols to express it? On the contrary, I reply, the musical system has such a notation, and constantly employs it. It is, in fact, another

advantage of this system that two different groupings are not confused with one another. If any one will look at a page of music, he will see that independently of the bar-groupings, another set of groups among the notes is established by curved lines above them. These groups frequently cross the bars. They indicate the groups of notes that are to be taken together; they are called 'phrases'; and between one group and another a slight pause takes place which does not enter into the rhythmical notation.¹ This exactly corresponds with the logical groupings of words in verse. Between each two mouthfuls a slighter or longer pause takes place, which may be simply stolen from the full sound value of the bar, or for great emphasis may be so prolonged as actually to interrupt the rhythm. These *extra-rhythmical* pauses are also well known in music, where a pause marked over a note prolongs it beyond anything it has a right to in strict rhythm. If, then, it is thought desirable to mark these collocations in the analysis of verse, it must be done in a similar way, e. g.

The distinction, in any case, is not, in the strict sense, rhythmical. So much, for the present, on this point; I shall return to it when dealing with prose.

To sum up this examination of current English prosody as represented by Professor Saintsbury: we find that it is the wreck or ghost of the Greek system imperfectly understood, and apart from that system, unintelligible; that the idea of our English prosody differing in essence from the Greek, arose from the fallacy that the Latin hexameter was originally non-accentual, and in course of time ceased to be

¹ The 'phrasing' in most editions of classical music is bad and corrupt; and endless confusion arises from the fact that the curve also serves as the sign for *legato* groups, which commonly, but not constantly, coincide with 'phrases'.

quantitative; further, that the Greek metrical system, so far from being non-musical, was confessedly musical, and differed from modern musical rhythm only in notation. Lanier had not realized this, but when he is treated as a negligible crank, it is well to remember that he has the whole weight of antiquity behind him.

Lanier made no appeal to authority; his appeal was to reason and the facts of English verse. It is impossible to repeat his argument here; I hope to send a few students to his book. But I will briefly state, with some departures from his exposition, the doctrine by which English, like Greek verse-rhythm, becomes intelligible.

2. THE MUSICAL THEORY

Verse, on its material side, being composed of sounds in the form of syllables (or rather of sounds and silences), and rhythm being, by general consent, a repetition or recurrence of some sort among those sounds, we can determine what it is that recurs by exhausting all the possible recurrences. Now sounds, and therefore syllables, may differ from one another or agree with one another in the following respects:—

- (1) Length (called in speech 'quantity').
- (2) Intensity (called in speech 'accent' or 'stress').
- (3) Pitch (in Greek *προσφδία*, in Latin 'accentus').
- (4) 'Colour' or 'quality' (in speech vowel-and-consonant values).

Rhythm must, therefore, be constituted by a recurrence of one or more than one of these. But the recurrence is not of (4), for, although vowel-and-consonant recurrences, in the form of rhyme and alliteration, are frequently found reinforcing rhythm, they are not necessary; verse can exist without them. Nor is the recurrence of (3). Variations of pitch have no fixed relation to verse, though intensity is

frequently accompanied by sharpening.¹ Verse can be recited in a monotone and still be verse.

We are left, then, with quantity and accent. Is the recurrence one of quantities alone? This is impossible, because there would be nothing to mark the quantities and render them appreciable. Is the recurrence one of accents alone? that is to say, of an equal number or of equally intense accents in the line. No; one or more accents may be dropped by breaks of silence in the line (this is notorious in Milton's verse), and the accents in a line are not equal;² they vary with logical emphasis. But if the regular recurrence is of quantities marked by accent, is the recurrence one of equal quantities, or of a succession of quantities in fixed proportion to one another? Of equal quantities; because to measure those proportions a fixed unit would be implied, which would itself divide them into equal quantities. Since, then, we cannot group the accents as a recurring series on any other principle, and cannot mark the quantities without the accents, and no other principle of rhythm has been suggested, we are driven to the conclusion that our verse³ is a function of quantity and accent,

¹ The terms 'rising' and 'falling' rhythm, used of iambic and trochaic measure by so many English prosodists, are question-begging and inaccurate: the coincidence of rise of pitch with stress is frequent, but by no means constant.

² Lanier says we cannot measure intensity of accent exactly; this is doubtful, and we can at least recognize equal intensities; otherwise logical accent could not exist.

³ This is the actual constitution of verse. Lanier quite rightly points out that quantity is the fundamental element; accent is the regulative, the 'signal' of quantities, and the signal might conceivably have been pitch or 'colour'. Mr. Thomson takes exception to this; but we can perceive quantity by alternate spaces of sound and silence, without any variation of intensity in the sounds, and we actually thus measure quantity when an accent is suppressed. Again, suppose our voice were a wind instrument incapable of varied intensity; our speech would be without accent. This is the case with the non-swell organ, and as a substitute for accent the initial notes in the bars of organ-music are dotted. Riemann

the universal law being that equal quantities of time (called 'bars' in music, and hitherto 'feet' in verse) are marked off by metrical accent.

The same result might be arrived at in another way. When we listen to verse, even verse we have never heard before, we know exactly *when* the next accent must fall as surely as when we listen for the next stroke of a clock striking the hour, and if one accent is passed over in silence, we know exactly when the next again will fall, as surely as we do in the case when a stroke of the clock has been obscured by an interfering sound. We can do this only if there is a fixed relation of time between the accents. But this relation must be the relation of equality, otherwise the normal relation would be one of inequality. But the normal relation is not one of inequality, for no one denies that, e. g. in the normal blank verse line

| titúm | titúm | titúm | titúm | titúm |

each 'titúm' is equal to each, since any one of them might be substituted for any other. Our power, moreover, to anticipate accent is in no way affected by resolution of the feet, since we cannot anticipate the syllables; therefore a resolved foot has the same quantity or time-value as a normal, and is equal to an unresolved. Otherwise expressed, in variations upon the normal foot accents remain equidistant in time.

Verse-rhythm, then, *is* music-rhythm, and may be represented by the same notation. The unit of the line in verse, as of the 'section' in music, is the 'bar', and the bar itself consists of one or more 'beats', the same in number for the bars of a given verse. But verse employs only a few of the varieties of rhythm possible to music. Bars of one beat only we may put aside. A child spelling out syllables,


(*Les Éléments de l'esthétique musicale*) calls this 'agogic' as opposed to 'dynamic' accent, but it is a variation of quantity used as a divider of quantity.


or a foreigner or 'deaf-mute' learning to speak, approaches to it, or we can construct a single line like

Nó | Nó | Nó | Nó | Nó |

Add a syllable like 'and' to one of these bars and the time is resolved into 2 or 3-time. A bar of two beats is in English, as in Greek, so monotonous that it is only employed as a resolution of 3-time. We arrive, then, at 3-time as the lowest combination in practice; it also proves, in English, as in Greek, to be the commonest. But 4-time also exists, revealing itself by a noticeable secondary accent on the third beat (there is a fainter accent on the third beat of a 3-time bar). Lanier's singling out of those 4-time measures like *The Battle of the Baltic*, whose striking rhythmical difference from ordinary 3-time no one had explained, is a tribute to the rightness of his theory. It is of course in this measure, not in 3-time hexameters, that English dactyls and spondees are found. The possible measures beyond this are 5-time and 7-time (which are rare in classical music, and are only passing resolutions in English verse) or else multiples of 3, 4, 5, or 7-time. Many of these measures are recognized in Greek prosody, *but only in lyric verse which was set to music*. In Greek spoken or declaimed verse, as in English, 3-time (iambic)¹ and 4-time (hexameter) are the measures, a striking confirmation of Lanier's results.

Lanier did not live to develop or revise his treatise, and one or two defects have been noted. He pointed out, but did not always make it clear in his scansion, that syllable-quantity does not regularly fill out the foot-values, and that there is considerable variation in this respect among individual readers. Thus, in the reading of Chaucer's line,

A | kníght there | wás, and | thát a | wór - thy | mán


by staccato reading we may alter the values of 'knight there' to  and make many other such changes;

¹ The so-called iambic trimeter is in 6/8, not 3/8-time.

but these fractional lengthenings and shortenings of *syllables* are made up for by rests, and do not affect the general time-relations. Mr. Omond, quite legitimately making the distinction between foot and syllable-quantity, goes on to persuade himself that in all but the dragging lines of blank verse there is in each foot a missing quantity. He argues that in a line like

The weight | of all | the hopes | of half | the world,
the actual syllables of each foot form an iamb, but that a silent beat fills out each foot to 'duple time'. Let us test this by supplying a short syllable in two of the feet :

The | weight of | "all of the' | hopes of | "half of the' | world.

I have rewritten, for simplicity of reference, in trochaic form, and marked the strong and weak accents in the two modified bars. Those accents prove that the time is not 'duple' but triple; otherwise the weak accent would fall on 'of' in either case; the resolution being actually (♩. ♪ ♩) for (♩ ♩). The case of dragging lines like Milton's 'Bogs, fens, &c.', is, as Mr. Thomson points out, a case of resolution into duple time, with *ritardando*.

Without this clogging of utterance the poet could not impose a slower *tempo*, as distinguished from a different *time*, on the reader. Variation of syllable-values, to take another of Mr. Omond's points, is not a reason against musical notation, for the same freedom is used in reading from a musical score; conductors, for example, frequently dot a quaver or crotchet, in performance, at the opening of a bar, and singers, as well as players, clip and extend the written values. Mr. Thomson, in his later analyses, substitutes numerical fractions for the musical notes, and such notation might be necessary to render individual readings; for ordinary purposes the normal notation is sufficient. So Professor Elton's privately suggested objection against musical notation, viz. that it does not allow for all fractions which may

conceivably arise, would only affect the phonographic record of individual readings. Professor Elton puts the more general objection that he does not *hear* the equal measures (he admits a tendency to equality), and that nothing would prove their existence but such a scientific graphic record. My answer is that he ought not to hear them exactly equal, and that such a record could never prove normal equality except for unintelligent schoolboy reading. In intelligent, expressive reading, rhythm is subject to constant small interruptions, slackenings, and quickenings; it rarely or never exists as the normal notation represents it. But does not that admission give away your whole case, it will be asked? Not a bit of it; exactly the same thing is true of all music. It is well understood (see C. F. Abdy-Williams, *The Rhythm of Modern Music*) that an exact, metronomical rendering of music is intolerable, exactly as the schoolboy's reading is intolerable, and for the more marked of these variations music has a notation of signs like *ritardando*, *accelerando*, *staccato*, and signs for pauses. All these variations are *extra-rhythmical*; the mind accepts them as means of expression affecting *tempo*, the rate of rhythm, but not rhythm itself, just as *staccato* or *legato* affects the quantities of notes actually sounded, but not the quantities of time they have a right to sound. Imagine time as equal sections marked out on an endless string. But imagine this string as elastic, so that any part of it may be temporarily stretched out or relaxed, so that the sections are no longer strictly equal. A variation of this sort is an understood concession in all expressive music.

A more important criticism of Lanier is Mr. Thomson's, viz. the contradiction of his own theory involved in his explanation of an 'initial trochee' in blank verse. Here Lanier was careless and wrong: the 'trochee', as we have seen, is not a trochee at all. So with particular valuation of syllables; Mr. Thomson is more exact, though not

infallible. But these mistakes in application affect in no way the principles involved.

Professor Saintsbury includes, in his *History*, an account of other theorists, and we may ask here what he has to say about the musical theorists. In a curious passage of the Preface he tells us that in early Oxford days he found himself fitting the measure of Homer's hexameters to the music of a waltz tune, borne in through the window. I cannot quite follow his account, but a waltz would fall into sections of four or eight bars, and therefore not square with the six-bar hexameter, and this is possibly why he could not get the whole line to fit; but the hexameter, as Englishmen read it, is a 3-time measure, and therefore corresponds to the waltz, also a 3-time measure. Professor Saintsbury, therefore, had the clue in his hands, if only he had followed it up. But when Sidney Lanier returns with the same clue and the skein unravelled, his critic lacks the patience to follow the thread. (iii. 493-7.) 'For my part,' he says, 'I can only close my visor, put lance in rest, and loosen sword in scabbard.' Unfortunately Professor Saintsbury not only closes his visor, but stops up its eye-holes, so that his blows never touch the antagonist. It is 'impertinence', he begins, in Lanier 'to use no other symbols than musical notes'. This from the man who has been using nothing but Greek musical notes! 'It may be', he goes on, 'that English iambic verse is in "3-time" from some crotchet-and-quaver point of view—it is not from any other; and if it were, the whole beauty of actual "3-time" substitution would disappear.' But the Greek iamb, from the Greek point of view, is a 3-time foot (*τρίσημος*) composed of three *χρόνοι πρώτοι*, and the English iamb, so far as sense can be made of Professor Saintsbury's account of it, is equally a 3-time foot, for it is made up of a short and long, and resolvable into three shorts. A quaver is merely a short, and a crotchet merely a long, so there is no difference in the 'crotchet-and-quaver

point of view'. What Professor Saintsbury does not seem to understand¹ is that $\cup -$ is just as much 3-time as $\cup \cup \cup$; a musical piece in 3-time might be written without a single resolution into bars of three notes, and yet be 3-time just as much.

He proceeds wholly to condemn Lanier's ear for prosody on the ground that he declares the typical 3-rhythm to exist in *Paradise Lost* and in Shakespeare's plays, which it certainly does, whatever may be the variations on the common base, and he proceeds: 'Of course I know I shall be told that it is my Philistine indifference to "pitch" and "tone-colour" and things of that sort, which makes me insensible to Lanier's merit.' This *boutade* is unfortunate, since Lanier expressly and clearly excluded 'pitch' and 'tone-colour' from the regular domain of rhythm, which is here in question. He proceeds, however, to give Lanier 'more serious' treatment, and this is the result:

'The fact, as pointed out elsewhere, *that accent has no place in music*, at once shows that music and prosody cannot be on all fours.'

It is not clear whether Professor Saintsbury is stating, in the words I have italicized, his own view about music, or supposing himself to be stating Lanier's. In either event, the assertion is equally and inexplicably remote from the fact. If the belief is Professor Saintsbury's, an ignorance of music may explain his failure to understand Lanier, but hardly excuses his contemptuous judgement. It would be unkind to pursue further this caricature of the writer who has kept distinctions clear in a region where others confuse quantity with accent, quantity with vowel-quality, accent with pitch, or, like our author, reduce feet to 'abracadabra'.

¹ See the strange footnote, iii. 494.

3. THE RHYTHM OF PROSE AND SPEECH

To this subject Professor Saintsbury has devoted a separate volume. A true rhythmical foundation is wanting to this as to the treatise on verse, or more so, since the recurrence of equal numbers of feet is absent. All we get, therefore, is the irrational 'feet', a collocation of items that have no measurable relation to one another, and are therefore incapable of building up wider relations. Some new 'feet' come in, notably the 'paeon' in deference to Aristotle (as well as others which belong to highly-organized lyrical music in Greek); but it is as impossible to define this 'paeon' in terms of quantity (distinguished from syllables) as it was in the case of the verse-feet.

Professor Elton's essay, referred to above, does call for notice here because it brings to the front a point of the first importance already touched upon in connexion with verse. Professor Elton agrees in the main with Professor Saintsbury's use of 'feet' and their classic species, but he differs from him in treating the musical theory with respect, while remaining sceptical about its validity. Provisionally, he will only admit that 'long' and 'short' (— and ∪) are an x and a y , unknown quantities. He does not even accept the accentual relations of the terms he borrows from the classics, for he admits feet with no accent at all, with two principal accents, or three. The point, however, on which I wish to dwell is his distinction between the 'feet' of verse and prose.

"An English prose sentence, for the present purpose, consists of a number of *feet*, or groups of words, containing at least one accent in each foot, but sometimes two or even three accents. In verse the feet may, and constantly do, cut across the words ('My bós|om's lórd'). In prose the foot, as here defined, must begin with the beginning, and end with the end of a word, though not necessarily of the same word; the prose feet would be 'my bósom's | lórd'."

This 'prose-rhythm', Professor Elton goes on to explain, exists in verse, cutting across the 'verse-rhythm', and he says that in prose the classical 'cursus' or 'cadence' may exist coincidentally with the native cadence and be heard at the same time, e. g. 'as mementos | of prostrate | sorrow' (native cadence), '(as me)méntos of | próstrate | sórrow' (classic cadence). That is to say, the speaking voice can produce two rhythms simultaneously. It is only necessary to state this to see that it is impossible. In concerted music of more than one part a second and a third and many more voices or instruments may accompany the rhythm of the first with a different rhythm; it is impossible, with a single voice, to divide words into more than one rhythm at a time. This second repartition of the syllables in verse, which Professor Elton calls the prose-rhythm, is not a rhythm at all, but something else. And what it is, his definition has already prepared us to recognize. It is the *logical* distribution of the syllables into their smaller groups, in which words are never broken up. And not being a rhythmical division (except so far as each logical group has a chief logical accent coinciding with a rhythmical accent), this system cannot serve as an account of the *rhythm* of prose, though the distinction does hold the clue to the definition of prose.

What, then, is that rhythm? Aristotle made some deeply interesting if ambiguous remarks on the rhythm of Greek prose (*Rhetoric*, iii. 8), and little advance has been made upon his statement. He puts it clearly enough that prose is rhythmic but not metrical. Now if that means anything, it means that prose, like verse, has the recurrence of equal feet, but has not the recurrence of the same feet, or of equal numbers of feet, or of a pattern of feet (metre). Without the recurrence of equal quantities, marked off by accent, rhythm is impossible; therefore prose is only rhythmical if, and so far as, it has the same

regular constitution of bars that verse possesses. The next question Aristotle discusses is, What are the feet used in prose? And he makes the interesting statement that in ordinary conversation the iamb or 3-time foot was the prevailing measure. This we should have expected, since the speaking verse, the verse of dialogue in Greece, was the iambic.¹ But puzzlement begins, and has continued ever since, over what he says about the paeon. That foot and the theory of its combination with others, is a difficult subject, because the paeon is a 5-time foot, and 5-time, even in conducted music, is very difficult to play in measure, without breaking it down into alternate 2 and 3, or otherwise transforming it. Aristotle's idea evidently is to find for the orators a foot which will disguise the regular recurrence of the 3-time iambus. The Greek theorists tell us that in verse the paeon sometimes became a 6-beat foot, in combination, for instance, with trochees, by prolongation (*τροπή*) or rest (*κενός*). Now Aristotle says the orators did not recognize their paeons as such. I am tempted, therefore, to think that this 'paeon' was really of six beats, and fell accordingly into the 3-time measure.

With this lead from the Greek master of all the rhythmic theorists (Aristoxenus was his pupil) let us turn to English prose. First of all, it is generally admitted that 'numerous prose' is actually, to some extent, *metrical*. This observation, however, is usually limited to noting the recurrence of regular blank-verse lines in writers like Ruskin, or blank-verse pages in writers like Blackmore. The purists object even to the occasional line; and though Professors Saintsbury and Elton are not so severe, we may say that prose, when it is obviously metrical, is not characteristically prose.

¹ We can probably arrive at an idea of the comparative *tempo* of Greek and English from the fact that the Greek dialogue verse had six iambs, whereas the English has five. Greek was spoken so much the faster, and no shorter unit than the \cup of the iamb was easy for them.

Another definite appearance of rhythm in prose has been noted by classical scholars. This is the existence, at the close of many sentences, of cadences corresponding to the forms of the *cursum*. Those students have been nibbling, so to say, at the edges of the supposed rhythmic irregularity of prose. But none of those critics has any conception of the extent to which regular metre exists in accepted prose writers. The specimens of prose cited by Professor Elton are passages from Coleridge, Gibbon, De Quincey, and Mr. Henry James. The entire passage from Coleridge is in metre.¹

What is | Gréece
 At this | présent | moment.
 It is the | cOUNTRY of the | heroes
 From | Códrus to Philo|poemen
 and | so it | would be
 though | all the | sands
 of | África should | cover
 its | cornfields and | olive-gardens
 and | not a | flower
 were | left on Hy|méttus
 for a | bee to | murmur in.

Or if 'olive-gardens' be read, there is one line with an extra foot. So in the Gibbon extract; I quote only a part of its metre.

The | pyramids at|tracted
 the curi|osity of the | ancients:
 an | hundred gener|ations,
 the | leaves of | autumn
 have | dropped into the | grave;

¹ It should be premised that since prose does not set out to be metrical, there is a greater individual choice permissible in the spacing out of bars: the readings given are possible readings.

and | áfter the | fáll
of the | Pháraohs and | Ptólemies,
the | Cáesars and | Calíphs,
the | sáme | pyramíds
stand e|réct and un|sháken
above the | floods of the | Níle.

De Quincey begins—

Thóse were the a|póstles
that had | trámped upon | éarth.

and Mr. Henry James begins—

What was | nów clear at | all évents
for the | fáther and the | dáughter.

To those let me add another passage from Gibbon, one of a host that might be cited—

As those | héretics | wére,
for the | móst part av|érse
to the | pleásures of | séné,
they mo|rósely ar|raigned
the pol|lygamy of the | pátriarchs,
the | gallantries of | David,
and the se|ráglio of | Sólomon . . .
The | súllen | óbstinacy
with | wích they main|táined
their pe|cúliar | rítes,
and un|sócial | mánners,
seemed to | márk them | out. . . .

In fact this measure, consisting of two bars of triple time combined in a section usually divided off by a comma, is a frequent jog-trot of Gibbon, broken in upon by one-foot, three-foot, and other sections. Combine two of these

may begin to suspect that chunks of metre can hardly be embedded in a context that is unrhythmical or governed by some quite different rhythmical law.

The best way, perhaps, of preparing for the next step is to ask: *What has happened when we say of a line in English verse that it will not scan?* People, of course, often say this of a line in which the feet are freely resolved, instead of maintaining a typical drumming form. That case we may put aside. And we may also put aside the case where the scansion is at first reading ambiguous. We may think it bad management on the part of the poet not to make his scansion unmistakable. But when the line proves to be readable in the same metre as the context, we can no longer say that it does not scan. Thus the first lines of Tennyson's song—

Cóme into the | gárden Máud,
For the | bláck bat Níght has | flown,

might be read as in 4-time, till we find that the metre is 3-time, and the reading—

Come | into the | gárden | Máud.

There are still the cases where the line, as naturally read, is short of a foot, or too long by a foot, but where it is still possible, by allowing for a rest, or by another reading of accent and quantity, to make a passable line of it. The remaining case is where the line obstinately refuses to run in the given metre. But does the line, in those cases, fall out of rhythm altogether? By no means; it merely falls into another metre, with a foot too many, or too few, for the metre required. *There is no line, in fact, that will not scan,* though it may not scan for a given measure. This is the result of the extraordinary freedom with which the accentuation and quantity of English syllables can be varied. Mr. Stone, followed by Mr. Bridges, holds the strange theory that quantity in English is or may be fixed. We have

already seen that it was not fixed even in Greek. Exactness of syllable quantity was maintained in Greek lyric poetry because that poetry was *sung*; the sustained singing voice could regularize the length of syllables, and the Greek conservative music avoided, as much as possible, any relation except that of a note and a half-note. The same thing happens in English when words are sung; syllabic quantities are regularized. Thus in 'Old Hundredth' the quantities of all syllables are equal.

It is impossible here to work this principle out through all the combinations of syllables and rests that arise, but one instance will show how in practice quantities and accents are malleable material, rearranging themselves under the need of rhythm. By adding four syllables to the first line of *Paradise Lost* we force the quantities and accents to rearrange, accommodating themselves to a 4-time measure instead of a 3.

Of | mán's | fírst dis - o - bédience | and the | frúit ¹

becomes the wretched jingle—

Of | an's fírst dis - o - bédience and the | frúit of hís be - guíling

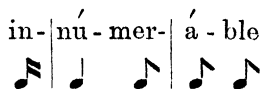
The 'longs' in the original line, 'mán's', 'fírst', 'be', 'frúit', have become 'shorts', the rests have disappeared, the principal accent on 'fírst' has gone, and secondary accents have been set up on 'dis', 'and', and 'hís'.

Take again the word 'innumerable', with which we have been concerned. Its quantities and accents in isolation are:

in - nú - mer - á - ble |

¹ Mr. Thomson is usually so careful that it is surprising to find him accenting the 'and' in this line, and so in other cases.

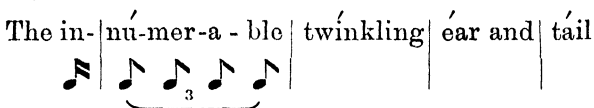
In Tennyson's line it is made to scan as :



with something of a strain, because a secondary accent has promoted to serve as bar-accent.

But in another context, that of a 4-foot line, it would suffer compression, e.g. :

Follow over hill and dale




where the four syllables are taken in the time of three.

Why should there be such variability of quantity? What can be the motive for this freedom to expand or compress the length of syllables and to manipulate accents? It cannot be the necessities of verse only, for in verse syllable-quantities are relatively more regular; it must be, then, the instinct which makes speech itself rhythmic, and insists that its elements shall be capable of accommodating themselves to a regular measure. Verse itself would be a fantastic, if not an impossible imposition upon language, if the collocations of measured feet out of which it builds its lines were not already present in habitual speech. Mr. Jourdain was astounded to be told that he had been speaking prose without knowing it. We must give him the further shock of learning that he has been speaking rhythm without knowing it; that not only 'prose', but ordinary speech, is rhythmic.¹

Now since English verse consists of 3-time measure, with a rare use of 4-time, we should expect that the habitual

¹ Any one who studies stage-dialogue will become aware that much of the art of a finished actor depends on *keeping time*, taking up his cue on the right beat.

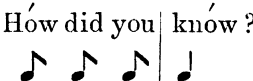
measure of English prose (if it have a measure) would also be 3-time; verse being selected from collocations and sequences that are used in prose, the raw material must have the same character; 4-time would be *too* metrical and difficult to maintain; it appears, as does 5-time, in passing resolutions. When I speak of the 'raw material' being there I do not mean that the quantity of English syllables is fixed, as it is falsely said to have been in Greek and Latin; it is fixed only when a word is isolated. What I mean is that our speech is *scandé* by recurrent accents at equal intervals, that we speak, as we breathe, rhythmically, and that we fit in our syllables, making them of various lengths, so that they fall into a 3-time measure. Thus I say :

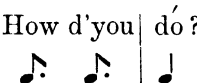
| Will you | go to | town to-day |


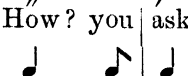
or I say :

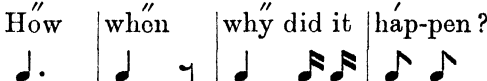
are you | go'ing to | to'wn or to the | línks,
 where 'go' and 'town' are shortened to admit respectively one and two fresh syllables in the bar, without affecting the framework of the measure.

When, again, in the four colloquial phrases

Hów did you | knów?


How d'you | dó?


Hów? you | ásk


Hów | when | why" did it | háp-pen?


the syllable 'how' assumes four different quantities, the reason cannot lie in a mere change of emphasis; it remains

accented in all four, in two the accent is simply rhythmical, in two it is logically reinforced. The reason must therefore lie in a rhythmical necessity to adjust the time-values of syllables or syllables and rests, so as to fall into regular measure.

If this line of argument does not convince, there is another way of proving the ubiquity of measure. Any section in prose which has in the context no metrical recurrence can be shown to be potentially metrical, and therefore actually rhythmical, by the simple expedient of supplying a metrical recurrence to fit it. Thus Bacon's

We | take | cúnning for a | sínister or | croóked | wísdom,
might have continued in the same measure :

But | wísdom | díffers both in | hónesty and | pówér from |
cúnning,

and so with any other sentence.

It will be objected that if the rhythmical framework of prose is the same as that of verse there is no longer a clear distinction between the two. Aristotle's distinction of metre will hardly avail for modern verse, because verse can be written quite as irregular in its rhythmical lengths as is prose, and yet remain verse. We must look further, then, for the distinction. One difference is clear, the greater frequency of resolution in the feet of prose. Prose, as compared with verse, does not insist on the repetition of one foot, the foot to which verse, with however many departures through resolution, keeps returning; *the foot, i. e. the unresolved bar, is characteristic of verse; the freely resolved bar, of prose.* Modern English verse has increased the frequency of resolution, and in so doing has made an approach to prose. Chaucer's 5-foot verse is more strictly syllabic in its constitution than Milton's. Is there any definable check on this frequency, which still differentiates Milton's verse from prose? Yes: if we turn to Mr. Bridges'

useful tabulation, we find that the frequency diminishes as we approach the end of the line. It is rare in the penultimate foot, extremely rare in the last.¹ The reason for this I take to be that with the increment of each foot in a line our consciousness of metre grows; the opening feet encourage the ear to expect metre, the final feet make the expectation a certainty. It is therefore to the end of the line we listen to make sure of the character of the metre, and any tampering with it endangers our certainty of that character. The reverse is true of prose. As it has no definite metrical character to maintain it is as free to resolve the last foot as the first, and actually makes great play with this resolution. If any one will read a page or two of Gibbon, he will see with what frequency, if not preference, the weak rhythmical ending ♪ ♪ to a sentence is employed, and the weakest in words like 'monument' (♪. ♪ ♪), a resolution of the 3-time foot which occurs very rarely in verse that is characteristically verse. It occurs in verse like that of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, which is losing character and breaking down into prose, this change being accompanied by others, such as extravagant use of the rest, and actual missing of a whole foot. Indeed, it is not always certain in *Cymbeline* whether a line is intended for verse or prose. With these distinctions, frequency and ubiquity of resolution, goes another, viz. freedom of resolution, I mean the breaking up of the foot into more

¹ Mr. Bridges' conclusion as to what he calls 'inverted stress' in *Paradise Lost* is 'Inversion is most common in the first foot, next in the third and fourth, very rare in second, and most rare in fifth'. My analysis of 400 lines, probably with some difference of reckoning, gave the relative frequency of *resolution* as follows:

122, 91, 96, 57, 7.

The great frequency in the first bar, more than seventeen times that in the last, accounts for the second bar being a little more stable than the third; the drop from the third to the fourth is one of about 40 per cent.

than three syllables. This resolution is not unknown in verse; again we find it in the verse of *Cymbeline*, e. g. :

To | his pro|técion, | calls him | Pósthumus Leo|nátus,

where bar 4 contains five syllables, being a paeon taken in the time of a trochee. So again, in the verse of Mr. Bridges. I am not speaking of the quantitative experiments (which only maintain the desired quantities when these are marked and spoken as marked), but of examples like the beautiful poem, *London Snow*, where ‘ | Stealthily and per|petually’, ‘ | Lazily and in|cessantly’, give us, in a five-syllable resolution, the light wavering movement of the flakes. A four-syllabled foot as a resolution of a 3-time foot is one of the frequent features of prose, e. g.

Tíme that | ántiquates an|tíquity,

and higher numbers are not uncommon, e. g.

But the in|íquity of ob|lívion.

To sum up these differences, verse singles out a rhythmical pattern, and disturbs it least at the end of lines, where its presence is most marked.¹ This care for the end of the line is reflected in the manner of printing verse, line by line, and is marked more strongly by the device of rhyme. In typical prose, as distinguished from poetical or oratorical set pieces, like Browne’s or De Quincey’s, rhythmical structure, though existing, is not brought to the front, but takes a secondary place in consciousness.

If these propositions be admitted, it will still be asked, Have you not reduced prose to a weakened and degraded form of verse, without strict metrical pattern, foot-character, and rhythmical character generally?

Let us put the question in another form: What advan-

¹ Cf. in the hexameter the sacredness of the final dactyl and spondee.

tages, if any, does verse sacrifice so as to be verse? To decide this let us take a normal blank verse, that in which all the feet are unresolved iambs—

titúm | titúm | titúm | titúm | titúm.

If we fit the syllables of a verse into these iambs we have arrived at the effect of smooth regularity which belongs to verse, as opposed to prose, and have thereby become intensely and increasingly conscious of the rhythmical constitution of the line. But in doing that we have rendered it difficult to single out any one foot rather than another for predominance. Such predominance as exists lies in a growing rhythmical consciousness of the successive feet. Now rhythm, of course, does not exhaust poetry; there is the other element, which may be of lesser, equal, or greater importance, namely significance. To give greater significance to one word rather than to another the chief means is emphasis, and the chief organ of emphasis is accent. But in this normal line the accents are evenly allotted, and there is no reason in the rhythm for reinforcing one of them rather than another. The meaning itself of the words will no doubt induce the reader to supply a variation of intensity; but the poet has no power to force it upon him. By what device can he do this? Let us see. In the first line of *Paradise Lost*,

Of man's first disobedience and the fruit,

two syllables start out emphatically, 'first' and 'fruit'. In either case emphasis is obtained by breaking up the regular iambic flow through what we may call generally 'resolution', but resolution here includes the use of the rest, and in one case the actual suppression of an accented syllable. 'First' becomes emphatic by the reduction of the preceding foot to one syllable eked out by a rest, and by the resolution of the following syllable into two, 'diso'. The omission of the

fourth accent piles a greater stress upon 'fruit'. Compare the effect in emphasis of a regular line,

Of man's initial error plus the fruit,

and compare generally the effect of the Chaucerian line, sparsely resolved, with the Miltonic. It may be observed that for the reason already given, viz. that it is the most conscious of the metrical accent, the last syllable is least capable of logical emphasis except by this violent means (see again the practice of Milton). To restore emphatic force to it normally, rhyme is necessary, used in the manner of Pope. A little examination of Milton's practice will prove how the two things go together (Mr. Bridges had already noticed it)—emphasis and the breaking, by resolution or by syncope and rest, of the even run of the feet.¹

Now this troubling of the flow, enriching the rhythm as it does and relieving its monotony, must be carried out warily, if it is not to imperil the character of verse as verse: but it is the very principle of prose, which is a vehicle of emphasis rather than of rhythm. Verse, even at its most elaborate and sophisticated, retains something of the character of incantation, of the monotony that may either soothe or madden, but in any case overrides the particular things said. As is a tune to verse, overbearing with its emotional movement the variations in significance, so is verse in its degree to prose that is characteristic prose. Prose is the medium of clear statement, of argument, of logic, and demands for these the utmost flexibility of stress.

¹ Milton is too cunning an artist to be restricted to one device. Note how he uses a long suspension as well as resolution to get the top-accent of the first six lines of *Paradise Lost* upon 'Heavenly Muse'. Classical scholars, he knew, would have in mind *ἄειδε θεά* and *ἔννεπε Μοῦσα*, both conventional and unemphatic; but this is the climax of his invocation. Again, by a sublime coquetry, he gives out his theme (théodicée) in a line made noticeable by its quiet regularity after so many resolutions:

And justify the ways of God to men,
this 26th being the first quite 'normal' line in the poem.

Hence the frequency and freedom of resolution, the tripping or dragging of syllables, the avoidance or unostentatious existence of metrical run with all that it involves. Hence also the fact that when emotion comes to the front, in oratorical or poetical writing, or in passionate scolding speech, with it increase rhythmical swing and metrical form, and vice versa, as the element of argument and logical statement invades verse so also do the resolutions of prose. These resolutions invade verse in all degrees till it is indistinguishable from prose; the regular 'feet' of verse invade prose in all degrees till it is indistinguishable from verse; but all through the 'bar', whether unresolved as a 'foot' or resolved, exists.

I invite the reader, then, to regard Prose and Verse not as sharply-divided entities under separate laws of rhythm, but as, in their characteristic forms, the extremities of a continuous chain, the variation being from freedom of syllable and emphasis towards strictness of foot and metrical pattern. And by 'characteristic' I do not mean that the extremest prose or verse is the best. We can conceive a kind of supernormal verse that would be intolerable. Beginning with a 'normal' iambic line, i. e. of unbroken iambs, like Milton's

A fair|er per|son lost | not Heaven | he seemed,
but with feet-cutting words (i. e. logical groups playing across feet), we go on to

Will He | so wise | let loose | at once | His ire,
where there is no cutting of words, but the foot is resolved into two words. The climax requires logical group and foot to coincide in one word, as in My Latin Tutor's line,

Depart | be off' | excede | evade | erump,
where only the second foot is syllabically resolved. But, apart from such toys, the chain is as follows:

<i>Characteristic Prose.</i>	<i>Numerous Prose.</i>	<i>Verse invaded by Prose emphasis.</i>	<i>Characteristic Verse.</i>
Free resolution of bar, with no predominance of foot, or recurrence of feet at the end of lines. Variation in length of line.	Less free and frequent resolution, so that rhythm becomes more apparent. Tendency to recurrence of lines with the same number of bars.	Frequent resolution of feet in early bars, and occasional in later. Length of line may be irregular.	Resolution rare, and rarest towards the end of lines. Lines of same length, or of recurrent pattern.

I have been concerned, in this paper, with the mere 'beggarly elements' of rhythm; but till there is an agreement about these the analysis of larger groupings and of subtler variations is without a basis or a notation.

DUGALD SUTHERLAND MACCOLL.

THE NOVELS OF MARK RUTHERFORD¹

NOR a great many weeks ago the daily papers recorded the death, at an advanced age, of Mr. William Hale White, retired contractor to the Admiralty, known also to studious readers as the translator into English of Spinoza's *Ethics* and unfinished little essay on *The Amendment of the Understanding*, and also, under the pseudonym Mark Rutherford, as the author of a remarkable, though not widely popular, series of novels. To the mind of some of us, these novels, though we recognize that their peculiar qualities are not such as are ever likely to appeal to a very wide circle of readers, are among the most remarkable works of literary art produced in our own time, and it is with the hope of calling attention to their rare merits, and, it may be, of winning a stray friend and admirer for a shy and retiring genius, that I am venturing to make the Mark Rutherford series the subject of my remarks this afternoon. I have reason to think that even among the discerning few who are alive to the difference between the novel which is a work of art and the novel which is a mere commercial product, made, like the American razors of the old story, 'to sell', the Mark Rutherford books are not as well known as they might and should be. For some few years past the publishers have been issuing them at the modest price of a shilling the volume,² and yet, as I have reason to know, the novels are not very familiar even to many of my own

¹ A lecture delivered before the Dundee Branch of the English Association in June, 1913.

² Since this lecture was delivered two or three of the series have been published at the still more 'popular' price of 7d.

colleagues in our University, who may fairly be presumed to have a wider acquaintance with literature than others whose days and nights are absorbed by the business of the noisier and larger world outside our quiet boundaries. For this reason I hope I shall be pardoned if I allow the personality of the giver of this lecture to fall into the background as speedily and completely as I can, and to devote most of the brief hour at my disposal to presenting you with samples of my author's characteristic moods and reflections and his manner of handling dramatic situations, as far as possible, in his own words.

But, first of all, a few remarks on the general scope and character of the series. The half-dozen novels and the one or two semi-devotional meditations which purport to be the work of Mark Rutherford are all of them studies from life of a particular kind. The personages who figure in the stories, at least the primary personages, are almost all socially on the border-line between what we may call the upper middle and the lower middle class, poor enough, for the most part, to be placed by a classifier with a keen sense for social values below the line, but generally, in virtue of education or a natural bent for reflection and original thought, tending intellectually to an 'upper division'. The minor persons among whom they play their part—at least, those of them whose characters are drawn with the surest hand—may be said to belong definitely to the 'lower middle', and sometimes to the 'lower' orders quite simply, small country tradesmen and their families and apprentices, artisans, cheaply paid and underfed warehouse clerks, porters, coffee-house waiters, and the like. When the 'upper class' comes upon the scene, in the figure, for instance, of a country small squire, it does so in the persons of its least exalted members, and the portraits, to my judgement, are drawn in uncertain outline and lack the intimate sense of reality and life which belongs to the

writer's conventionally 'humbler' characters. Most of the leading personages belong to a very definite social 'world', which has already all but passed away, and has found no faithful chronicler in literature except our author, the world of Calvinistic Dissent as it existed half a century ago in the country towns of England. Even less than forty years ago the English 'Dissenter', as represented in his purest and most classical form by the Independent, was a perfectly distinct social type. In the genuinely rural parts of the country he could hardly be said to exist, but in the towns, and particularly, so far as the England south of the Humber is concerned, in the market towns which served as local centres for the business of the surrounding agricultural districts, his kind formed a society, cut off, as a general rule, from that of his 'Church' neighbours by inherited Puritan traditions in theology and politics, but with a very characteristic life of its own. In not a few places this society included most of the more well-to-do tradesmen and their relatives, and thus gave the life of the market town its distinctive colouring; the parish clergyman, the squire, the local lawyer and wine-merchant, and usually one of the two local 'doctors', together with one or two retired persons living on their means, and commonly, for obvious reasons, the schoolmistress, making up a separate 'Church' society which stood only in business relations with the Dissenters, though it was generally recognized by the Independent shopkeepers as enjoying a temporary superiority on earth, compensated by the remoteness of the chance its members stood of admission into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is with this special social stratum that Mark Rutherford almost always deals, and, from what I can remember of the life of English country market towns as a boy, I can testify to the singular fidelity with which he has reproduced its daily habits, its characteristic methods of doing business and enjoying itself, even the small tricks and habits of speech

by which it revealed to the observant its historical descent from the robust Independence of those earlier days when Calvinistic Republicanism had been a fiery conviction for which tens of thousands of Englishmen had been ready to live—and to die.

To a very large extent this peculiar phase in the life of a great religious and political party is now a thing of the past. Calvinism, which still survived in my own early childhood, at least as a tradition and a professed theory among the Independents, seems dead among modern 'Congregationalists'. So far as ultimate convictions about the government of the Universe and the duty and destiny of Man go, there is nothing definite to discriminate the Congregationalist from his average Anglican neighbour. If he still prays without liturgical forms or ecclesiastical vestments and abstains from kneeling to receive the consecrated elements, it is almost wholly from inheritance of a tradition which no longer retains any special meaning and is kept up mainly because no one feels it worth his while to oppose it; his children receive the same High School and University training as those of his conforming neighbour; they enjoy much the same amusements and speak the self-same dialect. It is true that in politics there is still some discernible survival of the old divisions. The Independent is still nearly always a Radical, though his Radicalism no longer has its basis, like the Chartism or Republicanism of his ancestors, in religious conviction, and is made up largely of doctrines which would have horrified them as godless. The alliance of Calvinistic Dissent with Romanism against the Protestantism of Ulster would, for instance, have been a flat impossibility as recently as forty or fifty years back. On the other side, High Toryism has ceased to be the only political creed permissible in a good Churchman, and one is more often justified than not, when one meets a person of exceptionally pronounced Radical or Socialist

convictions, in guessing that if he belongs to any confession, he is most likely an Anglican of the 'highest' school. It was 'Mark Rutherford's' good fortune to live just at the era of the passing of the old Nonconformity, just at the time when it had ceased to be a scheme of life and death held to with passionate conviction, and had become a tradition, but before the tradition passed, as it is now rapidly passing—thanks mainly to the opening of University education to the non-Anglican, and to the late nineteenth-century elevation of 'culture' into the place of piety as the 'one thing needful'—into a mere memory. Hence, for the student of social history, 'Rutherford's' works are likely to have the steadily growing interest of a contemporary's true and discriminating portraiture of a social type which is rapidly vanishing even now. The future annalist of social England in the nineteenth century will need to draw upon them in the same way as he will need to draw upon Trollope if he wishes to understand what those now nearly extinct beings, the old-fashioned 'High-and-Dry' Church dignitary and the old-fashioned Whig of the middle of the last century, were really like. In particular, the two works to which the writer has given the autobiographical form, the *Autobiography* and the *Deliverance of Mark Rutherford*, afford an unique picture of the first faint stirrings, within the limits of orthodox Calvinism, of the doubts and heart-burnings created by the introduction of serious Biblical criticism into England, and the rise of such once much promising philosophies as those of Mill and Spencer. The book which, as I think, would generally be accounted the author's masterpiece, *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, gives us, in its two not over well joined halves, sharply contrasted pictures of two generations in the process of the dissolution of Independency, the first half of the book dealing with the fiery, *intransigent* Non-conformist Republicanism of the years just after Waterloo,

the time of the 'Friends of the People', the 'blanketeer' marchings, and the savage reactionary government of Eldon, Castlereagh, and Sidmouth, the latter with the paler revival of the same temper which accompanied the agitation against the Corn Laws in the 'Forties'.

But we, at least, are not likely to be interested in a contemporary novelist mainly as the author of social 'documents' from which our grandchildren may manufacture history as indifferently well as we manufacture it ourselves from the fiction of Fielding or Miss Austen. The interest of 'Mark Rutherford's' writings centres more naturally for us in the persons themselves whose fortunes the author invites us to follow, their peculiar characters, their interior attitude towards all that they 'do or have done to them', and the general view of the problems raised by life which the tale of their doings and sufferings appears to suggest, as well as in the purely artistic and stylistic merits of the books. Hence I may be allowed to make a few general remarks on the attitude of these novels to life, as well as on their character as pure works of art. It may be said of all of them that there is a note of subdued tragedy which persists through them. I do not mean that they deal to any large extent with outward deeds of violence or horror. Though *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, in its earlier part, is concerned with stirring historical events, and in *Clara Hopgood*, the last of the series—to say nothing of the singularly unpleasant 'seduction' episode at the beginning of the tale—we are even introduced to Mazzini in the years of his residence in London as a privy plotter, in the main these stories are what the lover of moving incident would call uneventful. The theme is always the interior development of a personality, and usually of a personality which the world in general would reckon, and perhaps rightly reckon, 'commonplace' and 'uninteresting'. The sense of tragedy—or rather, for the word is perhaps too strong, let

me say, the sense of trouble—which pervades our writer's work is, in fact, chiefly due to his preoccupation with the internal struggle of a soul which is called on by the accident of its surroundings or its early training to grapple with problems it will not leave untouched and is not equal to solving. This is, for instance, pre-eminently the case with Rutherford, the imaginary author of the novels. He has comparatively ordinary powers of intellect, and the meagre education which was thought sufficient for the Independent minister of forty or fifty years ago; thus ill-equipped, he is brought face to face with the real and formidable difficulties of religious belief as they appeared in the heyday of the great nineteenth-century development of physical science. By constitution he is helpless to keep himself from brooding on these deep matters, by lack of natural gifts and adequate education unable to lay the spectre science has raised. Thus his life becomes that of the incessant self-tormentor until he contrives after many years to arrive at peace by a Stoic submission to the inevitable. He has to learn that for himself the way that leads to life is a refusal to occupy himself with theology and metaphysics, a preoccupation with history and literature, the doing of a little social good, and contentment with marriage and a poorly paid, almost mechanical employment which, at least, enables him to keep a precarious roof over his wife's head. There is little ground for wonder that his creator was apprehensive lest his self-revelations should be taken for the foolish outpourings of a 'second-rate sensitive mind', and put into the mouth of the imaginary friend who is supposed to edit the 'works' after their author's death, a by no means superfluous protest against the dismissal of 'Rutherford' as 'morbid'.

And yet, perhaps, my last sentence is a little unjust. Perhaps, after all, any such protest *is* superfluous in an age which believes itself struggling painfully towards a philosophy or a faith which must be born, though the hour of its

birth is not yet. When a whole age is out of joint, it is a needless reproach to say of one of its humbler personages that his soul calls for the physician. In any case there is much mellow wisdom which may be taken to heart by the intellectually distressed of all ages in this editorial comment.

'Rutherford, at any rate in his earlier life, was an example of the danger and the folly of cultivating thoughts and reading books to which he was not equal, and which tend to make a man lonely. It is all very well that remarkable persons should occupy themselves with exalted subjects, which are out of the ordinary road which ordinary humanity treads; but we who are not remarkable make a very great mistake if we have anything to do with them. If we wish to be happy, and have to live with average men and women, as most of us have to live, we must learn to take an interest in the topics which concern average men and women. We think too much of ourselves. We ought not to sacrifice a moment's pleasure in our attempt to do something which is too big for us, and, as a rule, men and women are always attempting what is too big for them. To ninety-nine young men out of a thousand, or perhaps ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a hundred thousand, the wholesome healthy doctrine is, "Don't bother yourselves with what is beyond you; try to lead a sweet, clean, wholesome life, keep yourselves in health above everything, stick to your work, and when your day is done amuse and refresh yourselves." It is not only a duty to ourselves, but a duty to others to take this course. Great men do the world much good, but not without some harm, and we have no business to be troubling ourselves with their dreams if we have duties which lie nearer home amongst persons to whom these dreams are incomprehensible. Many a man goes into his study, shuts himself up with his poetry or his psychology, comes out, half understanding what he has read, is miserable because he cannot find anybody with whom he can talk about it, and misses altogether the far more genuine joy which he could have obtained from a game with his children, or listening to what his wife had to tell him about her neighbours.'

Apart from the volumes which profess to contain Rutherford's own autobiographical sketches, and one or two of his

unpublished meditations, the rest of the 'works', we must remember, purport to be novels written by him and published after his death by his friend Shapcott. Hence the 'greyness' which hangs over them, as it hangs over some great manufacturing city, the sombreness of their general tone, and the gravity which is rarely much relaxed even in their more playful passages, are artistically right. Given Rutherford, as we shall shortly make further acquaintance with him, as the author of the stories, we can see that in theme and tone they are exactly what he might have written. It is not to him that we should naturally go for the *joie de vivre* or for outbursts of high animal spirits.

A word as to the philosophy in which he finds ultimate deliverance, the philosophy which pervades every novel of the series, but is, perhaps, most strikingly expressed in the essay on the Book of *Job* appended to the *Deliverance of Mark Rutherford*. There can be no doubt of the source of its inspiration; it is the same doctrine of the freedom and peace that follow on a man's knowledge of his own powers and limitations which we find in the *Ethics* of Spinoza and the discourses of Epictetus. But 'Rutherford's' Stoicism is Stoicism with a difference. Epictetus dwells more especially on the strength and freedom it gives a man to know that his whole and sole good is to 'make a right use of his presentations'; with Spinoza, too, the main emphasis is on the sense of power that comes to the 'free' man who has learned to act only in response to adequate thought. Mark's Stoicism has its own peculiar colour, taken on in the passage through the medium of a sensitive mind which lays no claim to high originality or exceptional depth. Not for him is the buoyancy proper to a Spinoza who plays his part with the proud certainty that he draws his inspiration from adequate understanding of God. The one thing which 'Rutherford' finds himself able to say with certainty of God is that he does *not* under-

stand Him and never will. It is his duty, as it was Job's, when the Lord challenged him out of the whirlwind, to make no pretence that the mystery of God's way with His creature has been made any plainer to him, but merely to avow that the task of understanding the ways of God is not one for which *he* has been appointed, to turn from metaphysics and theology with the resolution not to vex himself with problems beyond his range, and to find contentment in appreciation of the good things which remain good in spite of the doubts and puzzles of philosophy; the simple beauty of earth and sun and sea, the reflection of life in the best literature, and some measure of homely domestic happiness and neighbourly good offices. To leave the heavier burdens for those whose backs are broad enough to bear them, to be satisfied if one can carry one's own load without undue weariness or complaining, above all, where the ultimate riddles of sin and pain and death are concerned, to refuse to speculate with a mind unequal to the task—to turn away and *wait* until these too vast questions cease in time to trouble us—this is his wisdom of life. And excellent counsel it surely is—except for the few who cannot follow it without being false to their own nature.

'Metaphysics', he says, 'and theology, including all speculations on the why and the wherefore, optimism, pessimism, freedom, necessity, causality, and so forth, are not only for the most part loss of time, but frequently ruinous. It is no answer to say that these things force themselves upon us, and that to every question we are bound to give or try to give an answer. It is true, although strange, that there are multitudes of burning questions which we must do our best to ignore, to forget their existence; and it is not more strange, after all, than many other facts in this wonderfully mysterious and defective existence of ours. One fourth of life is intelligible, the other three-fourths is unintelligible darkness; and our earliest duty is to cultivate the habit of not looking round the corner.'¹

¹ *Autobiography*; Preface to second edition.

It is not remarkable that, as has happened before in the history of thought, a Stoicism of this kind, meant not for the metaphysician but for the man of cultivated tastes whose worst miseries arise from the fact that he thinks himself bound to tread the metaphysical maze, though he is no metaphysician, should join hands with a refined Epicureanism in its estimate of the value of innocent and simple pleasures, or that Mark should more than once find the mood of the 'weary king, Ecclesiast' uncommonly to his mind.

'I remember his telling me' (says his supposed editor) 'that to suppress speculation would be a violence done to our nature as unnatural as if we were to prohibit ourselves from looking up to the blue depths between the stars at night; as if we were to determine that nature required correcting in this respect, and that we ought to be so constructed as not to be able to see anything but the earth and what lies on it. Still, these things in a measure ceased to worry him, and the long conflict died away gradually into a peace not formally concluded, and with no specific stipulations, but nevertheless definite. He was content to rest and wait. Better health and time, which does so much for us, brought this about.'¹

So Mark observes himself upon the close of the Book of *Job*,

'it is impossible to neglect the epilogue in which Job is restored to his prosperity. . . . There is really nothing inconsistent in it. The Almighty has explained himself, and the explanation stands, but there is no reason why Job should be left in such utter misery. The anguish which completely envelops the sufferer does break and yield with time, and often disappears. On the other hand, we have no right to demand happiness, and we are not told that Job's happiness returned to him because he demanded it. It is utterly to mistake the purpose of the last chapter to suppose that in it lies the meaning of all that has gone before, and that it teaches us that we have only to wait and God will reward us. God is great, we know not His ways. He takes

¹ *Autobiography, ad finem.*

from us all that we have, but yet, if we possess our souls in patience, we *may* pass the valley of the shadow and come out in sunlight again. We may or we may not.'

Closely connected with the spirit of this practical wisdom are some of the characteristic excellences of the writer's style. Its peculiar potency is largely due to a happy combination of austerity of diction and simple directness in narrative and description with an unusually keen skill in seizing just the essential features of a situation. The descriptions, for example, owe their value as historical documents as much to the austere restraint which will include nothing irrelevant as to the observant quickness which omits nothing really characteristic. Take, for instance, the perfect little passage which hits off exactly the typical dapper and self-satisfied, because wholly mis-educated, Principal of the Seminary for training Independent ministers.

'I see him now, a gentleman with lightish hair, with a most mellifluous voice and a most pastoral manner, reading his prim little tracts to us directed against the "shallow infidel", who seemed to deny conclusions so obvious that we were certain he could not be sincere, and those of us who had never seen an infidel might well be pardoned for supposing that he must always be wickedly blind. About a dozen of these tracts settled the infidel and the whole mass of unbelief from the time of Celsus downwards.'¹

Or consider this exquisite picture of the daily routine of life in an early Victorian market town.

'The shopkeeper came into his shop at half-past seven, about half an hour after the shutters had been taken down by his apprentice. At eight o'clock breakfast was ready; but before breakfast there was family worship, and a chapter was read from the Bible, followed by an extempore prayer from the head of the house. If the master happened to be absent, it was not considered proper that the mistress should pray extempore, and she used a book of "Family Devotions". A very solid breakfast followed, and business began. It was

¹ *Autobiography*, c. 2.

very slow, but it was very human—much more so than business at the present day in the City. Every customer had something to say beyond his immediate errand, and the shop was the place where everything touching Cowfold interests was abundantly discussed. . . . At one o'clock Cowfold dined. Between one and two nobody was to be seen in the streets, and the doors were either fastened or a bell was put upon them. After dinner the same duties returned in the shop; but inside the house dinner was the turning-point of the day. When the "things were washed up", servant and mistress began to smarten themselves, and, disappearing into their bedrooms, emerged at four, to make preparations for tea, the meal most enjoyed in Cowfold. If any spark of wit slept in any Cowfoldian, male or female, it appeared then. No invitations to dinner were ever heard of; but tea was the opportunity for hospitality, especially among women. The minister, when he visited, invariably came to tea. . . . After tea the master went back once more to his counter, and the shutters were put up at eight. From eight to nine was an hour of which no account can be given. The lights were left burning in the shops, and the neighbour across the way looked in, and remained talking till his supper was ready. Supper at nine, generally hot, was an institution never omitted, and, like tea, was convivial; but the conviviality was of a distinctly lower order. Everybody had whisky, gin, or brandy afterwards, and every male person who was of age smoked. There was, as a rule, no excess, but the remarks were apt to be disconnected and woolly; and the wife, who never had grog for herself, but always sipped her husband's, went to sleep. Eleven o'clock saw all Cowfold in bed, and disturbed only by such dreams as were begotten of the previous liver and bacon and alcohol.'¹

There is much in these descriptions which naturally recalls the manner of George Eliot in her earlier and better days, but such absolute mastery is something she rarely, if ever, reached. Her diction was too latinized, her desire to preach too ill-restrained, and she would probably have thought it her duty not only to moralize on the life of Cowfold, but to dilute the description with forced attempts at facetiousness and 'humorous' effect.

¹ *Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, c. 16.

The touch of austere restraint in the writer's style—so rare a characteristic in an age of tedious rhetorical exuberance and strained epigram—is particularly effective in situations which would tempt some very great writers to expatiate in satire or pathos. Here, for example, is a characteristic specimen from the supposed postscript to the *Deliverance* in which the 'editor' relates the death of Mark Rutherford.

'His body was taken to a hospital and thence sent home. The next morning his salary up to the day of his death came in an envelope to his widow, without a single word from his employers, save a request for acknowledgement. Towards mid-day, his office coat, and a book found in his drawer, arrived in a brown paper parcel, carriage unpaid.'¹

We all know how one whom, for very love of him, I will not name here would have found his opportunity to 'wallow naked in the pathetic' over such an incident. It would not be very hard to write the page of sarcasms by which Thackeray would have driven home the moral of the 'carriage unpaid', or the moralizing tags which George Eliot would have thought appropriate. But, in truth, the satire is a hundredfold the more effective that the writer tells his tale in the fewest and simplest words and leaves the facts to speak for themselves without note or comment. As in the great situations in all imaginative literature of the highest order, such facts tell their own story, and point their own moral. It is in the same spirit of austere grace, which we rightly connect with the supreme effects of 'classical' literature, that Plato ends the tale of Socrates' greatest and last day, as hardly a modern would consent to do, with the simple words, 'And this, Echebrates, was the end of our comrade—as we think him, the best, wisest, and most upright man of that time with whom we had to do.'

I will take one more example of the effectiveness of this

¹ *Deliverance of Mark Rutherford*, c. 9.

quiet self-restraint from a passage in *The Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, describing the present state of that place of worship. The reader has learned how its frequenters were cared for, and with what spiritual food they were fed under the successive pastorates of the Rev. James Harden, a Cambridge man who had been converted to the old fiery faith in the Calvinist gospel at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and had worn himself out in a thirty years' struggle to make it a real rule of life for his flock and his town, and then of the Rev. John Broad, a gross, mean-minded, vulgar man, to whom the 'ministry' had never been more than an easy and reasonably lucrative 'profession'. The writer now goes on to speak of the final transformation of the old meeting-house into Latimer Chapel, an institution devoted more to second-hand 'culture' than to any gospel, Calvinist or otherwise.

'By the time Mr. Broad died Tanner's Lane had sunk very low; but when his successor was chosen the seceders exercised their rights, and were strong enough to elect a student fresh from college, who had taken an M.A. degree at the University of London. He preached his first sermon from the text, "I am crucified with Christ," and told his hearers, with fluent self-confidence, that salvation meant perfect sympathy with Christ—"Not I, but Christ liveth in me"; that the office of Christ was not to reconcile God to man, but man to God; and this is effected in proportion as Christ dwells in us, bringing us more and more into harmony with the Divine. The Atonement is indeed the central doctrine, the pivot of Christianity, but it is an atonement, a making of one mind. To which Tanner's Lane listened with much wonderment, and not without uncomfortable mental disturbance, the elder members complaining particularly that this was not the simple gospel, and that the trumpet gave an uncertain sound. But the opposition gradually died out; the meeting-house was rebuilt, and called Latimer Chapel. The afternoon service was dropped and turned into a service for the Sunday-school children; an organ was bought and a choir trained; the minister gave week-day lectures on secular subjects, and became a trustee of the Cowfold charity schools, recently enlarged

under a new scheme. He brought home one day a wife who could read German; he joined the County Archaeological Society, and wrote a paper on the discoveries made when the railway station was built on what was supposed to be an ancient British encampment.'¹

The beauty of the passage lies, of course, in this, that while it is intended that the reader shall have constantly before his mind the contrast between the last state of Tanner's Lane and its condition under the Rev. James Harden, who 'wrestled even unto blood with the world, the flesh, and the devil in Cowfold for thirty years, never scrupled to tell any man what he thought, and would send an arrow sharp and swift through any iniquity, no matter where it might couch', the writer never condescends, as many even good writers would, to stress his point by any direct or indirect reference to the comparison which is in his thoughts. You must divine it for yourself, and so measured are his words that a dull man might even doubt whether any such malice was intended. This quality of style, this deliberate veiling of mischievous humour in a way which effectually hides it from the perception of a hearer or reader without *esprit*, is what Plato makes the enemies of Socrates call his 'irony'; it is never absent for long from the pages of Mark Rutherford, and I doubt whether his finest work will appeal greatly to a reader who is not himself an 'ironical' man. He would have said, perhaps, that the 'ironical' write only for their fellows.

As one would expect in a writer so alive to wider and graver issues, the 'love' which forms the staple subject of most of the ordinary novels of commerce does not figure very prominently in the Mark Rutherford books. As you would suppose, in its form of frantic lust—the inspiration of so many of our 'emancipated' feminist writers of fiction, it does not occur at all. But neither is it in its saner forms

¹ *Revolution in Tanner's Lane*, c. 27.

the main issue on which any of the stories turn, and it is characteristic that when a marriage plays its part in the development of a situation, our author likes to place it in the middle rather than at the end of his story. He is really concerned everywhere with the one question how a 'second-rate sensitive mind' of some well-defined type is to recover harmony with itself, and he knows that, as a general rule, such peace only comes with riper maturity in years, and that marriage is, for most men and women, at best only an episode on the way to it. Rutherford himself, indeed, seems, if not to reach his haven by the route of a rather singular marriage, at least to reach peace and marriage together. But more commonly love and marriage seem to interest the writer mainly as an adventure in which the young, who are necessarily ignorant of the issues, are forced to stake their chance of happiness for a lifetime on a single throw, with the result that they commonly lose. Nearly all his studies in married life deal with the mental distress that may be caused by even slight incompatibilities of character between a mated man and woman. To both parties he seems to say, 'no matter whom you choose, you will most likely suffer for it. You may, by the grace of God, learn to turn your suffering into a schooling into things spiritual, but you may not hope to escape the common fate.' He does not like Shelley, as he rather superfluously tells us through the mouths of characters who are meant to be sympathetic, and he does like and revere above all wielders of the pen that most robust of men of genius, Walter Scott; but his many and subtle studies in married misery would suggest that he is secretly of Shelley's opinion in the matter of the 'one chained friend', with the difference that of this, as of all other things, his last word is 'make the best of it, and wait and see'. As to 'romantic love' as we know it in the great literature which ranges from *The Knightes Tale* and the *Morte d'Arthur* to *Richard Feverel* and the poems of

Robert Bridges, like all Puritans, he misunderstands it and is afraid of it. His treatment of it, when it is allowed to make its appearance at all, notably in *Clara Hopgood*, is, to my thinking, nearly as unpleasant as Thomas Hardy's, and that is to say a great deal. Only, if I must choose, I think Rutherford's disagreeably pronounced anxiety and distrust of the ardours of youthful blood, even in their most innocent forms, wherein he is, of course, at one with mediaeval ecclesiastical tradition, not quite so disagreeable as the bitter contempt, as of a disillusioned sensualist, which I, for one, too often detect in Hardy. Fortunately, it is only occasionally that 'Rutherford' meddles with these things; with Hardy the trouble is that it is only now and then and by the special grace of Heaven that he can keep his mind off them.

I propose during the remainder of the time allotted to me to illustrate my author's way of dealing with human life by a more detailed sketch of the two best known of his books—the *Autobiography* and the *Deliverance*, which together make up the story of Mark Rutherford. The hero, I have said, is in many ways a conscious self-tormentor. If he is to be excused from the charge of morbidity, it must be on the ground that his tormenting self-questionings arise out of conditions which he could hardly have modified by any effort of his own. He comes of the old Independent stock, from a family in which it has always been reckoned the one business of life to escape from the general doom of hell-fire by the recognized evangelical way of conviction of sin and conversion, and though, like all thoughtful and nervous children brought up under such influences, he finds his attempts to induce the expected crisis in boyhood a failure, he naturally finds his way into 'church-membership', and is destined by his parents for 'the ministry' as the one alternative to business. This is really the irreparable mistake of vocation which makes the whole of his future

misery, though it is a mistake which is made for him and not by him. As his character unfolds itself we discover that he has a morbid bent towards self-examination, without the mental capacity to find answers for himself to his own problems. In a professional 'minister' this bent inevitably leads to a life of constant preoccupation with the problem of finding a creed which can honestly be believed in the face of the apparent results of popular secular science. For the Calvinistic doctrine as a reality he has been born a hundred years too late, yet it is his duty as 'minister' to preach it as the universal specific for all the ills of the human soul, though it is only too clear that it means nothing in daily life even to his own 'church-members' and 'office-bearers'. The intellectual discord is enhanced by a peculiar moral distress, the distress of a man whose natural disposition is intensely clinging and sympathetic. He needs, in fact, intimate affection and the whole-hearted friendship of a stronger character to support him if he is to get through the world with credit, but nowhere among the Independents, or the Unitarians, with whom he seeks refuge as his intellectual distress becomes keener, can he find any one who can even appreciate the difficulties which beset him, or—with the rarest exceptions—any one who takes the least personal and affectionate interest in him. His nearest approach to a sympathetic friendship is with a Radical atheist compositor of a not uncommon type, a man of singular honesty and uprightness, but a devotee of clear rather than deep thinking, with little appreciation of anything which cannot be brought within the corners of a crude and rigid materialistic philosophy. This friendship, such as it is, is soon ended by the death of the Radical Mardon, but it is not one from which one could expect a brooding and imaginative soul, like Rutherford's, ever to get the peace of mind which he is seeking. The truth is, he is, like many another of his and of our own time, that most unhappy of beings, a man

who has the office of a priest and a religious teacher without the vocation, and is keenly conscious that the spiritual office without the spiritual vocation—the task of the blind leader of the equally blind and more indifferent—is no office for an honest man. Probably the right calling for him would from the first have been business. Employed in one of the leisurely-conducted businesses of a rural market town—as the local watch-maker for example—he would have had neither the time nor the temptation to distress himself with metaphysical speculations too high for him, nor the need to find a logically satisfactory creed in a hurry, while his occupation would have given him all the leisure needed to feed himself among the green pastures of poetry and history, the kind of literature for which he had a natural and instinctive appreciation, and there would have been every chance for him of a quiet life of family affection, with no disturbing experience of the tempests of the soul. His tragedy is the double one that when he breaks finally away from the position of being a teacher without anything which he passionately believes in to teach, and without hearers who feel the need of being taught anything at all, he finds himself adrift on the world without the knowledge of any trade or calling by which he may support himself, and also finds that his best chance of intimate affection has been lost during his spiritual crisis, through his severance from the woman to whom he had been engaged, but whom, as she knew and cared nothing about the intellectual objections to her inherited Calvinism, he had come to think too frivolous a being to be a fitting companion for life.

The *Deliverance* traces his career from the time that he has seriously to set himself to earn food and shelter by whatever work the world will give to educated unskilled labour. He becomes at first for a while the employee of a free-thinking bookseller, and then more permanently a haunter of the House of Commons, whose business it is to

furnish a country newspaper with a 'descriptive' letter twice a week. This, of course, brings in no more than a mere subsistence, but in a way it is the first step to spiritual healing. The mere hard work for a living leads to a wholesome suppression of the tendency to eternal metaphysical brooding which leads to nothing; a friendship or two are made as a consequence of association in the Parliamentary lobbies, and so the old sense of loneliness loses its worst sting. Under the influence of such a friend, of stronger nature than his own, Rutherford also begins something like his old life as a teacher with more modest aims. The friends, instead of setting out to convert the world, content themselves with hiring a room in Drury Lane, where they hope once a week to meet and advise a few of those immediately around them in the practical difficulties of life among the 'submerged'. They do not convert Drury Lane, but at least they manage to do something for three or four of the most sorely tried of their acquaintance, in the way of making life bearable and not positively ignoble, and thus, by learning to have a definite and compassable aim instead of an indefinite and incompassable one, our hero slowly gets to understand that no man need be a hopeless failure; he has learned the lesson of Epictetus that for each of us the end is to 'make a right use of *his* presentations'. Real home affection comes at last by a bringing together of Rutherford and his old love, who for her part has also been by this time schooled by affliction, though this, too, has to be paid for with a price. Now that there are others (for Mrs. Rutherford has a small daughter by an unhappy former marriage) to provide for, the old source of income proves insufficient, and Rutherford is driven to support himself by becoming a clerk in a warehouse. The work is all but mechanical and the hours horribly long, the society of the other clerks abominable, and the manager a violent brute, but Rutherford contrives

to find happiness in the set resolve to put an absolute barrier between office and home. Two or three hours of the day are all the time that is left him for home life, but he lives wholly for these. His rule is never to breathe a word of the office and its trials to his wife, nor a word of his home to any one at the office. For the office itself he has one supreme regulation, never to risk falling into unemployment by opening his mouth, no matter how violent his tyrannical overseer may be. In this way he contrives at least to be a free and equal citizen and a human being for two or three hours out of the twenty-four, at the cost of being a machine for ten of the remainder. It is pleasing to see him in the achievement of even so much happiness after an early manhood of utter wretchedness; but one feels that even this is precarious, and that, apart from the accidents of life, real family bliss could hardly be enjoyed permanently on such terms. So it is perhaps as an act of kindness that the author kills him in the prime of life, by a heart failure following on a particularly violent attack from his manager. To the accustomed novel-reader it is unsatisfactory to hear not one word of the way in which his wife and step-daughter contrive to face the world on this sudden withdrawal of their bread-winner, but things happen so in this world, and it would run clear counter to our author's philosophy that any picture of a piece of human life should have the satisfactoriness of a well-composed painting or a neatly-articulated philosophical system. For him there is no getting away on the strength of any philosophy or any religion from his one positive doctrine concerning God and his dealings with man: 'Thy way is in deep waters and thy footsteps are not known.' He does not, like some more famous philosophers, dogmatically declare that this is the whole of the truth, and that it is on the whole satisfactory to the intellect that the reign of mutability is over all human affairs: rather, like his

favourite Job, he is confident that the tragic vision of life arises from the limitation of our outlook. If we knew all, we should see that God's dealings are right, but all we see is that they are mysterious. Meanwhile, so long as we live, we can live the life of the free man, if we will, even though it may be only for an hour in the day, and the dread of the night that comes to us all, if we refuse to let it darken the hours of sunshine, may prove, when nightfall comes, as baseless as so many other foolish anticipations of future troubles. 'Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity . . . for that is thy portion in life.' And as for 'quick-coming death', there is strength to be got from Livy's phrase, which we are told was a favourite motto with Rutherford, *nihil aliud quam bene ausus vana contemnere*. This may not be the last word of human philosophy—for my own part, I do not think it is. But it represents at least a great advance on anything that a pure naturalistic agnosticism, or, for the matter of that, a naturalistic agnosticism parading under the disguise of 'Absolute Idealism', has to offer us. It does at least, in the words of Novalis, 'give us hope', or the right to hope. What remains to be seen, and there are signs that our twentieth century will take us a long way towards the solution of this outstanding problem, is whether Novalis is right in saying that 'Philosophy bakes no bread'. Perhaps it does not; but perhaps, if it does not bake, it at least helps to knead for the oven the bread which is eaten but not consumed, the spiritual food and staff of interior life for which the most familiar of prayers asks in the petition, *panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie*.

But my time fails me. I would gladly read more to you, but I must not. I shall, with all the faults of which I am sensible in this address, have achieved as much as I have hoped for if I can send one or two readers to the Mark Rutherford novels in search of the 'healing power' which

they, no less than Wordsworth's poetry, contain for the mind that is sick of the idle clamour and meaningless spirit of rebellion of so much of our modern literature, and yet can find no salvation in the idols worshipped in the intellectual market-place.

A. E. TAYLOR.

ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES AND TEUTONIC SAGAS

THIS paper is an attempt to discover what light is thrown upon the origin, or growth, of certain great Teutonic sagas by an investigation of English place-names. Professor Binz in his interesting paper, 'Zeugnisse zur germanischen Sage in England',¹ surveyed this great field of study in masterly fashion some years ago. In the present essay attention is confined to two sagas—the Beowulf saga and the Nibelungen saga—from which sprang the two supreme achievements of the Teutonic epic genius—the *Beowulf* and the *Nibelungenlied*. One word of explanation is necessary at the outset. To those who steadfastly maintain that the conquest of England was the work of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes exclusively, the contents of this paper will seem like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals; if these pages make any appeal at all, it can only be to those who are willing to allow that we know very little about the details of that conquest, that few things are certain and many things possible. In support of this view, it may be well to quote the words of the Chichele Professor of History in the University of Oxford. 'We know', writes Professor Oman, 'what was the condition of the island [of Britain] in 410, and we know what was its condition in the end of the sixth century. But of the stages of the transformation, by which the Roman provincial Britain of Honorius became the Anglo-Saxon Britain of Aethelbert and Aethelfrith, we have little certain knowledge. There is a complete solution of continuity in the tale; six generations pass by in which

¹ Paul and Braune's *Beiträge*, vol. xx, pp. 141–223.

we have but the scantiest glimpse of what was going on in the island.'¹

It is unlikely that our ignorance will be expelled by a closer study of the historical authorities, or by the discovery of fresh literary material; yet there is one field of research which has as yet been almost wholly overlooked, but which, when fully investigated, may bring to light a mass of knowledge of which historians have so far little idea. When the place-names of England have been studied county by county, it may well be that the prevailing conception of the conquest of England will stand in need of serious re-adjustment. Among other things, it may be discovered that, although the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were the prime movers in that conquest and settlement, other tribes of the Germanic-speaking world took a share in the great westerly migration, and left an abiding mark upon the nomenclature of England before they became absorbed in the kingdoms of Wessex, Kent, Mercia, East Anglia, or Northumbria. That such was the case must, for the present, remain little more than an idle prophecy; but it is a prophecy which must also serve as a postulate for the right understanding of this paper. In other words, the attempt which is here being made to account for the vogue that the *Beowulf* and *Nibelungen* sagas once enjoyed in England presupposes the view that the settlement of the country was not exclusively the work of the three North German tribes of whom Bede and his successors tell their tale.

I. THE BEOWULF SAGA.

One of the many problems which the *Beowulf* epic presents is that of explaining why the poem is concerned with the doings of nations and heroes that are not English at all. The just pride which every Englishman feels, when

¹ *England before the Norman Conquest*, p. 186.

he learns for the first time that England is the only Teutonic nation that possesses an epic fashioned, before the coming of Christianity, out of the scattered lays of a vanishing heroic age, suffers a shock when the discovery comes that the hero of this epic is a Geat and that the action takes place partly in Denmark and partly in what we now call Sweden. We attempt to overcome the difficulty by trying to prove that, though the historic Beowulf was a Geat, the Beowa myth, which is transferred to Hygelac's nephew, belonged to the Anglo-Saxon races in their continental home and was brought by them to England during the course of their migrations thither in the period 449-560. The close analogy which the deeds of Beowulf bear to those of the Scandinavian *Bothvarr Bjarki* and other Scandinavian legendary figures tells against this theory, but for the present it may be allowed to stand. What is much more difficult to explain is why the deeds of the mythic Beowa should be fathered upon the Geat Beowulf, who was a young man at the time of Hygelac, his uncle's, death at the hands of the Franks about the year 520, and who, if the *Beowulf* is to be believed (ll. 2208-9), did not die until fifty years later, when the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Britain is supposed to have been completed. It is hard to believe that the association of the mythic Beowa with the historic Beowulf could have taken place in the continental home of the English, and harder still to believe that it could have taken place in England. Had the historic Beowulf been of the transcendent greatness of an Attila or a Dietrich von Bern, whose fame rang like a trumpet throughout the whole Germanic-speaking races, the association might well be possible; but it would be absurd to compare the Geat prince with the Gothic conqueror of Rome or the great Hunnish leader. There is no Beowulf saga in Germany, and Gregory of Tours, who records the fall of the raiding Hygelac on the lower Rhine between 512 and 520, does not

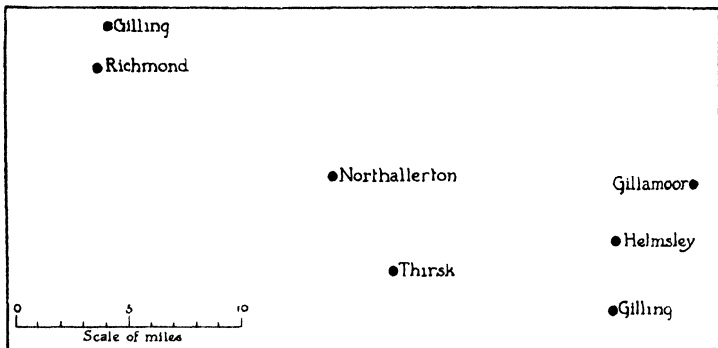
even mention his name. The deeds of Beowulf, and his rescue of the shattered forces of the Geats, as recorded in the epic (ll. 2359 ff.), may well have been treasured by the Geats, but were hardly of a character to make of him a great epic hero among the English either in their continental or their island home.

It is obvious that the difficulties which confront us would be lessened, if not altogether removed, if it could be proved that the Geats took a part in the conquest and settlement of England. We should then have a right to assume that the Geats brought both the mythical and historical elements in the poem with them to England and that the epos grew up among them on English soil. English historians, from Bede onwards, are, of course, altogether silent as to any possible share of the Geat race in the settlement of England; but, as already stated, our knowledge of the history of the Northumbrian, Mercian, and East Anglian kingdoms is almost a blank until we reach the seventh century. Where history is silent, recourse may be had to the study of place-names. Place-names like the Wiltshire *Grendles mere* and *Beowan hammes hecgan* have been pressed into the service of the Beowa myth. Will similar names serve equally well in indicating the existence of a Geat colony in England in the sixth and seventh centuries?

In considering this question, attention may first of all be directed to three places in the North Riding of Yorkshire which bear the names of Gilling, Gilling, and Gillamoor respectively. Their geographical relation to each other, and to the better known market-towns of Richmond, Northallerton, Thirsk, and Helmsley, will be indicated by the accompanying plan.

In Domesday Book the Gilling near Richmond appears as *Ghellinghes*, *Ghellinges*, and *Gellinges*; Gilling near Helmsley as *Ghellinge* and *Gellinge*, and Gillamoor as *Gedlingesmore*. In Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica* Gilling

near Richmond appears as *loco qui dicitur Ingetlingum* (iii. 14), and as *Ingetlingum* (iii. 24). It is obvious that Bede's *Getling* is the form from which the later *Gedling* of D. B. *Gedlingesmore* has developed by the voicing of *t* to *d* before the voiced *l*, and that the forms Ghelling, Gelling and Gilling are a further development from *Gedling*, with the assimilation of *dl* to *ll*.¹ We may therefore assume that if Bede had mentioned all three places, instead of only one, he would have called them *Ingetlingum*, or *in Getlingum*, and



Getlingesmor or *Getlingamor* respectively. Now Bede, referring to the *in Getlingum* near Richmond, speaks of it as a single place (*locus*), but the probability is very great that it was originally a regional name. We may compare it with the following phrases which are found elsewhere in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*: 'in regione quae vocatur *Infepplingum*' (iii. 21), 'in regione nordan-hymbrorum quae vocatur *In-cuneningum*' (v. 12), and 'provincia quae vocatur *Inundalum*' (v. 19). This view finds further support in the fact that the

¹ The preservation of the initial *g* in the modern spelling and pronunciation of Gilling and Gillamoor is probably due to Scandinavian influence. Without such influence the modern forms would probably be Yelling and Yellamoor; cf. Skipton, side by side with Shipley, the Domesday Book forms of which are Scipeton and Scipelei respectively.

district between the Swale and Tees, in which the Richmond Gilling is situated, was once known as Gillingshire. The name occurs as *Gillingschira* or *Gillyngschire* in an inquisition of lands made in the year 1183-4¹, and though the name Gillingshire subsequently disappeared, the area which it covered is still known as the Wapentakes of Gilling West and Gilling East.

It is possible that the original Gillingshire at one time covered a much larger area, and contained within its borders the Gilling near Helmsley and Gillamoor, a few miles to the north-east; but it is equally possible that these two places formed a second Gillingshire, peopled by a family, clan, or tribe known originally as the Getlingas.

We have now to consider who these Getlingas were. Dr. Henry Bradley interprets the phrase *Ingetlingum* as 'among the Gythlingas';² but the objection to this is that the substitution of *e* for *y* is exclusively confined to the Kentish dialect of Old English, and even there did not take place until the ninth century. Moreover, we have no knowledge of a family or tribe called the Gythlings, nor yet of a progenitor bearing the name Gythla. What is more likely is that the *e* in Getling—originally long but afterwards shortened before the *tl*—has proceeded, by *i*-mutation or otherwise, from an original *ēa*. In support of this view it may be pointed out that in the Bede MSS. the famous Northumbrian king is never referred to as Eadwine, but always as Edwine (Namur MS.) or Ædwinī (Moore MS.); similarly the Anglian name for Whitby is sometimes given as *streanaeshalch*, sometimes as *streonaeshalch*, sometimes as *strenæshalc* or *streneshalch* (iii. 24, 25). On the analogy of these forms we have, therefore, a right to assume that the original form of *in Getlingum* was *in Gēatlingum*.

¹ See R. Gale, *Registrum Honoris de Richmond*, pp. 22, 24.

² *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, vol. i, p. 35.

Who, then, were the Geatlings? It is, of course, possible that they are the descendants of a man called Geatla; but there is no record of such a name either in Searle's *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum* or Förstemann's *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, while the fact that the region or regions covered by the names *in Getlingum* were originally of large extent, favours the view that the Geatlings were a tribe and not a family. The probability is that the termination in the word *in Getlingum* is not *-ing*, but *-ling*. This termination has a twofold significance in Old English: it may mean 'a person or thing belonging to, or concerned with, what is denoted by the primary substantive'¹ as in *ræpling*, a prisoner, a man attached to a rope (*rāp*), or *ierpling*, a peasant, a man attached to the soil (*eorpe*); secondly, it may have a diminutive force, as in OE. *stærling* (a starling) or Modern English *gosling*, though this usage is commoner in Old Norse than in Old English. We may accordingly interpret the phrase *in Getlingum* as 'among the people connected with the Geats', or as 'among the little Geats' where the force of the diminutive is similar to that of the word 'Petty' in Petty France or 'Little' in Little Marlow, and indicates the breaking away of a colony of settlers from their original home in France or Great Marlow. In other words, we arrive at the conclusion that when Yorkshire was first colonized by Teutonic tribes from the mainland of Europe, there may very well have been among the settlers certain families of Geats, migrating from South Sweden, and establishing themselves in considerable numbers in some of the richest territory of the North Riding.

Again, though Bede is silent as to a settlement of Geats in Yorkshire, we have at our disposal a considerable number of facts which support such a theory. *Beowulf* itself informs us of the frequent attacks which the neighbouring Swedes were making upon their Scandinavian territory, and

¹ See *New English Dictionary*, s. v. '-ling'.

of the fears of Wiglaf that, when the tidings of Beowulf's death reach the Swedes, fresh attacks will follow—fears which were only too soon realized in the absorption of the Geat state in Sweden in the course of the sixth century.¹ In the next place, we have the evidence furnished by the remarkable list of Geat names of *Beowulf* fame preserved in the Durham *Liber Vitae* of the late eighth or early ninth century. It has been pointed out² that not all of these names are to be looked upon as Northumbrian, and that among them are the names of Mercian princes and princesses; but it may be argued that, while the Durham church may have secured benefactions from princes and princesses at a distance, the more humble priests, monks, and *clerici* who made their offerings probably belonged to districts much nearer home. And it is among the lists of priests, monks, and *clerici* that the Geat names of *Beowulf* fame are found. The name Beowulf itself appears as *biuulf* among the *nomina monachorum*, and nowhere else outside of the epic. The name *hyglac* appears once as that of a priest and once as that of a *clericus*, and we also meet with it as the name of a lector at Crayke—which is close to the more easterly of the two Gillings—in Simeon of Durham;³ elsewhere it occurs only in the place-name *Hygelaces git* of Kemble's *Codex*, 566. The name Herebeald, that of Hygelac's elder brother, appears as *herebald* three times in the *Liber Vitae*, and once in Bede—as the name of Bishop John of Beverley's clerk (c. 686): its only other occurrence is on a coin of the ninth century. The name of Hereric, another of Hygelac's brothers or brothers-in-law, is found once in the *Liber Vitae*, once in Bede—as father of Abbess Hild—and once in the *Liber Eliensis* as that of a tenth-century *comes*. The name of Heardred, borne by Hygelac's son,

¹ Stjerna, *Essays on Beowulf*, p. 89, and Dr. Clark Hall's footnote.

² Brandl, *Geschichte der altengl. Litt. ratur (Grundriss*, 2nd ed., ii. 1002).

³ *Opera*, ed. Arnold (Rolls Series), i. 284, 291.

appears five times in the *Liber Vitae* and once in a Kentish Charter of about 775: there was also a bishop of Hexham of this name.

In the next place, we may sift the evidence furnished by Yorkshire place-names. We find the name of Hrethel, Hygelac's father, preserved in the West Riding Riddlesden, which appears as *Retlesden* in the *Placita de quo Warranto* (p. 225) of the time of Edward I, and as *Redelesden* in Domesday Book; the patronymic form of Hrethel—Hrethling—seems also to be preserved in Rillington (D.B. *Redlinton*), a village near Malton. The name of the Danish King Hrothgar probably appears in the village of Rogerthorpe (D.B. *Rogartorp, Rugartorp*), near Badsworth in the West Riding,¹ while Hroar, the contracted form of Hrothgar, is concealed in the East Riding Ruston Parva (D.B. *Roreston*) and the West Riding Royston (D.B. *Rorestun, Rorestone*). The name Hrothmund, borne by Hrothgar's son, is found in the North Riding Romanby (D.B. *Romundebi, Romundrebi*), and the name Hrothulf, borne by Hrothgar's nephew, in the *Roudeluestorp* of Domesday Book, a place not yet identified, but somewhere in the North Riding. There remain the names of Beowulf and his adversary Grendel. It is possible, but by no means certain, that the former name, under its contracted form, Beow, lies concealed in Beeston (D.B. *Beston*), now a suburb of Leeds, and the name Grendel in the East Riding Grindale, of which the D.B. form is *Grendele*; this may very possibly go back to an OE. *Grendelleah*, the sound-change being similar to that through which the OE. *Trendeleah* of Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus* (No. 587) has passed on its way to the Modern English Trendle.

¹ It is etymologically possible that the first element in this name is ON. *vágr* = rye, but the fact that Roger is the usual ME. development, under Norman French influence, from OE. Hrothgar, makes it highly probable that the first element in Rogerthorpe is the personal name Hrothgar.

In the last place, attention may be drawn to the genealogies of Northumbrian kings preserved in Cotton MS., *Vespasian B 6*,¹ in the Parker MS. of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and elsewhere. In the first of these we find that among the ancestors from which King Edwin traced his descent was a certain Siggeot, apparently a Northumbrian form of Sigegeat—the victorious Geat—and in the genealogy of the Kings of Bernicia contained in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*² it is stated that the first progenitor of the royal house bore the name Geat. Anglo-Saxon genealogies are not altogether trustworthy, but this repeated occurrence of the name Geat, either alone or in composition, as an ancestor of more than one of the Northumbrian dynasties, cannot be without significance. Professor Chadwick is of the opinion that the name Geat ‘suggests a Götish [i. e. Geat] origin for the family or families which claimed descent from that person’;³ this may be the case, or it may simply mean that the man who, early in the ninth century,⁴ drew up the genealogies of the Northumbrian kings wished to bring into prominence some floating tradition that, when the kingdoms of Deira and Bernicia had been won from the Britons, the Geat people had borne a share in the conquest.⁵

¹ Published in Sweet’s *Oldest English Texts*, p. 170.

² Parker MS. anno 547.

³ *The Origin of the English People*, p. 293; see also Prof. Chadwick’s reference to a roll in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, where Geate is said to be one of the nine sons of Boerinus, and the founder of the Geat people, who, with the help of the nations descended from Boerinus’s other eight sons, ‘invaded and acquired the kingdom of Britain’. (‘Ab istis novem filiis Boerini descenderunt novem gentes septentrionalem inhabitantes, qui quondam regnum Britannie invaserunt et optinuerunt’), *Op. cit.*, pp. 273–4 and footnote.

⁴ Sweet states, on the authority of the palaeographer who published these genealogies for the Palaeographical Society, that the MS was written between the years 811–814. See *Oldest English Texts*, p. 167.

⁵ It is probable that the genealogy of the Bernician house in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, together with other and later genealogies, is ultimately derived from those in the Cotton MS.

Here, then, we have three separate strands of evidence supporting the theory that there was a Geat colony in Yorkshire in the sixth and seventh centuries. Each of these strands, when isolated from its fellows, may be unable to bear the strain which is now being put upon it. It is possible that the phrase *in getlingum* may be explained in some other way than as 'among the little Geats', or 'among the people attached to the Geats'. It may be that names like Hygelac, Hrethel, and Beowulf are not so peculiarly Scandinavian as is generally believed, and it is possible that their frequent occurrence in the *Liber Vitae* and in Yorkshire place-names is merely an indication of the popularity of the Beowulf story in Northumbria after the epic had been brought thither, in its final form, from some other region. Finally, it may be that names like Siggeot and Geat in the genealogies are nothing more than the random guesses of an ingenious compiler. But when these three strands of evidence are intertwined, they lend support to each other, and furnish a body of evidence which cannot well be regarded as negligible. At the same time they help us to understand how an epic, the hero of which is a Geat, and the action of which takes place in Scandinavia, could arise on English soil.

If the theory of a Geat colony in the North Riding of Yorkshire be accepted, we may proceed to consider when such a colony was established, and what light its existence throws upon the composition of *Beowulf*. It is obvious that the migration of Geats to Yorkshire must have long preceded the composition of the *Historia Ecclesiastica*; Bede evidently knew nothing of a Geat settlement in England and in his eyes *in getlingum* is simply a *locus*. It is possible that the migration took place shortly after the death of Beowulf, and about the time when the Geat kingdom became absorbed in Sweden, probably about the end of the sixth century. But it is also possible that the migration

took place earlier in the sixth century, and during the period of fifty years when Beowulf was king of the Geats. Gregory of Tours' story of Hygelac's descent upon the lower Rhine in the years 512-20 shows that the Geat people were a roving race, and it needs no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that, if they turned their keels in the direction of the Rhine, they may also have turned them at some other time in the direction of that Britain which the Romans had left defenceless, and towards which the Angles, Jutes, and Saxons were hurrying in their thirst for new territory. If this view be taken, we may assume that the story of Beowulf's later years reached England through the intercommunication which would naturally be established between the English Geats and their comrades in Scandinavia. But, whatever be the period at which the migration took place, it is easy to understand how the English Geats would have cherished the memories of their old home and revered the name of the great king who rescued his people from the Franks and 'who ruled well, as a wise king, for fifty years, the old fatherland'.¹ Nor need a long period of time have elapsed before elements of a mythical nature gathered about his person. The rapidity with which the transformation of an historic character into a saga-hero takes place is often very great.² Culture-myths and nature-myths, stories of dragon-slaying and Grendel-slaying, are attracted to him by the magnetism of his heroic personality, until the true proportions of his figure grow obscure, while history, legend, and myth become almost indistinguishable from each other.

It is questionable, however, whether the Beowulf-epos in its complete form could have come into being in the North

1

He geheold tela
fiftig wintra—wæs þæt frod cyning—
eald eþelweard. (*Beowulf*, ll. 2208-10.)

² See B. Symons, *Heldensage* (*Grundriss*, iii. 615).

Riding Gillingshire. We know, of course, nothing of the life of the Geats in their Yorkshire home in the sixth or early seventh century, but we may well believe that they were under the sway of one of those *duces* who, according to William of Malmesbury, had control over the people of Northumbria for nearly a hundred years, but never assumed the title of king or attempted to exercise suzerainty over neighbouring *duces*.¹ For a time, no doubt, these Geats would still speak a somewhat different dialect from that of the Anglians; but, surrounded as they were by English-speaking tribes, this would tend to disappear, and epic lays which were once chanted in the Geat dialect would now be transposed into Anglian English. With the rise of the house of Deira under Eadwine in the first quarter of the seventh century, the tribal independence of the Geats of *Getlingascir* would naturally come to an end, and they would form simply a part of the Northumbrian kingdom which Eadwine ruled. At such a time many of them would be easily tempted to leave their homes and seek their fortunes elsewhere in the territory over which Eadwine held sway, and it is easy to believe that their *gleomenn* would receive a welcome at the king's court. It may indeed very well have been at the royal court of Eadwine that the Geat lays of Beowulf were finally welded into the epic that we possess to-day.

The composition of such a work as the *Beowulf* presupposes an advanced stage of culture and civilization and a somewhat broad outlook upon life. It stands alone among all the narrative stories which the heroic age of the Teutonic migrations called into being, and its unique character demands unique conditions of workmanship. It is hard to believe that a work of epic dimensions could have been

¹ *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Book I, § 44 'Annis enim uno minus centum, Northanhimbri duces communi habitu contenti, sub imperio Cantuaritarum privatos agebant . . .'

produced in the little province of Gillingshire, or at the court of a small Geat *dux*. The author of those lines which describe the arrival of Beowulf at Heorot, his entertainment there, and his departure thence after his heroic purpose has been fulfilled, had been accustomed to live at ease in a royal court of great refinement and splendour. The whole atmosphere of the Heorot scenes is courtly, almost chivalric, in character. Again, the epic presupposes an age which lay on the borderland between Paganism and Christianity. The reference in lines 175-6 to the offering up of sacrifices (*wigweorþunga*) in heathen temples (*æt hærgtrafum*), above all, the whole story of Beowulf's body being consumed with fire on the funeral pyre at Hrones Næss is pure Paganism. On the other hand, the references to Cain and Noah, the possible echo in lines 1707-8 of the speech of Simeon to the child Jesus, and, above all, the spirit of Christian charity which is disclosed in many of the speeches of Hrothgar and Beowulf, indicate a knowledge of Bible story and a response to the Christian evangel of peace and goodwill.

Now there is only one period in the history of Yorkshire which is in harmony with the spirit of the epic, and that is the reign of Eadwine (617-33). The latter years of his reign were, as the eloquent pages of Bede inform us, a time of peace and prosperity. It was an age when a woman could walk scathless with her babe from sea to sea, while the splendour of his court and the dignity of his kingly person were such that 'banners were borne before him, not only in time of battle, but when, in time of peace, he rode with his officers through town and countryside'.¹ Moreover, it was in his day that Christianity reached Yorkshire: during the first years of his reign he was a pagan, but in the year 627 he accepted the new faith and laid the foundations of the first York minster. There was great

¹ *Historia Eccles.* ii. 16.

culture in Yorkshire in the early part of the next century, but it is scarcely possible to believe that the account of the burning of Beowulf's corpse could have been the work of a poet who was a successor of Cædmon and a contemporary of Bede and Alcuin.

There remains the question of dialect. It is agreed on all sides that the poem as we possess it in the Vitellius MS. is a transcript from an earlier version in the Anglian dialect; but there is a difference of opinion whether the original was Northumbrian or Mercian. This is not the place to discuss these points of difference, but it is well to point out that Yorkshire forms the borderland between these two dialects. Most of the West Riding of Yorkshire is regarded by philologists as belonging, not to the northern, but to the midland group of modern English dialects,¹ and the translation of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Rushworth MS., which was made by Farman, a priest at Harewood,² seven miles north of Leeds, is looked upon as pure Mercian English of the tenth century. There is therefore no need to suppose that because Mercian forms like *eafora* and *cearu* appear in the *Beowulf*, the poem must originally have been composed south of the Humber and within the territory of the Mercian kings.

II. THE NIBELUNGEN SAGA.

It is generally agreed that the so-called Nibelungen saga has been formed by the union, at a very early period, of the Siegfried saga with the Burgundian saga. It is also supposed that much of the Siegfried saga, with its story of the hero's slaying of the dragon, Fafnir, his rescue of the hoard, his bathing in the dragon's blood, and his deliverance of the sleeping Valkyrie, Brunhild, is in the main mythical

¹ See Wright, *English Dialect Grammar*, pp. 3-4.

² Harewood is on the edge of the district of Elmet, where Edwin is said by Bede to have had a royal villa.

in character¹; while the heroes who figure in the Burgundian saga, which relates the fortunes of Gunther and his brothers at the palace of the Hunnish king, Attila, are generally regarded as historical characters. Every attempt to discover an historical basis for the Siegfried saga has so far failed, and, in the opinion of many, is inevitably doomed to fail. Before accepting this failure as final, however, it is clearly worth while to consider whether every possible attempt has been made to investigate the material which is at our disposal. German and Scandinavian records have undoubtedly been examined with exemplary diligence, and have contributed very little to the solution of the problem; but English records, above all English place-names, have as yet not received the attention which they deserve. The purpose of the following pages is accordingly to pursue this line of investigation a little further, and to see whether new light may reach us from this quarter of the horizon.

It is, of course, well known that there is a reference to the slaying of the dragon and the rescue of the hoard in *Beowulf*, though the hero of the story there is not Siegfried, but his father Sigemund. As frequent reference will be made to this episode in the following pages, it is worth while to transcribe it before proceeding further :

Secg oft ongan
 siþ Beowulfes snyttrum styrian
 ond on sped wrecan spel gerade,
 wordum wrixlan, wel-hwylc gecwæþ
 þæt he fram Sigemundes secgan hyrde
 ellen-dædum, uncuþes fela,
 Wælsinges gewin, wide siþas,
 þara þe gumena bearn gearwe ne wiston,
 fæhþe ond fyrena, buton Fitela mid hine,
 þonne he swylces hwæt secgan wolde

¹ Prof. Chadwick, however, is disposed to regard the Siegfried saga as mainly historical, though containing within it certain fictitious elements. See *The Heroic Age*, pp. 139 ff.

eam his nefan, swa hie a wæron
 æt niþa gehwam nyd-gesteallan :
 hæfdon eal-fela eotena cynnes
 sweordum gesæged. Sigemunde gesprong
 æfter deaþ-dæge dom unlytel,
 syþþan wiges heard wyrm acwealde,
 hordes hyrde : he under hærne stan,
 æþelinges bearn, ana genepde
 frecne dæde : ne was him Fitela mid.
 Hwæpre him gesælde, þæt þæt swurd þurhwod
 wrætlicne wyrm, þæt hit on wealle ætstod,
 dryhtlic iren ; draca morþre swealt.
 Hæfde aglæca elne gegongen,
 þæt he beah-hordes brucan moste
 selfes dome : sæ-bat gehlod,
 bær on bearm scipes beorhte frætwa,
 Wælses eafera ; wyrm hat gemealt.
 Se was wreccena wide mærost
 ofer wer-þeode, wigendra hleo
 ellen-dædum : he þæs aron þah.

(ll. 872-901, Heyne's edition.)

Owing to the fact that in this passage the deeds which in all other versions of the Nibelungen saga fall to the lot of Siegfried are here ascribed to Sigemund, it is the custom to speak of the passage as confused and misleading;¹ indeed, among critics of the saga, Dr. Mogk² and Professor Chadwick³ apparently stand alone in asserting its authenticity. Before rejecting the *Beowulf* passage, however, it is well to bear certain things in mind. In the first place, the rendering of the Nibelungen saga in *Beowulf* is older by centuries than its earliest records in the literatures of Scandinavia

¹ 'Trotz der verworrenen Mitteilungen eines Beowulf-Interpolators . . .' (B. Symons, *Heldensage, Grundriss*, iii. 659 ; cf. Binz, 'Der verfasser der episode des Beowulfes besass nur eine verschwommene kenntnis der sage' (*P. B. B.*, xx. 190) ; cf. Müllenhof, *Z. f. d. A.*, xxiii. 148.

² *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum*, i. 68 ff.

³ Prof. Chadwick states that 'the balance of probability is in favour of believing that the incident has been transferred to Sigurðr [i. e. Siegfried] from Sigemund' (*The Heroic Age*, p. 142).

and Germany. The Edda songs which tell of Siegfried cannot well be earlier than the close of the ninth century, while the Low and High German versions of the story are still later. Secondly, the author of the *Beowulf* passage alone knew the true genealogy of Sigemund. While the *Völsunga saga* confusedly refers to Sigmundr as the son of Völsungr and the grandson of Rerir, the King of Hunaland, the English poet is aware that Völsungr or Wælsing is simply another name for Sigemund, and that Sigemund is the son of Wæls (*Wælses eafora*), the progenitor of the great Wælsing family. Thirdly, while we frequently find in the heroic sagas that the deeds of fathers are in course of time transferred to their descendants, it is a very rare thing to meet with the deeds of a son transferred to his father. Fourthly, it can be shown that, if the author of the *Beowulf* passage was wrong concerning Sigemund, he was not alone in his error.

In support of this last statement attention must be drawn to English place-names. A study of the map of England, and of early charters and inquisitions bearing upon the holding and transfer of land, will show that the OE. name Sigemund, under the contracted forms Symond, Simmond, and Simon, is of very frequent occurrence in the place-names of many parts of England from Northumberland to Cornwall. In Gloucestershire there is a Symonds Hall which appears as *Simondeshale* in Domesday Book, 163^a; in Derbyshire a Simmondley (*Simondesle*, 'Calendar of Patent Rolls' [1307-17], p. 155); in Cornwall a Simonsham (*Symundisham, Simondesham*, 'Feudal Aids', i. 202, 207, 211, 237 [1303-1428]); in Dorsetshire a Simonsbury (*Simondesberge*, 'Exon Domesday Book', p. 36, *Simondesbergh*, 'Cal. of Inquisitions post-mortem', p. 234 [1309]); in Northumberland there is a Simonburn (*Simundeburn*, 'Cal. of Charter Rolls', i. 127 [1230]) and a *Simonseth* (? OE. *Sigemundesseaf*), 'Rotuli Hundredorum', 22 [temp. Ed. I];

in Lancashire there is a Simondstone (*Simondiston*, 'Inq. of Hen III', p. 116 [1259]) and a Simonswood (*Simundeswude*, 'Lancs. Pipe Rolls', p. 53 [1206]); in Durham a *Symondesete* ('Rot. Hundred.', ii. 279 [temp. Ed. III]) and a *Simundes-cote* ('Cal. Charter Rolls', ii. 232 [1280]); in Yorkshire a Simonstone (*Symonstayn*, 'C. C. R.', iii. 94 [1307]), a *Simundkelde* ('Guisborough Chartulary', ii. 26 [c. 1230]), a Simon Seat, and a Simon Fell. In Lincolnshire there is a Simon Weir; in Gloucestershire a Symond's Yat (*Symunde yate*, 'Cal. Patent Rolls, 1247-58', p. 524); in Hertfordshire a Symond's Hyde (*Simondesheved*, 'Cal. Pat. Rolls, 1338-40', p. 234); and in Worcestershire a *Symondescrombe* ('C. P. R.', Rich. II, vol. vi, pp. 222, 275). Finally, in Somersetshire there is a Simonsbath.

Reviewing this list of English place-names which incorporate the OE. personal name Sigemund, we need have little hesitation in saying that places like Simonsham, Simonstone, Symonds Hall, and Simmondley, where the termination indicates the enclosing of land and human occupation, owe their names to some historic person of the name of Sigemund who made the enclosure and settled there. Sigemund is by no means a rare name in OE. charters, and there is no need whatever to associate these places directly with the Sigemund of *Beowulf*. But the same cannot so easily be said of those Sigemund names which are associated with barren, unenclosed mountains or crags of rock. Thus Symond's Yat is the name of a famous limestone crag through an opening (*geat*) in which flows the river Wye; similarly, Simon Seat and Simon Fell are the names of mountain peaks in the West Riding of Yorkshire. We may compare them with the various hills and rocks which incorporate the name of Robin Hood—Robin Hood's Hills, Robin Hood's Stride—and also with the Brunhildenbett (*lectulus Brunihilde*), Brunhildenstein, and Brunhildenstuhl of Germany. In other words, we may

associate them with the Sigemund of *Beowulf*, who slew the hoard-guarding dragon under the grey rock (*under harnestan*). The same association may, perhaps, be made in the case of those place-names in which the name Sigemund is linked to some word meaning stream or spring (*Simundeburn*, *Simundkelde*, *Simonseth*¹), and with which we may again compare the Robin Hood's Well near Doncaster. Finally, there is the name Simonsbath. In the eighteenth century this was the name of a single farm-house by the side of the river Barle on Exmoor,² but the farm-house has now grown into a small hamlet. Properly speaking, however, the name belongs to a pool in the stream itself. In the bed of this stream (the Barle) lies the original Simon's Bath, a deep pool in which, according to the legend, a noted outlaw, once the terror of these parts, was accustomed to bathe (see *Murray's Handbook for Somersetshire*, p. 502 [1899]). The noted outlaw, Simon, is, in all probability, no other than the heroic Sigemund of *Beowulf* fame. If this be granted, much else follows: not only does the name Simonsbath lend support to the other English place-names which associate the name of Sigemund with springs and streams and rocks among the mountains; not only does it warrant the association of such names with the Sigemund story as told in *Beowulf*; it also carries that story one step further: it tells of the next act in the Sigemund drama—the bath in the dragon's blood which was to confer immortality upon the hero. In conclusion, the evidence of English place-names seems to show that a Sigemund legend was widely dispersed in England in the OE. period, and that this legend bore a certain resemblance to, and also supplemented, the version of the myth which appears in *Beowulf*. In other words, if the *Beowulf* poet was wrong in ascribing

¹ The OE. *seab*, often used in the sense of a pit, meant originally a bubbling spring (OE. *seoban*, to boil).

² J. Collinson, *History and Antiquities of Somerset*, ii. 20 [1791].

to Sigemund the deeds of Siegfried, he was not alone in his error.

The next question which arises is this: Through what channel did the Sigemund story reach England? It is universally acknowledged that the Wælsing family was of Burgundian descent, and that the names Wælsing, Volsungr, Welisung are the patronymic forms of an East Teutonic *Walis* which is to be associated with the personal name *Walestus*, found in the *Lex Burgundionum*, and closely allied to the Gothic adjective *walis*, *gawalis*, chosen, elect, and the Gothic verb *waljan*, to choose. The OE. form *Wæls* has similarly developed out of *Walis* by Anglian *i*-mutation of *a* to *æ*. Now the most obvious explanation of the popularity of the Sigemund story in England would be that it was either brought over by the English tribes from their Continental home at the time of the Conquest, or reached them through the instrumentality of wandering minstrels after that conquest was completed. Before attempting to decide the question, attention must be drawn to the place-name Walsingham in the north-west of Norfolk, which appears as *Wælsingaham* in a will of the year 1046 (*K. C. D.* 782) and as *Walsingaham* in a will of the reign of Harold (*K. C. D.* 759). The meaning of *Wælsingaham* is, of course, 'the home of the Wælsings or sons of Wæls', and the association of the name with the famous Wælsing saga was first of all indicated by Müllenhof,¹ and, more recently, by Professor Binz.² This association may have arisen in one of two ways. First, it may be argued that some Englishman, having a knowledge of the doings of the progenitor of the Wælsing house, gave the name Wæls to one of his sons, and that the sons of this Wæls, having established a new settlement in the north-west of Norfolk, gave to it the name *Wælsingaham* or Walsingham.³ Such an explana-

¹ *Zeitschrift für deutsches Alterthum*, xii. 288.

² *P. B. B.*, xx. 191. See also Kemble, *The Saxons in England*.

³ It is impossible to believe that an Englishman could have borne

tion would, under ordinary circumstances, be looked upon as the most natural one; for it brings the name Walsingham into line with a large number of English place-names which incorporate the patronymic *-ing*. Thus we explain Bede's *Godmunddingaham*¹—the modern Goodmanham—as 'the home of the sons of Godmund', and Beddingham in Sussex (*Beadingaham*, *K. C. D.* 314, 1023, 1034) as 'the home of the sons of Beada'. This explanation of the name Walsingham, however, does not enable us to understand why the deeds which in Continental saga are invariably ascribed to Siegfried should in England be associated with his father Sigemund, and it is therefore worth our while to consider a second explanation of the name, even though it may seem far-fetched and lead us into the quicksands of idle speculation. The name Walsingham may indicate the settlement, not of the sons of an Englishman called Wæls, but of the original Burgundian family of the Wælsings. There is much that is audacious in the suggestion that this famous house ever settled in England, but a consideration of the fortunes of the Burgundian race in the fifth century, and a careful study of the *Beowulf* passage already quoted, may serve to show that the suggestion, though audacious, is not altogether impossible. We know from the sober record of history that the Burgundians were at that time in a state of extraordinary unrest. Settled originally as close neighbours of the Goths and Vandals in the country between the Oder and the Vistula, they later moved westwards, and in the year 413 founded their famous kingdom on the Rhine, with Worms as its capital. They were not, however, destined to enjoy a long-continued peace. Ever restless, they began to move north-westwards, and in the year 435 they were defeated by the Roman general Aetius in Belgium

the name Wæls except in association with the Wælsing saga, inasmuch as the root *wal* is not English at all.

¹ *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ii. 13.

and forced to conclude an ignoble treaty of peace. Two years later, the great Hunnish army fell upon them in their homes by the Rhine; their king Gunhahar—the Gunther of the *Nibelungenlied*—and 20,000 of his followers were slain, and the kingdom brought to nought. Finally, in 443, the remnant that survived were established in a new home, by their old adversary Aetius, in the province of Savoy between Lyons and Geneva. Now it is not impossible to believe that in 435, or in 437, or in 443, or at some other period in the fifth century, one of the Burgundian families, detaching itself from the rest of the tribe, may have reached the coast, and, crossing the waters of the North Sea, may have found a new home in England. From 410 onwards this country was at the mercy of any invader. Already under Roman rule, attempts had been made by bands of North German tribesmen to effect a landing on these shores, and a special officer, the *comes litoris saxonici*, having command from the Wash to Southampton Water, had been appointed to ward off such attempts. We need not suppose that the clan of the Burgundian Wælsings came alone: they may very well have thrown in their lot with any one of those Anglian bands which were making for these shores during the fifth century, and which eventually succeeded in setting up principalities and kingdoms in their new home.

It will at once be seen that if this explanation of the name Walsingham be recognized as possible, it completely changes our conception of the origin of the Nibelungen saga. Sigemund is no longer a vague mythical being, but a more or less historic figure. We may look upon him as the leader of that little band of Burgundian exiles who broke away from the rest of the tribe and found a new home among the Angles in Norfolk. Highly conjectural as this theory must of necessity be, it is fair to point out that it derives a certain amount of support from the story of Sigemund as found in *Beowulf*. Not only is mention

made there of Sigemund's far journeys (*wide sibas*), but the Wælsing leader is described as 'by far the most famous of exiles among the tribes of men':

Se was wreccena wide mærost
ofer wer-þeode.

The word *wrecca* occurs on two other occasions in *Beowulf*, and it is worth while to notice the uses which the poet makes of it. It is used in reference to Hengest (l. 1138), who had left his home in Denmark to spend 'a blood-stained winter' (*wælfagne winter*) as the guest of King Finn in Friesland. It is also used (l. 2614) in reference to the Swedish prince, Eanmund, who, having rebelled against his uncle, Onela, was banished, and came as an exile (*wrecca*) to the court of Heardred, the Geat king. It is fairly certain, therefore, that the *Beowulf* poet looked upon Sigemund the Wælsing as an exile—indeed, as the most famous of exiles among the tribes of men.

Now, it is easy to understand that, if Walsingham was in reality a Burgundian settlement, the career of the Wælsing leader would have touched the imagination of neighbouring settlers. The names of some of the princes of the Burgundian race were known in England very early. Already in *Widsith* we hear of the Burgundian kings Guthhere and Gifica—the Gundahar and Gibica of Burgundian history, while the latter name also appears in the place-name *Gifcan cumb* of *K. C. D.* 641. Finally, Guthhere is mentioned, either by name, or as *wine Burgenda*, in both of the *Waldere* fragments¹

Given, then, this knowledge of Burgundian history on the part of the English, it is not hard to understand that the eyes of men would naturally be attracted to the fortunes of the Wælsing house in England, and to the adventurous career of Sigemund, their leader. Nor is it

¹ Cf. also the reference to Attila in *Waldere* (*Ætla*), and the form *Ella* in the *Liber Vitae*.

impossible to believe that Sigemund's fame, surviving his death, would attract to him legendary stories of dragon-slaying and hoard-winning. Very similar stories were attracted, at a somewhat later period, to the person of the Geat prince, Beowulf, until at last the historic basis of Beowulf's life-story is almost hidden from view by the accumulation of myth and legend resting upon it.

Turning once again to the Sigemund episode in *Beowulf*, is it not possible to see there a Sigemund myth in the very process of formation? In the first half of the story, down to the words *sweordum gesæged*, nothing of a supernatural character is introduced. We read of Sigemund's feuds, his far travels, and his deeds of valour; also of the acts of violence which he committed, in company with Fitela, his son and nephew. In particular, reference is made to his slaughter of the *eotena cynn*—the tribe of Jutish or Frisian extraction over whom Finn ruled¹—which it is natural to associate with the fortunes of the Wælsing family before it reached England. But the second half of the passage, beginning with the words *Sigemunde gesprong* and ending with *wyrm hat gemealt*, is pure legend. While the first half of the passage is concerned with the life-story of the historic Sigemund, the second half records his after-life of fame, when some floating tradition of nature-myth had gathered about his name. We are told that after his death there accrued to him no little glory, and we learn how, unaided by Fitela, he had slain the wondrous worm with his sword beneath the grey rock, had gained possession of the dragon-guarded hoard, and borne it away in his sea-boat.

If any belief whatever may be placed in this suggestion

¹ There is no need to translate this phrase as 'the race of giants', as some *Beowulf* editors suggest. It is probable that the *eotenas* here referred to are the same as those mentioned in lines 903, 1072, 1088, 1141, namely, the subjects of the Frisian king, Finn.

of the possible origin of what in later years came to be known as the Nibelungen saga, two questions still demand an answer. What of the further expansion of the saga, and what of Siegfried? We have already seen that the name Simonsbath in Somersetshire apparently carries the story of Sigemund one stage further, and indicates the bathing of the hero in the blood of the slaughtered dragon Fafnir. Is there any evidence of knowledge in England of the next episode in the story—the deliverance of the Valkyrie Brunhild? While dogmatic assertion in regard to a question of this kind is undesirable, it may be frankly stated that there is nothing to indicate the vogue of such a story in England. The name Brunhild, Brunild, Brynhild, or Byrnhild does not appear in English records till after the Norman Conquest, and though we find place-names like *Byrnanleah*, *Byrnansilf*, and *Birnanhris* in the charters of Kemble's *Codex*, no conclusion whatever can be drawn from such names. Moreover, if there is no Brunhild saga in England, neither is there a Siegfried saga. The name Sigefrith or Sigeferth is, indeed, quite common in OE. records. We meet with it in the *Liber Vitae*, in the genealogies of East Saxon kings, and, as the name of a monk at Jarrow, in Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert*; somewhat later it occurs in a number of OE. charters. Finally, it occurs in the Finn Fragment as the name of the prince of the Secgene (*Secgena leod*), a tribe which may perhaps be identified with the Segni, whom Caesar represents as of Germanic blood, and dwelling between the Eburones and the Treveri, i. e. in Gallia Belgica, somewhere between the valleys of the Rhine and the Maas.¹ But it must be borne in mind that personal

¹ *De Bello Gallico*, vi. 32 'Segni Condrusique ex gente et numero Germanorum, qui sunt inter Eburones Treverosque, legatos ad Caesarem miserunt.' It is somewhat curious (1) that this Sigeferth should, like Sigemund, in the *Beowulf* passage, be spoken of as a far-famed exile (*wreccea wide cup*), and (2) that he should be represented as ruler of

names compounded with Sige- — Sigemund, Sigefrith, Sigebeald, Sigebeorht, Sigehelm, &c.—are exceedingly common in OE. records, and that it is therefore most dangerous to draw conclusions from their occurrence, unless found in place-names which, like Simonsbath, Simon Fell, or *Simonseth*, have a certain legendary appearance. Now there seems to be no association of the name Sigefrith with the names of English hills, rocks, streams, or springs, and the natural conclusion is that the sun-myth which underlies the famous story of Siegfried and the Valkyrie Brunhild was unknown in England before the Norman Conquest.

The evidence at our disposal seems, therefore, to warrant the following theory of the rise of the Nibelungen saga. There arose in England a Sigemund legend, which represented the Wælsing hero as engaging in conflict with a hoard-guarding dragon: he slew the dragon, rescued the hoard, and bathed in the dragon's blood. At this point of development, we may assume that the legend was transported to Germany and there became associated with the Siegfried-Brunhild legend. In this process of association, the heroic deeds of Sigemund were transferred to Siegfried, perhaps because Siegfried was, indeed, the son of Sigemund, perhaps through the mere resemblance in the two names. At a yet later period, and probably in the province of Rhenish Franconia, the Sigemund-Siegfried legend came to be linked on to the historic story of the fall of the Burgundians at the hands of the Huns in the year 437. The changes in the saga which this later association called into being have been elaborately considered in other investigations of the Nibelungen saga and need not be discussed here. But one word may, in conclusion, be added as to the

a district in immediate proximity to the town of Xanten, where, in the *Nibelungenlied*, his father Sigemund is said to have had his royal seat. But I have started sufficient hares for one day's coursing, and would fain leave it to others to take up the scent.

reasons why Sigemund should, in all the German and Scandinavian versions of the story, be despoiled of his chief title to fame--the slaying of the dragon and the rescue of the hoard. In regard to this, it may be pointed out that the transference of deeds of valour from an older to a younger hero is no unusual thing in the history of the heroic sagas, and that the substitution of one name for another is to be seen even in the *Nibelungen saga* itself. Thus the murderer of Siegfried (*Sigurþr*) in the *Völsunga-saga* is not Hogni (i. e. Hagen), but his step-brother Götþormr, while Siegfried's wife is not Grimhild but Guþrun.¹ Moreover, there were special reasons for the substitution of Siegfried's name for that of his father Sigemund in the later developments of the story. With the coming of Christianity and the advance of civilization, Sigemund must have been looked upon as unfit to share in the glory of a great national epic. His incestuous union with Signy, and the wild werewolf life which he led in the forest with his incestuous son Fitela--the *Sinfjötli* of Scandinavian legend, the *Sintarfizilo* of German folk-lore--placed him under the ban of the Church and of society. In the *Völsungasaga* he is still a great figure, though the slaying of the dragon and the rescue of the hoard have already been taken from him and given to his more famous son: in the *Nibelungenlied* he is but the shadow of a great name. With his wife Sigelind, he rules over his people at Xanten, a king well advanced in years; but all his troubled past is discreetly hidden from view: Fitela, his child by Signy, is forgotten, and the fame that once was Sigemund's is now the possession of a younger child, 'der herre Sifrit'.

In putting forward the above theory of the origin of the *Nibelungen saga*, I recognize very fully that it rests on an insecure basis. Facts have been brought forward to show that the Sigemund story, as recorded in *Beowulf*, does

¹ In Danish ballads she goes by the name of Signild.

not necessarily rest, as Müllenhoff and others have supposed, 'lediglich auf einer confusion des interpolators,'¹ but is supported by the evidence of such a place-name as Simonsbath, and, less certainly, by other place-names in various parts of England. What makes the basis insecure is the interpretation of *Wælsingaham* as 'the home of the Burgundian family of Wæls'. It may at once be confessed that such an interpretation is a departure from the normal explanation of such names. The reasons for such an interpretation have been indicated in the preceding pages, and need not be repeated here. All that I would venture to claim, therefore, for the above theory is that it comes within the region of possibility, and that it helps us to understand a little better the curious circumstance that deeds which in German and Scandinavian versions of the Nibelungen saga are invariably ascribed to Siegfried, fall, in *Beowulf*, to the lot of Sigemund.

F. W. MOORMAN.

¹ Müllenhoff, *Z. f. d. A.*, xxiii. 148.

SHELLEY'S 'TRIUMPH OF LIFE'.

'I would love infinitely, and be loved.'

Paracelsus, ii. med.

'Good, far more than evil impulses, love, far more than hatred, has been to me, except as you have been its object, the source of all sorts of mischief.'—Shelley to Mary, August 16, 1821.

THESE two quotations,—the one from Browning's *Aprile*, a figure clearly modelled on Shelley's, the other from Shelley himself, in a letter written a year before his death,—may serve to suggest all that was most beautiful and most tragic in his own life, character, and work. Every one who is attracted to Shelley must feel that he was, in the words of his friend Leigh Hunt, 'gifted with a double portion of love for all living things.'¹ And it was a love that longed for sympathy: it was, as he described it himself, 'that powerful attraction towards all that we conceive, or fear, or hope beyond ourselves, when we find within our own thoughts the chasm of an insufficient void, and seek to awaken in all things that are, a community with what we experience within ourselves'.²

At the same time the longing for an absolute union with all he loved was Shelley's one great snare: other temptations seem scarcely to have touched him: almost everything that there is to regret in what he wrote or what he did sprang from his inability to resist the chance of satisfying this one desire, or to endure the pain of bearing it unsatisfied. Such pain is a perpetual theme throughout his poems, from his first great work, *Alastor*, to his last, and perhaps his greatest, the *Triumph of Life*. But the

¹ *Autobiography*, ch. xix.

² *Essay on Love*.

Triumph is marked out by a difference. *Alastor*, *Prince Athanase*, *Epipsychidion*, all express for the sufferer not only pity but an admiration which scarcely allows blame. Even where, as in the Preface to *Alastor*, some error is admitted in one who perishes 'through the intensity and passion' of the search after an all-satisfying love, the admission is all but qualified away. The chief fault of the hero lies in ever having attempted to live without the full rapture of human sympathy, and though the thirst for this, when suddenly aroused, proves destructive, we are expressly told that it is only one of the elect who could be so destroyed. Throughout *Epipsychidion*, again, in spite of its high beauty, there is something jarring in the concentration of interest on the sufferings of the seeker; no question of the suffering he may inflict on the persons accepted and rejected in his wandering search seems to occur to the poet's mind.

But in the *Triumph of Life* the seeker himself is judged, and the judgement is stern. Love, it is true, is not dethroned from its supreme place in the world. That is clear enough from the lines about Dante, the seer

whom from the lowest depths of hell,
Through every paradise and through all glory,
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured except Love.¹

(472-6.)

But none the less those lovers who lose their self-control are shown to us as the captives of Life, and not its conquerors, even though their love should have as noble stuff in it as Plato's. Plato is among the prisoners because—though nothing else could subdue him, not 'gold, or pain, or age, or sloth, or slavery'—love brought him under the

¹ I read 'whom' in 472 with Rossetti and Locock: for the rest I follow here, as elsewhere unless otherwise stated, the reading of Hutchinson's Oxford edition.

dominion of a joy and woe that needed expiation and from which his master Socrates was free. (254-9.) It concerns us little to ask if there is the least historical ground for such an opinion, but it is of great interest to recall how we find in the *Phaedrus* and the *Symposium* the double view of love that marks the *Triumph of Life*, the view that while it is one of the divinest things in the world, it is also one of the deadliest. Shelley, of course, had been familiar with Plato from the Oxford days, but there were influences towards the end of his life calculated to deepen his sense of Plato's insistence on the need, everywhere and in everything, for self-mastery. One was his recognition of his own weakness. This can best be seen, I think, in the letter quoted at the head of this article, already cited by Dowden as a clue to the *Triumph of Life*.¹ It can be felt again in the well-known letter to John Gisborne (June 18, 1822) where he speaks with a certain distaste of *Epipsychidion*, and blames the error of 'seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal'. And the stanzas in *Adonais*, though full of pity, are severer in tone than anything written earlier on the 'Power girt round with weakness', the lover who had lost himself through gazing 'on Nature's naked loveliness, Actaeon-like'.

At this period when self-distrust and self-criticism were deepening in Shelley, he became absorbed in *Laust*, and he could not have found anything better suited to his needs, a herb for 'the wounded deer' of far higher healing powers than any that grew in Jane Williams's pretty garden.² Goethe, indeed, had everything both to attract and to help Shelley. His nature was marked, like Shelley's own, by a rare union of the passions for absolute knowledge, beauty, love. He could feel, as keenly as Shelley, the gap between the actual and the ideal, and knew well the temptation to

¹ *Life*, 1st ed., vol. ii, p. 505.

² See *The Serpent is shut out from Paradise*.

seize any emotion that offered the faintest chance of satisfying him, or else to fling up life in despair. *Werther* was his *Alastor*, and the abandonment in his early letters is even greater than in Shelley's. But he had got beyond his own Wertherism when he wrote *Faust*, and the self-criticism latent in the earlier work is unmistakable in the drama. All through it runs the feeling that the thirst for the infinite, unless steadied by the endurance that can support its privation, will send a man to the devil. This feeling has sunk deep into the *Triumph of Life*, and the warning Goethe prefixed to the second edition of *Werther*, the cry of the pale ghost to those who love and pity him—'Play the man and never follow me!'—might stand very well as a motto for the figure of Rousseau in the *Triumph*. Now Rousseau, Shelley felt, offered another instance of the tragedy shown in *Faust*. He refers to him, very significantly, when describing his own intense excitement over Retzsch's illustration to the scene in the drama where Gretchen is in the summer-house with her lover:—

'Do you remember', he writes to John Gisborne, 'the fifty-fourth letter of the first part of the "Nouvelle Héloïse"?' Goethe, in a subsequent scene, evidently had that letter in his mind, and this etching is an idealism of it.'¹

Shelley's quivering sensibility may well have trembled at the illustration: the face of Mephistopheles is at the door, and Goethe has compressed into the situation the best and the worst of love. *Faust*, Shelley implies in the same letter, awakened in him 'the reproaches of memory', and Rousseau's fate in the *Triumph* appears to be, as Stopford Brooke has pointed out,² definitely connected with his own, both by the likeness in the story to 'what Shelley has at other times said of his own life' and by the hint that

¹ Letter to Gisborne, April 10, 1822. The 'subsequent scene' must be the second Garden Scene in *Faust*.

² Preface to the *Selected Poems* (Macmillan).

the poet's experience might throw light on the whole problem :—

But follow thou, and from spectator turn
 Actor or victim in this wretchedness,
 And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
 From thee. (305-8.)

And Rousseau confesses that he has been brought to his state of deformity and weakness, overcome in the struggle with Life,

By my own heart alone, which neither age,
 Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
 Could temper to its object. (240-3.)

That is, I understand, Rousseau was not strong enough to resist his own enervating desires for emotional experience, although he could resist the paralysing influences of age and sorrow and disgrace and the near approach of death.¹

Readers of the *Confessions* and the *Rêveries* will recognize the substantial truth of the portrait drawn by Shelley, both in its generosity and its severity. And, in spite of obvious differences, the likeness in the defeat of the noble Plato and the ignoble Rousseau is so great that we seem warranted in pressing the parallel, and its warning. What appears but a flaw in Plato has grown to deformity in Rousseau. Both have been conquered by the temptations that Life has brought to the

¹ The phrase 'temper to its object' is very difficult. The simplest interpretation seems the first of those now discussed by A. C. Bradley (*Mod. Lang. Review*, October 1914). "Object" may = purpose or aim, and "its" may refer to "age", &c. Infamy, e. g., an agent of Life, could not subdue Rousseau's heart into conformity with infamy's purpose.'

It may be added that the pride of the historic Rousseau in bearing-up against age and suffering is noticeable in the *Rêveries*, e. g. 1. 'Mon âme est encore active . . . sa vie interne . . . semble encore s'être accrue par la mort de tout intérêt terrestre et temporel.' Mary's note-book gives the *Rêveries* as among the books read in 1816 (Dowden, op. cit., p. 74).

heart, and only by such : Rousseau has sunk far lower than Plato and all but lost himself entirely, because his will is far weaker,¹ but it is the same type of temptation, and it is the same that makes the tragedy in the love of Faust for Gretchen, and the same that was Shelley's snare.

It is important, however, not to overstate Goethe's influence. When Shelley was only nineteen, he had already taken Rousseau as an example of how the self is impoverished and enslaved through yielding to passion. 'Rousseau', we read in the *Proposals for an Association*, 'gave licence by his writings to passions that only incapacitate and contract the human heart—so far hath he prepared the necks of his fellow-beings for that yoke of galling and dishonourable servitude which at this moment it bears.'

And the sense of the peculiar danger in man's finest desires and feelings appears independently from time to time in Shelley's writings. The whole stress of the sonnet *To the Nile* is on the peril of the fruitful waters :—

and well thou knowest
That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee
Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be. (1818.)

Similarly, the *Essay on the Punishment of Death* stresses the view that evil is essentially the result of good passions overshooting the mark. And in the *Speculations on Morals*

¹ For Rousseau's recognition of the dangers in his own 'sensibility' and lack of will, see the *Rêveries, passim*, e. g. 6. 'Des que mon devoir et mon cœur étoient en contradiction, le premier eut rarement la victoire.' 'Sûr de moi sur tout autre article, j'étois perdu par celui-là seul.' 8. 'Toujours attiré loin de moi par des goûts de mille espèces, par des attachements aimables qui sans cesse occupoient mon cœur, je m'oubliois, en quelque façon, moi-même.' 10. 'Facile et sans résistance, j'ai été tellement agité, ballotté, tiraillé par les passions d'autrui, que, presque passif dans une vie aussi orageuse, j'aurois peine à démêler ce qu'il y a du mien dans ma propre conduite, tant la dure nécessité n'a cessé de s'appesantir sur moi.'

Shelley admits in so many words that 'patriotism, and chivalry, and sentimental love, have been the fountains of enormous mischief.' So in the *Satire on Satire* (1820):

From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow
These bitter waters.

Goethe's influence on Shelley is rather such as, with a splendid modesty and pride, he claimed for himself on the poets of his own nation: 'he had been no man's Master, but perhaps, to young men, he had been a Deliverer.'¹ Or we might adapt what Shelley says himself about the relation between Goethe and Calderon. 'Have you read', he writes to John Gisborne (April 10, 1822), 'Calderon's "Magico Prodigioso"? I find a striking similarity between "Faust" and this drama. . . . "Cyprian" evidently furnished the germ of "Faust", as "Faust" may furnish the germ of other poems; although it is as different from it in structure and plan as the acorn from the oak.'

The 'structure and plan' of the *Triumph* are indeed, it has often been noticed, drawn from Petrarch's *Trionfi*, a connexion very important in view of the question (to be discussed later) as to how Shelley meant to finish the work. And the influence of Dante is unmistakably profound, both in form and spirit. Dante's spirit is above all favourable for 'the birth of severe and high feelings,'² and for that grave and warning appeal to the will which seems to me characteristic of the *Triumph*. This severity of temper shows itself in a new quality which has come into Shelley's music. There is still the old entrancing melody of the long liquid phrases when such are needed,

magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun. (340--2.)

¹ 'Noch ein Wort für junge Dichter' (ed. Cotta, vol. 32 ad fin.).

² Shelley to Ollier, February 22, 1821. A. C. Bradley (op. cit.) has collected many striking parallels from the *Purgatorio*.

But there is now also a direct and weighty simplicity, marked by the use of short clear-cut monosyllables, such as those where Napoleon is described, the Shadow

Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak
That every pigmy kicked it as it lay. (226-7.)

That simplicity of which Shelley already had the secret for his personal lyrics, or for such tragic situations as the close of the *Cenci*, is now united to broad epic themes and to a certain steady observation, an advance full of promise for the future. Nor should Calderon's influence be altogether forgotten. This, no doubt, was far less, but still it is interesting to note that at this time Shelley was translating those scenes from the *Magico Prodigiioso* which centre round the struggle between desire and will, and round the evil bound up with the good in man's heart,

Forging the instruments of his destruction
Even from his love and from his wisdom.

(Scene ii, 77-8.)

But, allowing for all such influences, the conception of evil-in-good is so characteristic of *Faust* that I think it is to Goethe above all we should ascribe its singular prominence here. Whether Shelley would have gone further and grasped the other side of Goethe's great scheme, the side that shows the good-in-evil, is another question. It is hard to set limits to the growth of such a spirit as his. The letter to Gisborne already quoted certainly seems to show a willingness to believe that the craving discontent which is the curse of Faust is also his redeeming trait and the pledge of a higher destiny. 'Perhaps all discontent with the *less* (to use a Platonic sophism) supposes the sense of a just claim to the *greater*, and that we admirers of "Faust" are on the right road to Paradise.' (To John Gisborne, April 10, 1822.) The *Triumph* itself is quite consistent, as we shall see, with the view that evil is only

transitory. But certainly also the contempt of this life is so marked throughout the poem that we can hardly think of Shelley, at this stage of his development, as echoing Goethe's utterance:

I learnt to scorn this world of ours once,
But I have grown worthy to win it now.
(Paralipomena to *Faust*.)

Indeed, 'scorn of the narrow good we can attain in our present state' (ibid.) was one of the distinct impressions the younger poet derived from *Faust*.

This leads us to the questions, not to be longer postponed, what, after all, does Shelley mean in the poem by 'the world' and 'Life' and 'the struggle with Life'? To attempt an answer in detail we must recall the main outlines of the poem, so far as it was completed.

The poet is resting at sunrise on a mountain-slope,¹ and suddenly he falls into a trance through which the real scene can only be discerned faintly, while across it he sees, in what appears high noon, a dusty 'public way', crowded with human beings of all ages, drifting in a torrent of fear or futile pursuit. While he gazes the crowd thickens, and then he sees an icy glare making the sun look dim, and in the glare a cold bright Car, drawn by strange winged creatures, and on the Car a sinister woman-shape, and on the chariot-beam of it a four-faced blindfolded charioteer. Round the Car now surges a wild dancing multitude, young

¹ The slope is on a spur of the Apennines near the coast (such as those that surround Spezia itself), and from it there is a view westward to the sea. The poet's back is, at first, turned to the east. The car that passes him I understand to have come up behind him over the spur, from the east, up from 'the oblivious valley' of Rousseau's birth, on the further side of which (the eastern side) rises 'the great mountain' of l. 452. This assumes, as I think we should, that the vision described by the poet and all that is seen by Rousseau before their meeting are meant to form one picture, on the whole coherent. The curious in such matters will find it quite possible to make a consistent map.

figures in the van, and in the rear a 'ribald crowd', old men and women, 'with limbs decayed,' and ghastly shadows winding in among them. Chained to the Car are mighty captives, all the great ones of the earth, except a chosen few, such as Christ and Socrates, and those,

the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits to the conqueror's—but as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame,
Fled back like eagles to their native noon.¹

When the rearguard is fully in sight the poet asks sadly, and half to himself, what it all can mean. He is answered by the word 'Life!' a word uttered by one of the last-comers who has fallen by the wayside, a figure so distorted as to be more like an old root than a man. This 'grim Feature' shows him who the mighty captives are, and tells his own story, how he is 'what was once Rousseau', and how, at dawn in the oblivious valley of his youth, he was met by a radiant vision that gave him a cup of Nepenthe to drink, and on that he saw the Car of Life sweeping past him, and flung himself into the thickest of the throng around it, and grew deformed under its influence, and how he had watched other creatures like himself, surging about the Car and sending out shadows from their own being, and perishing as the shadows issued.

The Car of Life, it is clear from such a scheme, cannot mean the whole of Being, nor even, I think, the whole of human life on earth apart from man's conscious will. Rather, it would seem, Shelley uses the word 'life', much as the New Testament speaks of 'the world', simply to describe the evil side of human society in the earthly order, those elements, terrible and alluring, in the rush of circumstance and in the passions of men that combine to

¹ 128-131. In l. 129 I follow a suggestion of A. C. Bradley's *Mod. Lang. Review*, October 1905.

fetter, deform, and crush personality. So that 'Life' conquers when a man fails in right action, and still more when his character becomes the plaything of circumstance.¹ It is doubtless possible to take certain passages as implying that the Car does mean the whole of 'phenomenal life', and not merely the evil side of it, but there seems nothing that necessitates this view, and much that goes against it. The 'sacred few', of whom it may be said, in the Biblical phrase, that they kept themselves 'unspotted from the world', are not in the pageant at all. They have had to pass through life, and yet they have gone free from the power of the Car.

Von der Gewalt, die alle Wesen bindet,
Befreit der Mensch sich, der sich überwindet.²

And close beside the path of the Car, though never on it, are flowers and fountains and shadowy solitudes, which the followers could enjoy if they chose, and where some do linger for a little while. (65-73, 447-65.) The very words 'a public way' (43) recall the 'publico viaggio' of Petrarch,³ who uses the metaphor to represent the way of worldly life which the upright are not bound to follow. And when Rousseau drops by the wayside, and lets the Car go on, it is natural to suppose that the poet refers to the historical

¹ Since writing the above I have seen a passage from an article on 'Shelley's Nature-Poetry' by the late Henry Sweet (*Collected Papers*, Clarendon Press): 'His--Shelley's--conception of Jupiter in his *Prometheus* is quite new and original: he makes him the personification of all that hinders the free development of the human mind.'

² Goethe, *Die Geheimnisse*, 191-2:

From the Constraint that fetters every creature
That man wins free, who overcomes himself.

Shelley, apparently, had not read these lines, but they seem too appropriate not to be quoted.

³ *Trionfo della Morte*, ii. 14. This parallel was pointed out to me by A. C. Bradley, to whom this essay in general is deeply indebted. Other parallels between the *Triumph* and Petrarch's *Trionfi* are being published by him in the *Mod. Lang. Review*, October 1914.

Rousseau's 'retirement' from 'the world'.¹ The drifting multitude who are blown in front of the dancing escort suggest those who, like the aimless spirits that meet Dante before he sees either Hell or Purgatory or Paradise, have neither flung themselves passionately into the enjoyment of worldly life, been 'in the thick of it' as we might say, nor fought it, whether nobly or only fiercely. Both the drifters and the dancing million have been, in different ways, the subservient slaves of Life, and there is much in the 'sad pageantry' of both, their futile desires carrying them forward to destruction past the beauty and refreshment they cannot see,

Weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
that does, I think, recall characteristic elements in the dominion of Mephistopheles, alike on his 'gala-day' of the Witches' Sabbath², when the tumult of desire and despair sweeps round him, and in his ordinary day's work of laying plots for Faust:

Thus will I drag him through life's wildest roar
And through the deserts of her barren places,
Writhing and frozen, he shall cling to me,
Hungry and thirsty, he shall feel the fulness
Of meat and drink upon his lips in vain,
In vain one drop of health shall he implore,
Insatiate! (*Faust*, 1860-5.)

The immediate escort of the Car is led by the young devotees of lust. (137 ff.) This is clear from the whole drift of the lines, but it seems also clear, from Rousseau's account, that they are the leaders only, and that the escort is thronged with others too, 'lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist.' (510.) Similarly Goethe fills the *Walpurgisnacht* with every type of perverted desire, though the desire of lust is taken as the burning-point of the whole. Such is the life round the Car, a life which is death-in-life.

¹ See the *Réveries*, *passim*.

² Shelley was translating this scene at the time.

Certainly it follows, I think, that Shelley would not have given the general name of 'Life' to this power of the Car unless he had felt that there was something in the conditions of human existence under all the forms known to us on earth that must prevent the manifestation of perfection. He had travelled far from the Utopian dreams of an earthly Paradise, easily won, such as inspires *Queen Mab*. But it by no means follows that even the glare of evil-in-life completely extinguishes a diviner day that lies behind it. The contrary seems clearly indicated by the opening of the poem, taken in connexion with what follows. The radiant landscape where the poet has lain is never quite lost: it comes through the trance of the Vision as far-off hills glimmer through the haze of evening, and to it must belong the lovelinesses round the path of the Car. Nothing quenches completely the power of the Sun that rose at first,

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good.

And the Sun, it would seem, represents the Principle of Good as something working for its own complete manifestation. This, I think, is strongly suggested not only by the likenesses to Shelley's own *Hymn of Apollo*, and to the Platonic imagery in the myth of the Cave where the Sun is the real cause of the appearances in all things, but also by the express words of our poem. The Sun is named, much as he is named by Dante¹ (who doubtless followed Plato) as the Father of continent, and isle, and ocean, and

all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould.

They rise with him, and in some fashion he shares and directs their labour.² (15-20.) I have admitted that the

¹ *Paradiso*, xxii. 116.

² A. C. Bradley, who gives the Dante reference, notes (*Mod. Lang.*

general tone of the *Triumph* seems to preclude the idea of a full manifestation of good on earth. But it is hard to see why Shelley wrote these lines at all and set them as a prelude unless he meant to suggest that somewhere such a manifestation would be attained. The stress laid on the delusiveness and transitoriness of this world is certainly not inconsistent with this: it does, in a way, support it. As in the *Adonais*, we seem to be reminded that it is only for a little while that 'the false and fragile glass' can 'stain the white radiance of Eternity'. The true sun will emerge.

This way of looking at the matter seems exactly to harmonize with the view Shelley stated as Christ's, and stated very sympathetically, in the *Essay on Christianity*:—

'According to Jesus Christ, and according to the indisputable facts of the case, some evil spirit has dominion in this imperfect world. But there will come a time when the human mind shall be visited exclusively by the influences of the benignant Power. . . . Another and a more extensive state of being . . . will follow from that mysterious change which we call Death. . . . This is Heaven, when pain and evil cease, and when the Benignant Principle, untrammelled and uncontrolled, visits in the fulness of its power the universal frame of things. Human life, with all its unreal ills and transitory hopes, is as a dream, which departs before the dawn. . . . All that it contains of pure or of divine visits the passive mind in some serenest mood.'

Review, October 1905 and 1914) the close correspondence with the lines in *The Boat on the Serchio* :

All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to His ends and not our own ;
The million rose to learn, and one to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known.

The 'one', I think, is hard to identify absolutely with the 'He' of the lines preceding. But it can hardly be an ordinary individual, especially in view of the constant Shelleyan antithesis between the 'One' and the 'Many'. May it not be 'the Sun', representing the immanent principle of good in appearances as distinct from the transcendent principle beyond them ?

Petrarch, it may be noted, speaks of the Sun's course through the Zodiac as determining the labours of men (*Trionfo della Divinità*, 40-2).

But if the Benignant Principle is sure ultimately to overcome the world, what is the relation to it of Evil? Now Shelley about the time of the *Triumph* confessed that he could not untie 'the Gordian knot of the origin of evil'.¹ He adds: 'That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain.' But Evil can hardly be called a riddle save to him who believes not only that it is bound up inevitably with the present state of things, 'inextricably entangled with good', but that Good is after all the fundamental power in the universe. Otherwise Evil is indeed a burden and a grief but scarcely a problem, and it is irrelevant to hope for a 'solution'. But Shelley's hope, when he wrote the *Hellas*, was still that somehow such a solution did exist and that Good would master Evil, although Evil was now linked to the frame of things by Necessity, and although he had sung of Necessity as the force

whose sightless strength for ever
Evil with evil, good with good must wind
In bands of union, which no power may sever.²

In the Prologue to *Hellas*, Satan, it is true, stands side by side with Christ before the throne of the Father, and claims that the Destiny to be sent forth shall be

Vicegerent of my will, no less
Than of the Father's, . . . (142-3.)
mailed in the omnipotence
Of Him who sends thee forth, whate'er thy task.
(134-5.)

But in the prophetic vision of the Jew Ahasuerus it is the 'seraph-wingèd Victory' of the Christ who conquers finally,

bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom.
(448-50.)

¹ No. 2 of the notes to *Hellas*, 1821.

² *Revolt of Islam*, IX. xxvii.

Such a hope does, I think, underlie here the enigmatic description of the Car and how it is guided. It is guided ill, for the Charioteer in the rear of the swift team is blind-folded, and yet there is a Power somehow connected with it calculated to produce other and better results, something that, under other circumstances, could behold all that is or was or is to be. It is not plausible, I think, to suppose that Shelley could have conceived such a Power, one capable of absolute knowledge, as not ultimately good. In the *Hellas*, Satan, to use the words of Christ, can only see 'the Past in the To-come'. But the Spirit connected with the Car could, if it were not hampered, see everything.¹ No doubt the lines are very difficult, but however we take them, something to this effect must, I think, emerge:—

All the four faces of that Charioteer
 Had their eyes banded; little profit brings
 Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
 Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,—
 Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere
 Of all that is, has been, or will be done;
 So ill was the car guided— (99-105.)

I follow W. M. Rossetti in taking 'that with banded eyes' as a description of the Charioteer,² who symbolizes Destiny, called in *Hellas* 'the world's eyeless charioteer' (711), and I understand Shelley to mean that if the glare from the Car could help his plight, which it cannot do, then this Destiny, who seems so blind, would attain his fundamental nature, the bandages would become transparent, and his eyes would be the eyes of Providence.

Such a mythology seems not unnatural for one who confessed himself at a loss about the problem of Evil and

¹ Prologue to *Hellas*, 161. Petrarch, it may be noted, refers to God simply as 'chi tutto vede' (*Tr. della Morte*, ii. 78).

² For a further defence see A. C. Bradley, *op. cit.*, who compares the Italian use of *quello* followed by a prepositional phrase.

yet cherished in his heart dreams of bliss concerning 'that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality'.¹

The Charioteer is given four faces, to represent, it would seem, not only the Past, the Present, and the Future, but also Eternity, which is different from all three. Unless Shelley meant something like this, he would surely have given the Charioteer three faces only, making a Geryon of him and not a double Janus. The opposition and connexion between Time and Eternity runs, it will be remembered, through the greater part of Shelley's writings. And it furnishes, we may add, a motive in Petrarch's *Trionfi*. In the last of the Petrarchan series Time is transformed into Eternity: 'I saw', Petrarch says, 'the three parts thereof reduced to one: and that one now stood firm.' (*Tr. della Divinità*, 28, 29.)

The imagery is not the same as Shelley's and not nearly so mysterious or impressive, but it is not unlike it, and may even, in part, have suggested it.

We pass on to the vision of the great heroes, good and bad, who are bound to the Car. Here the intermingling of good and evil appears again, in tragic and glorious shapes. There is high value in all these captives: not one of them has simply collapsed under life, a mere passive 'victim in this wretchedness'. They are famous, but they are more than that. To win the honour of being bound to the Car, it is not enough for a man so to have impressed the world that what he did cannot be forgotten. Otherwise Rousseau would be there. The chained captives are not the strongest of all, not as Christ or Socrates, but they must at least have had strength enough never to have dissipated themselves at the bidding of the chance cravings that circumstance might provoke. Good or bad, they have, in a sense, been themselves, and possessed their own souls

¹ Note on *Hellas* (2).

through life. Only such does Life count as foemen worthy to adorn her triumph, after the fashion of a Roman conqueror. Even in old-age their fundamental vigour of personality is unlesened: the flower of youth and the fruit of maturity may fall, but the trunk survives. Shelley's thought is difficult here through its subtlety and depth. Age has not subdued the old among the captives: they have subdued it: but they have subdued it by experiencing it, by living deep, by spending themselves in brave action or suffering, and so they bear the marks of the years upon them:

all those who had grown old in power
Or misery,—all who had their age subdued
By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower.
(120-4; cp. 259.)

Such an ageing is to be approved and desired,¹ and is quite distinct from the enfeebled exhaustion (described later) of those who have only yielded to craving.

In the account of the captives we feel Shelley's powers of sympathy and admiration as well as his indignant grief. Shelley will always be the singer of the young and the hopeful in spite of his tirades or his wistful doubt, for his anger and his sorrow never came because he could not believe in men or love what was splendid in them, but just because of his fury at the contrast between what they were

¹ Compare Shelley's constant feeling about age being more a matter of experience than of actual duration: e. g. in the early lines to Harriet—

The sense of love,
The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought
Prolong my being; if I wake no more
My life more actual living will contain
Than some gray veteran's of the world's cold school.
(Locock, ii. 450; Dowden, *Life*, i. 288.)

It is possible, I think, that the difficult line in the *Triumph*, l. 239,

names which the world thinks always old,

refers to a recognition even by the world of this weight of experience in the statesmen who have fought against 'Life'.

and what he felt they had it in them to be. So here, nothing can exceed his pity for those who had failed to win the supreme prize in the great search for knowledge,—failed, I think it is clear from the context, because they could not master completely the untameable mysterious self within them. Although they wore more radiant crowns than priests or warriors or kings,

wreaths of light,
Signs of thought's empire over thought—their lore
Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night
Caught them ere evening. (210-15.)

The pathetic closing cadence seems reminiscent of the two poets I conceive to have been so much in Shelley's head at this time, Petrarch and Goethe. Petrarch speaks of the night coming before the evening.¹ But Petrarch is only speaking of untimely death, and the deep pathos of the searchers being overtaken, and through their own weakness, by the darkness of error instead of by the dawn that they announced, is far closer to Goethe's tragedy, where Faust, himself uncontrolled, and almost uncontrollable, looks bitterly on the skull of his forerunner as a type of all those

Who loved the light, and in the thickening darkness,
Longing for truth, went wrong, and wept, and died.
(*Faust*, 666-7.)

Deep, too, is the sympathy in the lines on Napoleon, where the famous name flashes out at the close like a drawn sword. It is interesting to compare with this passage not only Shelley's early crude hostility to 'the tyrant', but certain lines in the *Trionfo della Fama*. (ii. 13-15.) Petrarch, speaking of the great conquerors, notes how the lack of opportunity lessens the chance of glory, but Shelley mourns over the far heavier loss in the ill-use of opportunity when

¹ *Tr. della Morte*, i. 39.

it came to a man who was great, but not great enough to be
unselfish, one who lost through this failure

more

Of fame and peace than virtue's self can gain
Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before
Fallen, as Napoleon fell. (219-224.)

The sympathy with Plato has already been noticed, and Aristotle is spoken of with reverence, though the lines about his keeping 'the jealous key of Truth's eternal doors' (268) and the stress on his union with his pupil, the conqueror Alexander, look as though Shelley meant to suggest that it was Aristotle's belief in a close aristocracy which prevented him from reaching the ultimate heights. When we come to the poets, Shelley's admiration carries him so far that we are ready to ask why they are bound to the Car at all. For Rousseau says that they, in contrast to himself, mastered the passions of which they sang, and that the victory can be discerned in the quality of their music. That melody is such and so vital that those who come under its influence can suffer no shock and take no harm from any danger in its themes. Shelley's words are not without difficulty, but they are a wonderful expression by a poet of the transmuting power in poetry and of how it is fed by character:—

See the great bards of elder time, who quelled
The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein
Of those who are infected with it—I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!
And so my words have seeds of misery— (274-80.)

Shelley, I suppose, if we could ask him, would say that he had placed such 'great bards' among the captives,

because he did not conceive of a Shakespeare or a Sophocles as of the pure temper that passes unstained through life. None the less in these lines he has concentrated on their strength and forgotten their weakness.

And at last we reach Rousseau's story. He was laid asleep as a child under a strange mountain, beside a Lethean rivulet flowing, through a mysterious dell, from a lofty cavern in the mountain-side. At dawn he awakens into a loveliness which still keeps

a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth. (337-9.)

The conception is obviously influenced by the ante-natal dreams of Plato and Wordsworth, and also by Shelley's own early memories of childhood

When everything familiar seemed to be
Wonderful. (*Epipsychidion*, cancelled passage.)

The mountain lies between Rousseau and the dawn (451-2), and the watery cavern pierces it, making an archway to the eastern land of mystery beyond, 'the realm without a name.' It is more than hinted that Rousseau himself has come from this heavenly country.¹

Suddenly the morning light floods through the opening, and Rousseau sees a wonderful Shape, standing, at the cavern's further arch, on the waters that feed the rivulet and just where they take the full sunlight from the east,— a Shape 'amid the sun', 'a Shape all light', and in her hand

a crystal glass
Mantling with bright Nepenthe.²

¹ A. C. Bradley calls my attention to the phrase 'birth's orient portal' in *Hellas* (202). In the *Mod. Lang. Review* (October 1914) he shows from many passages that Shelley did not think of a 'cavern' as necessarily closed at the further end.

² 343-363. The drops that the Shape flings from her left hand I imagine to drift through the cavern and fall on the grass beside and

She glides, out of the burning radiance, under the cavern-shade, and along the rivulet, to Rousseau's side, and at his entreaty for knowledge she offers him the cup to drink. But the moment he drinks there sweeps over him the new vision of the cold bright Car, almost extinguishing the first fair Shape. Almost, but not quite: he feels her presence beside him still, although

More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep;
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam
Through the sick day in which we wake to weep
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost. (427-31.)

These lines alone would, I think, entitle us to feel that the 'Shape all light' represents a spirit of good, and indeed supreme good, the life-of-life, the loveliness in the universe—even if we had not the other clues and the marked likeness to such radiant figures as those in *Alastor*, and *Epipsychidion*, and the *Witch of Atlas*. I cannot help thinking also that the drowning of the fair Shape in the world's welter and the impoverishing of Rousseau himself may be reminiscent to some degree of the lines in *Faust* that were ringing in Shelley's head:

Over the noblest gift, the spirit's splendour,
There floods an alien, ever-alien stream;
When this world's wealth is won, our souls surrender,
The larger hope we call a lying dream.
Our life of life, the visions grave and glorious,
Fade, and the earthly welter is victorious.
Imagination once, fire-winged with hope,
Filled all eternity, and flamed to heaven;
But now it dwindles to a petty scope,
While joy on joy falls round us, wrecked and riven.
Deep in the heart Care makes her evil nest, &c.¹

beyond Rousseau. From his position he could see rainbow-lights in those near him.

¹ *Faust*, 634-44:

Dem Herrlichsten, was auch der Geist empfangen,
Drängt immer fremd und fremder Stoff sich an;

That the Shape can be good and yet her cup a cup of danger, is only another expression for the belief I take to be fundamental in Shelley's conception of Rousseau's character. The dream of a sublime rapture awakes his craving for anything rapturous, however base: that is the paradox and tragedy in his desire. The Nepenthe in the cup appears to be such a dream, inspired and perilous, the dream of an all-satisfying experience in which love—the Nepenthe love—may be, for Rousseau as for Shelley, the deepest element, but which, as Rousseau's cry for knowledge shows, is wider than love in the ordinary sense. The whole draught is surely akin to 'the oracular vapour' in *Prometheus Unbound*,

Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth,
And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
To deep intoxication. (II. iii. ll. 5-8.)

It does madden, it does intoxicate, and only the strongest can drink it without losing their footing. There may be some who know the joy of 'a heart that every hour runs wild, yet never once doth go astray'.¹ But Rousseau is not of these, and I think Shelley has intended to indicate this, even before the draught, by the touch of shame in his request (394), and by the darkness that the sight of the fair Shape brings over his brain:

Wenn wir zum Guten dieser Welt gelangen,
Dann heisst das Bessere Trug und Wahn.
Die uns das Leben gaben, herrliche Gefühle,
Erstarren in dem irdischen Gewühle.
Wenn Phantasie sich sonst mit kühnem Flug
Und hoffnungsvoll zum Ewigen erweitert,
So ist ein kleiner Raum ihr nun genug,
Wenn Glück auf Glück im Zeitenstrudel scheidert,
Die Sorge nistet gleich im tiefen Herzen, . . .

Shelley quotes the first lines, writing to Gisborne, October 22, 1821. With *Sorge* cp. ll. 523-4 in the *Triumph*.

¹ See Wordsworth's *Matthew*.

And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
 Her feet like embers; and she, thought by thought,
 Trampled its sparks into the dust of death. (386-8.)

It is possible to take this as merely describing the blessed rapture where

Thought was not, in enjoyment it expired;
 but the phrasing has a bitter turn suggestive of destruction. Locock, in his edition, goes so far as to cite these lines against the view that the Shape is the Spirit of Eternal Beauty in the world. But the interpretation I offer seems to me to answer his objection. The actual evil lies, not in the cup itself, but in him who drinks it unworthily. And it is hard to be worthy.

In any case, I think there is a likeness to a situation in *Faust* which may help us to understand Shelley's idea. The siren-song to which Faust falls asleep sings of nothing ignoble, but of a starry heaven of peace and love and life, of the spirits who fly

Alle zum Leben,
 Alle zur Ferne
 Liebender Sterne,
 Seliger Huld. (1502-5.)

But Faust falls asleep to it: and in his sleep Mephistopheles escapes from his control. Faust 'is not the man to hold the Devil fast' (1509). That song at the beginning, and at the end the ruin of Margaret. So with Rousseau: the glory of the 'Shape all light' at the dawn, and in the afternoon,¹ in spite of the illumination he has given to the world, the horrible distortion of 'the grim Feature' that has lost the likeness of a man. There must have been high courage in Shelley's heart if he could turn on himself like this, at his age, 'nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita', and

¹ The poet, I think, allows the time to shift, with visionary speed, from noon in l. 64 to afternoon, or perhaps evening, when Rousseau tells his story (e. g. 195, 537).

say, 'This is what you may come to, if you cannot learn to forbear.' (188-9.)

The vision of the distortion and dissolution of personality through caprice and craving culminates in the spectral scene described by Rousseau, when the air is peopled with 'dim forms', phantoms that came out of the company round him, and as they came sucked with them the strength and beauty of the figures that gave them birth. These phantoms, it would appear, are of two kinds: some are the superstitions of men, ghastly spectres born of priestcraft and tyranny and legalism, shadows thrown from the shadow-thoughts of men, and strangely distorted (488); while others are their own evil desires, the parts they wish to play, masks, as it were, that are formed on their faces and then drop from them, leaving the faces wrecked. (535-43.)

The metaphor of 'masks' is a favourite one with Shelley,¹ but he expands it here in a singular and striking way. The masks not only disguise the true self—the spark with which Heaven lit the spirit—but they corrupt and exhaust it when it should be fed and developed, 'with purer nutriment supplied.' The evil desires, as they fall, leave deadly traces of their work, and, like the superstitions, hover round the figures, veiling them and extinguishing their glow.² And these masks are moulded by Life. Here Shelley

¹ Locock cites e.g. *Prometheus Unbound*, III. iv. 65, &c. The assumption of 'masks' by men in society is the theme for a telling passage in the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, Bk. ii. Letter xiv. fin.

² It is hard to say whether the 'discoloured flakes of snow' (511) refer to impure desires or to legalistic superstitions about marriage. For Rousseau's sense of degradation and exhaustion through caprice, see *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Bk. ii. xvii. init. and fin.: 'Enfin me voilà tout-à-fait dans le torrent . . . je commence à sentir l'ivresse où cette vie . . . plonge ceux qui la mènent . . . je vois ainsi défigurer ce divin modèle que je porte au-dedans de moi . . . je flotte de caprice en caprice . . . Confus, humilié, consterné, de sentir dégrader en moi la nature de l'homme, . . . je reviens le soir . . . accablé d'un dégoût mortel, et le cœur vide et gonflé comme un ballon rempli d'air.'

seems to follow, for these slaves, the Godwinian view to which he refers in the Notes on *Hellas* (4): 'It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation . . . whose connection with our character is determined by events.' To begin with, the shadow-masks and the parent-souls are all alike, the uniform primaevial innocence is scarcely blurred, and then some of the masks grow so distorted beneath the glare that they seem nothing but shapeless clouds. Shadows of this kind issue from men whose personality is obliterated by circumstance; and it is on this passive malleable element in human nature that evil can do its work.

So I read the difficult lines :

Each like himself and like each other were
 At first; but some distorted seemed to be
 Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;
 And of this stuff the car's creative ray
 Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there.
(530-534.)

There may be much doubt as to exactly how these lines should be taken, but little, I think, of the general sense, and none of the power in the vision that shows us the withered creatures in the end :

The marble brow of youth was cleft
 With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
 Desire, like a lioness bereft
 Of her last cub, glared ere it died. (523-526.)

But is this the end? The last lines printed in the Oxford edition are not even the last that we possess. Others were found by Garnett and are published by Locock. To the poet's despairing question :

'Then what is life?' I cried—

the poem went on :

The cripple cast
 One look upon the car, which now had rolled
 Onward, as if that look must be the last,
 And answered, 'Happy those for whom the gold
 Of ——'

There it breaks off, but it breaks off on the note of 'the sacred few' who had been untouched by the Conqueror. Could these be called happy by Shelley if he had conceived them as the only ones saved out of an expiring company? Other poets, perhaps, might have thought of such a state as happy, but not Shelley. And what of 'the living flame' with which some of them touched the world? Did nothing come of that? When we consider these points, and the kindred hints throughout the poem of a deeper life, 'a more extensive state of being' behind and beyond the present dream, as the Ocean and 'the realm without a name' lie beyond the path of the Car; when we remember how, from his earliest work to his latest, Shelley's hope was of evil conquered and men rescued through 'the magnetic leading of chosen and consecrated spirits',¹ then it is hard not to believe that he would have ended this poem also with a vision in which the Conqueror would be conquered, as the individual spoilers had themselves been spoiled (235), and Love, untrammelled and unperverted, would rise triumphant

from its awful throne of patient power
 In the wise heart,

as it rose with Prometheus, to fold 'over the world its healing wings'. Such a belief is strengthened by a comparison with the *Trionfi* of Petrarch. The very name, the 'Triumph of Life', which might be thought to cut against the suggestion, is seen, because of the Petrarchan parallel, to support it. For in Petrarch's poem the conqueror of each

¹ See Brailsford's admirable study in *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle* (Home University Library).

Triumph is in turn overcome by the conqueror of the next, until the last is reached: Worldly Love by Chastity in the life of Laura, and her life by Death, and Death by Fame, and Fame by Time, and Time by Deity. And Petrarch prepares us at the outset for such a reversal, not only by speaking of individual conquerors who are themselves conquered, but by the deliberate introduction of one figure walking in peace and freedom through the Triumph of Worldly Love, the figure of Laura, 'in libertate e'n pace.'¹ Shelley, as we have seen, followed Petrarch's example, here and elsewhere, in his own way, and the natural inference is that he meant so to follow it to the end, and that among the 'great plans'² for poetry surging through his head in those last months was one for a second and a more glorious Triumph, where the Promethean conquerors, the powers 'from the unknown God', enter into their kingdom, 'the world' is overcome, and

Conquest is dragged captive through the deep.

F. MELIAN STAWELL.

¹ *Tr. dell' Amore*, iii. 102.

² Letter to Ollier, September 25, 1821. (See also to the same, February 16 and February 22.) The fragment written in Italian *Una Favola* (dated by Garnett, 1820), has interesting points in common with the *Triumph of Life*, e. g. the beguiling of the hero by 'the Siren' Life in his search for the promises of Love, the vain pursuit through cavern and valley and forest, and the vision of the terrible phantom-like forms, 'evil companions of Life,' of whom none can say whether they were 'the spectres of his own dead thoughts or the shadows of the living thoughts of Love'. And the fragment breaks off with a prophecy from Life's twin sister Death that only in her kingdom can the wanderers' longings be fulfilled: 'I await ye where ye needs must come, for I dwell with Love and Eternity, with whom the souls whose love is everlasting must needs hold communion.' (Garnett's tr., *Prose Works*, ed. Buxton Forman, vol. iii, pp. 83 ff.)

EMILY BRONTË—A RECONSIDERATION

BESIDES the unfailing crop of comment and conjecture, the past four years have yielded some new material of real importance for the study of the Brontës. The publication of Emily Brontë's Complete Poems in 1910, and of Charlotte Brontë's letters to M. Heger in 1913, interested all sections of Brontë students. But the interest aroused by Emily's new poems was little to the interest aroused by Charlotte's new letters. This is characteristic of the Brontë cult. For admirers of the Brontës fall into two bands. Some are interested in the writers, others in the women. And the latter sometimes make things hard for the former. Their Lives and Letters, Circles, Keys, Footsteps, and Secrets are a kind of Enchanted Ground. A low mist or fog hangs over it, the breath of that great public which takes gossip for literature; and through this mist the authentic figures of the sisters loom vague and distorted. It has been so from the first. Half the success of *Jane Eyre* was a success of scandal and mystery. *Villette* was obviously a *roman à clef*. Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* excited as much curiosity as it appeased, and propagated a fresh scandal by its veiled attack on Mrs. Robinson. Mary Robinson tore the veil away in her *Life of Emily Brontë*. And so it has gone on. At one time it was the wretched Branwell through whose eyes the sisters were supposed to have seen life. Now it is all the Brussels episode and M. Heger. M. Heger is Paul Emmanuel; he is Crimsworth; he is Rochester; he is Heathcliff. We have come to shudder at his name.

These questions have an interest of their own, no doubt. But the student of literature must protest that to the study

of literature as such, this insatiable quest for origins is at best irrelevant, at worst merely obstructive. It confuses our sense of values. We must escape from this Enchanted Ground if we are to see the truth in its real shape and dimensions—I mean not the truth *about* the Brontës, but the truth that was *in* the Brontës, their immortal part, which is in their books.

We turn back, then, to the books themselves; we return in middle age—I speak for my contemporaries—to those favourites of our youth, and we find that something has gone. Gone in varying degrees, perhaps, and whether from them or from us is hard to say; but something that intoxicated once has evaporated. Re-read *Shirley* after twenty years and you will be shocked to find how bad it is, with its parade of French, its desolating humour, its rhetoric, its satire so provincial always, and even, in ecclesiastical matters, so underbred. It makes one positively thirst for Jane Austen.

To name Jane Austen is to name the exemplar most dangerous to the Brontës. Their genius is rebuked by hers. That admirable art, so solid, so natural, so close to recognizable life in an ordered, recognized English society, so sure in its fingering of the social motives, is a terrible touchstone for all that is pretentious or provincial, rhetorical or overstrained in the Brontë novels. Poor Charlotte had that model forever thrust in her face, till she could not speak of Miss Austen without a little spirit of jealousy:

‘The passions are perfectly unknown to her: she rejects even a speaking acquaintance with that stormy sisterhood. What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study; but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life and the sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores. She no more, with her mind’s eye, beholds the heart of her race than each man, with bodily vision, sees the heart in his heaving breast. Jane Austen was a

complete and most sensible lady, but a very incomplete and rather insensible (*not senseless*) woman.'

I do not hold with that conclusion. Such inference is always dangerous: in Miss Austen's case it is demonstrably unjust. Jane Austen had an affectionate and unselfish temper: her sincere, unaffected piety sustained her uncomplaining through the cruel illness that ended in her early death. For she, too, we must not forget, 'died in a time of promise', counting few more years than Charlotte herself. No: if Jane Austen avoided passionate themes it was because she knew where her own strength lay, and deliberately limited her art to its congenial province—the traditional woman's province of the drawing-room.

The fact remains that she did so limit it. Her novels abound in clergymen; but of religion in its inward or personal sense she never speaks. Though she lived through the Napoleonic wars, into a time when the condition-of-England question was beginning to prey on serious minds, she has nothing to say of politics, home or foreign; nor would you guess, except for a casual mention of prize-money, that during most of her life the existence of Britain was staked upon the mastery of the seas. Her avoidance of passion is still more significant, because more plainly deliberate. In all her novels there is only one episode of passion—for Lydia's affair with Wickham no more deserves that name than does the mating of any other pair of geese: the one passionate episode in Jane Austen is the elopement of Maria Rushworth with Mr. Crawford. And see how Miss Austen deals with that. She must relate it for the sake of her moral; but having done so, she catches up her train as fast as she can and skips back to the proprieties. 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can, impatient to restore everybody, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest.'

Well, there were to be other pens. Other women were to step beyond these limits and apply the art of prose fiction, which she had perfected for social comedy, to graver and more passionate themes. Therein lies the historical importance of the Brontës. Even *Shirley*, failure as it is, means greatly: there is the attempt, though frustrated and finally abandoned, to turn a woman's mind upon that same 'condition-of-England problem' which Kingsley had brought within the province of prose fiction; and feminism has inspired at least one miraculous burst of eloquence in *Shirley's* vision of the Great Mother. Public interests are lacking in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, but the note of passion lifts them above melodrama and sentiment, towards the region of tragedy. In that region Emily habitually moved. With a genius less various and inventive than Charlotte's, she had a bolder stroke and a more speculative temper; and the issues which her art raises have been much less confused by biographical considerations. They call her the Sphinx of our literature; but, indeed, Emily has no 'secret', or none that the gossips could comprehend or care to learn. That she was afflicted by Branwell's fall is certain; that she used her observation of his symptoms is possible, for the gesture of Heathcliff's passion must, one thinks, have been observed; but that Branwell or Branwell's fate gave her genius its bent is incredible, for some of her most characteristic thoughts had found expression years before his catastrophe, when Branwell was to all appearance still 'doing well'. The Brussels episode meant nothing to her but hard work and homesickness. The one thing clear in her attitude to M. Heger is disdain. Her character was already set, and the currents of her soul determined, so far as they were externally determined, by influences deeper and more vital than the precepts of her Belgian instructor.

The first of these influences was her early familiarity

with death. Her mother died when she was little more than three. (That loss had a further effect on Emily, in that it exposed her too much to her father's influence, hardening that natural inflexibility of temper which shows not only in her life but in the unbending masculinity of her prose style. But our business for the moment is not with this, but with her early familiarity with death.) When she was seven her sisters Maria and Elizabeth died within six weeks of each other. The churchyard where they were laid beside their mother adjoins the parsonage. You pass into it from the parsonage garden by 'a little wicket gate'. How often must Emily's childish feet have stumbled at graves!

But the garden had another exit. Through a 'little and a lone green lane' you emerge at once upon the moors. 'My sister loved the moors,' says Charlotte; and in a passage of exquisite delicacy she describes their austere monotony, flushed with the brief purple of autumn, and the nooks of beauty which they enfold. Emily knew those nooks; but she loved even more that austere monotony of the open spaces, with the pageant of the sky over all. Here was nature, here was freedom. On the moors, Ellen Nussey tells us, Emily was like a new creature. Her reserve would vanish: she would run ahead with Branwell to lay stepping-stones over the becks for the rest of the party; or, lying by a pool in one of those nooks of beauty, she 'played like a young child with the tadpoles in the water, making them swim about, and then fell to moralizing on the strong and the weak, the brave and the cowardly, as she chased them with her hand'.

Evening brought the girls home, to sit round the kitchen fire 'establishing' their interminable plays, or 'to pace the floor with their arms about one another. The attitude is symbolic. Never was a more united, a more self-sufficing family. Charlotte indeed had some school friends; but not

Emily. She never had a friend¹: she was never to have a lover. Her whole affections were focussed upon home. Haworth was the centre and circumference of her world. From her seventh till her sixteenth year she never once quitted it, and only once, for a few days, in the last seven years of her life. Indeed, she could scarcely live elsewhere: the first attempt to uproot her from Haworth nearly killed her.² Even at Haworth she was much alone: her brother and sisters were often absent, leaving her to do housework, to read, and to write in the parsonage garden between the churchyard and the moors.

These are the essential facts about Emily's life. Yet how little they explain her essential nature is clear when we reflect how differently circumstances almost identical operated on the natures of Charlotte and Anne. The reminiscences of the gossips do not bring us much nearer. There are few figures more familiar than Emily's, and few souls so remote. We see her roaming the moors, slim and strong; in the house helpful, independent, extraordinarily courageous; in Brussels heavy with homesickness, leaning on Charlotte, reserved and even repellent to strangers. The passionate pale face survives in Branwell's portrait,³ with the abundant dark ringlets and the 'kind, kindling, liquid eyes' that Miss Nussey praises, dark eyes enraptured with the forward view. And lastly we have her portrait at full length drawn by her sister's hand in *Shirley*. But, as a portrait of Emily, Shirley, I fear, is

¹ Only two letters of Emily's survive, both to 'Dear Miss Nussey', friendly but not intimate.

² This was when she went as a pupil to Rothead. Some years later she went as governess to Law Hill. This is the one obscure episode in her life. Mrs. Gaskell believed that she was only six months at Law Hill, but Mrs. Chadwick has shown reason to think that she stayed for about two years.

³ Now in the National Portrait Gallery. The reference is to the profile, not to the group.

a worse failure than Branwell's artless painting. Shirley is a bundle of traits and opinions, taken, no doubt, from Emily; but not the living Emily, certainly not all of her. The fact seems to be that Charlotte did not wholly understand Emily, nor enjoy her whole confidence. Our view of their relations has been distorted by that picture of them in the garden at Brussels, with Emily leaning heavily on Charlotte. That was in Brussels; at home, in their native air, it was Charlotte who leaned; Emily was the cardinal figure in that household, independent, self-sustaining, and sustaining others—the man of the house, as she had need to be, for there was little help in poor Branwell :

αὐτὰρ ὁ μούνος ἔην μετὰ πέντε κασιγνήτησιν.

In her account of the discovery of Emily's poems Charlotte owns, in effect, that they two were not perfectly intimate. If there was one person to whom Emily opened her whole heart it was not Charlotte but Anne. And Anne has not told.

There was one secret that Emily kept from Charlotte, but not from Anne—the secret of her imaginative life. It is clear from Charlotte's own account that until she found the unlocked desk in 1845 she had never seen any of Emily's poems. But Anne had: indeed, the two had collaborated for years. The story of this collaboration and secret imaginative life is very curious. Since the publication of Mr. Shorter's book on *Charlotte Brontë and her Circle* it has been known that Emily and Anne worked together for years on what they called the *Gondal Chronicle*. But what the *Gondal Chronicle* was or how it originated has only become clear—in so far as it is yet clear—since the publication of Emily's complete poems in 1910, and Mrs. Chadwick's subsequent discovery of manuscripts in the British Museum. What, then, was this mysterious *Chronicle*? Readers of Mrs. Gaskell will remember Charlotte's account

of the 'plays' that the children 'established': she describes at length the establishment of 'The Islanders' and adds, 'Our best plays are secret plays.' In its origin the *Gondal Chronicle* was one of those secret plays. We know now that it was established as early as 1834. These plays were long dramatic inventions, in which the children assumed all manner of historic or romantic characters. The Gondal play dealt with the vicissitudes of the imaginary kingdom of Gondal, a northern land 'of mists and moorlands drear'. At first all the children took part; Charlotte was the Duke of Zamorna and Branwell was Alexander Percy, Earl of Northangerland. For some years after 1835 the family was much scattered, and the others forgot Gondal. But on Emily, alone at Haworth or Law Hill, the spell of the misty northern land remained, and she continued to make it the receptacle of her poetic musings. Early in 1842, as I make out from Anne's memorandum, on the eve of her departure from Brussels, she took Anne into partnership—she had already taken her into confidence—and together they set about the compilation of the *Gondal Chronicle*, a work which engaged and amused them for the next three years and a half. On a little trip which they took in June 1845, they are still found playing at the Gondals. 'During our excursion', Emily noted, 'we were Ronald Macalgin, Henry Angora, Juliet Angusteena, Rosabella Esmaldan, Ella and Julian Egremont, Catharine Navarre, and Cordelia Fitzaphnold, escaping from the palaces of instruction to join the Royalists, who are hard pressed at present by the victorious Republicans.' Anne adds the tantalizing remark: 'The Unique Society about half a year ago were wrecked on a desert island as they were returning from Gaul.' We would give a good deal for the Proceedings of the Unique Society! Anne is rather despondent about the Gondals: they 'are in a sad state', 'not in first-rate playing condition'. Emily, however,

writes in a sanguine and hearty style: 'The Gondals still flourish bright as ever. We intend sticking firm by the rascals, as long as they delight us, which I am glad to say that they do at present.' This was in June. In autumn Charlotte discovered Emily's poems. The exposure of her childish secret probably explains Emily's resentment. At all events, the Gondal poems cease from that date. Though in a holiday temper she had declared her intention of sticking to the rascals, in other moods she was growing weary of them. It has not hitherto been observed—indeed, the observation could not have been made till the Complete Poems were published in 1910—that the famous stanzas, 'Often rebuked yet always back returning,' are, in fact, a 'Farewell to Gondal'. She tells how she had often left the 'busy chase of wealth and learning'—her German studies and plans for school-keeping—for 'idle dreams'—these Gondal poems, to wit. But now she grows weary of them:

To-day, I will not seek the shadowy region;
 Its unsustaining vastness waxes drear;
 And visions rising, legion after legion,
 Bring the unreal world too strangely near.

She will turn from it, not to follow traditional paths, but to the only real world that calls to her own nature, the mountains and glens of home. She is in the mood for *Wuthering Heights*.

But for years—for some ten years, apparently—Gondal had been a resource and an escape. We cannot hope to reconstruct the Gondal Cycle even in outline. We cannot tell how much of it there was, or even whether it was all in verse. From a remark of Emily's about some 'articles' that Anne was writing on the First War, I infer (but with no confidence) that the *Chronicle* proper, in which Anne collaborated, was in prose. But all that remains are fragments of the verses with which Emily precluded, or

accompanied, or interspersed it. Of the Complete Poems Miss Sinclair reckons eighty-three as belonging to the Gondal Cycle. But even her genius cannot build up these fragments into any coherent whole. Gondal is a 'shadowy region'. Through its huge cloudy symbols we make out two or three figures. There is King Julius—Julius Angora, perhaps, the King of Almadore—spurred by the ambition of his Queen Rosina to attempt and achieve the crown of Gondal, struck down by an assassin in the hour of triumph. There is the assassin Douglas—but whether the assassin of Julius or not I cannot tell—whose wild flight and escape up Gobeloin's glen are related in a gallant ballad, and who reappears in another long but mutilated and interpolated ballad, to murder a princess of Gondal's royal race. More fascinating, but still more obscure, is the figure of Zamorna, the man of sin. He has wooed and carried off Percy's daughter, Mary. She droops, and is dying. Zamorna, branded with remorse, seeks out Percy, who has withdrawn from this shadowy warfare, to tempt him back again to strife. But on what side, or to what issue, we shall never know. The other figures are still more shadowy.

Yet we are grateful for even these glimpses into the secret chamber that was closed to Charlotte. In the ordinary affairs of life there were, of course, no secrets between the sisters. In all Charlotte's projects for study and school-keeping Emily was a wilful but a trusty and even a cheerful ally. Yes, cheerful. Two memoranda exist which Emily made on her twenty-third and twenty-seventh birthdays, for Anne to open later. They give a new impression of her domestic temper. 'We are all stout and hearty,' she writes in 1841, and guesses that four years hence will find them all merrily seated in their own sitting-room 'in some pleasant and flourishing seminary. . . . Our debts will be paid off, and we shall have cash in hand to a considerable amount.' In 1845 she writes as bravely as ever: 'I am

quite contented for myself: not as idle as formerly, altogether as hearty . . . and merely desiring that everybody could be as comfortable as myself and as undesponding, and then we should have a very tolerable world of it.' Such was the domestic Emily.

But in the very month in which she penned that first memorandum, declaring herself stout and hearty, and looking forward as sanguinely as Mr. Micawber to that flourishing seminary and cash in hand to a considerable amount, in that very month she wrote the following poem :

I see around me piteous tombstones grey
 Stretching their shadows far away.
 Beneath the turf my footsteps tread
 Lie low and lone the silent dead ;
 Beneath the turf, beneath the mould,
 For ever dark, for ever cold.
 And my eyes cannot hold the tears
 That memory hoards from vanished years.
 For time and Death and mortal pain
 Give wounds that will not heal again.
 Let me remember half the woe
 I've seen and heard and felt below,
 And heaven itself, so pure and blest,
 Could never give my spirit rest.
 Sweet land of light! Thy children fair
 Know nought akin to our despair ;
 Nor have they felt, nor can they tell
 What tenants haunt each mortal cell,
 What gloomy guests we hold within,
 Torments and madness, fear and sin!
 Well, may they live in ecstasy
 Their long eternity of joy ;
 At least we would not bring them down
 With us to weep, with us to groan.
 No, Earth would wish no other sphere
 To taste her cup of suffering drear ;
 She turns from heaven a tearless eye
 And only mourns that *we* must die!
 Ah, mother, what shall comfort thee
 In all this boundless misery?

To cheer our eager eyes awhile
 We see thee smile, how fondly smile!
 But who reads not through the tender glow
 Thy deep, unutterable woe?
 Indeed, no darling land above
 Can cheat thee of thy children's love.
 We all in life's departing shine
 Our last dear longings blend with thine,
 And struggle still and strive to trace
 With clouded gaze thy darling face.
 We would not leave our nature home
 For *any* world beyond the tomb.
 No, mother, on thy kindly breast
 Let us be laid in lasting rest,
 Or waken but to share with thee
 A mutual immortality.

All poets, in a sense, lead double lives. But it is seldom that the diremption of the practical from the imaginative life is so profound, seldom that the two lives flow in currents so distinct and so different in their emotional colouring. The atmosphere of Gondal is an atmosphere of unrelieved gloom. The Gondal poems are full of the lamentations of captives and exiles, the noise of battle and siege, and garments rolled in blood. But I am speaking not merely of the Gondals. In her more personal poems, poems that do not belong to the Cycle and cannot therefore be dismissed as dramatic, the prevailing tone is the same. Yet the author is stout and hearty, comfortable, contented, undesponding. If this be a contradiction in nature we shall meet with stranger contradictions in Emily. In mitigation of this I would recall her girlish moralizings on the strong and the weak, the brave and the cowardly, and the wish expressed in her second memorandum that everybody could be as comfortable as herself and as undesponding. Emily might have said with Goethe, 'For myself I am happy: only for others I am not happy.' Happiness flowed in upon her from the homely round of duty, the eager pursuit of knowledge, and the glory of summer skies. But even the

last of these influences seldom inspired her muse, the others never. Her imagination was resonant to the note of human suffering and death. Yet humanitarian pity is not her ruling passion in the sense in which it is Hardy's. If in the poem I have quoted it rises to an agony that makes her turn her back on the conventional consolations of religion, it is to be noted that the piteous tombstones which she sees are those of Haworth churchyard, and that the nearest of the graves are those of her own dead. The circle of her compassion may spread till it embraces the human family and their mother earth; but its centre is in that native spot in which she was rooted so deeply that she would not quit it even for heaven. The love of home is her ruling passion, of the home of her childhood. Emily's was one of those narrow intense natures on which the experiences of childhood leave an impression so deep and ineffaceable that, in comparison with them, all later experiences are like breath upon a mirror. At the heart of her thoughts the memory of 'the best beloved of years' lies like a core of joy; but of joy so keen as to be pain:

And even yet I dare not let it languish,
 Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
 For, drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
 How could I seek the empty world again?

These lines are familiar to all her readers. Here are some others from the newly-published poems not unworthy to be set beside them:

I

That wind, I used to hear it swelling
 With joy divinely deep.
 You might have seen my hot tears welling,
 But rapture made me weep.
 I used to love on winter nights
 To lie and dream alone
 Of all the rare and real delights
 My lonely years had known.

And oh! above the best of those
 That coming time should bear,
 Like heaven's own glorious stars they rose
 Still beaming bright and fair.

II

When days of beauty deck the vale,
 Or stormy nights descend,
 How well my spirit knows the path
 On which it ought to wend.
 It seeks the consecrated spot
 Beloved in childhood's years;
 The space between is all forgot,
 Its sufferings and its tears.

III

The damp stands in the long green grass
 As thick as morning's tears;
 And dreamy scents of fragrance pass
 That breathe of other years.

A nature thus centred is not so much careless as impatient of worldly experience and restraints. It asks only to be left alone with its memories and its dreams: 'Leave me the heart that now I bear, And give me liberty,' was Emily's sole prayer for herself. With these she will face her fate without its mask, seeking no celestial aid. And with such memories at her heart there should be no despair. For all her preoccupation with mortality, Emily was never in love with death. If at times, in her poems, she seems to be so, she knows that the cry for annihilation is a coward cry, raised by an enfeebled will that despairs of recovering the vision of the spirit whose gaze once transfigured and glorified the triune stream of life. For herself we know that when her hour came she fought silently and resentfully against the indignity of death. In Charlotte's terrible words, she was 'torn panting and reluctant from a happy life'.

'What was Emily Brontë's religion?' was a question that troubled Mrs. Gaskell. She had discernment to perceive

that neither Charlotte's Broad-Church Anglicanism nor Anne's Calvinism could have satisfied Emily. But the only evidence she gathered was a single anecdote of Mary Taylor's. 'One time', says Miss Taylor, 'I mentioned that some one had asked me what religion I was of . . . and that I had said that that was between God and me. Emily (who was lying on the hearthrug) exclaimed, "that's right." This was all I ever heard Emily say on religious subjects.' Charlotte could have told her more; for this secret at least Charlotte had half-divined. There is a strange passage in *Shirley*, the full significance of which is not at once apparent, in which Charlotte describes Shirley's 'genii-life', her 'visions' and 'trances'. In auspicious moments, as at moonrise after a happy day, a still delight glows in Shirley's veins, that gives her experience of a genii-life. She reaches a station little lower than the angels; her soul possesses the vision of life as she wishes it. No—she has no wish; the glory is swifter than thought or aspiration. While the trance is upon her she is quite mute. And when it has gone she is too careless of her rare gift, too ignorant of its rarity, to seize and fix the apparition, tell the vision revealed.

This testimony is none the less precious because Charlotte herself seems scarcely to have realized how rare is the experience that she was recording. For it is clear—and here we come upon the deepest paradox in Emily's nature—that this home-lover, this contemner of heaven, was at heart a visionary, a natural mystic. I mean not that she had attained by logical reasoning, like Mr. McTaggart, to a supra-logical philosophy of life which might, by contrast, be called mystical. Mysticism is not a philosophy: it is an experience. That experience, that *ἐνωσις* or immediate union with the divine, which Porphyry tells us that his master attained four times in six years and he himself once, that blinding experience had been Emily's. How often or

in what measure I cannot tell. In adult life she apparently came, as other visionaries have come, to associate its recurrence with those 'best beloved of years', and to believe that the vision had been constant in her childhood. In maturer years she yearns to recover that benign assurance; she longs to be alone for an hour, free from earthly cares and joys and restless thoughts, that her spirit may stretch its wings, 'Bask in the sunshine of the sky, And be alone with God.' But more often the trance came upon her with the rising of evening winds and the onset of the stars. To the Visionary waiting with lamp trimmed, in a figure familiar to mystical literature, the celestial lover comes in the night 'like visitant of air'. To the Prisoner, the celestial messenger 'comes with western winds, with evening's wandering airs, With that clear dusk of heaven that brings the thickest stars'. And in a newly-published fragment she speaks without a parable:

I'm happiest now when most away
 I can tear my soul from its mould of clay,
 On a windy night when the moon is bright,
 And my eye can wander through worlds of light,
 When I am not, and none beside,
 Nor earth, nor sea, nor cloudless sky,
 But only spirit wandering wide
 Through infinite immensity.

Once and only once, in the fragment of *The Prisoner*, has Emily Brontë attempted, in lines too familiar for quotation, to seize and fix the apparition, tell the vision revealed—to describe the soundless calm which heralds the dawn of the Invisible, the spirit stooping for the last leap into the abyss of Being, the agony of the return to the flesh. Students of mystical literature can tell whether and how closely this description of the trance can be paralleled: one thing is certain, that the experience which Emily here describes had been her own.

I have said that mysticism is not a philosophy. But

philosophies have been built upon it, and Emily herself, in her *Last Lines*, sought to express the faith that she had reared on her mystical experience. Her too-bold dying song has troubled some of her devoutest admirers; even Mr. Swinburne was perturbed, strangely for him, with the doubt whether the faith it declared was compatible with a belief in personal immortality. To the mystic in the moment of ecstasy such doubts are probably meaningless; but the answer that Emily's reason would have given is fairly clear. She would have said that in this mystic union the soul is as necessary to God as God is to the soul.

When a poet and mystic like Emily Brontë turned to prose fiction, what kind of novel was she likely to write? Not social comedy: she knew nothing of Society. Nor a novel of manners: she knew the language and customs of her Yorkshire neighbours well, but knew them almost wholly by report. Neither had she the invention and eloquence which make *Jane Eyre*, at the lowest, a great melodrama. A harsh critic might say that the construction of *Wuthering Heights* is clumsy, its diction bookish, and its characters so repulsive as to justify Rossetti's saying that the scene is laid in hell. If it mattered, one might temper all these criticisms. One might claim that the clumsiness of construction is due to Emily's initial error in choosing the autobiographical method and her fidelity in clinging to it. The result is clumsy; yet Shakespeare would have called the method an honest method, and a practised artist like Mr. Conrad might have applied it even to such matter, with success. The style is certainly bookish in the sense that it has been formed by reading rather than by conversation. For the rest, it is a pure and manly style, stiffened here and there with racy northern words; its chief fault is that it is too even: all the characters speak alike, except those who speak in dialect. But none of these things is vital. The greatness of *Wuthering Heights* lies elsewhere.

Emily had little experience in the ordinary sense; but she had an intense inner life, and out of the depths of a nature passionate for home and freedom she created the image of a passion beside which all others look pale. It is the love of Catherine and Heathcliff that makes *Wuthering Heights* great. Rooted in the community of childhood, and watered by common memories of home and freedom, it binds their natures with a power stronger than death. The foundling Heathcliff, bullied and brutalized by Hindley Earnshaw, finds in Catherine his one friend and playmate. The first glimpse we get of them shows them skulking from Hindley's observation in the arch of the dresser, over which Catherine has hung up their pinafores for a curtain. Hindley degrades Heathcliff to a drudge, and the advent of the Lintons completes the separation. Catherine becomes engaged to Edgar Linton. But to a nature like hers the memories of childhood are ineffaceable. 'I dreamt once', she tells Nelly Dean, 'that I was in heaven. It did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy.' And of this home, for which she breaks her heart, Heathcliff is the centre. That life-in-others, which for happier girls is diffused over friends and family, for her is concentrated in Heathcliff. When she confesses her engagement to Nelly Dean she owns that her love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods, her love for Heathcliff like the rocks beneath: 'Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.' Heathcliff overhears the beginning of her confession but not the end. He slips away, and for three years is seen no more. When he returns Catherine has married Edgar. After a terrible quarrel between the two men, Catherine falls into delirium,

from which she wakes with the dream that she is back in her bed at home, on the day of her father's funeral. The seven years between have vanished. It is as if at twelve years old she had been wrenched from her home, to be turned at a stroke into the wife of a stranger, an exile henceforth from all that she loved. 'I wish I were out of doors!' she cries. 'I wish I were a girl again, half-savage and hardy and free. I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on these hills.' She throws open the window to breathe that air: in the darkness she fancies she sees the lights of home, and her own room with the candle in it, and Joseph's as he sits up to wait till she comes home.

She dies, and Heathcliff is left like a lost soul alone in the abyss. Two passions absorb his being, longing for Catherine and for revenge. He plots and waits for eighteen years. All the lands of the Earnshaws and the Lintons, with the two children who alone represent them, are at last in his power. The weapon is in his hand; and, lo, he has lost the will to strike. Longing for Catherine has consumed every other faculty. Nearer to him than the beat of his heart, the thought of her at last takes visible form to his eyes. For three days he lives in a strange ecstasy; forgetting to eat, almost to breathe; gazing at something that floats before him, with the agonized rapture of one whose joy is just beyond his grasp. On the fourth morning he is found dead, with a life-like gaze of exultation in his eyes. They bury him by Catherine's side: *kein Geistlicher hat ihn begleitet.*

If this were all we should call it a psychological study, and say that Heathcliff died the victim of a strong delusion. But over the psychological tragedy there hovers, throughout the tale, the mysterious suggestion that *Cathy is there*. This feeling is created very early in the story. It begins with that incident which first arouses our curiosity,

Lockwood's strange dream of the child-ghost at his window and Heathcliff's wild outburst on hearing of it. The impression is renewed when Catherine in her delirium declares that she will not rest in her grave without Heathcliff. On her death-bed she says: 'That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me: he's in my soul. . . . I'm tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart; but really with it, and in it.' When she is dead, what keeps Heathcliff from opening her grave is the sudden conviction that she is beside him. The rest of his life is an agonizing struggle to reach her, as she is struggling to reach him. And when he dies—but the sequel must be told in Emily's own words:

'I was going to the Grange one evening—a dark evening, threatening thunder—and just at the turn of the Heights I encountered a little boy with a sheep and two lambs before him; he was crying terribly; and I supposed the lambs were skittish, and would not be guided. "What is the matter, my little man?" I asked. "There's Heathcliff and a woman, yonder, under t'nab," he blubbered, "un' I darnut pass 'em." I saw nothing; but neither the sheep nor he would go on. . . .'

We, too, may see nothing: a natural explanation is left open. We may see nothing in Heathcliff either but the unredeemed fiend that Charlotte saw, 'never once swerving in his arrow-straight course to perdition.' Well, he thought himself bound for another haven. 'I tell you I have nearly attained *my* heaven,' he said; and died in the exultation of attaining it. I cannot judge of these issues: only I discern

Infinite passion and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn.

J. C. SMITH.

POSTSCRIPT.—Emily Brontë has been happy in her critics, and not least in the latest. The praise of Sidney Dobell,

Arnold, and Swinburne; of Mme. Duclaux, M. Maeterlinck, and M. Dimnet is some compensation for unfulfilled renown. But none of these great critics has written of Emily Brontë with more flashing insight than Miss May Sinclair; and my sole excuse for taking up the theme after her is that I had come to most of the conclusions set forth in this paper before I had read *The Three Brontës*, and that the fascination which Emily Brontë exerts is of a nature so personal that every admirer may claim the right to declare how it personally affects him.

J. C. S.

TRANSLATION FROM OLD ENGLISH

A NOTE AND AN EXPERIMENT

ROSSETTI, our poet of elaborate and troubled beauty, who may be said to have died of its obsession and of too much dreaming, was also, it happens, a poet distinguished, as hardly even Coleridge was, by the almost habitual rightness of his thinking about the business of his art. Of Beauty he said, 'I drew it in as simply as my breath': but not less certain or less native to him were his knowledge, his critical sense, his thoughtfulness, and clear perceptions. Upon what solid substratum of 'fundamental brainwork' he based his low, grave, ceremonious chants. How easily and simply right is everything he said or wrote about the art of verse! Coleridge among his predecessors, of his contemporaries Coventry Patmore (when the question is of principle or technique, of essences, that is, not embodiments), and for a later day perhaps Mrs. Meynell, have this constant grasp on what is needful, this intellectual thoroughness about matters of art, this saving knowledge of the medium and its conditions. They and he seem to be in ultimate possession of secrets; but he alone, one may believe, has uniform happiness in giving them aspect and articulation. And of his criticisms in prose, that which seems most to have acquired the directness and finality of verse itself is what has been called his 'First Commandment of Translation'. In the *Early Italian Poets*, in the Preface, it stands written: 'The life-blood of rhymed translation is this—that a good poem shall not be turned into a bad one. The only true motive for putting poetry into a fresh language must be to endow a fresh nation with one more

possession of beauty. Poetry not being an exact science, literalness of rendering is altogether secondary to this chief law. I say literalness—not fidelity, which is by no means the same thing. When literalness can be combined with what is thus the primary condition of success, the translator is fortunate, and must strive to unite them; when such object can only be obtained by paraphrase, that is his only path.'

Of Rossetti's primary condition of success, thus stated, the translator of Old English measures will do well to be persuaded. No version of poetry, however literal, however faithful, can be held to translate which does not itself read like poetry. When Mr. Robert Bridges turns—

Ibant obscuro sola sub nocte per umbram
perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna:
quale per incertam lunam sub luce maligna
est iter in silvis, ubi caelum condidit umbra
Iuppiter, et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem,

into—

They wer' amid the shadows by night in loneliness
obscure
Walking forth i' the void and vasty dominyon of Ades;
As by an uncertain moonray secretly illumin'd
One goeth in the forest, when heav'n is gloomily clouded,
And black night hath robb'd the colour and beauty from
all things;

when Mr. Arthur Symonds takes these lines of Catullus—

Soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda,

and re-creates them as—

Suns may set and suns upon earth arise:
As for us, when for us the brief light dies,
There is only night, and an everlasting sleeping;

translation is achieved. The original is re-created: its effect, character, and atmosphere are made to live again in

another language, and a fresh nation is indeed endowed with one more possession of beauty. It may well be that—to use a phrase and an example of Francis Thompson's—‘save by a heaven-born poet, who should perform on the Teuton epic the miracle which Edward Fitzgerald performed on Omar Khayyám’, our *Beowulf* cannot be so presented, but must continue to lead its tributary life in useful prose. But at least its translator must not permit himself to think so. He may doubt if he can introduce the values of poetry into his translation, but not that they exist in solemn splendour in his original. He must approach his task with this conviction of the poetry of the poem he would translate, with this complete poetic faith. When *Beowulf*'s men are waiting in Hrothgar's haunted hall for Grendel to come under cover of night from the misty slopes of the moorland, they fell to sleeping, each to an apparently untroubled rest. Then, says the poet—

Nænig heora þohte þæt he þanon scolde
eft eardlufan æfre gesecean
folc oðþe freoburh þær he afeded was.

Not one of them thought that he thereafter
Would live to behold again the home he loved,
His folk, or that free land wherein he was fostered.

And if we do not feel here, as in a score of other and not lesser moments in the story, that peculiar and presiding-significance of the thing imagined and expressed that we associate with epics only, that combination of a certain quality of experience, symbolic almost of all experience and of human nature, with a certain quality of expression which seems to *be* rather than merely *say* the thing it means—if we do not feel this and are not set thinking thus of similar experience and expression in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* and the *Song of Roland*, we had better spare ourselves and others the unavailing efforts to translate.

We wish, then, let us say, to translate the measures of

Old English poetry so as to be scrupulously true in our version to what was essential or beautiful in their art. Let us assume that we know an Old English line in its very soul: then can we re-create in another world, and in what is almost another language, a line that shall equal it in character, exactly in vigour it may be, on the one hand, or in simplicity and largeness on the other? Can we make a terse line of the old poetry strike the modern senses tersely, and a leisurely full-stocked line, a well-figured line, resound with the same rich contrivance? In the *Essay on Style* Pater says that the all-important thing in this close work of translation will be the right vocabulary: 'If the original be first rate, one's first care should be with its elementary particles, Plato, for instance, being often reproducible by an exact following, with no variation in structure, of word after word, as the pencil follows a drawing under tracing paper, so only each word or syllable be not of false colour, to change my illustration a little.' There are translations of *Beowulf* certainly that show how little this importance of the faithful vocabulary has been seen. But even more fundamental, certainly more difficult to answer, is the question of Rhythmical Form. What modern rhythm can be found or made which has sufficient analogy to the alliterative? And will it not in the end be the case that to reproduce the original we must write a modern stressed or accentual verse, with more or less systematic alliteration, and write it with care to secure the normal complement of stresses, and with indifference as to how many other unstressed or half-stressed syllables go to make the line?

Certainly, to those already persuaded of this, and hoping to put others, it may be, on the road to such persuasion, it must always seem ironically unfortunate that the one notable attempt to turn *Beowulf* into rhymeless alliterative verse, Morris's, is not only far from being a success, but is even of a nature to suggest to readers, familiar chiefly, if not only, with

the rhymed metres of modern poetry, that the uncouthness, the wryness, the roughness as of thorn-thickets, are necessary features of the alliterative line itself. And the misfortune is the more in that Morris, whose sympathy with the old northern temper was instinctive, whose *Sigurd* is the one poem of its century that is actually like an epic, must have seemed to many the one poet of modern times who could have translated *Beowulf* at all. The temper that drew him so steadily to the northern stories, with their sombre and almost terrifying simplicity of passion and grim austerity of scenery, was born with him. He was characterized, as we may say the Sagas were, by that tragic simplicity which tends to see things always in reference to a few large emotions and primal energies. You are conscious in him at once of that entire absence of sentiment and self-analysis ('dreary introspective nonsense' he called it) to which you are accustomed in them, so that beside him Chaucer, for instance, with whom he is often compared, seems really subtle and complex. He has a degree of 'supernaturalism' akin to that of the first Germanic poets, taking the form in him and them of a furtive longing for, and profound fear of, sinister images, dim moods, strange lands, questionable shapes. He had, too, the known Pagan fear of death, not in the least from deficiency of physical courage, rather because he recoiled, one fancies, simply from its final stay and pause. From 1860 onwards, when he first learned Icelandic with Eiríkr Magnússon, he loved this literature of the north more than any other in the world, and he made his own statement of faith in the terms of the religion of the Norsemen.

'It may be that the world shall worsen, that men shall grow afraid to "change their life", that the world shall be weary of itself and sicken, and none but faint hearts be left—who knows? So at any rate comes the end at last, and the evil, bound for a while, is loose, and all nameless merciless horrors that on earth we figure by fire

and earthquake and venom and ravin. So comes the great strife; and like the kings and heroes that they have loved, here also must the gods die, the gods who made that strifeful imperfect earth, not blindly indeed, yet foredoomed. One by one they extinguish for ever some dread and misery that all this time has brooded over life, and one by one, their work accomplished, they die: till at last the great destruction breaks out over all things, and the old earth and heaven are gone, and then a new heaven and earth. What goes on there? Who shall say, of us who know only of rest and peace by toil and strife? And what shall be our share in it? Well, sometimes we must needs think that we shall live again. Yet if that were not, would it not be enough that we helped to make this unnameable glory, and lived not altogether deedless? Think of the joy we have in praising great men, and how we turn their stories over and over, and fashion their lives for our joy. And this also we ourselves may give to the world.'

This is the very temper of the northern heroes as painted by the Sagas, and the temper of *Beowulf*, even though a Christian redactor worked over that poem with some piety and tenderness. It is compact of courage—a noble courage which is yet bleak and desolate and would be near to desperation were it not tempered by so much magnanimity and generosity, such loyalty to the race and such thought of the civilization that is to follow after. And of this temper Morris was able to write: 'I think one would be a happy man if one could hold it, in spite of the wild dreams and dreadful imaginings that hang about it now and then.' Thus, completely, it may be said, *Beowulf* possessed his imagination. How, then, does it come that his version of it is admittedly one of the few failures, perhaps, indeed, the only real failure, of his life?

We know less than might be expected of the circumstances under which the version was made. Miss May Morris, whose introductions to the volumes of the new edition, from being, perhaps, properly diffident at first, have become frankly disappointing, merely says: 'Readers will understand the

impossibility of my offering any remarks on my father's *Beowulf*; for he had always felt an affection for the poem, and probably the plans he had formed in connexion with the Kelmscott Press of publishing the literary masterpieces of the English tongue in a form worthy of them made it necessary to include it. From such a series he could hardly leave out the first epic of our race.' Beyond this we are told nothing except that among other things he was interested by the curious mixture of Pagan and Christianized elements in the story. From Mr. Mackail we learn that he began his version in February 1893, when Mr. Wyatt supplied him with a prose paraphrase, and that he at once began to 'rhyme it up' (his own words), and was 'very eager to be at it, finding it the most delightful work'. Through the rest of that year, and apparently till the end of 1894, he was at work on it, reading it, as his habit was, to Burne-Jones on Sunday mornings. But as the work advanced, Mr. Mackail says (and the words are significant), 'his pleasure in the doing of it fell off'. We need lay no stress on the suggestion that we owe the version in the first instance to the fact that Morris as printer and patriot seems to have felt that a Kelmscott copy of *Beowulf* was essential to that Press. But we are entitled to remember that this 'rhymed-up' version was, after all, in the first instance, a paraphrase in verse of a friend's paraphrase in prose, and that there is nothing that suggests that Morris was quite on translating terms with the original,—Morris being used, of course, to this plan of joint translation, and having already published his *Volsunga Saga* similarly as the work of himself and Eiríkr Magnússon. Still, Morris would speak of the translation as his own, and in a letter to a German student at Marburg wrote: 'I have translated a great deal from the Icelandic, a little from Old French; and of late have translated *Beowulf*, for which I have a very great admiration.' Mr. Wyatt, on his part, makes no claim

as collaborator; for in his edition of the text of the poem he says simply, 'Mr. William Morris has taken the text of this edition as the basis of his modern metrical rendering of the lay.' Morris's, therefore, we must call it, with only this important qualification, that it was written in the evening of his life when at last he was a tired man.

Now Morris, who despised the merely literal rendering of poetry, and had theories of his own as to translation, and had said to Ellis that his translation of the *Odyssey* was a 'real one', not a 'mere periphrase of the original as all the others are', strove in this case by antiquated English and old-fashioned movement to reproduce not only the general archaic atmosphere of this early poem, but its particular verbal texture, the informing temper of its style, its remoteness and forthrightness of phrase—the utterance and movement, that is to say, of a narrative which is at once thoroughly English, and yet older than any other poem in any Teutonic tongue. He therefore excluded as far as was possible all Romance words, and generally all habits of phrase and idiom due to the thought or the linguistic influences of the Middle Ages proper. By every means in his power he increased the archaism of his style, keeping the word order of the original, preserving much of the old construction and syntax, and working for the most part on a method which must be called that of transliterating eighth-century English. No one who knows Morris, certainly no one who cares for him, will call this choice of style on his part either affected, or imitative. For he was, without qualification, the simplest writer of his time, and one of the simplest, some think, in all literature; and in a curiously rhetorical and literary age had managed to simplify himself and his speech, as one might say, almost into the second simplicity and childhood of language. As for his obsolete usage, in vocabulary and in phrase, he was born with a taste for this, and had recourse to it whenever he wrote, easily and

and rathe, the longest lived, hardly a poetic life beyond Spenser and Milton. If, therefore, the reader knows them, and knows them easily and without troubling, may he not as easily be reading the original itself :

Hraðe wæs gerymed, swa se rica bebed,
feðgestum, flet innanweard.

We are told on Mr. Mackail's authority that Morris felt it necessary to make some apology for his own language, and that the defence took the form of the statement (which one may take leave to be incredulous of) that, except for a few words, those he had used in the version were such as he would not hesitate to use in an original poem of his own. And with unconscious humour he headed his list of the more thorny of these so assiduous archaisms, 'Some Words not Commonly used now'.

As for the verse itself, which retains the original system of movement by means of four principal stresses with a varying number of unstressed syllables, and is, as Morris handles it, strictly an 'imitative' measure, it is hardly possible to see the significance or the lesson of his experiment without recalling for a moment the history of this most interesting of all English verse forms. Every language probably has a rhythmic movement which is the natural expression of its genius, and the almost inevitable outcome of the emotion of his singers or speakers. Such a natural rhythmic movement was the native alliterative measure of the Old English. It is not unlikely that the remote origin of this verse lies in the obvious predilection of the Teutonic tongues for arranging the names of familiar things or persons in alliterative sequences. In prose, for instance, the family names of the Teutonic heroes are frequently found, as Tacitus noted, in such pairs or groups. And Old English literary texts are full of examples of this alliterative habit in names; Scyld and Scaef, Hengist and Horsa, Finn

and Folcwald, Hrothgar Halga and Heorogar, Hrethric and Hrethmund, Onela and Othere, Herebald Hæthcyn and Hygelac, Yrmenlaf and Æschere. In genealogical tables, alliteration usually unites father and son, and so on; and the occurrence of these alliterative names in conjunction is characteristic of the oldest Teutonic epic style. Old English verse, indeed, delights in such names for their own sake, anticipating Milton with a difference.

Hrothgar maðelode, helm Scyldinga,
 Ne frin þu æfter sælum; sorh is geniwod
 Denigea leodum. Dead is Æschere
 Yrmenlafes yldra broþor.

Hrothgar was speaking, the head of the Scyldings;
 Nay, but ask not of ease, for newmade is sorrow
 For all the folk of the Danes: and dead is Æschere
 Elder brother of Yrmenlaf.

Mr. Watts Dunton once made the suggestion that in all languages not only passion, but all strong emotion, is naturally and instinctively alliterative, and went on to say that because of this 'no scansion seems so absolutely the scansion of nature as that which governs the verses of *Beowulf* and other Old English poems'. It may be so; but in thinking of alliteration as the support, within the line, to rhythm which subsequently came to be given by rhyme at the end of the lines, we must not forget that it is almost certain that the first poetry of the Old English was intended to be sung, not merely recited, still less read. Now Wagner preferred alliteration to rhyme in verse intended to be set to music, holding that rhyme was useless in conjunction with music, because it implied identity not only of vowel sounds but of succeeding consonants. But these consonants, he argued, are necessarily lost, more or less, to the listener because of the singer's habit and need of dwelling on vowel values alone; whereas initial consonants, preceding these vowels thus valued, cannot be so lost, they stamp themselves on the whole sound. And

as repetition of this sound by a series of initial similar consonants creates of itself a cadence, a movement agreeable to the ear, he substituted alliteration for rhyme. No doubt Wagner had personal reasons for his choice, sufficient to himself. But he may also have hit upon a real distinction between alliteration as the basis of poetry that is to be sung, and rhyme as the support of rhythms that are to be said or read. It is true that the actual lines of old Germanic poetry by their nature preclude the notion of their being sung in our sense of the word. One cannot imagine them set to any definite series of musical notes—not even the most lyrical of them, such as *Deor's Lament*. Music must have been rather an accompanying feature of the delivery of narrative.¹ Yet this delivery at least involved something other than the ordinary speaking and reading tones of the voice. The adjectives used in various poems for the delivery of poetry indicate that the voice was high-pitched and clear, *swutol* and *hador*. And we know it was accompanied by the harp. Probably, therefore, it was a sort of declamation in which singing tones were used, and these, together with the accompaniment of the harp, would give a chanted effect to the whole—this, again, being the greater in that the functions of poet, composer, and singer were united in one person, the *scop*. This free recitation, or chant, then, determined the structure of the lines of the alliterative measure, each line having two halves which had rhythmical likeness in that each had two normal speech stresses, but need not have and in practice very seldom had actual identity of rhythm. Alliteration was the form of support devised for the rhythm of such verses as these, which were neither distinctly epical,

¹ The common expression *singan and secgan* suggests this,—*Widsith*, l. 54. Forþon ic mæg singan and secgan spell. Again l. 100, þonne ic be songe secgan sceolde. There are examples also of *cweðan and singan*. And the history of other words such as the OE. *gidd* and the Gothic *sigwan* has the same interpretation.

nor distinctly lyrical, but, as Professor Ker has said, 'lyric rather than epic, or lyric with such amount of epic as is proper for psalms of triumph or the praise of kings; the kind of verse which could be used for any kind of *carmina*, for marking authorship or ownership on swords and poems, for epitaphs and spells, or for vituperative epigrams.'

This measure of the Old English poets it would be difficult to praise more adequately than by quoting Coventry Patmore's words: 'We venture to say that no good ear when once accustomed to it can fail to perceive in this law [the alliterative] a fountain of pure and beautiful metrical character, or at least to absolve it from the charge of any essential quaintness or oddity, though an appearance of such character inevitably attaches itself at first to what is so far from our modern notions.' It is essentially, in character, an accentual verse, and the function of alliteration in its system is to strengthen and support the accentual rhythm. In the nature of the case alliteration will appear to some observers to do this less thoroughly than rhyme would, because it requires the repetition of merely single letters rather than of complete sounds or syllables. For the same reason, no doubt, it occurs at briefer intervals, three or four times within the line, and serves to knit the two halves of the same line together rather than to connect two or more whole lines. Each line is made up of two half lines, separated from each other by definite pause or break, but united by the alliteration so as to preserve a rhythmical unity. Each half line tends to have two syllables (or words) which predominate over the other by logical and natural importance, and carry on this account the stronger stress. The force given to these stresses is the more in that they are made to carry as well the alliteration. This is the case at least once in each half line; normally there are two such alliterated stresses in the first half and one in the second half of each line, but in a fair number of instances there are two

in both half lines. And the effect of emphasis given to these three or four words or syllables by grammar, logic, speech-stress, syntax, and alliteration is such that the other syllables of the line become as far as the rhythm is concerned not only unstressed but unimportant, and it is a matter of minor concern how many there are. The half line, therefore, may contain anything from three to seven or more syllables, and the two half lines of any verse seldom, if ever, are symmetrical either in number or position of unstressed syllables.

Actual similarity between the half lines, then, ends with each half line having two accented syllables. At the same time it is obvious that in the result certain combinations of stresses and unstresses will and do occur more frequently than others. Briefly, and without entering into detail here, those that occur most frequently are such as suggest to the modern ear trochaic, or less often dactylic, cadence. Hence it has been contended that Old English poetry has a prevailing trochaic character of rhythm. But it is unwise to dwell on this, perhaps even to state it thus at all. For the analogy either of classical or modern metrical terms is misleading—a convenience, it may be, but of no strict application. In proportion as the lines are regular, and the half lines tend to be symmetrical, the presence of the metrical unit of the foot suggests itself. But it is for all that a stress-rhythm purely. Stress, with alliteration to help it, is the determinant; and this rhythm-stress is not a metrical *ictus*, but the speech-stress of the language. The syllables that fall between the stresses are related to them by simple, natural relation; they depend on them, that is, in changing degree,—some closely on one stress, others less closely on another. But such relation is not strict; not regular or consistent, not important or organic. It results in a *group*, but the group was not practised, and is not to be thought of, as a metrical foot.

Now Mr. Mackail, in a most pregnant page,¹ dealing with the displacement of this measure by metres of foreign origin, naturalized only 'in the long and difficult practice of centuries' has ventured a suggestion drawn from the history of an analogous displacement in Latin literature. In English as in Latin verse the native metre has, as a matter of fact, never been wholly or finally displaced, but in addition to exercising a deep influence on the development of the imported metres '*has retained an affinity to the structure of the language which has made it tend to reappear when the dominant metrical forms were exhausted from over-use*'.

'If', he goes on, 'the argument from the Latin analogy were seriously pressed, it might be conjectured that the future forms of English poetry would be, not indeed the forms of the mediaeval alliterative metre—for the English language has developed too widely and changed too deeply in structure to revert to its Saturnians—but forms essentially based on the same metrical principles.'

This is not the place to inquire into the validity of such prophecy, or to urge what alone would conclude such an inquiry, a closer scrutiny than has been made yet of the exact relations of Modern to Old English poetry in respect of measure and alliteration. But I suggest that it is precisely by refusing to treat them as unrelated, by studying all the evidences in every century of connexion and continuity, above all by watching the reappearances of the native measure when the 'dominant metrical forms were exhausted from over-use', that the translator will come by the only form or medium in which he can hope to translate now the poetry that was written in the original alliterative verse. And Morris's mistake in his choice of verse was that instead of writing a modern form of the measure based on the same principles as the old, he ignored the changes in the structure

¹ *Life of Morris*, vol. i, p. 284.

and character of the language, and tried to write again the actual forms of the original verse itself, as though such changes had not taken place in the interval. Strange and inexplicable mistake: for of all reappearances of the old measure in modern form and with new vitality the most wonderful and beautiful beyond comparison is the alliterative part of his own Morality and masterpiece, *Love is Enough*.

'One cannot help considering', Miss May Morris writes, 'how it was that *Love is Enough* has never been among those poems by which my father is known, though some of the lyrics are among his best known pieces. Written to-day it would have been eagerly received, but the masque and mystery were not familiar forms in his day, and the alliterative verse can have interested only a small circle. . . . He himself spoke of it later in a curious detached sort of way. Talking of early English poetry with a friend once, he said: "You know I wrote an alliterative poem myself once on a time"—almost as though it had been written by some one else, written on another planet.'

One can only qualify this by saying that he so handles the alliterative verse, which he uses for the central action of the play, as to give it qualities that belong to him alone among modern poets, and represent him at his very best; and that the unusual poignancy of the whole play is by no means due alone to the haunting and felicitous beauty of the lyrics that are sung between the scenes. Compared with the verse of his *Beowulf* the alliterative lines in *Love is Enough* are seen to conform to the modern genius of the language while remaining true to its earliest and native instinct for rhythm. The pauses that are so functional in the old verse are not wholly discarded, but are subtly suggested by, and partly replaced by, modern substitution of syllabic values. A certain stiffness and bare simplicity would seem to be lost in the change, and there is the least consequent quickening in pace.

All I prayed for him once now no longer I pray for,
 Let it all pass away now as my warm breath now passeth
 In the chill of the morning mist wherewith thou hidest
 Fair vale and grey mountain of the land we are come to!
 Let it all pass away! but some peace and some pleasure
 I pray for him yet, and that I may behold it.
 A prayer little and lowly,—and we in the old time
 When the world lay before us, were we hard to the lowly?
 Thou know'st we were kind, howso hard to be beaten.
 Wilt thou help us this last time? or what hast thou hidden
 We know not, we name not, some crown for our striving?
 O body and soul of my son, may God keep thee!
 For as lone as thou liest in a land that we see not
 When the world loseth thee, what is left for its losing?

To this example of the reappearance, spontaneously and artistically, of the old measure must be added the characteristic example of it given to us last Christmas Eve by Mr. Bridges, inspired by so much English piety and scholarship. Here again the traditional art of the oldest and first of our poets is carried on, caught up and pushed to new perfection, speaks with the same cadenced monotony, and is troubled with the old and unforgotten pathos.

A frosty Christmas-eve when the stars were shining
 Faced I forth alone where westward falls the hill
 And from many a village in the water'd valley
 Distant music reached me peals of bells a-ringing:
 The constellated sounds ran sprinkling on earth's floor
 As the dark vault above with stars was spangled o'er.

Examples such as these must surely convince us that accentual alliterative verse is still congenial to English speech, and that it is still possible to produce its beautiful effects of varied rhythm without alienating average readers, provided such readers will not pass forced judgement on the lines according to current notions of modern metrical verse. They show, it is not too much to say, that such rhythms still rise from the altogether natural use of English, and from its normal emotional speech stress. And it must be in emulating such happy reappearances of the old but still

living measures that the hope of the translator of Old English poetry lies.

Beowulf, ll. 4 to 52

THE LEGEND OF SCYLD—HIS PASSING AND BURIAL

Oft Scyld the Sheafson, when the hosts were thronging,
 Fell upon many a folk and left them houseless.
 Ah! but they came to fear him when, after his finding,
 All lonely and lacking, he lived to have solace,
 To wax in the ways of the world and win him worship,
 Until it befell that all folk whatsoever,
 That beset the whale's way, bowed to his bidding,
 And his guerdon gave him. Yea, he was good for us!

And by him it befell that a son was begotten.
 Thither the Great God sent an heir to his house,
 To lighten the hearts that long had grown too heavy
 Of the load that lay on them for lack of a King.
 For now to the Lord of Life, the Heavenly Ruler,
 One was beholden for honour on the earth.
 Blessèd was Beowulf, and wide went blowing
 The fame of Scyld's son through the Scandian lands.
 Herein ye shall know of the yoke of a young man:
 He must freely give in the house of his fathers,
 And be able to earn that, when eld approacheth
 And war draweth nigh, well willing comrades
 Come, and helpers at hand; for in every homeland
 By such deeds of grace shall a young man grow.

Full of days at length, when the hour overtook him,
 Scyld wended his way to the shelter of God.
 And to the sea-girt shore the men of his own choosing
 Even as himself had bade them bore him down.
 The while that his words were of worth, yea, and were
winsome,
 He had ruled them long beloved of his land.

Out in the harbour was standing the well-wrought vessel,
Gleaming fair as ice, and fain to ferry the hero.
There then they laid him, the lord of their loving,
Their only begetter of good within the ship's bosom.
By the mast he lay and a many of jewels
Of fair things and fretted from far ways brought over
Was heaped at his hand. And I heard not of any
That folk ever furnished a vessel more fairly
With the weapons of war, with the weeds of the battle,
With bills and with byrnies. And there lay on his bosom
Many a jewel that with him must journey,
Must float on the flood and be faring for ever.
For not with less gifts nor with less folk giving
Was he furnished forth than when of old, aforetime,
In the beginning others had sent him outward
Over the waves alone and he but a baby.
So now high over head they unfolded above him
A gold fashioned flag, then let the flood have him;
Seaward thus consigning him in sadness of soul.
Ah! but they mourned him and what man is able
What head of our halls or what hero under heaven
Of a truth to tell who took up that lading?

A. BLYTH WEBSTER.

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