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ROBERT BRIDGES

Poetry & Prose

With appreciations by

G. M. HOPKINS

COVENTRY PATMORE

LIONEL JOHNSON

LAURENCE BINYON

and others

With an Introduction and Notes by

JOHN SPARROW

OXFORD

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1955

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT BRIDGES was never a popular poet. At the end of his long life, it is true, a brief burst of celebrity followed the publication of his *Testament of Beauty*, but the general interest awakened by that remarkable poem did not long survive its author, and little of his poetry, apart from his shorter lyrics, has ever appealed to any but a small circle of admirers. Most of those who care for poetry today look down other vistas, away from the trim garden that Bridges chose to cultivate and beyond the horizon that bounds his pleasant pastoral landscape, towards other fields of poetical experience and technique.

Bridges was a remarkable link between two literary ages: his first book appeared within six years of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, his last at a time when Eliot's *Waste Land* had already come to be widely accepted as a classic. It was difficult for those who saw him in his vigorous old age, or heard him broadcast on Poetry as Poet Laureate, to realize how distant was the past to which his earliest memories belonged. When he was born, Wordsworth was still living; among the familiar figures of his childhood were the Prince Consort and the Duke of Wellington; at Eton he came under the influence of the Tractarian Movement while it was still a living force; and he went up to Oxford in

Those changeful days that pass'd between,
Say, Verdant Green and T. H. Green.

Judged by these dates, Bridges was a Victorian—even a mid-Victorian. But the epithet does not truly describe him, for he was almost unmoved by the 'movements' and un-influenced by the 'influences' of the age. This integrity was the result of a deliberate self-seclusion. It was not change or innovation that Bridges shunned; he was always eager to

make himself master of the latest experiments and discoveries in diverse fields of philosophical and scientific speculation, of artistic and literary technique. His desire for shelter was not due to timidity or softness of body, mind, or character; for he was a strong and sinewy person; he had been an athlete in his youth and he remained in old age leonine not only in physical appearance but also in attitude of mind. His withdrawal from the world was an effort not of escape but of concentration; his aim was to shut out the ugly and the irrelevant, and so to secure the leisure and tranquillity that he needed if he was to give himself up to the writing of poetry.

He achieved his aim—but at a price. For poetry which is the fruit of such self-seclusion is not the kind of poetry that most commends itself to those readers or critics who demand that literature should be 'co-extensive with life'. Such readers expect the poet to show himself a political animal, drawing his inspiration and his material from the society of which he is himself a member, and if they are looking for a master or a model they will turn, not to Bridges, the recluse, but rather to such figures as W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot. Yeats, it is true, devoted himself in youth and age to the study of the art of words—'Words alone are certain good'—but he was always (and he so described himself) a 'public man', dedicating both the passion of rebel and the wisdom of a senator to the service of political ideals; and Mr. Eliot, though his own emotions may seem rarefied and his idols very different from those of the market-place, has become, for a whole generation of readers, the accepted exponent of what they call 'the contemporary consciousness'.

It is not surprising, then, that Bridges unlike yeats and Mr. Eliot, should have been without influence and without disciples, and that today his admirers should be comparatively few. Bridges himself was not in the least troubled by lack of appreciation; he had no desire for popular applause,

and in his seclusion he was perfectly content. The Laureateship, when it came to him, came unsought; he never wrote to order; and public murmurs at his appointment and at his subsequent taciturnity left him undisturbed. (His nature was evidently made for happiness, and fortune did little or nothing to thwart that natural disposition. True, he was acquainted with the melancholy mood; he could feel the pressure of a 'Low Barometer'; he had faced 'a wall of terror in a night of cold', and had experienced—not only as a physician in the Casualty Ward at St. Bartholomew's—

life's common plod: still to repair
The body and the thing which perisheth:
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,
The grinding enginry of blood and breath—

but those moods were not congenial to him; he was the poet of what he himself calls 'the happy moment':

not a stir
In any tree, no portent in the sky;
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
The morrow hath no name to call it by,
But life and joy are one,—we know not why . . .

and 'the best of his art is gay'—the gay expression of such moments of exaltation and delight. *Fortunatus nimium* was the title he gave to a poem in which he looked back on his long and happy life, and perhaps it is true that he was, in a sense, too happy. For a poet whose chief inspiration is the blessedness of his own lot will not find favour with a perplexed, preoccupied, and disillusioned generation, at a time when both lark and nightingale sing 'to dirty ears'; and those who wander in the Waste Land are not likely to take as their guiding beacon a fire lit at the altar of beauty on the summit of Boar's Hill.

Whether or not Bridges's life was 'too happy in its happiness'¹, it was to the worship of beauty that he devoted

it. To use his own words, he 'sought and adored' beautiful things, and felt it to be his task as a poet lovingly to create *tferri*. This impulse had its being in the depths of his nature ; it was something as different from sensuality as it was from mere good taste — alove of beauty in the ideal aswell asin the visible world, the natural beauty of flowers and faces, the spiritual beauty of "tender or exalted emotions, of noble thoughts and deeds.

Poetry, we know, "lias other fields than this : evil has its flowers, and ugliness a fascination of its own. From these ignoble' themes Bridges turned impatiently away. He had no desire to absorb and digest such materials ; rather, he thought it a poet's duty to reject them:

as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness
which Art would outlaw —

and to the question 'What is Beauty ? ' he gave the answer :

Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind Of man.

Whatever may be thought of the philosophy of this, it was a doctrine in which Bridges believed instinctively; he expounded it at length in *The Testament of Beauty* and he devoted his life to the expression of it. indeed, he might have echoed Shelley's apostrophe to Inteltec'tual Beauty :

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?

Beauty may be worshipped in various ways; and where Shelley, with a 'beating heart and streaming eyes', 'shrieked and clasped [his] hands in ecstasy', Bridges was content to sun himself among the Cheddar pinks in his rock-garden, intent on devising a new unsimplified spelling or a new pointing for the Psalms, cherished, to the end of his long life

of artistic creation and experiment, by her who had inspired the tenderest lyrics of his youth.

Chilswell, with its happy domestic scene, certainly called up an image of Farringford, and there were other likenesses between the patterns of the two poets' lives. Both were deeply and enduringly influenced by an undergraduate friendship, and after early years in London went to live in the country. Both became Laureates almost on the eve of a war, and exercised poetic gifts with undiminished vigour and increased virtuosity into a ripe old age. But Bridges also resembled Tennyson in his attitude towards his art, in his conception of what a poet's life should be and of the language in which he should write. He believed that poets—'quique pii vates et Phoebos digna locuti'—were not as other men are; in voice, in appearance, in bearing, he was naturally an aristocrat; he looked, and lived, the part of the great poet. He was not one of those who think that the poet should look at life through the eyes of the man in the street and describe it in the language of every day: he called things 'beauteous' and 'jocund' and 'mighty'; he introduced into his verse such personified abstractions as Love and Duty and Delight; he invoked the Muse, and addressed his 'mistress' in the second person singular.

This consciously poetic manner may seem id justify those who dismiss his work as something literally 'cultured' and therefore devoid of deep or spontaneous feeling; and Bridges has made the charge of artificiality the more plausible by his preoccupation with the technique of poetry, with metres, spellings, alphabets; with questions of vocabulary and 'purity' of language and pronunciation. He was a founder of The Society for Pure English, and he devised an ingenious and elaborate phonetic typography. But it would be wrong to infer from his intense interest in *minutiae* that the feelings he put into his poetry were either shallow or artificial; that interest was due to his belief that in speech the least

inflexion may count for incalculably much, both for the ear and for the mind, and that if language is to be a fully effective instrument in the hands of the thinker or the poet its edge must not be allowed to become blunted by careless use. Even his apparently wilful archaisms were not the result of whim or affectation:

The author would explain [he says in a note to *The Testament of Beauty*] that the use of *eth* for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

Yet, when all is said, there is substance in the criticisms hinted at above. Those who most admire his poetry will be the first to admit that it is a pity that he spent so much of his talent and his time in elaborating traditional themes and embroidering archaic patterns. Masques in blank verse, interspersed with choric odes, verse dramas (of which he wrote eight) on the model of Greek tragedy or of Terence, formal odes—these are difficult to read unless they are relieved by passages of exceptional beauty or splendour—and such passages are no more frequent in Bridges than they are in Spenser or in Shelley.

His true gift was lyrical: in his *Sonnets* and his *Shorter Poems* (as Hopkins long ago pointed out) the level of excellence is so high that to choose from among them is hardly possible, and Housman did not overpraise Books I-IV of *Shorter Poems* when he said that 'probably no single volume of English verse had ever maintained such perfection'. However much Bridges may at times remind us of those who have gone before him (and one cannot mistake his debt to Shakespeare's sonnets and to the lyrics of Wyatt and Campion and the Elizabethan song-writers generally) it is always a living voice that we hear, never an echo. Sometimes he speaks almost with the tongue of Blake:

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night . . .

or again:

Open for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire . . .

Such lyrical cries are wrung from him most often by the ecstasies of love or by the contemplation of Nature, and these are the themes that inspire the greater part of the *Shorter Poems* ; but his range is not confined to them : some of his most, beautiful poems — *On a Dead Child*, for instance, *The Tramps*, and *The College Garden* — are poems of reflection ; he had a remarkable power of infusing into a landscape the feelings peculiar to the several seasons ; and he could invest with a strange beauty the plainest of descriptions :

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
Glided in line upon the windless deep . . .

Of the fifth of these lines one can only ask: Can poetry go further?

Few things are easier to write than a beautiful line of poetry ; minor poets abound in them ; but every such line of Bridges is integral with its context, its beauty is somehow one with the beauty of the stanza or the poem as a whole. To write a perfect lyric is a rare achievement, and Bridges repeated the miracle perhaps more often than any other English poet.

Bridges himself would no doubt have wished to be remembered not so much for his youthful lyrics as for the didactic poem of his old age. What is to be said of *The Testament of Beauty*? It was, in a sense, the crowning achievement of its author's long life; he sustained, through

its four books of almost unremitted argument, the intensity of the passion that inspired it; it is embellished with a profusion of images and similes which are the harvest of an unsleeping eye and a rich imagination; and the lasting impression that it leaves upon the mind of the reader, for all its peculiarity of diction and colloquiality of metre, is an impression of nobility. Like all philosophical poems that have ever been written, it will be read for its poetry, not for its philosophy: for its beauty, not for its wisdom; it is starred with lovely passages which grow naturally out of their context in the poem, but lose little by being detached from it. But the loose syllabic metre, if it made for easy writing, does not make for easy reading; the most effective lines are those which the accent marks as normal or almost normal Alexandrines, and too often the reader, deprived of any accentual aid, may find that he is counting syllables.

As a writer of prose and as a critic Bridges is easier to describe than to classify: both his manner and his matter were always very much his own. He had strong preferences which he was not concerned to justify and he did not waste his time writing—or talking—about what he did not like.

A personal reminiscence may not here be out of place. I remember paying a visit to Chilswell as an undergraduate, overflowing with admiration for John Donne and eager to hear what the great man had to say about him. The mention of Donne's name, hopefully uttered as I paced the lawn by the side of my host, was enough: Bridges was so revolted (he declared) by Donne's sensuality and by the cacophony of his verse that he simply could not understand what people saw in him. I was glad to take refuge in a change of subject. A mention of Tennyson seemed to give me my opportunity, and I asked whether he knew Churton Collins's *Illustrations* of his poems, a book which had delighted me with its discussion of Tennyson's Virgilian reminiscences. Here, it seemed, was a more fruitful opening—and, indeed, the

poet's reaction was immediate: 'Yes! yes!', he exclaimed, with a sort of melodious growl, 'Yes! yes! *terrible* stuff!'—and I perceived that this, too, was a topic that had better be abandoned.

That was altogether characteristic. Bridges was no respecter of reputations; to 'assess' a writer with whom he was out of sympathy seemed to him neither a pleasurable nor a profitable occupation; and discourse about 'Literature', however learned, did not interest him. It is not surprising that he resisted the strong pressure put upon him, in 1895, to stand for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. He thought about poetry simply as a poet; criticism meant to him either an exposition of its function or an analysis, severely technical, of how its effects might be obtained, or had actually been obtained by writers he admired. On these topics he enlarged with fearless originality, never blinded by greatness in the work he was examining to any flaws that there might be in it, striving always for truth and for exactness.

His prose falls on the ear like the spoken word, yet it is far removed from common speech, for he chose his words like instruments, with the effect sometimes of making them a little too choice; he is at the same time, one might say, colloquial and mannered. The manner is his own; it never degenerates into mannerism, but reflects exactly the quality of his mind, so that his writing is always fine in the good sense, not the bad. How moving it could be when he himself was moved may be judged by the extracts from his tributes to two of his greatest friends, Dolben and Dixon, that have been chosen for this book.

To an even closer friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Bridges paid a tribute of a different kind. Their intimacy, which began in their Oxford days, ended only with the death of Hopkins in 1889; their mutual affection recalls the friendship of Tennyson and Arthur Hallam; and their sympathy was marred only by difference about religion: Hopkins

regretted the 'paganism' of his 'dearest Bridges'; Bridges deplored any sacrifice of his friend's poetic talent on the altar of his faith.

For nearly a quarter of a century they wrote copiously to each other, but only the letters of Hopkins survive to show how close was their communion, how free and frank and sympathetic their criticism of each other's work. Bridges shared his friend's enthusiasms and encouraged his experiments in language and metre, though protesting often against the obscurity of his allusions and his syntax.

When Hopkins died, Bridges regarded himself as the trustee of the 'lov'd legacy', his friend's verse; he gradually introduced it to the public in the nineties, and gave it a wider audience by including seven of the poems in his own war-time anthology, *The Spirit of Man*. Little notice was taken of these efforts either by critics or by the common reader; but Bridges judged that by 1918 a 'genuinely poetic interest' had grown up 'both in England and America', strong enough to justify his publishing an elaborate edition of the poems. This was not an easy undertaking. From a large and confusing mass of manuscripts the editor had to decide which poems to preserve, and in which versions to print them; he had to explain not only Hopkins's metrical theories and notations but also his obscurities of syntax and expression. The task demanded sympathy as well as scholarship. For Bridges it was a labour of love—'When I came to edit the poems' (he later wrote) 'my whole intention was to make the book as he would have wished it to be. I felt completely in touch with him'—and he performed it perfectly. Even so, the poems were slow to win popularity, and ten years elapsed before the edition of 750 copies was sold out. But Bridges lived long enough to see his aim entirely realized, for when he died in 1930 the reputation of Hopkins was already being raised up to the pinnacle upon which the succeeding generation placed it, and from which it has cast

an undeserved shadow on the reputation of Bridges himself.¹ In time, no doubt, a more sober estimate of Hopkins's splendid successes and his splendid failures will prevail, and belated justice will be done to Bridges as a poet, a critic, and a friend.

What, then, will that 'justice' be—for surely it is the business of the critic to anticipate if he can the verdict of posterity? Bridges, I think, will 'live'; not simply in the anthologies, like Herrick, say, or Darley, the almost disembodied author of a number of lovely lyrics; nor as a figure in the history of letters whose name, like Southey's, is remembered better than his writings: posterity will be on equally familiar terms with the poet and with his *Collected Works*. For he impressed a distinct personality upon a body of poetry large enough to take, and to give back, the image of the whole man, so that both the writer and his work remain alive together. He spoke with a clear and individual voice, always beautiful and often passionate, though never loud or wild. Unmistakably, it was the voice of a noble human being and a true poet, and such voices do not die.

¹ There has even been an attempt, on the part of critics who ought to have known better, to suggest that Bridges failed to recognize Hopkins's poetic genius or culpably delayed its recognition by others—a false legend that persists even to this day. In 1884 Patmore communicated to Hopkins (*Further Letters* of G. M. H., Oxford, 1938, p. 208) Bridges's opinion of his poems 'He spoke with the sincerest admiration and love of your poetry.' These feelings were deep and constant, and they shine through the sonnet which R. B. prefixed to his edition of Hopkins's poems more than thirty years later.

LIFE

1844. Robert Seymour Bridges born at Walmer, Kent, 23 October: eighth Of the nine children of J. T. Bridges of Roselands, Walmer.
1853. Death of his father.
1854. His mother marries the Rev. J. E. N. Molesworth and the family moves to Rochdale, Lancashire.
- 1854—63. At Eton; among his friends are V. S. S. Coles and D. M. Dolben; comes under Tractarian influence.
- 1863-7. At Corpus Christi College, Oxford; makes friends with Gerard Manley Hopkins; Pre-Raphaelite supersedes Tractarian influence.
1866. Death of his younger brother Edward; it 'plunged me into deep sorrow . . . and considerably altered the hopes and prospects of my life'.
1867. Second Class in Literae Humaniores; strokes his college boat in Eights and in a regatta in Paris.
- 1867-74. Makes several long tours abroad.
1869. Enters St. Bartholomew's Hospital; M.B., 1874.
1873. *Poems* (favourably reviewed by Andrew Lang in *The Academy*, 17 January, 1874).
1876. *The Growth of Love*, a collection of twenty-four sonnets afterwards revised and greatly increased.
1877. Appointed casualty physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; moves on the death of his step-father from 50 Maddox Street, which he shared with H. E. Wooldridge, to 52 Bedford Square, where he made a home for his mother.
1878. Appointed assistant physician to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street; later to the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway.
1879. Makes friends with the Rev. R. W. Dixon.
- 1879-84. Publishes several series of poems in limited editions, later included in *Shorter Poems*.
1881. After a serious illness spends the winter in Italy; retires from medical practice.
1882. Goes to live, with his mother, at the Manor House, Yattendon, Berkshire.
1883. *Prometheus the Firegiver*.
1884. Marries Monica Mary, eldest daughter of the architect, Alfred Waterhouse, R.A.
- 1884-1904. Lives at Yattendon; in touch with H. C. Beeching, W. J. Stone, and others interested in poetry, music, and prosody.

1885. *Eros and Psyche*.
 'Eight Plays'—*Nero* (1885), *Pahcio* (1890), *The Return of Ulysses* (1890), *The Christian Captives* (1890), *Achilles in Scyros* (1890), *The Humours of the Court* (1893), *The Feast of Bacchus* (1894), *Nero Second Part* (1894).
1890. *Shorter Poems* (Bks. I-IV; Bk. V, 1894).
1893. *Milton's Prosody* (final edition 1921).
1895. *The Yattendon Hymnal* Part I (Part II, 1897; Part III, 1898; Part IV, 1899).
John Keats, A Critical Essay (published also as introduction to the Keats volume in 'The Muses Library').
 Declines to stand for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford.
1898. Revises poems for six-volume edition (1898-1905).
1903. *Now in wintry delights* (his first poem in classical prosody).
1905. *Demeter, A Mask* (performed 1904).
- 1905—6. Long visit to Switzerland.
1907. Builds, and moves to, Chilswell House, Boar's Hill, Oxford.
1909. Edits *Selected Poems of R. W. Dixon*, with a Memoir.
1911. Edits *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, with a Memoir.
1913. Founds the Society of Pure English, with Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Bradley, and Logan Pearsall Smith.
 Appointed Poet Laureate.
1916. *The Spirit of Man*, an anthology.
1917. Fire at Chilswell House; during part of the next two years lived in Oxford.
1918. Edits *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.
1920. *October and other Poems*.
1924. Visits the United States of America.
1925. *New Verse* (containing 'Neo-Miltonic Syllabics').
1926. *Henry Bradley, a Memoir*.
1929. *The Testament of Beauty* (published on his eighth-fifth birthday): receives the order of Merit.
1930. Dies at Chilswell House, 21 April

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES

From *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*,
ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935.

THE sonnets are truly beautiful, breathing a grave and feeling genius, and make me proud of you (which by the by is not the same as for you to be proud of yourself: I say it because you always were and I see you still are given to conceit...). I have scarcely read them all yet.... In general I do not think you have reached finality in point of execution, words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc. . . .

General remarks—In spite of the Miltonic rhythms and some other points your sonnets remind one more of Shak- 10
spere's. Milton's sonnets are not tender as Shakspeare's are. Yours are not at all like Wordsworth's, and a good thing too, for beautiful as those are they have an odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty. The ones I like least are those that have a Tennysonian touch about them, . . . not for want of admiring Tennyson to be sure but because it gives them a degree of neckcloth too. I have not yet *studied* them: at a first and second reading the drift and connection is very hard to find; you seem to mean it to be so. The Our Father sonnet [No. 69, p. 10] is very 20
beautiful, so is the one on your mother's picture [No. 40, p. 6], so is XXII [p. 5], so are they all and full of manly tenderness and a flowing and never-failing music. The more I read them the more I am delighted with them.

(Letter XXX: 3 April 1877.)

.

Your precious little volume [*Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love' . . . 1879*] is to hand—also to head and heart, breathing genius everywhere, like sweet-herbs. I shd. like to criticise it in detail throughout, but that may not be.

Something however I must say. . . . The jewel of all, judice me, is no. 2 [p. 21], That is a lovely poem. . . .

The pieces in sprung rhythm—do not quite satisfy me. They do read tentative, experimental; I cannot well say where the thought is distorted by the measure, but that it is distorted I feel by turning from these to the other pieces, where the mastery is so complete. *The Downs* [p. 26] is the best. (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879.)

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Style seems your great excellence, it is really classical. 10 What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner—not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew. Just think the blank verse these people have exuded, such as *Paracelsus*, *Aurora Leigh*, Baillie's or Bayley's *Festus*, and so on. The Brownings are very fine too in their ghastly way. . . .

London Snow [p. 32] is a most beautiful and successful piece. It is charmingly fresh, I do not know what is like it. The rhythm, as I told you, is not quite perfect. That of the 20 child-piece [p. 34] is worse and that piece is worse, indeed it is Browningsese, if you like; as for instance 'To a world, do we think, that heals the disaster of this?' or something like that. You are certainly less at your ease in sprung rhythm. In the snow-piece this has not been a hindrance however, but perhaps has helped it, by making it more original in diction. Truth compels, and modesty does not forbid, me here to say that this volume has at least three real echos (or echoes) of me: I do not wish them away, but they are there. The 'snow-mossed wonder' line recalls 'For though he is under' in the 30 *Deutschland*, 'O look at the trees' the first line of the *Starlight sonnet*, and 'throned behind' again comes from the *Deutschland*. I fancy there is another I cannot now recall. O yes, it is in the *Voice of Nature* [p. 33]—'Precipitate all o'er-rides and swerves nor abides'¹ (is it?): this is in the

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES xxiii

Deutschland too, I cannot quote it but it ends with 'abides'. It is easy to see why this is: that is the longest piece extant in sprung rhythm and could not help haunting your memory. I do not want them altered, and 'throned behind' having found its way into the midst of a lovely image would not like to be parted from its company. The Voice of Nature is very fine, but the touch in rhythm as well as diction is not quite sure. . . . The lyric 'Thou didst delight' [p. 38] is, like the others before it, a gem. (Letter LXX: 26 October 1880.)

COVENTRY PATMORE ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The St. James's Gazette*, 9 March 1885, reprinted in *Courage and Politics and Other Essays*, 1921.

'THE crowd, incapable of perfectness', is not likely ever to 10
be much attracted by such verses as those of Mr. Robert
Bridges, of which the chief merit is a quiet unpretentious
perfectness, which has the air of coming not from laboured
finish, but from finished habits of thought, feeling, and life,
combined with and aided by a scholar's attainments. Though
differing from Mr. William Barnes in almost every other
quality, Mr. Bridges resembles the Dorsetshire poet more
than any other modern writer in this character of perfectness
which bears little or no sign of work: a character the opposite
to that of the best poems of Tennyson, in which the mani- 20
festation of finish and fully accomplished labour constitutes
of itself no small grace. Another probable obstacle in the way
of Mr. Bridges's acceptance by the public is his singular
though entirely unostentatious independence of any other
poet or school. He seems to have read and felt with fulness,
but with such impartiality that people will never begin by
admiring his verses because they are like those of some one
else they may happen to admire; nor is the absence of this
great and almost universal first cause of popular favour
balanced by anything that most readers would think 30

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'striking' or 'original'¹. We feel quite sure that Mr. Bridges would be absolutely distressed if any reader whom he respected should be detained by any line or passage of his to say or think 'That's fine!' He aims at and attains a style so equabje, and the eminently beautiful lines or passages are so proportioned to and arise so naturally out of eminent occasions, that nothing is 'striking' until it is made to stand alone, and then most of the beauty vanishes because it is relative. In what he writes Mr. Bridges is thoroughly
10 'masterly', because he knows exactly the powers he is master of, and never attempts to strain them. In this, too, he resembles Mr. Barnes, who never fancies that, because he is a writer of matchless idylls and eclogues, he ought to try his hand at epics or odes. No extracts could give any idea of that equable and steady poetic flight, of which the main charm consists, not in its attitude, but its sweet and unlaboured evenness.

LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

From an essay in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, October 1891,
'reprinted as a preface to *The Growth of Love*, 1894.

THE poems of Mr. Bridges are of the lyrical kind, of the narrative, and of the dramatic: and before examining each
20 kind apart, let me say something applicable to the whole of them, in greater or less degree. These poems, then, represent, with much else that is admirable, the scholarship of poetry; a certain erudite air of mastery over the secrets of rhythm and of metre; a trained skill in music, and in those delicate devices, which give so excellent a distinction to the older English poets. To whatever Mr. Bridges sets his hand, he preserves discretion and propriety: the scholar's instinct, no less than the poet's, making it impossible for him to outrage fine taste, by the fantastic freaks of some great men amongst
30 us.' At the present time', so he tells us with lamentable truth,

'men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art': but he, at least, reverencing the great masters, makes an 'attempt to work in their manner'. Not that he is a slavish follower of the great masters, their captive rather than their votarist: at times, he may have fallen somewhat into that attitude, but not for long, it is not characteristic of him. It is his characteristic virtue, that he moulds his thought, guides his imagination, into fresh and living forms, with a scholarly knowledge of what has been done before him, in like manner, though not in the same: thus, some among his poems are 10 noticeable for their boldness of metrical experiment and invention; but we can trust him, who wrote those two good treatises *On the Prosody of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*, and *On the Elements of Milton's Blank Verse in Paradise Lost*. The invention may displease us, the experiment prove unhappy: yet we recognize a justifiable enterprise, a scholar's venture; not the frantic impertinence of one writing, in despair of nature, and in contempt of art. And this learned competence, so abundant in his form, is naturally abundant in his matter: for matter and form, to 20 repeat a simple and neglected truth, are inseparable. Mr. Bridges is not enamoured of a new thing, for its novelty: his thoughts are his own thoughts, but his expression of them is in harmony with the matured wisdom of many ages, meditating the common, human things, with gravity or in gladness. That is Horace, we say, or Catullus; there is Theognis or Meleager; and here is Marvell, here Vaughan, here Herrick; and this brings Landor to mind, Landor, or Collins, or Wordsworth; and now Shakespeare, now Terence, now Fletcher comes across us, with elder Athenian spirits: 30 yet the final outcome is no mere freshened memory of old greatness and delights, but a recognition of the true and living poet in Mr. Bridges, who thus delicately preserves for modern use an antique charm. . . .

A thorough consideration of Mr. Bridges' poetry would

ponder long his skill in music and in metre: for in these he has something of the master's touch, and beyond the dexterity of a novice. But so full of minute and of technical scholarship is he, that a treatise were required for the exhibition of his theoretic science and actual practice. But I will say, that, if he err at all, it is in a certain concision and compactness, coming of many strong monosyllables, too little tempered and relieved by words of a more prolonged melody: it is an effect, something between briskness and loisprihtliness, common in the less deft and versatile of 'Elizabethan lyrists, and unequal to occasions of great and moving beauty. Such verses are, indeed, of a pleasant tone and of a just economy; their structure is neat and clean, they are without waste and profusion of words: but coming from Mr. Bridges, they come rather as 'copies of verses', done in the scholar's humour, for the leisurely exercise' sake, than as the best products of his imagination. When he chooses to sing or to chaunt, with more of various melody and concerted music, we regret, not without some ingrati-
 20 tude, his less delicate or lofty strain. In certain measures, devised with a great subtilty of accents, equal in number upon each line, but in each line prevailing over various reaches, or disposed at various intervals, Mr. Bridges has not yet attained a perfect ease: but he contrives many pleasurable effects: witness some of the lines on *a Dead Child*

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair! . . .

Besides the *Shorter Poems*, the volume of seventy-nine
 30 sonnets, entitled *The Growth of Love*, is of noticeable beauty: it may be thought, in point of mental and imaginative strength, his finest work. Unlike most sonnets of our time, these sonnets are weighty with close thought, and rich with images, in the Shakespearian, and in Milton's ways; yet not

obscure, nor luxuriant, in the less happy manner of Rossetti. And their substance is congruous with the form: each grave or exulting thought finds within the limits of the fourteen lines, an exact place for it to fill: so Petrarch conceived the sonnet, and so Sidney. . . .

Briefly, and generally, I have touched upon the characteristic virtues, as I see them, of this excellent poet: rather indicating, than attempting to expound, his peculiar charm. It is a limited charm: not that it is one liable to decay with time, or to pass with the reader's passing moods. But it is 10 limited, in the sense that this poetry in all its simplicity, in all its skill, is too dainty a thing for common use. Unlike the poems of Arnold or of Wordsworth, of Virgil or of Keats, of Milton or of Goethe, they cannot be read daily and in all places. That is a test of great poetry: its abiding and unfailing power upon us, because of its indifference to time and place. A line of Virgil, written by the Bay of Naples, in some most private hour of meditation, all those long years ago! comes home to us, as though it were our own thought: upon each repetition, experience has made it more true and touch- 20 ing. Or take some verse of Arnold, written at Oxford or in London, some few years past: it comes home to us, as though a thousand years had pondered it, and found it true. And in beauty, in power of music and of phrase, the great poets are all contemporaries: an eternal beauty is upon the great works of art, as though they were from everlasting. Poets of exquisite charm, true to their art, true to its traditions, full of its inner spirit, may still miss that final grace and grandeur: and of these, Mr. Bridges is, in my poor judgment, the most admirable in recent times. Had a friend been 30 reading Herrick to me, or Catullus; were I lying in the gardens of New College in Oxford, or in Winchester Meads; did some one play to me a fugue of Bach: I might, at this hour, rate the *Shorter Poems of Robert Bridges* far higher than my conscience, unperturbed by delights, will suffer me.

xxviii LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

For they are poems, unaffected and simple, yet with an air of dainty luxury, about them: free from all trivial show and glitter/ yet not commanding and compelling us by their intrinsic greatness.

EDWARD DOWDEN ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, reprinted in
New Studies in Literature, 1895.

THERE is a lyric which is the direct outcry of passion transformed to art—such are some of the songs of Burns; a lyric which is the expression of profound and ardent contemplation—such are some of Wordsworth's poems; a lyric, which is architectonic in character, the product of an elaborate evolution—such are some of the odes of Gray. Mr. Bridges' poems are seldom mere outcries of passion; they do not often explore the heights and depths of thought; they are in general of admirable evolution, but their design is rarely (save in the choral odes of his dramas) complex and of large dimensions. Elements of many and various kinds enter into his volume of 'Shorter Poems'—delicate observation, delight in external nature, delight in art, delight in love, gladness and grief, ethical seriousness, pensive meditation, graceful play of fancy. But all are subdued to balance, measure, harmony; and sometimes our infirmity craves for some dominant note, some fine extravagance, even some splendid sins. Mr. Bridges' audacities are to be found in occasional phrases—often felicitous and of true descriptive or interpretative power, sometimes not felicitous—and in his metrical experiments. But in his metrical experiments there is nothing revolutionary; they are extensions of a true tradition in English verse; they amount to little more than nicely calculated variations of stress. No writer of verse understands his business better than Mr. Bridges; and if finer and subtler harmonies are attained unconsciously or

half-consciously by greater poets, our ear soon adapts itself to the delicate surprises and delicate satisfactions, which he has thought out and felt out as a skilled craftsman. . . .

Mr. Bridges¹ poems have been censured for a lack of warm humanity, and, with the exception of certain poems of joy and love, his lyrics are not direct and simple utterances of passion. But many of his lyrics are charged with fine and tender human sentiment, and he can express moods of dejection and meditative sorrow as well as the happiness of lovers. There is poignant grief, purged of all that is violent, 10 in the beautiful stanzas *On a Dead Child*. Even into his interpretation of nature an element of humanity enters. It was a bold enterprise, for any poet to attempt a new rendering of the nightingales¹ voices when Keats had been his predecessor; but there is magic in Mr. Bridges' poem, *Nightingales*, and half the magic is won, not from the birds' songs, but from the heart of man.

LAURENCE BINYON ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Dome*, 1899.

THAT Mr. Bridges should be neglected has seemed strange and deplorable to many of his admirers; but, however deplorable, it is not really strange. Let us not be angry with 20 the reviewers; let us rather sympathise with their misfortunes, which no one, who has not tried reviewing, can truly gauge. Compelled by cruel editors to read, digest, and pronounce on books almost before they are published, forced to proclaim their judgment before thousands and tens of thousands of readers, who will not listen if they do not shout, with what cause may they not lament, with Matthew Arnold—

What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise ?

30

They are condemned, against their will, to a hurried stripping

from the pages before them of the ornaments that glitter most, and to hang their plain columns with these brilliant trophies. There are some authors whom this treatment flatters; Mr. Bridges is one of those whom it most injures. It was quite easy by this method to prove that Alexander Smith (the classic instance) was of the rank of Keats. Read in quotations, at the breakfast-table, or on the top of an omnibus, doubtless he seemed a Shakespeare. Unfortunately for him, the world was led to read his work. He would have
10 been wiser, had he bought up the edition and placed it in safe flames, and survived as Sappho has survived. For he shone in fragments. The most extravagantly praised poet of this reign, he has now subsided into darkness. Mr. Bridges is a poet of a very different type. His beauties are not easily detachable, but inhere in the substance of his work; he cannot be known in quotations. More than this, his poetry does not reveal itself all at once. On a second reading it seems finer than on the first; on each successive reading its fine qualities grow and deepen. And this, which is the stumbling-
20 block of the reviews, is indeed its greatest merit. For poetry is made to be known, loved, enjoyed; and the poetry which wins us with tranquil and sure power is victorious in the end over that which thrills at the first reading, and chills on the third or fourth. There is too much said in our modern emotional criticism about 'thrills'; the test is too dangerously personal.... That some oracular Anonym has been thrilled tells us nothing. If, then, we are silent about our thrills, and apply other forgotten tests to Mr. Bridges' poetry, we shall find, I think, that it has virtues of a high and rare order,
30 virtues which some accepted masterpieces might envy. For the best of Mr. Bridges' poems have that structural beauty, that 'wholeness of good tissue,' which is the pith of all enduring art. Some may find them not sufficiently exciting, may complain that their hues are too sober; just as people will complain of the low tone of a Velasquez landscape. But

the main thing is achieved, without which splendours are of little avail....

This underlying beauty and organic strength are matched by similar qualities in imagery and rhythm. Mr. Bridges' images are scarcely ever 'striking'; you may search him in vain for stanzas so obviously spirited and picturesque as that admired stanza of Mr. Davidson's (perhaps the stanza most praised by the critics in all recent poetry)—

The adventurous sun took heaven by storm:
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

10

This is as successful in its way as a vigorous water-colour by David Cox; it has merits which everyone grasps in a moment; and it is perhaps only when we examine it a little, that we find that it has no imaginative, no finely poetic qualities at all. And the false note of the first line can only be excused by the excited temper in which the whole ballad is written. This example happened to be at hand; but it is not quite fair to single out Mr. Davidson, since one might mention one or two popular favourites even among our poetical classics, which will not really bear a strict analysis. Mr. Bridges is singularly free, I think, from hidden flaws in the texture of his work. He approaches his subject in a spirit so scrupulous and sincere, that his beauties are always truths, and lie deep; such touches, I mean, as that comparison in *The South Wind*:

As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower—
Like as the stem that beareth the flower
By trembling is knit to power.

30

And this is the reason why his observation is so subtle, delicate, and new, excelling, as I think, Tennyson, in one of Tennyson's main excellences.

Again, of Mr. Bridges' rhythm I would say that it has the

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finest virtue of all good rhythm, namely, a perfect expressiveness. It is organic, it flowers spontaneously from the subject, and it obeys the changing thought with an exquisitely true vibration. Mr. Bridges in this carries on the tradition which Shelley handed down to us in his divine lyric art; the tradition which has degenerated rather than developed (let us take courage to say the truth) in the too mechanical devices and the too facile melodies of Mr. Swinburne. Mr. Swinburne's stanzas always dazzle and astonish; but his
10 rhythm has almost nothing of those magic responses to the turns of emotion, those lovely natural falterings, and those victorious bursts, in which Shelley's art surpasses that of all other lyric writers.

Taken thus in every view, Mr. Bridges appears the sure master of all that he attempts; and if one is to quarrel with his poetry, it must be on the ground that he attempts too little, that he abstains from too much.

ARTHUR SYMONS ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Monthly Review*, July 1901, reprinted in
Studies in Prose and Verse, 1904.

MR. BRIDGES appears to me, in his 'Shorter Poems', to be alone in our time as a writer of purely lyric poetry, poetry
20 which aims at being an 'embodied joy', a calm rapture. Others have concerned themselves with passions more vehement, with thoughts more profound, with a wilder music, a more variable colour; others have been romantic, realistic, classical, and tumultuous; have brought a remote magic into verse, and have made verse out of sorrowful things close at hand. But while all these men have been singing themselves, and what they have counted most individual in themselves, this man has put into his verse only what remains over when all the others have finished. It is a kind
30 of essence; it is what is imperishable in perfume; it is what

is nearest in words to silence. Of the writer of 'Will love again awake', or 'I love all beauteous things', you know no more than you know of the writer of 'Kind are her answers', or of 'O Love, they wrong thee much', in the Elizabethan song-books. You know only that joy has come harmoniously into a soul, which, for the moment at least, has been purged of everything less absolute than the sheer responsiveness of song. And so, better than the subtlest dramatist, the lyric poet, in his fine, self-sacrificing simplicity, can speak for all the world, scarcely even knowing that he is speaking for 10 himself at all. And in this poetry, it should be noted, nothing is allowed for its own sake, not even the most seductive virtue, as pathos, the ecstasy of love or of religion; but everything for the sake of poetry. Here is an artist so scrupulous that beauty itself must come only in sober apparel, joy only walking temperately, sorrow without the private disfiguring of tears. Made, as it is, out of what might be the commonplace, if it were not the most select thing in the world; written, as it is, with a deliberateness which might be cold if it were not at that quiet heat in which rapture is 20 no longer astonished at itself; realising, as it does, Coleridge's requirement that 'poetry in its higher and purer sense' should demand 'continuous admiration, not regular recurrence of conscious surprise'; this poetry, more than almost any in English, is art for art's sake; and it shows, better certainly than any other, how that formula saves from excess, rather than induces to it. So evenly are form and substance set over against one another that it might be said, with as much or as little justice, that everything exists for form, or that nothing is sacrificed to it. ... 30

Mr. Bridges' style in verse has been said to lack originality, and it is true that his finest lyrics might have found their place among the lyrics in an Elizabethan song-book. And yet they are not archaic, a going back to the external qualities of style, but a thinking back, as of one who really, in

thought, lives in another age, to which his temper of mind is more akin. They are very personal, but personal in a way so abstract, so little dependent on accidents of what we call personality, that it seems the most natural thing in the world for him to turn to a style which comes to him with a great, anonymous tradition. He has never had that somewhat prosaic desire to paint himself 'with all the warts', and he is quite indifferent to the self-consciousness which goes by the name of originality. Just as, in his plays, he borrows
 10 frankly from any one who deals in his own merchandise, so in his lyrics he tries to write only what might have been written in any time or in any country. . . . He seems almost impersonal in his work, indifferent whose it is, his own or another's, as if only its excellence interested him. And this work, when it is most narrowly personal, does not so much render moods of a temperament as aspects of a character. Nobility of character, a moral largeness, which becomes one with an intellectual breadth, a certain gravity, simplicity, sincerity: these count for so much in his work, which indeed
 20 they seem to make. . . .

Made, as it is, on so firm a basis of character, his art is concerned with results rather than (as with most lyric poets) with processes. How many of his poems seem to lead from meditation straight to action; to be expressing something more definite, more formed and settled, than a feeling divorced from consequences! When, as so often, he finds words for an almost inarticulate delight, it is, for the most part, no accidental but rather an organic delight to which he gives utterance! the response of nature to his nature, of his
 30 nature to nature.

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate, emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of

subtlety endeavours to come in. Mr. Bridges' poetic heat is intermittent, and thus his felicity; for all charm in verse, however 'frail and careful', is born of some energy at white heat. At rare times, even in the short poems, and not only in so long a poem as, for instance, 'Prometheus the Fire-giver', one feels that the wave of thought or emotion does not flow broadly and strongly to the end, but breaks on the way. . . .

To Mr. Bridges, undoubtedly, there is something of an actual 'joy' in making poetry, in the mere writing of verse. 10
No one in our time has written verse more consciously and more learnedly, with a more thorough realisation of all those effects which are commonly supposed to come to poets by some divine accident. . . .

If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance. This poet, collectedly living apart, to whom the common rewards of 20
life are not so much a temptation, has meditated deeply on the conduct of life, in the freest, most universal sense; and he has attained a philosophy of austere, not unsmiling content, in which something of the cheerfulness of the Stoic unites with the more melancholy resignation of the Christian,⁴ and, limiting himself so resolutely to this sober outlook upon life, though with a sense of the whole wisdom of the ages:

Then oft I turn the page
In which our country's name,
Spoiling the Greek of fame,
Shall sound in every age:
Or some Terentian play
Renew, whose excellent
Adjusted folds betray
How once Menander went:

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limiting himself, as in his verse, to a moderation which is an infinite series of rejections, he becomes the wisest of living poets, as he is artistically the most faultless. He has left by the way all the fine and coloured and fantastic and splendid things which others have done their utmost to attain, and he has put into his poetry the peace and not the energies of life, the wisdom and not the fever of love, the silences rather than the voices of nature. . . .

SIR WALTER RALEIGH ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

ROBERT BRIDGES has just been in on the way down the hill. He is delightfully grumpy. He mentions thing after thing which is commonly believed and says that of course it's not so. He's always right. His intellect has been so completely self-indulged that it now can't understand rubbish. He has never obeyed anyone or adapted himself to anyone, so he's as clear as crystal, and can't do with fogs. (30 October 1912.)

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R. B. says he can't bear Donne, because Donne was a sensualist. R. B. is a pernickety, dainty, wilful, self-indulgent chaste old bird. Just a shade too little of a blackguard. (10 20 November 1916.)

W. B. YEATS ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

I had a short illness six months ago and the first sign of returning health was the excitement of finding that I could read poetry again and the poem that brought on this excitement was your poem on the dead child. In my weak state it produced an almost unendurable emotion.

(To Robert Bridges, 20 April 1913.)

I have always so greatly admired [his] work. It has an emotional purity and rhythmical delicacy no living man can equal. (To Siegfried Sassoon, 7 October 1924.)

I think I remember your husband most clearly as I saw him at some great house near you where there were some Servian delegates. He came through the undistinguished crowd, an image of mental and physical perfection, and one of the Servians turned to me in obvious excitement to ask his name. He has always seemed the only poet, whose influence has always heightened and purified the art of others, 10 and all who write with deliberation are his debtors.

(To Mrs. Bridges, 7 May 1930.)

From *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.

ROBERT BRIDGES seemed for a time, through his influence on Laurence Binyon and others less known, the patron saint of the movement. His influence—practice, not theory—was never deadening; he gave to lyric poetry a new cadence, a distinction as deliberate as that of Whistler's painting, an impulse moulded and checked like that in certain poems of Landor, but different, more in the nerves, less in the blood, more birdlike, less human; words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing, 20

A glitter of pleasure
And a dark tomb,

or by some trick of simplicity, not the impulsive simplicity of youth but that of age, much impulse examined and rejected.

WALTER DE LA MARE ON BRIDGES

From *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*, 30 August 1913,
reprinted in *Private View*, 1953.

TO Mr. Bridges this patience (the patience of the conscious artist) is not merely the outcome of wisdom acquired

from experience; it is an innate quality of mind. A deliberate reticence, a sedulous restraint, a hatred of revelations, are its constant marks. It is never in danger of a loose insincerity, bombast, mere prettiness. Its tendency is rather towards the impersonal and academic. It may become austere almost to the point of aridity. A trace of Augustan formality edges at times into the verse; 'rival amorous vows Amaze the scented air'; an acrostic on the revered name of Purcell diversifies the exquisitely told tale of *Eros and Psyche*. But

10 though inspiration occasionally flags or fails it, the tinder, as it were, is always there; it is the spark that is wanting. This is only another way of saying that Mr. Bridges is that too-rare combination of excellences—a scholar as well as a poet. Whatever his interest centres on, whether music, or hymnody, English speech, prosody, or technical criticism, his method and treatment are always close and thorough, and his conclusions are never extravagant. In an age of crazes and caprice, of curiosity, ostentation, and publicity, he has consistently stood aloof—but not as a mere spectator. He is

20 beyond any of his contemporaries—and forerunners, too—the poet of discipline, of a serene assurance, of an unfretful though by no means passive endurance of what a divine destiny may send and life commit to. ... A tranquil ease and mastery invariably characterize his work, an assured play of mind, a slightly astringent irony. No smoke, no fire, says the proverb; but this close artist kept even his chimney out of sight. His consistent example is a counsel of excellence.... In such poems as *The Affliction of Richard*, *Pater Filio*, *I never shall love the snow again*, a heart desperately charged

3° with grief and perplexity may still express itself in words that reveal more clearly even than these its faith and trust and courage. But though the initial spontaneity of Mr. Bridges's lyrics is never entirely hidden, it much more clearly shows itself to be a kind of distillation of reflection and reverie. And this is true although—beyond perhaps that of

any other English poet—his verse is free from regret or melancholy or sadness or reproach. And there falls across his page no Shadow of Despair.

H. W. GARROD ON BRIDGES

From a lecture (Harvard, 1929) printed in *Poetry and the Criticism of Life*, 1931.

IT becomes us, reading it [*The Testament of Beauty*], to remember that the book is, what its title proclaims it, a testament. It is the final deliverance, the last will and monition, upon the subject of beauty, of a lifelong student of the beautiful. The writer of it, making his last dispositions, is in the nature of things uninfluenced by the ordinary literary motives, vanity and love of glory. But he wishes before he 10 takes leave of the sensible world to put upon record his experience of the beautiful, what it has meant in his life, what he conceives to be its relation to truth, what promise he finds in it of immortality for man's spirit.

It is not easy, I have said, to dodge the argument of the poem. The main lines of it are easy enough to follow.

How the mind of man from inconscient existence
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning
toward spiritual conscience,

20

that is Mr. Bridges' theme. In the treatment of it, the first book is introductory, and nearly all of it is pure poetry—perhaps of any immersion in philosophy the most delightful part is trying the water with one's toe. Beginning from the origin and growth of intellectual Wonder, the book explains the spiritual as, in all its departments, a differentiation of the natural, as the flower is a differentiation of the leaf; the four sections into which the introduction is divided furnish together a brief outline of the natural history of what Mr. Bridges calls Wisdom. The two books which 30

follow deal with the two fundamental human instincts; the self-assertive instinct, which Mr. Bridges calls 'Selfhood', and the instinct of sex, which he mostly prefers to speak of as 'Breed'. Book II traces the evolution of Selfhood into altruism, the passion of benevolence, an evolution conditioned naturally by the fact of 'Motherhood'. Book III instructs us how Breed is by like natural process converted into spiritual love. The fourth book is concerned with Ethick—the origin of the idea of duty, the place of pleasure
 10 in the good life, disposition and education, the relation of Reason to the idea of Beauty and to the material of the senses generally,

If it is not easy to dodge the argument, neither is it easy for Mr. Bridges to dodge the question whether there ought to be one. But he does—it suffices for him to have written, against all odds, the only readable philosophical poem since Lucretius. I fancy that he thinks his argument better, abstractly, than it is, i.e., better than I think it; and newer than it is, i.e., not as old as the hills and the human heart.¹
 20 But I am sure, in any case, that the best comment upon the whole of it is to be given in his own words:

and the secret of a poem
 lieth in the intimate echo of the poet's life:

The power of the argument, I mean, consists in the manner in which it reflects an experience. The same is in some degree true, no doubt, of the *De Rerum Natura*—though the power of Lucretius derives mainly, perhaps, from his proselytising ardour (Mr. Bridges is not much concerned to proselytise). But argument is reason, and poetry is beauty;
 30 and when I have read these four books—and four times have I read them with close attention, reasoning as best I could, and submitting (not always with the best grace in the world) to be reasoned with—after all this reading and

¹ What is new is Mr. Bridges' audacious eclecticism.

re-reading I have to confess that I still do not know how Mr. Bridges relates Reason to Beauty. By Beauty he says,

by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,
but not by Reason at Beauty.

Yet Reason, or reasoning, has a front place in this *Testament of Beauty*; and when I hope that Mr. Bridges is at length going to tell me why, he breaks off:

here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me,
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

Of the things that cannot be told Mr. Bridges has 10 managed, none the less, to tell some in a manner of which the deep and original power cannot, I persuade myself, be matched outside the very greatest poetry.

G. S. GORDON ON BRIDGES

From *Robert Bridges* (The Rede Lecture 1931), 1946.

DOLBEN'S assumption that emotional urgency will find or make its own form is the romantic, and also the amateur, view in all the arts, and can only be disproved by failure. Neither on this nor on one other point to which he draws attention did Bridges change. I mean his inability to suppose that the emotions of the poets he read were any better than his own, or his own than another's. Many years later, in his 20 famous essay on Keats he reaffirms this:

'There must be thousands and thousands of persons alive at this moment in England, who, if they could only give poetic expression to those mysterious feelings with which they are moved in the presence of natural beauty, would be one and all of them greater poets than have ever yet been.¹ This is easily said, but Bridges meant it. What these thousands of people want, of course, is art; an art equal to that mystery. But their souls are right. No less than his respect

for art is his faith in the human spirit, at whatever stage of articulation, and this was a tenet of his creed to the end. It is so declared in his last poem, and indeed is a necessity of its reasoning. I speak of it now because the thorough-paced artist, as Bridges was, has so seldom held this view. It is of a piece with his devout humanity. . . .

He came to have some half a dozen languages at his command, and was a wide and intent but increasingly selective and capricious reader. There had so seldom been
10 any reason why he should persevere with what he did not like, or open, indeed, at all, what failed to invite him. It was his one complaint against Mr. W. P. Ker that he was so catholic, that not content with the appalling self-sacrifice of reading everything, he actually tried (could it be believed?) to *like* everything also—for something. When Mr. Bridges had decided that Dryden, for example, had nothing that he wanted, it was no good speaking to him of Dryden's other abilities; he was done with Dryden. It is the difference between the reading of the scholar and the artist, even when
20 the artist is a scholar: the mature artist, at any rate, reads not so much to enlarge his taste as to confirm or refine it....

The loose and roomy metre of the *Testament* is, in fact, the last fruit of prosodic investigation, of a series of experiments carried on by the poet with perfect frankness for many years, and to that, and that alone, we owe that the poem was ever written. This is not the usual order in the genesis of poetry, but it was Bridges' order. Had he failed to discover the metre of the *Testament*, I will not say that he would never have written his philosophy. He spoke often of doing
30 so, sometimes, in despair, of doing it in prose. I have noticed, indeed, that his Broadcast Lecture on Poetry, given in 1929, is an advance statement of the principles of his poem. But he would not have written the *Testament of Beauty*....

No man was more steadily true to himself. His physical

and mental beauty matched each other, and equipped him superbly for the life he chose. He was of noble and even heroic presence, and his careless outdoor strength and grace, growing more picturesque with age, expressed the colour and delicacy as well as the masculine humour and outspoken freedom of his mind. He was poet, scientist, philosopher, naturalist, musician, philologist, typographer, and country gentleman—a mixture of qualities that would have been surprising in another man, and probably ineffectual, but that in him achieved their harmony.—He grew up, through 10 the kindness of fortune, unwarped by the struggle of living, with none of the inevitable vices of a profession. He used the gifts of fortune responsibly, setting an example of high-minded devotion to all the arts of Beauty and to the spiritual advancement of mankind. Before he died he delivered in the *Testament of Beauty* his message of belief in the goodness of the human heart, and of faith in the religious foundation of human life.

CYRIL CONNOLLY ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Sunday Times*, 11 January 1953.

IT is interesting to reconsider this late Victorian bard of Boar's Hill, scholar and muscular metrical Christian, from 20 our disadvantage point in 1953, surrounded by

the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings, the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art.

The defect is obvious: lack of inspiration. No poet seems so consistently without it; and yet, unblessed by any heavenly visitation, he worked bravely on, steeping himself in the true and beautiful—Plato, Dante, Wordsworth, and, above all, Milton—studiously observing the minutiae of the country- 30

side, dryly doing his best as our official poet during a momentous war, sitting on Hopkins's manuscript and pondering problems of prosody: until suddenly, in his eighties, the Muse took pity on him and changed his Martha into Mary. Grace flowed, inspiration descended, and the long and difficult but also intelligent and beautiful 'Testament of Beauty'¹ appeared, dedicated to the King and running into fourteen editions, a modern miracle, a swansong of Victorian integrity, Edwardian learning and Georgian
10 questioning, where Christian platonism

passionat soul and sense
blend in a rich reverie with the dying year.

The five volumes of shorter poems which appeared between 1873 and 1893 contain, however, some lovely things in which nicety of observation and felicity of rhythm compensate for a certain monotony of diction and feeling: a gardener-poet, a walker and a boatman quietly develops, growing familiar with the moods of the countryside and constituting himself the poet of winterspring, the season
20 when January bequeaths to February and March its faltering authority:

Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,
Doth to his heiress shew
His kingdom fair.
In patient russet is his forest spread,
All bright with bramble red,
With beechen moss
And holly sheen: the oak silver and stark
Sunneth his aged bark
And wrinkled boss.

30

'January,' 'November,' 'The Palm Willow,' 'London Snow,' 'A Robin,' 'The Upper Skies,' 'Screaming Tarn'—these and many other slight but haunting and graceful poems end by producing a quiet intoxication in the reader, an aquatinted calendar of the English scene.

Selections from
ROBERT BRIDGES

From POEMS, 1873

HER eye saw, her eye stumbled:
 Her fingers spread and touched it:
 It was so ripe it tumbled
 Off in her hand, that clutched it.

She raised it up to smell it: 5
 Her jealous tongue ran o'er it:
 Ere the thought rose to quell it,
 Her keen teeth closed and tore it.

There as she stood in wonder,
 And smacked the flavour fruity, 10
 She scanned it o'er and under,
 And marvelled at its beauty.

'It's fair,' she said, 'and fairest
 Just where the sun's rays strike it;
 The tastes's the strangest, rarest; 15
 It's bitter, but I like it,'

To man she brought it, bitten,
 She brought it, she the woman,
 The fruit, of which 'tis written
 The eating should undo man. 20

'Taste, taste!' she cried, 'thou starvest;
 Eat as I ate, nor fear it,
 For of all the garden's harvest
 There's nothing like or near it.

' Fair to the eyes, and fairest
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
But oh! the taste's the rarest,
It's bitter, but thou'lt like it.

He took the fruit she gave him,
Took it for pain or pleasure: 3°
There was no help could save him,
Her measure was his measure.

Through her teeth's print, the door of it,
He sent his own in after;
He ate rind, flesh, and core of it, 35
And burst out into laughter.

'Tis fair,' he cried, 'and fairest
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
The taste's the strangest, rarest,
It's bitter, and I like it.¹ 40

From PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

ODE

A COY inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,
 Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things
 Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under. 815
 It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings
 Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,
 And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her:
 She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820
 The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth; and later
 The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night;
 'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,
 With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah! how surely, 825
 How soon and surely will disenchantment come,
 When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,
 And drives the master spirit away from his home;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning
 Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830
 Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,
 As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,
 And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning;
 Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite!

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest 835
 To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright:
 To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest;
 Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting

The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest
 With wonder everlasting. 840

From THE GROWTH OF LOVE

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,
 And carry purpose up to the ends of the air:
 In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where
 By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies:
 Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise 5
 The silence: over plains in the moonlight bare
 I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare
 In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds! then I cry,
 Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd 10
 By the only joy of knowing that ye fly;
 Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,
 The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
 Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
 That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
 Hailing in each the citadel divine
 The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago;
 Until at length your feeble steps and slow 5
 Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
 And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine
 Whether it be Jerusalem or no:

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you;
 For, having worshipped many a barren face, 10
 I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to:
 I stand a pagan in the holy place;
 Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
 And question with the God that I embrace.

33

I CARE not if I live, tho¹ life and breath
 Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
 I care not if I die, for I could meet—
 Being so happy—happily my death.
 I care not if I love; to-day she saith 5
 She loveth, and love's history is complete.
 Nor care I if she love me; at her feet
 My spirit bows entranced and worshippeth.

I have no care for what was most my care,
 But all around me see fresh beauty born, 10
 And common sights grown lovelier than they were:
 I dream of love, and in the light of morn
 Tremble, beholding all things very fair
 And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.

40

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,
 Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,
 Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,
 Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer,
 Tears of contrition; all tears whatsoever 5
 Of tenderness or kindness had she shed
 Who here is pictured, ere upon her head
 The fine gold might be turn'd to silver there.

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place
 Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son; 10
 But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace:
 So that I praise the artist, who hath done
 A portrait, for my worship, of the face
 Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize
 The prize of life from age and likelihood,
 I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
 Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.
 For in the forest among many trees 5
 Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
 The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
 That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high
 Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare; 10
 Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
 So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
 From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
 When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

WHEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand
 The traveller faints, upon his closing ear
 Steals a fantastic music: he may hear
 The babbling fountain of his native land.
 Before his eyes the vision seems to stand, 5
 Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,
 Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,
 And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire— 10
 O shameless, O contempt of holy things.
 But never of their wanton play they tire,
 As not athirst they sit beside the springs,
 While he must quench in death his lost desire.

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice
 Of works unperfected and broken schemes,
 Where is the promise of my early dreams,
 The smile of beauty and the pearl of price?
 No charm is left now that could once entice 5
 Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,
 And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,
 Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air
 Has chill'd endeavour: sickly memories reign 10
 In every room, and ghosts are on the stair:
 And hope behind the dusty window-pane
 Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care
 Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

51

0 MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
 That in my secret book with so much care
 I write you, this one here and that one there,
 Marking the time and order of your birth?
 How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth, 5
 A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
 Look ye for any welcome anywhere
 From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd
 To write you such as once, when I was young, 10
 Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.
 Twere something yet to live again among
 The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd
 My art, be there remember'd for my song.

SINCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond
 Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
 Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
 Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond;
 Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond 5
 Is writ my promise of eternity;
 Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,
 That if thou look but from me I despond;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this:
 Think of the dedication of my youth: 10
 Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss:
 Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
 My sheer annihilation if I miss:
 Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

TWAS on the very day winter took leave
 Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies
 The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise
 At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,
 I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve; 5
 Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise
 As Adam went alone in Paradise,
 Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around
 I laid me down beneath a flowering tree, 10
 And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound;
 In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,
 Rending my body, where with hurried sound
 I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

61

THE dark and serious angel, who so long
 Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,
 Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
 To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
 Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong, 5
 Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
 God's purpose in a soul of such degree;
 And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
 He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay, 10
 And work confusion of so many foes:
 The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,
 Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes
 Unto what great reward I cannot say.

69

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,
 In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,
 To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,
 Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.
 Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state, 5
 That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve
 Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,
 Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
 And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin, 10
 Even as our anger soon is past and dead
 Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
 By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
 And in the vale of terror comforted.

(II)

From SHORTER POEMS

Book I

I

ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day; 5
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament 10
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit 15
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray, 20
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

(12)

Many an afternoon 25
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums 30
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon 35
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem 40
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content 45
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

2

ELEGY

THE wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

(13)

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten, 5
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:— 10
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her, 15
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls. 20

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches 25
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:
And birds that love the South have taken wing. 30
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

5

I HEARD a linnet courting
 His lady in the spring:
 His mates were idly sporting,
 Nor stayed to hear him sing
 His song of love.— 5
 I fear my speech distorting
 His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading
 Were full of young delight;
 And she that gave him heeding 10
 Interpreted aright
 His gay, sweet notes,—
 So sadly marred in the reading,—
 His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer 15
 Awaited the refrain,
 Till swiftly perching nearer
 He sang his song again,
 His pretty song:—
 Would that my verse spake clearer 20
 His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!
 That in the merry spring
 Think not of what misfeatures
 Or cares the year may bring; 25
 But unto love
 Resign your simple natures,
 To tender love.

7

I WILL not let thee go.
Ends all our month-long love in this?
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss?
I will not let thee go. 5

I will not let thee go.
If thy words¹ breath could scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go. 10

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen, I might;
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go. 15

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go. 20

I will not let thee go.
Have we not chid the changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go? 25

(16)

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go. 30

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go. 35

9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late:
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought, 5
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn: 10
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

ii

LONG are the hours the sun is above,
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

(17)

She does not meet me upon the stair,—
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :
I always walk straight up to my love;

And she lets me take my wonted place
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face. 10

There as I sit, from her head thrown back
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear, 15
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,
The firelight hours are a dream of gold. 20

And so I sit here night by night,
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair,
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay: 25
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,
That I sit so much by myself alone.

ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,
And all ye loves, assemble; far and wide
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before
Has been deferred to this late eventide :

For on this night the bride, 5
The days of her betrothal over,
Leaves the parental hearth for evermore;
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain
Yet all unvisited, the silken gown: 10
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain
Her dearer friends provided: sere and brown

Bring out the festal crown,
And set it on her forehead lightly:
Though it be withered, twine no wreath again; 15
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,
While her attendants, chosen from among 20

Her faithful virgin throng,
May lay her in her cedar litter,
Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.

(19)

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be 25
Not without music, nor with these alone;
But let the viol lead the melody,
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan
Of sinking semitone;
And, all in choir, the virgin voices 30
Rest not from singing in skilled harmony
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night, 35
And then the maidens, in a double row,
Each singing soft and low,
And each on high a torch upstaying:
Unto her lover lead her forth with light,
With music, and with singing, and with praying. 40

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,
And found her trusty window open wide,
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,
That long the restless curtain would not hide
Her form that stood beside; 45
As scarce she dared to be delighted,
Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn: 50
And watching she has seen no shadow pass
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne
Upon her ear forlorn.
In vain has she looked out to greet him;
He has not come, he will not come, alas! 55
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

Now to the river bank the priests are come:
 The bark is ready to receive its freight:
 Let some prepare her place therein, and some
 Embark the litter with its slender weight: 60

The rest stand by in state,
 And sing her a safe passage over;
 While she is oared across to her new home,
 Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thott, O lover, that art on the watch, 65
 Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,
 The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch
 The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

Thou, when the torchlight gleams,
 When thou shalt see the slow procession, 70
 And when thine ears the fitful music catch,
 Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

16

TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master;
 Of more than common friendliness
 When first we met we did not guess.
 Who could foretell this sore distress, 5
 This irretrievable disaster
 When first we met?—We did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master.

Book II

I

MUSE

WILL Love again awake,
That lies asleep so long?

POET

O hush! ye tongues that shake
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE

It is a lady fair 5
Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET

She must be fair of face, 10
As bold of heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
With the delight of dreams.

MUSE

Her beauty would surprise
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise 15
Upon the scattered sheaves.

(22)

POET

O sweet must be the voice
He shall descend to hear,
Who doth in Heaven rejoice
His most enchanted ear. 20

MUSE

The smile, that rests to play
Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
Tricks her sweet syllables.

POET

And yet her smiles have danced 25
In vain, if her discourse
Win not the soul entranced
In divine intercourse.

MUSE

She will encounter all
This trial without shame, 30
Her eyes men Beauty call,
And Wisdom is her name.

POET

Throw back the portals then,
Ye guards, your watch that keep,
Love will awake again 35
That lay so long asleep.

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest ?
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest, 5
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
 In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air: 10
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
 grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair 15
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
 That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
 As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
 From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
 In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place 5
 Their thick tops interlace,
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
 Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade, 10
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare
 The stout roots in the air:
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played 15
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
 Robbing the golden market of the bees: 20

And laden barges float
 By banks of myosote;
 And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool 25
 Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
 The drowning nenuphars, 30
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows 35
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:

 Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high. 4°

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;
 And dreams, or falls asleep, 45
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
 In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care 50
 Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
 May by the pathway of the forest fare:
 As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
 Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware 55
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam; 60
 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

(26)

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames? 65
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:
 Lest ere I come the while
 Strange feet your shades defile; 70
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
 Within your guardian isle.

7

THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;
O still solitude, only matched in the skies:
 Perilous in steep places,
 Soft in the level races,
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies; 5
With lovely undulation of fall and rise;
 Entrenched with thickets thorned,
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned!

1 climb your crown, and lo! a sight surprising
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide: 10
 And scattered ships ascending
 To heaven, lost in the blending
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,
Urging their engines against wind and tide,
 And all so small and slow 15
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,
 Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,
 Takes my ear, in the veering
 Baffled wind, as rearing 20
 Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;
 And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;
 While again at the foot of the downs
 He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.

10

ELEGY

AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews
 I come, unquiet sorrows to control;
 Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse
 With my neglected solitary soul;
 And to poetic sadness care confide, 5
 Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide:

They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,
 Among the tombs finding my rare delight,
 Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,
 Or in the windy moon-enchanted night, 10
 Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,
 And given them water from the well divine.—

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun
 Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;
 The seeds are perfected: his work is done, 15
 And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May;
 Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear
 Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,
 The world my solemn fancy leaves behind, 20
 Come! pass within the inviolable wall,
 Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind;
 Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,
 And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears; 25
 For many eyes have sanctified this spot,
 Where grief's unbroken lineage endears
 The charm untimely Folly injures not,
 And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap
 The simple fence its holiness doth keep. 30

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
 Their pompous legends will no smile awake;
 Even the vainglorious title o'er the head
 Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake;
 And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize, 35
 Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,
 Here where a lover left his bride, below
 The treasured names their own are added on
 To those whom they have followed long ago: 40
 Sealing the record of the tears they shed,
 That 'where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

(29)

Grandfather, father, son, and then again
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath
Numbered in turn among the sons of men, 45
And gathered each one in his turn to death:
While he that occupies their house and name
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits? Ah! could we tell
The manner of our being when we die, 50
And see beyond the scene we know so well
The country that so much obscured doth lie!
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,
Or crown our melancholy with despair;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come: 55
Since of this world the essential joy must fall
In all distributed, in each thing some,
In nothing all, and all complete in all;
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace. 60

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here:
Though in most black habiliments attired,
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit 65
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet
Back to the busy town return, but yet
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,
Or touch their hands, or share without regret 70
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents:
 A honeymoon delight,— 5
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour:—
 My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ 10
 Along a liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere:— 15
 My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom:
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb! 20
 Fly with delight, fly hence!
 Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast; now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

*Book III***I**

O MY vague desires!
 Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires:
 That are my soul herself in pangs sublime
 Rising and flying to heaven before her time:

What doth tempt you forth 5
 To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north?
 What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
 Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

Joy, the joy of flight!
 They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night; 10
 Gone up, gone out of sight: and ever again
 Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah! they burn my soul,
 The fires, devour my soul that once was whole:
 She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day, 15
 But whither, whither? ay whither? away, away!

Could I but control
 These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul:
 Could I but quench the fire: ah! could I stay
 My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away! 20

LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing; 5
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven 10
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
 The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
 The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness; 15

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze 20
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
 'O look at the trees!' they cried, 'O look at the trees!'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder, 25
 Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day. 30

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
 And trams of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken, 35
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
 they have broken.

3

THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea:
 Whose smile severe and chaste 5
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever:
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides; 10
 Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
 Precipitate all overrides, and turns, nor abides:
 For you sad birds and fair,
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air;
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature, 15
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames Valley,
 The silent river glides by flowery banks:
 And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
 Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks: 20
 Where if a light air stray,
 Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever:
 Serve thy sweet desire: despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entranced river, 25
 That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,
 Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;
 Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them:
 For you my bowers green,
 My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between, 30
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

4

ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 A he bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.
 Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer 5
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be
 Thy father's pride;—ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make
 stronger.
 To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond; 10
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.
 Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;
 Yet feels to my hand as if 15
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

(35)

So lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—
Propping thy wise, sad head,
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing. 20

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither
hath he taken thee?

To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and
awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us 25
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and have
heard of, fail us.

7

INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day
Had verged already on its hot decline,
And charmed Indolence in languor lay
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine:
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream!' 5
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
Upon our proposed travel well begun,
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
Past shallow islets floating in the sun, 10
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

(36)

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam, 15
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass 20
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;
And pulling for the middle span, we drew
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below! 25
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
And with its easy flood no murmur made:
And weeds spread on its surface, and about
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out. 30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove:
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank, 35
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green; 40
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

(37)

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks; 45
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along, 50
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip 55
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore;
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by. Co

II

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest
In fancy rising now to re-awaken
My love unshaken;

All thou 'st forgotten, but no change can free thee, 5
No hate unmake thee; as thou wert I see thee,
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting
Its ample greeting.

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy, 10
The only joy of all the joys I cherished
That hast not perished,

(38)

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure:
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest, 15
Me thou delightest?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,
And faery fancy leaves her habitation
To desolation. 20

Of two things open left for lovers parted
 Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted:
 But I would ever dream I still possess it,
 And thus caress it.

12

THOU didst delight my eyes:
Yet who am I? nor first
Nor last nor best, that durst
Once dream of thee for prize;
Nor this the only time
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear:
Ah! little praise; thy voice
Makes other hearts rejoice,
Makes all ears glad that hear; 10
And short my joy: but yet,
O song, do not forget!

For what wert thou to me ?
How shall I say? The moon,
That poured her midnight noon
Upon his wrecking sea;—
A sail, that for a day
Has cheered the castaway.

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake!
 The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,
 It leaps in the sky: unrisen lustres slake
 The overtaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake!

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee; 5
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,
 Already they watch the path thy feet shall take:
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—
 She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee; 10
 For thee would unashamed herself forsake:
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake!

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,
 Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:
 And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake; 15
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee:
 She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,
 And awake my heart to be loved: awake, awake!' 20

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,
 Hast loved me best and longest,
 And now with trust the strongest
 The joy of my heart renewest;

Since thou art dearer and dearer 5
 While other hearts grow colder
 And ever, as love is older,
 More lovingly drawest nearer:

(40)

Since now I see in the measure
Of all my giving and taking, 10
Thou wert my hand in the making,
The sense and soul of my pleasure;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee
In heaven I pray be recorded,
And all thy love rewarded 15
By God, thy master that made thee.

19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly 5
Through tempest, flood and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire, 10
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless quire
Soon shall thine eager cry 15
Be numbered and expire.

Book IV

I

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them. **5**

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Altho' to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking. **10**

4

THE clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb **5**
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurried foam
Up on the dusky shore.

(42)

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats, 10
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home, 15
My shadow walks before.

6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh;
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May:
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth:
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower 5
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's
drouth:

On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower
In bulging hea^' that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

12

THE hill pines were sighing,
O'ercast and chill was the day:
A mist in the valley lying
Blotted the pleasant May.

(43)

But deep in the glen's bosom 5
Slimmer slept in the fire
Of the odorous gorse-blossom
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
And out of the copse the stroke 10
Of the iron axe that hammered
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,
As a hundred years of pride
Crashed, in the silence falling: 15
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,
White-robed, with silver hair;
In your meadows fair,
Where the willows weep,
And the sad moonbeam 5
On the gliding stream
Writes her scattered dream:

Angel spirits of sleep,
Dancing to the weir
In the hollow roar 10
Of its waters deep;
Know ye how men say
That ye haunt no more
Isle and grassy shore
With your moonlit play; 15

(44)

21

Like autumn flowers that brave the frost, 5
And make their show when hope is lost,
These 'mong the fruits and mellow scent
Mourn not the high-sunned summer spent.

Their notes thro' all the jocund spring
 Were mixed in merry musicking: 10
 They sang for love the whole day long,
 But now their love is all for song.

Now each hath perfected his lay
To praise the year that hastes away:
They sit on boughs apart, and vie
In single songs and rich reply:

And oft as in the copse I hear
These anthems of the dying year,
The passions, once her peace that stole,
With flattering love my heart console. 20

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
 The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
 Is fallen back in the west
 To couch with the sinking sun.
 The last clouds fare 5
 With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
 In melting drifts of the sky.
 Already the birds in the air
 Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,
 And one by one, 10
 Proclaiming aloud their care,
 Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,
 They trim afresh the fair
 Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm, 15
 And awhile will be handsome yet.
 To-morrow's sun shall caress
 Their remnant of loveliness:
 In quiet days for a time
 Sad Autumn lingering warm 20
 Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!
 What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,
 That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,
 That sheltered the cooing doves at noon, 25
 Of airy fans the delicate throng,—
 Torn and scattered around:
 Far out afield they lie,
 In the watery furrows die,
 In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown, 30
 Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,
 The high year's flaunting crown
 Shattered and trampled down.

(46)

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep 35
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light 40
Sleep falls on forest and field.
S6e! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,
And whitens all the marshy lea:
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,
The day is dark and black the sea.
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves 5
With driven foam the offing fleck:
The ebb is low and barely laves
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach
My childhood chanced and chose to be: 10
'Twas here I played, and musing made
My friend the melancholy sea.
He from his dim enchanted caves
With shuddering roar and onrush wild
Fell down in sacrificial waves 15
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee:—
My heart is now too fixed to bow
Tho' all his tempests howl at me: 20

Book V

I

THE WINNOWERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs
The little hamlet lies,
And nothing sees but the bald crowns
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent 5
And grey slopes of the wold,
The red roofs nestle, oversprent
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun
Basking, what time of year 10
The thrush his singing has begun,
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
His faggots on the stack:
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched 15
Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne
A steady muffled din,
By which we knew that threshed corn
Was winnowing, and went in. 20

(49)

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed 25
The hopper, lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught; 30
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet 35
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not gat us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity: 40

But here we found ourselves again.
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little grain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

LOVE not too much. But how,
When thou hast made me such,
And dost thy gifts bestow,
How can I love too much?

Though I must fear to lose, 5
And drown my joy in care,
With all its thorns I choose
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,
Didst kill my childish trust, 10
That breach with toil did I
Repair, because I must:

And spite of frightening schemes,
With which the fiends of Hell
BlaspHEME thee in my dreams, 15
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,
What marvel in me wrought
Shall quite exculpate thee,
I have no shadow of thought. 20

What am I that complain?
The love, from which began
My question sad and vain,
Justifies thee to man.

THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams
 Of the September sun: his golden gleams
 On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows
 Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows
 That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers; 5
 Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads
 Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds;
 And in the feathery aster bees on wing
 Seize and set free the honied flowers,
 Till thousand stars leap with their visiting: 10
 While ever across the path mazily flit,
 Unpiloted in the sun,
 The dreamy butterflies
 With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,
 White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes, 15
 Or on chance flowers sit,
 With idle effort plundering one by one
 The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze
 Into the garden saileth, 20
 Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,
 For his sharpness he vaileth:
 So long a comrade of the bearded corn,
 Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,
 O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray, 25
 As mindful of the kisses and soft play
 Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,
 Ere he deserted her;
 Lover of fragrance, and too late repents;
 Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink, 30
 Nor spicy pink,

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,
 But the few lingering scents
 Of streaked pea, and gillyflower, and stocks
 Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox. 35

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones
 Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,
 With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,
 Or the wild cry
 Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare 40
 The distant blue, to watering as they fare
 With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,
 If aught their ancient polity displease,—
 Come gathering to their colony, and there
 Settling in ragged parliament, 45
 Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
 When first we kissed beside the thorn,
 So strangely sweet, it was not strange
 We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told— 5
 That love will change in growing old;
 Though day by day is nought to see,
 So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
 Quite to forget what once he was, 10
 Nor even in fancy to recall
 The pleasure that was ah¹ in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
 So deep in summer floods is drowned,
 I wonder, bathed in joy complete, 15
 How love so young could be so sweet.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again
 Since Maurice died:
 With corniced drift it blocked the lane
 And sheeted in a desolate plain
 The country side. 5

The trees with silvery rime bedight
 Their branches bare.
 By day no sun appeared; by night
 The hidden moon shed thievish light
 In the misty air. 10

We fed the birds that flew around
 In flocks to be fed:
 No shelter in holly or brake they found.
 The speckled thrush on the frozen ground
 Lay frozen and dead. 15

We skated on stream and pond; we cut
 The crinching snow
 To Doric temple or Arctic hut;
 We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut
 By the fireside glow. 20

Yet grudged we our keen delights before
 Maurice should come.
 We said, In-door or out-of-door
 We shall love life for a month or more,
 When he is home. 25

They brought him home; 'twas two days late
 For Christmas day:
 Wrapped in white, in solemn state,
 A flower in his hand, all still and straight
 Our Maurice lay. 30

(54)

And two days ere the year outgave
We laid him low.
The best of us truly were not brave,
When we laid Maurice down in his grave
Under the snow.

35

12

NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air 5
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound, 10
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn 15
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of
May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE
ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF
ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,
Mary, in whose fair name was laid
Eton's corner, bless our youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth!

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June, 5
By silver Thames's lulling tune,
In shade of willow or oak, who try
The golden gates of poesy;

Or on the tabled sward all day
Match your strength in England's play, 10
Scholars of Henry, giving grace
To toil and force in game or race;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came
Here in his realm a realm to found, 15
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing
Ye plunge in the lashing weir; or dashing
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain
Round the rushes and home again;— 20

Or what pursuit soe'er it be
That makes your mingled presence free,
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes;

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death, 25
 Temper for you her sword of faith;
 Crown with honour the loving eyes,
 And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring: for you
 The very stars of heaven are new; 30
 And aged Fame again is born,
 Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,
 Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,
 Homer his bardic hymn rehearse, 35
 Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best;
 Each in one thing excel the rest:
 Strive; and hold fast this truth of heaven—
 To him that hath shall more be given. 40

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,
 So many hours for food and sleep,
 So many hours till study tire,
 So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save, 45
 Mirrors bright for her magic cave;
 Wherein may steadfast eyes behold
 A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,
 And when ye leave regret it not; 50
 With wishing gifts in festal state
 Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

(57)

Then to the world let shine your light,
Children in play be lions in fight,
And match with red immortal deeds 55
The victory that made ring the meads:

Or by firm wisdom save your land
From giddy head and grasping hand:
IMPROVE THE BEST; so shall your sons
Better what ye have bettered once. 60

Send them here to the court of grace
Bearing your name to fill your place:
Ye in their time shall live again
The happy dream of Henry's reign:

And on his day your steps be bent 65
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

15

THE north wind came up yesternight
With the new year's full moon,
And rising as she gained her height,
Grew to a tempest soon.
Yet found he not on heaven's face 5
A task of cloud to clear;
There was no speck that he might chase
Off the blue hemisphere,
Nor vapour from the land to drive:
The frost-bound country held 10
Nought motionable or alive,
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.
There scarce was hanging in the wood
A shrivelled leaf to reave;

No bud had burst its swathing hood	15
That he could rend or grieve:	
Only the tall tree-skeletons,	
Where they were shadowed all,	
Wavered a little on the stones,	
And on the white church-wall.	20
—Like as an artist in his mood,	
Who reckons all as nought,	
So he may quickly paint his nude,	
Unutterable thought:	
So Nature in a frenzied hour	25
By day or night will show	
Dim indications of the power	
That doometh man to woe.	
Ah, many have my visions been,	
And some I know full well:	30
I would that all that I have seen	
Were fit for speech to tell.—	
And by the churchyard as I came,	
It seemed my spirit passed	
Into a land that hath no name,	35
Grey, melancholy and vast;	
Where nothing comes: but Memory,	
The widowed queen of Death,	
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye	
All slumber banisheth.	40
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes	
That sickly, staring shore,	
Its old chaotic change of shapes	
Remembers evermore.	
And ghosts of cities long decayed	45
And ruined shrines of Fate	
Gather the paths, that Time hath made	
Foolish and desolate.	

(59)

Nor winter there hath hope of spring,
Nor the pale night of day, 50
Since the old king with scorpion sting
Hath done himself away.

▼ ▼
The morn was calm; the wind's last breath
Had fal'n: in solemn hush
The golden moon went down beneath 55
The dawning's crimson flush.

19

WEEP not to-day: why should this sadness be?
Learn in present fears
To o'ermaster those tears
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise: 5
Up, sad heart, nor faint
In ungracious complaint,
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace 10
Draweth surely nigh,
When good-night is good-bye;
For sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away
Deem, nor strange thy doom.
Like this sorrow 'twill come, 15
And the day will be to-day.

From NEW POEMS

4

ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path!
 My homing heart no happier playground hath.
 I need not close my lids but it appears
 Through the bewilderment of forty years
 To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between 5
 Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green;
 Fairer than dreams of sleep, than Hope more' fair
 Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,
 Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees, 10
 Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar
 From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,
 Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,
 A mossy terrace of the native chalk
 Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around 15
 Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.
 There live the memories of my early days,
 There still with childish heart my spirit plays;
 Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair
 When she hath fled me, I have found her there; 20
 And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring
 Alternate days of summer and of spring,
 With childish thought, and childish faces bright,
 And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood, 25
 A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood:
 Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,
 Whereby unto the southern front we went,
 And from the dark plantation climbing free,
 Over a valley look'd out on the sea. 30

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky
 Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie
 High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,
 Or nearer in the roads pass within hail
 Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride 35
 At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch; nay, now
 The brazen disk is cold against my brow,
 And in my sight a circle of the sea
 Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee, 40
 And ships in stately motion pass so near
 That what I see is speaking to my ear:
 I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,
 The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain
 That runs out thro' the hawse, the clank of the winch 45
 Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,
 Till half I wonder if they have no care,
 Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear
 On all their doings, if I vex them not
 On every petty task of their rough lot 50
 Prying and spying, searching every craft
 From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—
 Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean
 Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen
 Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length, 55
 Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some
 Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come
 Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up
 Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop, 60
 By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,
 The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,
 Or some immense three-decker of the line,
 Romantic as the tale of Troy divine;
 Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall 65
 The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,
 And for the engines of a mightier Mars
 Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.
 The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave
 That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave 70
 Lost then their merriment, nor look to play
 With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
 Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound:
 Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea, 75
 As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
 Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
 Glided in line upon the windless deep :
 For in those days was first seen low and black
 Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack, 80
 And neath their stern revolv'd the twisted fan.
 Many I knew as soon as I might scan,
 The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,
 The *Rogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright
 Others that I remember now no more; 85
 But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,
 With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,
 The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,
 Whereon saiTd George, who in her gig had flown
 The silken ensign by our sisters sewn. 90

The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame
 To England's proudest ship had given her name,
 And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene
 Had scarce more honoured than accustom'd been,—
 Was two years since to his last haven past: 95
 I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast
 One morn as I sat looking on the sea,
 When thus all England's grief came first to me,
 Who hold my childhood favoured that I knew
 So well the face that won at Waterloo. 100

But now 'tis other wars, and other men;—
 The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—
 Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found:
 A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,
 The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers, 105
 And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.
 Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,
 The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

9

MY delight and thy delight
 Walking, like two angels white,
 In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
 Twining to a tongue of fire, 5
 Leaping live, and laughing higher;
 Thro' the everlasting strife
 In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
 Hath the secret of the sun. 10

(64)

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life. and.S3£££Li& breath: 15

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay 20
In the dawning of the day.

II

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,
His waves come rolling evermore;
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I, 5
Under the pine upon the hill,
The sadness of the clouded sky,
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,
The seamew's melancholy cry
With loving fancy suit but ill. 10

We talk of moons and cooling suns,
Of geologic time and tide,
The eternal sluggards that abide
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent 15
That man should guess her dreary scheme
Lest he should live too well content
In his fair house of mirth and dream:

(65)

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,
His heart that wearies of desire, 20
Being so fugitive a part
Of what so slowly must expire.

She in her agelong toil and care
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,
Mocking alike hope and despair. 25

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,
Days that are one with human art,
Worthy of the Virgilian muse, 30
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

12

RIDING adown the country lanes

One day in spring,
Heavy at heart with all the pains
Of man's imagining:—

The mist was not yet melted quite 5
Into the sky:

The small round sun was dazzling white,
The merry larks sang high:

The grassy northern slopes were laid
In sparkling dew, 10
Out of the slow-retreating shade
Turning from sleep anew:

Deep in the sunny vale a burn
Ran with the lane,
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern 15
It laughed in joyful strain:

(66)

And primroses shot long and lush
 Their clustered cream;
Robin and wren and amorous thrush
 Carol'd above the stream: 20

The stillness of the lenten air
 Call'd into sound
The motions of all life that were
 In field and farm around:

So fair it was, so sweet and bright, 25
 The jocund Spring
Awoke in me the old delight
 Of man's imagining,

Riding adown the country lanes:
 The larks sang high.— 30
O heart! for all thy griefs and pains
 Thou shalt be loth to die.

14

NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed;
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands 5
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear
The teams following and crossing far and near,
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands
Of the striped fields; and behind them firk and prance 10
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance:
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)

(67)

They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by
Above the lane they shout lifting the share, 15
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air;
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out
The small wrens glide
With a happy note of cheer, 20
And yellow amorets flutter above and about,
Gay, familiar in fear.

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,
All the afternoon to the gardens fly, 25
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel:
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,
In an isolated tree a congregation
Of starlings chatter and chide, 30
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel:
Suddenly they hush as one,—
The tree top springs,—
And off, with a whirr of wings,
They fly by the score 35
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more
Dispute for the roosts; and from the unseen nation
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly, 40
While falls the night on them self-occupied;
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,
And soon to bury in snow •
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole, 45
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole
Of how her end shall be.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—

Its course is done:

But nothing tells the place

Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,

5

And up the lane

You may hear, but cannot see,

The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums

In the farm hard by:

10

Its lowering smoke is lost

In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,

And all night through

The dropping will not cease

15

In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house

Must keep his chair:

He knows he will never again

Breathe the spring air:

20

His heart is worn with work;

He is giddy and sick

If he rise to go as far

As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,

25

His hale, strong years;

And braves as he may the night

Of darkness and tears.

WHEN Death to either shall come,—

I pray it be first to me,—

(69)

Be happy as ever at home,

If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own;

5

And sing to the child on thy knee,

Or read to thyself alone

The songs that I made for thee.

20

EPftl

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?

Thou idol of the human race,

Thou tyrant of the human heart,

The flower of lovely youth that art;

Yea, and that standest in thy youth

5

An image of eternal Truth,

With thy exuberant flesh so fair,

That only Pheidias might compare,

Ere from his chaste marmoreal form

Time had decayed the colours warm;

10

Like to his gods in thy proud dress,

Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,

For in thy face is nought to find,

Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,

15

That shadows neither love nor guile,

But shameless will and power immense,

In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?

I dream thou knowest it is nought,

20

And wouldst in darkness come, but thou

Makest the light where'er thou go.

Ah yet no victim of thy grace,

None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,

Hath cared to look upon thy face.

25

From LATER POEMS

5

ONE grief of thine
 if truth be confest
 Was joy to me;
 for it drave to my breast
 Thee, to my heart 5
 to find thy rest.

How long it was
 I never shall know:
 I watcht the earth 10
 so stately and slow,
 And the ancient things
 that waste and grow.

But now for me
 what speed devours
 Our heavenly life, 15
 our brilliant hours!
 How fast they fly,
 the stars and flowers!

13

THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,
 Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,
 One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek:
 It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,
 Imagine fathering my father; when he, in sonship afore, 5
 Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictured agaze,
 The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,
 O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,
 The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows
 my going, 10
 How had I stray'd without thee! and yet how few will seek
 The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,
 Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid the
 weak.

And Thee! ah what of thee, thou lover of men? if truly
 A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to
 speak, 15
 In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,
 —Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—
 Ever ready to speak to us, if we will hearken duly,
 'Come, O come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden!'

15

ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION
 OF HENRY PURCELL

Performed at the Leeds Festival, 1895

V

I

LOVE to Love calleth,
 Love unto Love replieth:
 From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,
 Over the dawning and darkening lands
 Love cometh to Love. 5

To the pangs of desire;
 To the heart by courage and might
 Escaped from hell,
 From the torment of raging fire,
 From the sighs of the drowning main, 10
 From shipwreck of fear and pain,
 From the terror of night.

2

All mankind by Love shall be banded
 To combat Evil, the many-handed:
 For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth, 15
 The airy fancy he heedeth,
 He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,
 In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,
 The sovran sun that knows not the night;
 He loveth the beauty of earth, 20
 And the sweet birds' mirth;
 And out of his heart there falleth
 A melody-making river
 Of passion, that runneth ever
 To the ends of the earth and crieth, 25
 That yearneth and calleth;
 And Love from the heart of man
 To the heart of man replieth:
 On the wings of desire
 Love cometh to Love. 30

VIII

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
 Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,
 And that your names, remember'd day and night,
 Live on the lips of those who love you well.

(73)

Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Hell 5
Each with the special grace of your delight;
Ye are the world's creators, and by might
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names
Behind the sun ye climb 10
To light the glooms of Time
With deathless flames.

IX

OPEN for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire;
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire
Have planted the trees of life.—
The branches in beauty are spread, 5
Their fruit divine
To the nations is given for bread,
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams; 10
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,
The sea the trust of his streams:
And the rapture of woodland spring
Is stay'd in its flying;
And Death cannot sting 15
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine
Their aching beams in colours fine;
Pain and woe forgo their might.
After darkness thy leaping sight, 20
After dumbness thy dancing sound,

(74)

After fainting thy heavenly flight,
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:
O enter the garden of thy delight,
Thy solace is found.

25

16

A HYMN OF NATURE

Performed at the Gloucester Festival, 1898

VI

SWEET compassionate tears
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Tears of love, the showers wherewith
The eternal morn is bright:
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.
With tears my eyes are wet,
Tears not of vain regret,
Tears of no lost delight,
Dews of the heav'nly spheres
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Sweet compassionate tears.

5

10

From POEMS IN CLASSICAL
PROSODY

2

EPISTLE II

TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

. . . AND what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90
 If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,
 Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,
 Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd
 Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;
 Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers 95
 Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,
 Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;
 Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy
 Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy
 roamers;
 Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100
 Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;
 Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds;
 All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,
 Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers, 104
 Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading
 Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd
 Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning
 With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:
 All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine
 Centenarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance no
 Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffing ephemeral insect,
 Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,
 Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:

Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring, 114
 'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,
 MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute apparatus,
 ratus,

So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:
 What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?
 That the select creatures, who^vinherit earth's domination,
 Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120
 Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles
 Chanting a brief paeon for victory on the battlefield?

6

JOHANNES MILTON, Senex
Scazons

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,
 'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him
 praise,

Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
 Nor unto Him^vin suff'ring and sorrow turn me: 5
 Nay how coud I withdraw me from^vHis embracing?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,
 Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly
 His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose eternal;
 Therefore will I be bound to no studied system 10
 Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,
 Nor seek to please Him in any foolish invention,
 Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty
 And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy:

But I cherish my freedom in loving service, 15
 Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking
 Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness
 Confiding always on^vHis excellent greatness.

From OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS

3

NOEL: CHRISTMAS EVE, 1913

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

A FROSTY Christmas Eve , ' when the stars were shining
 Fared I forth alone , ' where westward falls the hill,
 And from many a village , ' in the water'd valley
 Distant music reach'd me , ' peals of bells aringing:
 The constellated sounds , ' ran sprinkling on earth's floor 5
 As the dark vault above , ' with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep , ' that first Christmas of all
 When the shepherds watching , ' by their folds ere the dawn
 Heard music in the fields , ' and marveling could not tell
 Whether it were angels , ' or the bright stars singing. 10

Now blessed be the tow'rs , ' that crown England so fair
 That stand up strong in prayer , ' unto God for our souls:
 Blessed be their founders , ' (said I) an' our country folk
 Who are ringing for Christ , ' in the belfries to-night
 With arms lifted to clutch , ' the rattling ropes that race 15
 Into the dark above , ' and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar , ' it was starry music
 Angels¹ song, comforting , ' as the comfort of Christ
 When he spake tenderly , ' to his sorrowful flock:
 The old words came to me , ' by the riches of time 20
 Mellow'd and transfigured , ' as I stood on the hill
 Hearn'ing in the aspect , ' of th' eternal silence.

IN DER FREMDE

AH! wild-hearted wand'rer
 far in the world away
 Restless nor knowest why
 only thou canst not stay
 And now turnest trembling 5
 hearing the wind to sigh:
 Twas thy lover calling
 whom thou didst leave forby.

So faint and yet so far
 so far and yet so fain— 10
 'Return belov'd to me'
 but thou must onward strain:
 Thy trembling is in vain
 as thy wand'ring shall be.
 What so well thou lovest 15
 thou nevermore shalt see.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISTRESS

WE watch'd the wintry moon
 Suffer her full eclipse
 Riding at night's high noon
 Beyond the earth's ellipse.

(79)

The conquering shadow quell'd 5
Her splendour in its robe:
And darkling we beheld
A dim and lurid globe;

Yet felt thereat no dread,
Nor waited we to see 10
The sullen dragon fled,
The heav'nly Queen go free.

So if my heart of pain
One hour o'ershadow thine,
I fear for thee no stain, 15
Thou wilt come forth and shine:

And far my sorrowing shade
Will slip to empty space
Invisible, but made
Happier for that embrace. 20

18

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

September, 1917.

FOOL that I was: my heart was sore,
Yea sick for the myriad wounded men,
The maim'd in the war: I had grief for each one:
And I came in the gay September sun
To the open smile of Trafalgar Square; 5
Where many a lad with a limb fordone
Loll'd by the lion-guarded column
That holdeth Nelson statued thereon
Upright in the air.

The Parliament towers and the Abbey towers, 10
 The white Horseguards and grey Whitehall,
 He looketh on all,
 Past Somerset House and the river's bend
 To the pillar'd dome of St. Paul,
 That slumbers confessing God's solemn blessing 15
 On England's glory, to keep it ours—
 While children true her prowess renew
 And throng from the ends of the earth to defend
 Freedom and honour—till Earth shall end.

The gentle unjealous Shakespeare, I trow, 20
 In his country tomb of peaceful fame,
 Must feel exiled from life and glow
 If he think of this man with his warrior claim,
 Who looketh o'er London as if 'twere his own,
 As he standeth in stone, aloft and alone, 25
 Sailing the sky with one arm and one eye.

26

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun
 I have toil'd as I might
 I have thought as I would
 And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep
 My heart of content
 For friends that I met
 The way that I went.

(81)

I welcome fatigue
While frenzy and care 10
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds 15
And the sun on the hill.

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake ? 20

What good have I wrought ?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot 25
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

From NEW VERSE

5

THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

THE infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,
 a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,
 and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool
 as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.

There is no beauty of love or peace, no joy nor mirth 5
 but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanced
 decketh his sovranty with immortalities.

Jewels of imagination hath he, purities
 and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God
 plenishing his temples with incense of music 10
 in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ:
 his Destiny is one with the eternal skies: he lieth
 a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth
 inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air
 that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious 15
 to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.

And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief
 sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he
 will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.
 Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn 20
 whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood!
 See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces
 how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic
 cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions!
 He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong 25
 till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find

his one nobility is but to suffer bravely
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart:
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing 30
basking this summer day under the stately limes
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment— 35
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy
of their return, Alas! for how few shall return! 40
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death!
And yet some shall return, and others with them come:
life will renew; tho' now none cometh here all day
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought, 45
and the aged gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours— 50
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels
punctilious subdivisions of infinity
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours
these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'er-
thrown— 55
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.

Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me 60

the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be
 and me as I am, as reluctant in the stream
 I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn
 among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon
 in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook 65
 and for animal recreation of hot fatigue
 hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste
 the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh
 and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky
 supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass 70
 until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream
 as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there
 stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones
 blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current
 ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt 75
 into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

6

THE PSALM

WHILE Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees
 as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,
 the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears
 gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church
 stood to their evening psalm praising God together— 5
 and when it came to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air
 with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping
 through the responsive figures of a stately dance
 conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array 10
 in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,
 then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew;

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly
 fresh as in springtime when, four centuries ago,
 it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n 15
 chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots

standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines, 20
thou wast the unconquerable paeon of resolute men
who fell in coward massacre or with Freedom fled
from the palatial horror into far lands away,
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel 25
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold;
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them;
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song. 29
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew!

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery
burst in and searched but found nor living man nor maid
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not 35
but when it wound to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes
where unabsolved crime yet calleth plagues on France
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night 40
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.
O evermore great Psalm spring forth! spring forth anew!

7

COME SE QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains

climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:
 Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought
 and the infinite architecture of our darkness,
 the dim essence and being of our mortalities, 10
 is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
 whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays....

8

TO FRANCIS JAMMES

Tis April again in my garden, again the grey stone-wall
 Is pranked with yellow alyssum and lilac aubrey-cresses;
 Half-hidden the mavis caroleth in the tassely birchen
 tresses
 And awhile on the sunny air a cuckoo tuneth his call: 4
 Now cometh to mind a singer whom country joys enthrall,
 Francis Jammes, so grippeth him Nature in her caresses
 She hath steep'd his throat in the honey'd air of her
 wildernesses
 With beauty that countervails the Lutetian therewithal.
 You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,
 Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly trousseau— 10
 The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques
 Rousseau,
 Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,
 Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson
 Crusoe,
 And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

9

MELANCHOLY

TWAS mid of the moon but the night was dark with rain,
 Drops lashed the pane, the wind howl'd under the door;

For me, my heart heard nought but the cannon-roar
 On fields of war, where Hell was raging amain:
 My heart was sore for the slain:— 5
 As when on an Autumn plain the storm lays low the wheat,
 So fell the flower of England, her golden grain,
 Her harvesting hope trodden under the feet
 Of Moloch, Woden and Thor,
 And the lovingkindness of Christ held in disdain. 10

My heart gave way to the strain, renouncing more & more;
 Its bloodstream fainted down to the slothful weary beat
 Of the age-long moment, that swelleth where ages meet,
 Marking time 'twixt dark Hereafter and Long-before;
 Which greet awhile and awhile, again to retreat; 15
 The Never-the-same repeating again and again,
 Completing itself in monotony incomplete,
 A wash of beauty and horror in shadows that fleet,
 Always the Never-the-same still to repeat,
 The devouring glide of a dream that keepeth no store. 20

Meseem'd I stood on the flats of a waveless shore,
 Where MELANCHOLY unrobed of her earthly weeds,
 Haunteth in naked beauty without stain;
 In reconcilment of Death, and Vanity of all needs;
 A melting of life in oblivion of all deeds; 25
 No other beauty nor passion nor love nor lore;
 No other goddess abideth for man to adore;
 All things remaining nowhere with nought to remain;
 The consummation of thought in nought to attain.

I had come myself to that ultimate Ocean-shore, 30
 Like Labourer Love when his life-day is o'er,
 Who home returning fatigued is fain to regain
 The house where he was unconsciously born of yore;
 Stumbling on the threshold he sinketh down on the floor;
 Half-hearteth a prayer as he lieth, and nothing heeds, 35
 If only he sleep and sleep and have rest for evermore.

THE TRAMPS

A SCHOOLBOY lay one night a-bed
 Under his window wide,
 When dusk is lovelier than day
 In the high summertime;

The jasmin neath the casement throng'd 5
 Its ivory stars abloom;
 With freaking peas and mignonette
 Their perfume fill'd the room:

Across the garden and beyond
 He look'd out on the skies, 10
 And through black elmen boughs afar
 Watch'd where the moon should rise:

A warm rain fed the thirsty earth,
 Drops patter'd from the eaves
 And from the tall trees as the shower 15
 Fell lisping on their leaves:

His heart was full, and pleasant thoughts
 Made music in his mind,
 Like separate songs of birds, that are
 By general joy combined. 20

It seem'd the hour had gathered up
 For every sense a bliss
 To crown the faith of all desire
 With one assuaging kiss ;

So that he fought with sleep to hold 25
 The rapture while he might,
 Lest it should sink and drowning die
 Into the blank of night;

Nor kenn'd it was no passing thing
 Nor ever should be pass'd 30
 But with him bide a joy to be
 As long as Life should last.

For though young thoughts be quite forgone,
 The pleasure of their dream
 Can mesh them in its living mood 35
 And draw them in the stream:

So I can fancy when I will
 That there I lie intent
 To hear the gentle whispering rain
 And drink the jasmin scent: 40

And then there sounds a distant tread
 Of men, that night who strode
 Along the highway step by step
 Approaching down the road,

A company of three or four 45
 That hastening home again
 After a Sabbath holiday
 Came talking in the rain:

Aloof from all my world and me
 They pass aneath the wall, 50
 Till voice and footstep die away
 And into silence fall:

Into the maze of my delight
 Those blind intruders walk;
 And ever I wonder who they be 55
 And of what things they talk.

LOW BAROMETER

THE south-wind strengthens to a gale,
 Across the moon the clouds fly fast,
 The house is smitten as with a flail,
 The chimney shudders to the blast.

On such a night, when Air has loosed 5
 Its guardian grasp on blood and brain,
 Old terrors then of god or ghost
 Creep from their caves to life again;

And Reason kens he herits in
 A haunted house. Tenants unknown 10
 Assert their squalid lease of sin
 With earlier title than his own.

Unbodied presences, the pack'd
 Pollution and remorse of Time,
 Slipp'd from oblivion reenact 15
 The horrors of unhouheld crime.

Some men would quell the thing with prayer
 Whose sightless footsteps pad the floor,
 Whose fearful trespass mounts the stair
 Or bursts the lock'd forbidden door. 20

Some have seen corpses long interr'd
 Escape from hallowing control,
 Pale chanel forms—nay ev'n have heard
 The shrilling of a troubled soul,

That wanders till the dawn hath cross'd 25
 The dolorous dark, or Earth hath wound
 Closer her storm-spredd cloke, and thrust
 The baleful phantoms underground.

From THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY*Book I*

INTRODUCTION

TWAS late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
 the path was narrowing and the company few,
 a glow of childlike wonder enthal'd me, as if my sense 10
 had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
 re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;
 with like surprise of joy as any man may know
 who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
 to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spredd 15
 mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged
 he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
 maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June
 bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come
 afar 20

on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced
 thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was
 of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made
 a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:
 But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness, 25
 the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent
 lawns,

I would have lain me down and long'd, as then I did,
 to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch
 the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,
 waving in a gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30
 each telling of its own incontinent happiness,
 each *type* a faultless essence of God's will, such gems

as magic master-minds in painting or music
 threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;
 things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd 35
 in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play
 sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now
 stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous
 mountainous snowbillowy up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280
 Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,
 Now scattered wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze
 disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane
 highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl
 freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close overhead,
 wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain 286
 gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:
 Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms
 mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb
 deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching
 flood 290
 rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend
 til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully
 clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils
 layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;
 and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space 295
 twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks
 of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:
 agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles 655
 and promontories of the blue Ionian shore
 —where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing
 old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—
 and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,
 wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660

whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right
 knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land
 whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win
 heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue
 that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd, 665
 and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus
 motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took
 her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis
 of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670
 patterning heavily beauty, a pictured idea
 that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:
 for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told
 by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,
 nor is discernible in logic, but is itself 675
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,
 hid only from our eyes by skies that will not clear:
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,
 like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence, 685
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,

flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying 695
 scattered its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:
 nor ever again hath like bloom appeared among men.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness
 with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,
 men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
 crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame, 775
 in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
 wider than Alexander's and more enduring;
 since from his death it took its everlasting life.

HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple
 not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. ^780

They who understand not cannot forget, and they
 who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.

He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,
 and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,
 be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast: 785

But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed
 that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,
 thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;

While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX
 the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790

Book II

SELFHOOD

NAY, some I hav seen wil choose a beehive for their sign
 and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought, 201
 picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,

a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;
 Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour
 is spiritual attainment, individual worth, 205
 at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,
 to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;
 not such material ease as might be attain'd for all
 by cheap production and distribution of common needs,
 wer ah¹ life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210
 Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,
 man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them
 how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake
 the maximum of toil that is found tolerable
 upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance; 215
 and stay from procreation at thatt just number of men,
 hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth
 under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.
 And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,
 life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220
 and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,
 lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:
 then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,
 the system will be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy 225
 is thinking to distribute indivisibles,
 and make equality in things incommensurable:
 forged under such delusions, all Utopias
 are castles in the air or counsels of despair.

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May, 345
 when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,
 nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350

of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells* 355
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues
 surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

What is Beauty P saith my sufferings then.—I answer 840
 the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:
 Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
 the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
 wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
 And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty, 845
 awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
 in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence
 to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death, 955
 and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—
 we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,
 sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,
 horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,
 dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960
 yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;
 and memory is so complacent that we well may fear
 lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,
 regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,

hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain 965
the trenches, and reclothed the devastated lands.

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted
re'entering hath possessed her desolated halls;
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and
games, 970

their live abounding mirth reechoing from the walls,
where among antique monuments their brothers' names
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory 975
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh
find health in mutilation: as if our agony
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,
and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself 980
disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,
the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right
prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities, 985
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd
the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,
desperatly unrepentant to the 'scourge of God',
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990
punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor
stay;

for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness; 995
so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,
our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

Book III

BREED

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me
 in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing 355
 patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,
 as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow
 submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!
 They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now
 squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360
 a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro
 combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,
 blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,
 hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn, 365
 were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,
 a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,
 and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,
 swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,
 that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370
 clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,
 as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:
 and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,
 whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke 375
 the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach
 against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft
 toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,

and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry
 it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380
 that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield
 with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile
 the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints
 feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,
 Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—
 a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;
 tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660
 Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,
 Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon
 and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names
 of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes
 Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World 665
 far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home
 westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms
 of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,
 damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670
 whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be
 i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held
 place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line
 wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montelimar, Narbonne,
 Beziers, Castelnaudary, Beam and Carcassonne, 675
 and truly I could hav shared their fancy could I have hVd
 among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,
 and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will
 which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn
 that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. 680

Book IV

ETHICK

FOR social Ethick with its legalized virtue 265
 is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,
 a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,
 the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,
 beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.
 Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,
 whereon to found their creed in the true history
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto, 275
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
 who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280
 Chaldaean KISH and UR; while for all life today
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls 285
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290
 a city and folk undremt of in archaeology,
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust

the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold, 295
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,
 cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems
 of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;
 withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff 300
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today
 Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys
 gathered to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack
 in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand
 his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp, 305
 his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas
 the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride
 was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film
 of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds
 that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold, 310
 wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow
 great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,
 impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work
 whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name
 and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up 315
 thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,
 finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men
 who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,
 had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320
 til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep
 he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile
 in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;
 for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones
 of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones 325
 lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughtered at their post
 all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,
 in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp

the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her
 dirge,
 lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330
 two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience
 whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,
 the uniform decoration of their young service,
 mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed
 to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth 335
 to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
 congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun
 squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood
 his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 1270
 and all the towers and temples and mansions of men
 face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp
 naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes
 'tis given, if so they close not of fatigue, nor strain
 at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon 1275
 to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch
 where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space
 Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul
 in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280
 walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,
 discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams
 that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when
 the small bats, issued from their hangings, flitter o'erhead
 thru¹ the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro 1285
 hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;
 for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed
 may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright
 pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290
 with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake

methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream me-
thought

I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances 1295
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,
and I remember wondring the while I told it
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300
as once when she took thought to adjust theology,
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids
wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM, 1305
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.
Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dolben's *Poems*, 1911

I HAD not visited Eton for many years, when one day passing from the Fellows' Library into the Gallery I caught sight of the portrait of my school-friend Digby Dolben hanging just without the door among our most distinguished contemporaries. I was wholly arrested, and as I stood gazing on it, my companion asked me if I knew who it was. I was thinking that, beyond a few whom I could name, I must be almost the only person who would know. Far memories of my boyhood were crowding freshly upon me: he was standing again beside me in the eager promise of his youth; I could hear his voice; nothing of him was changed; while I, wrapt from him in a confused mist of time, was wondering what he would think, could he know that at this actual moment he would have been dead thirty years, and that his memory would be thus preserved and honoured in the beloved school, where his delicate spirit had been so strangely troubled.

This portrait-gallery of old Etonians is very select: pre-eminent distinction of birth or merit may win you a place there, or again official connexion with the school, which rightly loves to keep up an unbroken panorama of its teachers, and to vivify its annals with the faces and figures of the personalities who carried on its traditions. But how came Dolben there? It was because he was a poet,—that I knew;—and yet his poems were not known; they were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends: indeed such of his poems as could have come to the eyes of the authorities who sanctioned this memorial would not justify it. There was another reason; and the portrait bears it own credentials; for though you might not perhaps divine the

poet in it, you can see the saint, the soul rapt in contemplation, the habit of stainless life, of devotion, of enthusiasm for high ideals. Such a being must have stood out conspicuously among his fellows; the facts of his life would have been the ground of the faith in his genius; and when his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn. . . .

With such friends as Coles, Hankey, Lionel Muirhead, Bickersteth, and Manning, he was well off,—he could not 10 have had more congenial companions; but without them he would have been miserably isolated at Eton, for he had no common interests of any kind with the average school-boy, scarcely even the burning question of the quality of the food provided to develop our various potentialities. He seemed of a different species, among the little ruffians a saint, among sportive animals a distressful spirit. By what steps our intimacy at first grew I cannot now tell. As neither work nor play threw us together, I saw but little of him during the day: he never even in my last term accompanied me in my frequent 20 visits to St. George's Chapel, where it was my custom to go on short after-fours and sit in the north aisle or organ-loft, stealing out at the end of the anthem in time to be not very late for five o'clock school. Our meetings were therefore generally after lock-up, when, if we both had work to do, he would sometimes bring his to my room, but more often I would go uninvited to sit with him. His room looked over the Slough road, a small narrow room with the door at the end of one long side, and a window at the opposite diagonal corner. Against the wall facing the window stood his plain oaken 30 bureau, at which he would sit with his back to the window, while I occupied most of the rest of the room at right angles to him. The clearest picture that I have of him is thus seated, with his hands linked behind his head, tilting his chair backward as he deliberated his careful utterances: or

sometimes he would balance it on one leg, and steady himself by keeping the fingers of his outstretched arms in touch with the walls. There was moreover a hole in the boards of the floor, and if the chair-leg went through and precipitated him on to the carpet, that was a part of the performance and gave him a kind of satisfaction. The bureau-lid lay open before him as a desk, and in the top drawer on the right he kept his poems. His face whether grave or laughing was always full of thought: he would sometimes throw himself
10 backward as if to escape from the stress of it, or he would lean forward with meditative earnestness and appear to concentrate his attention on the tallow dip, which in its brazen saucer was the only illumination, feeding it anxiously with grease from the point of the snuffers, or snuffing it to the quick till he put it out. When he spoke it was with a gentle voice and slowly as if he pondered every word. . . .

Our instinctive attitudes towards poetry were very dissimilar, he regarded it from the emotional, and I from the
20 artistic side; and he was thus of a much intenser poetic temperament than I, for when he began to write poetry he would never have written on any subject that did not deeply move him, nor would he attend to poetry unless it expressed his own emotions; and I should say that he liked poetry on account of the power that it had of exciting his valued emotions, and he may perhaps have recognized it as the language of faith. What had led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the
30 material: it was an art which I hoped to learn. An instinctive lightness was essential, but, given that, I did not suppose that the poet's emotions were in any way better than mine, nor mine than another's: and, though I should not at that time have put it in these words, I think that Dolben imagined poetic form to be the naive outcome of peculiar

personal emotion; just as one imagines in nature the universal mind conquering matter by the urgency of life,—as he himself describes it in his 'Core':

Poetry, the hand that wrings
(Bruised albeit at the strings)
Music from the soul of things.

There is a point in art where these two ways merge and unite, but in apprenticeship they are opposite approaches....

No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins, and I am glad to have preserved the 10 letter which he then wrote, having met Dolben but once, for it must give some idea of the grief which his more intimate friends suffered at his death; some measure too of the shock to their hopes, since it records the full appreciation which his genius received from them during his life. This was, no doubt, chiefly due to the great charm of his personality, for his character was transparent; nor did the strange spontaneous beauty and significance, that invested the actions of his life, desert him in the circumstances of his death. It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental 20 perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of healthy bodily enjoyment: and premature as his end was, and the stroke of it unlocked for, and apparently sudden, yet his last poems show him waiting and expectant, and his last action had all the dignity and fitness of artistic preparation.

My story of the accidents of his life can give no picture of his charm; his perpetual humour and light merriment are what will least appear: though I may hope that the truthful- 30ness of the story reveals more than I can myself perceive. As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dixon's *Poems*, 1909

IN one of the loveliest cities of the world—for almost all that may now hinder Oxford from holding her title is the work of the last fifty years—in a university whose antiquity and slumbering pre-eminence encourage her scholars to consider themselves the *elite* of the nation, there stood apart a company of enthusiastic spirits, in the flourish and flower of their youth, united in an ideal conspiracy to reform society by means of beauty. In the frankest friendship that man can know, when its ecstasy seems eternal, and time only
 10 an unlimited opportunity for agreeable endeavour, before experience has sobered enterprise or thought has troubled faith, these young men devoted the intention and hope of their lives to the most congenial task that they could imagine. Their lightheartedness never questioned their wisdom, and to their self-confidence all appeared as easy as the prospect was pleasant. They inherited the devotion that had built their schools and temples, and regarding the beauty that had been handed down to their enjoyment as peculiarly their own, since they alone worthily loved and
 20 adored it, they aspired to enrol themselves in the same consecration and rekindle a torpid generation with the fire that burned in their souls. Almost every one of the group was intending to take Holy Orders, and looked to pursue his vocation within the Ministry of the Church. We are warned that Morris was in those days an aristocratical High Churchman, and Burne-Jones tells us of himself that he knew nothing of Painting; but it was the liberty of their ideal, the vagueness of their aspiration, the rebellion against convention, the boyish contempt for authority and discipline that animated
 30 their mutual affection and made the charm of their life....

I have already commemorated my visit in a poem which

begins, 'Man hath with man on earth no holier bond'. The sentiment there is from life, but the incidents and scene are fictitious. The facts were that, after staying with my friend Mandell Creighton at Embleton, I proposed to explore the Roman Wall on foot from Newcastle to Carlisle, and conclude my holiday under the poet's roof. The summer of that year was wet in the North, and the persistent rain delaying my start made me relinquish the western end of my ramble, so it was by train that I arrived one afternoon, and first saw Dixon awaiting me on the platform of How Mill station. 10 Emotion graven the scene on my memory: a tallish, elderly figure, its liteness lost in a slight, scholarly stoop which gave to the shoulders an appearance of heaviness, wearing unimpeachable black cloth negligently, and a low-crowned clerical hat banded with twisted silk. His attitude and gait as he walked on the platform were those of a man who, through abstraction or indifference, is but half aware of his surroundings, and his attention to the train as he gazed along the carriages to discover me had that sort of awkwardness that comes from the body not expressing the intention 20 of the mind. His face, I saw, was dark and solemn, and as he drew near I could see that the full lips gave it a tender expression, for the beard did not hide the mouth. Nothing further could be read, only the old mystery and melancholy of the earth, and that under the heavy black brows his eyes did their angelic service to the soul without distraction. His hearty welcome was in a voice that startled me with its sonority and depth; but in its convincing sincerity there was nothing expansive or avenant. He then became so silent that I half suspected him of common tactics, and was slow to 30 interpret his silence as mere courtesy, which it was; indeed, he would never speak unless he were assured that he was not preventing another, a habit which made a singularly untrue disguise of his eager, ingenuous temper. However, as we approached the village it was his call to talk, and he set me

wondering by his anxiety that I should admire the church. It was a dreary, modern stone building with round-headed windows and a wide slate roof; the shrunken degradation of a tower stuck on to one end and the after-concession of a brick chancel at the other. I have a letter from him, dated 1895, where, in narrating a visit to Carlisle from Warkworth, he writes—

I also went to Hayton, and as I walked from the station I thought of my first sight of you there. . . . The church is
10 externally the same, but it has a clock now; internally it is translated from the consistent ugliness and Presbyterian arrangement of sittings which you saw, into a sort of music-hall or sacred concert-room; nothing of the old preserved, and entirely devoid of interest.

It is as if he remembered how he had praised the church on that day. I suppose he loved it as the home of his ministry, and perhaps from the link which it made with the Wesleyanism of his family. He would, too, have preferred the simplicity and spiritual ease of making the best of
20 poor circumstances to the labour of ineffectively exploiting luxurious opportunities. There is surely not one of our meanest churches that has not been sanctified by loving service, but few can have known such poetical idealization as Dixon lavished on Hayton. . . .

Some characters give the idea of a personality that has attained to certain qualities; in others we seem to see qualities composing a character. Without assuming the validity of this distinction one may use it as a real description. Dixon was of the latter type. His imagination, since
30 that is an inborn gift beyond conscious control, would, of course, have this effect, and seem a visitation from without, and he merely the happy dispenser of it. His insight, clear judgement, and memory were gifts of a similar kind; but even in his humility he did not appear like a man who had put it on, but as an incarnation of the quality, whose essence

was distilled or reflected in him. And so with his good temper, humour, patience, tenderness, and sympathy, which made up his social aspect, all seemed to flow from the deeper perennial sources, uncontaminated and inexhaustible. This great ingenuous being went about among men almost unrecognized, though influencing nearly every one with whom he came in contact. As he respected every man, he won respect from all, and any lengthened intercourse with him awoke the best affinities of his associates, who became infected with his grace. One might see around him the 10 common Christian virtues propagating themselves in a natural state like healthy plants that, without a gardener's care, flourish and multiply from year to year. He was truly revered, and where he bestowed his affection the gift was so unmeasured that the mere flattery of it must have been injurious, were it not that spiritual love has no excess, but is always beneficent. It was more than any one could repay, and, however I have rejoiced in it, the remembrance, now that he is taken away, shames me with the thought of my unworthiness.

20

HENRY BRADLEY

From a Memoir, 1926

WHATEVER outward honour can be shown to the dead was paid to Henry Bradley when his mortal spoils were borne into Magdalen College Chapel for the requiem before burial. It seemed as if Alma Mater in her respect for this stranger had ordered the ceremonies with a greater care and solemnity than for her own sons. It was a gloomy day: the sky was overcast and dark; and within the choir, lined with ranks of grave academic figures, the long rows of candles brightened the noon with their ritual illumination. The music was a consummate rendering of the severe English dirge which, 30 discarding all vain sentiment in a dignity that will not relax

even before the face of death, has rivalled for two hundred years whatsoever else has been written to interpret man's emotion in that hour. All was in true keeping with Bradley's spirit, and the crowd of his assembled friends who moved out to the subdued strains of the Dead March, following his coffin to the grave, felt that they bade him a worthy farewell, and while the flowers were scattering could rejoice with him for the peaceful end of his long life of toil. . . .

He was one of those who having neither inclination nor
10 temptation to accept the world as it stands, are early driven to live to themselves, and by instinctive self-protection preserve that simplicity and purity of mind which is the foundation of all that is good whether in thought or conduct. In that contemplative detachment from conventional valuations, human sensibility is heightened both in delicacy and emotion by a profounder perception of the ideal significance of Appearance, and the feelings are transported into a spiritual world where accidents of Being are but ephemeral shows. Bradley lived in that ideal world with assured faith
20 in the promises of man's desire, and in a life after death where they would be fulfilled. Though no man could better understand the objections with which material science would forbid such hopes,—and he was presumably no better able than another to picture any sort of future existence which should be sufficiently like our present state to continue our mortal sympathies, or, if it should continue them, could continue to satisfy them—yet this Agnosticism did not destroy the faith in which Bradley lived and died.

And difficult as it is with our sorrowful experience to face
30 with any comfort the prospect of a general resurrection, yet there is none of us who would not desire to meet his old friends again, and cannot picture the joy of it. I myself would risk a good deal on the chance of meeting Henry Bradley: indeed all my memories of him are so pleasant that I can almost imagine the delight of his company enduring *in eternum*.

JOHN KEATS

From *Jahn Keats A Critical Essay*, 1895, revised 1916

IN these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats¹ poetry have been incidentally brought out; there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and that is the very seal of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time as- 10
tonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it; the difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree that Shakespeare does; indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subjects that his poems afford illustrations; but these are, as far as they go, not 20
only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field. Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these—

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.—*Macbeth*.
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.—*Hamlet*.
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.—*Tempest*.

Examples from Keats are—

The journey homeward to habitual self.
 Solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven.
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams.

In most of Keats' phrases of this sort there is a quality which makes them unlike Shakespeare; and if we should put into one group all those which are absolutely satisfactory, and then make a second group of those which are
 10 not so simply convincing, we should find in these last that the un-Shakespearian quality was more declared, and came out as something fanciful, or rather too vaguely or venturesomely suggestive; the whole phrase displaying its poetry rather than its meaning, and being in consequence less apt and masterly. This second group would contain many of the most admired lines of Keats, and these are very characteristic of him. Such are—

Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks,

20 and—

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.

The *Revision of Hyperion* shows that Keats himself was dissatisfied with his 'senators'; and one can see the reason without condemning the passage or approving its omission. Finally, there would be left a third group of such-like phrases which plainly miss the mark.

Closely allied to these imaginative phrases, and perhaps more characteristic of Keats and peculiar to him, are the short vivid pictures which may be called his masterpieces
 30 of word-painting, in which with a few words he contrives completely to finish a picture which is often of vast size. Good examples of this are the sestet of the *Leander* sonnet; the last four lines of the *Chapman's Homer*; the passage

beginning 'Golden his hair' in *Hyperion* ii. 371; and, to quote one from *Endymion*—

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks.

For its wealth in such rare strokes of descriptive imagination Keats' poetry must always take the very first rank; and it is his imaginative quality of phrase which sets him more than any other poet of his time in creative antagonism to the eighteenth-century writers; for it was not only foreign 10 to their style, but incomprehensible and repugnant to their pseudo-classic taste, which preferred a 'reasonable propriety of thought', such as Hume found to be lacking in Shakespeare, to the shadowy powers of imagination, however sublime.

The limitation that we found of Keats' faculty when compared with Shakespeare—which, if it may be ascribed wholly to his youth, amply justifies the sentiment of the opening lines of this essay—leads us on naturally to another of his chief characteristics, and that is his close relationship 20 with common Nature: he is for ever drawing his imagery from common things, which are for the first time represented as beautiful: and again in this we see his opposition to the eighteenth-century writers, who mainly contented themselves with conventional commonplaces for their natural imagery; whereas Keats discovers in the most usual objects either beauty or sources of delight or comfort, or sometimes even of imaginative horror, which are all new; and here his originality seems inexhaustible, and his wide poetic sympathies the strongest. Nor does he confine himself to matters 3° of which he could have had much experience; he makes Nature the object of his imaginative faculty—Nature apart from man, or related to man as an enchantress to a dreamer. This is, I suppose, what he means when, comparing himself with Byron, he says, 'There is this great difference

between us: he describes what he sees,—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task: now see the immense difference,' Here he shows a vast wealth which makes his poems a mine of pleasure. *Endymion* is crowded to excess with a variety of these images, and as they came up in his mind in an endless stream to illustrate his ideas, the ideas sometimes fare rather badly; for though they were no doubt generally held firm in his own mind, they are yet drowned by the images of their objective presentation; until these
 10 themselves at last lose even their own virtue, and fatigue the reader, who feels like a sight-seer in a gallery overcrowded with pictures, which by degrees he ceases to regard with attention.

And in this devotion to natural beauty lies, I believe, one true reason of Keats' failure in the delineation of human passion. The only passion delineated by Keats is the imaginative love of Nature, and human love is regarded by him as a part of this, and his lover is happy merely because admitted into communion with new forms of natural beauty.
 20 This, which appeared in theory in the explanation of the allegory of *Endymion*, is practically exposed in the second stanza of the *Ode to Melancholy*, where, among the objects on which a sensitive mind is recommended to indulge its melancholy fit, the anger of his mistress is enumerated with roses, peonies, and rainbows, as a beautiful phenomenon, plainly without respect to its cause, meaning, or effect. And so in *Lamia*—

He took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new,

30 and

Fine was the mitigated fury.

How different is the parallel passage of Shakespeare, which at once occurs to one—

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!

This is not artistic admiration, but a lover's entire devotion.

In the criticism of *Endymion* we found a want of taste in Keats' idea of woman; we have now to add a charge of lack of true insight into human passion. If this was wholly due to the absence of awakening experience, it is at least unfortunate that in *Lamia*, in which from its date we might have expected something mature, he should have chosen so low a type. Though perhaps suggested by the original of his story, it was not necessary to it; and even if he preferred to have his snake-woman bad, there was every reason why Lycius¹ passion should have been of a higher type. How unworthy it is is shown in the description of their meeting and in the following sentiment—

But too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.

This love is an association for mutual pleasure, the end of which is satiety and revulsion, and it is, I repeat, at least unfortunate that Keats, after he had known love, should, in his first attempt to delineate it, have been satisfied with so vulgar a type. The ideal passion in *Isabella* is insipid, and even in *The Eve of St. Agnes* the passion, as expressed in stanzas xxxv-xxxix, is at best of a conventional type, and has to have a good deal read into it by the light of the story.

But Keats¹ doctrine of beauty, which might be defended if it was spiritualized, which it never is by him, may often be reconciled with true feeling by the allowance which is due to his objective method; concerning this, as illustrations have been given, I shall say no more here except to repeat that Keats' imagery probably always followed, if it did not always clearly picture, some train of ideas; and when he says in the Ode *To Fanny*

My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual. yet divine to me;—
 Divine, I say! What sea-bird o'er the sea
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes ?

these words should not be taken as a disavowal of meaning in 'those abstractions which were his only life', but as an
 10 apology for immaturity, and they must be interpreted in the light of his high idea of philosophy. Keats was conscious, like Virgil, of a double inclination. He said of himself, April 1818: 'I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy. Were I calculated for the former, I should be glad; but as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter,' This would be a strange variant of

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae

if we need suppose it to be anything more than an utterance
 20 of that contrarious mood so common to introspection; it is nevertheless evidence that Keats was unlikely to have depreciated the intellectual element of his art: but the intellectual element is always in league with emotion, and would have been, I imagine, considered by him as worthless in poetry without such mixture. In the *Epistle to Reynolds* even the unpleasantness of the consideration of what we call the struggle for existence would, simply presented, have been flat and commonplace; but he shows it as a 'horrid mood'¹, by which he is haunted, and uses great
 30 skill and a wealth of contrasted beauty in introducing it under this enhanced aspect, 'wreathing a flowery band spite of the unhealthy ways made for his searching'; and in calling his Muse unintellectual, he was no doubt uttering his reiterated impatience for more knowledge, the expression of which recurs so often in his poems and letters,

that it is needless to quote any one, and which rises to a sort of consummation in the *Revision of Hyperion*, where it seems as if he had imagined himself to have at length attained to an insight of the mystery.

There is less opposition, it seems to me, between Keats' true instinct for ideal philosophy and his luxurious poetry (which seems rather its young expression), than between these on the one hand and his practical human qualities, as revealed by his letters, on the other. The bond of all was an unbroken and unflagging earnestness, which is so utterly unconscious and unobservant of itself as to be almost unmatched. It is always present in his poetry both for good and ill, in the spontaneous and felt quality of his epithets, and the absence of any barrier even, it would sometimes seem, of consideration or judgement between his mind and his pen. Whether this earnestness is the account of his failure in his purely comic freaks I do not know, but it may certainly account for his want of humour, for which, in spite of some traces in his letters, it does not appear to have left any room. The best of the letters are serious and full of good matter, a few are quite foolish, and a great number are written in a high-spirited jocular vein, which seems to be carelessly assumed for the double purpose of amusing his correspondent and relaxing his own mind. The chief charm in all of them is their unalloyed sincerity: there is nothing between the pen and the mind, not always even an effort or desire to write what should be worth reading: it is enough that it is he that writes, and his brother or friend that will read.

In spite of this earnestness and philosophy, it is certainly true that Keats' mind was of a luxurious habit; and it must have been partly due to this temperament that he showed so little severity towards himself in the castigation of his poems, though that was, as I said before, chiefly caused by the prolific activity of his imagination, which was always

providing him with fresh material to work on. In this respect he is above all poets an example of what is meant by inspiration: the mood which all artists require, covet, and find most rare was the common mood with him; and I should say that, being amply supplied with this, what as an artist he most lacked was self-restraint and self-castigation,—which was indeed foreign to his luxurious temperament, unselfish and devoted to his art as he was,—the presence of which was most needful to watch, choose, and reject the 10 images which crowded on him as he thought or wrote.

EMILY BRONTE

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 January 1911

THE transcendent genius of Emily Bronte is now well recognized; *Wuthering Heights* has taken its place among the unique creations of literature. But what of the poetess? There is no question of her poetic faculties. The wide intellectual grasp, the unsurpassed power of vivid representation, the almost isolated originality, the concentrated fire of native passion are all undisputed; and yet, with one or two exceptions, her poems—which are her most personal revelation—have made no impression at all. The editor of this 20 collection almost apologizes for them. 'No one today', he says, 'will deny them a certain bibliographical interest'; while Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in his introductory essay writes, 'It is not claimed for a moment that the intrinsic merits of the verses are of a special kind,' Emily herself wrote:—

Dreams have encircled me.

.

But now when I had hoped to sing,
My fingers strike a tuneless string;
And still the burden of the strain—
I strive no more, 'tis all in vain.

And the casual reader of this book will, likely enough, look into a few pages and then close it with indifference or disappointment. What is the impediment? Why, when such a genius brought her supreme gifts to bear on the task, and loved it, why did she produce something which is at first sight cold and worthless? We do not forget that Matthew Arnold said of one of her poems that it 'shook my soul', nor that she herself never wrote anything so unlike poetry as the poem in which he praised her; and we know that stanzas chosen from her poems might exhibit her as a poet of the 10 first order—still, the general effect is what it is, and the reasons may be perceived and stated.

First of all, Emily Bronte is very direct, and eschews ornament. Indeed, it seems probable that what artistic defect her instinct had was indifference to artistic beauty, and that therefore the beauty in her work is that which comes of bare truth and insight rather than of aesthetic handling and ornament. Secondly, she never mastered the technique of poetry, and took what she had chiefly from poets like Cowper. Her biographers, it is true, assert that 20 she was musical; but proficiency in her day, and at a girls' boarding school, implies little; and it would be difficult to find in her writings any evidence of the true musical faculty. In her poems she is certainly not delicately conscious of the music either of her rhythm or of her rhyme; she is rather indifferent, for she will consent to break the rhythm at any obstacle, without respect to its effect; and in her treatment of rhyme she is sometimes quite childish; where the rhymes are not common they are often awkward or bad, and are allowed to nullify themselves by unconsidered assonances. 30 It is pitiful to see her working with 'anguish' and 'languish' and such-like commonplaces, not knowing how tarnished the ornaments are, or else revolting from them to do something worse. And for this reason many of her poems would show to greater advantage in a translation. Incompetence

in technique is a ready source of obscurity or awkwardness of grammar; and indifference to aesthetic beauty allows the diction to fall; nor is Emily incapable of stumbling into the mannerisms of the school with which she was most familiar. The reader may remember the poem beginning—

On a sunny brae alone I lay
 One summer afternoon :
 It was the marriage-time of May
 With her young lover June.

10 and how after the characteristic lines—

But her father smiled on the fairest child
 He ever held in his arms.

she continues—

In sooth, I did not know
 Why , ' had brought a clouded eye
 To greet the general glow.

And in the following quotation see how a profound thought, poetically illuminated by a masterly image, is damaged by prosaic diction, while the grammar leaves the application
 20 of the image ambiguous; for 'all' and 'each one' may suggest persons, not the thoughts as intended:—

And yet there is—or seems at least to be—
 A general scheme of thought that colours all;
 So though each one be different, all agree
 In the same melancholy shade-like pall;
 Even as the shadows look the same to me,
 Though cast, I know, from many a varying wall
 In this vast city—hut and temple sharing
 In the same light, and the same darkness wearing.

30 Emily has not, therefore, a perfected style. We must not expect either full artistic technique or sustained height of diction; she works without them: and this plainness may deceive; for it is a genius that is speaking, and in her speech

the common words have regained their essential and primal significance, and, being the simplest, are therefore for her the best means of direct verbal touch with felt realities. As a French critic, whose book on the Brontës is just published—M. Dimnet—says of the poems with true perspicacity:—'Avec des mots simples, Emily atteint a chaque instant l'effet rare . . . cette Me extraordinaire a garde la puissance de regarder face a face la realite pres de laquelle nous passons sans la voir.' It is just because we are so familiarized by language with ideas that the simple presentation of reality 10 in that language does not stir our emotion, nor carry us beyond the mere recognition of the accustomed idea. And thus Arthur Symonds wrote of her, using the same word 'rare', 'A rare and strong beauty comes into the bare outlines, quickening them with splendour'. Indeed, a near acquaintance with her poems—which with few exceptions are the plainest revelation that she can make of herself—brings one to give the same value to her commonest expressions that one gives to the most consummate artistic diction. Never was there a poet who so much requires to be kept 20 apart from others, away from conventional contagion; and when one has got accustomed to her voice it is wonderful what a range it covers, and how various are her successes.

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

From The Times Literary Supplement, 29 February 1912

IT is true in all art that when a great master appears he so exhausts the material at his disposal as to make it impossible for any succeeding artist to be original, unless he can either find new material or invent some new method of handling the old. In painting and music this is almost demonstrable to the uninitiated; in poetry the law may not be so strict, but it still holds; and anyone may see that serious rhyme 30

is now exhausted in English verse, or that Milton's blank verse practically ended as an original form with Milton. There are abundant signs that English syllabic verse has long been in the stage of artistic exhaustion of form which follows great artistic achievement. Now as far as regards the verse-form Wordsworth was apparently unconscious of this predicament. It never occurred to him that he was working with blunted tools. His idea was to purify the diction and revivify English poetry by putting a new content into the
10 old verse-forms; and two reasons may be given for this conservatism. First, that in his time an artificial school of poetry had separated itself *oft* from the older tradition, so that any return to the older style appeared to be a freshness; and, secondly, he was a part of that unaccountable flood of inspiration which in Keats and Shelley and in a few of Coleridge's lyrics transcended in some vital qualities whatever had been done before, and actually wrought miracles of original beauty within the old forms; but these bond-breaking efforts, we should say, more than completed the
20 exhaustion, while the tedious quality of much of their work shows under what hampering conditions the genius of these poets attained excellence. Keats speaks very plainly; he says, for instance, that he relinquished his *Hyperion* because he could not get away from Milton. . . .

Mr. Kipling's genius is very varied, and though he has written much verse he has won his reputation chiefly by his prose tales. Now we shall concern ourselves only with his verse, and only with the style and diction of that. With Mr. Kipling, then, nothing in diction is common or unclean;
30 nor can we draw any strict line to separate the diction of such poems as *The Barrack-room Ballads*, which are professedly and wholly in the low dialect of the characters, from those other poems where it is not so prominent nor so evidently in place. A good many poems, it is true, are entirely free from it; but these rather show the author's

liberty to take up with whatever manner he may choose; and their conventionalities of rhyme and diction, from which not even the obsolete is rejected, are not to be reckoned among his inventions. Now as vehicle for this kind of diction (which need not be more nearly described) he chooses the Elizabethan ballad stanza, the nursery rhyme, the popular song, and whatever other accentual lilt he may devise of a similar character, and with these material resources (of diction and metre) he will treat almost any subject. As an example to exhibit the result we will take *The Looking Glass*, 10 in *Rewards and Fairies*. In this masterly poem the motive is heroic and almost tragic. Great Queen Bess is portrayed with the vain woman's vanity and the tyrant's bad conscience, and with a vast pride, sufficient to drown them both; and the picture is done with such force that many readers will have the four stanzas by heart when they have read them twice. Now observe the diction; the first line runs thus:—

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was middling old.

This is of course founded on 20

The Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey,

and the key of the emotion is thus deliberately pitched at the level of the nonsensical nursery rhyme. Observe, too, the expression 'middling old'. This sets the Queen down among the homeliest of her subjects; but in so doing it may humanize and provoke common sympathy. Later on Lord Leicester's ghost comes 'scratching and singing' at the door, which degrades the ghost; and yet, in spite of those things, the whole has an irresistible force, so that our dislike of the incongruities, if we feel any, is overpowered; and this force, 30 though it may not be due to the apparent obstacles, may seem the greater for its victory over them. That 'was' (= woz) is rhymed in the refrain with 'lass' is a convention

no doubt congenial to the nursery rhyme, and we only mention it because it is not otherwise reconcilable with Mr. Kipling's method, which at its best refuses the foolish inversions and bad rhymes that lower the standard of so many of Wordsworth's scholastic stanzas, because they are conventions of another school, retained for obvious convenience—mere resources of imperfect execution. (Criticism of this poem cannot omit notice of the phrase 'her sins were on her head', which must be reckoned as a slip in artistic accomplishment, because, since the Queen is looking at herself in the mirror, one is too conscious of her actual head to escape visualizing at once some sort of bundle on the top of it. This by the way.)

Now suppose that we had never heard the rhyme of the Queen and her bread and honey, and did not know English well enough to understand the true values of 'middling' and 'scratching', would the poem affect us less or more powerfully than it does with this knowledge? What would it be without the queer quality that it actually has? Or again, is our pleasure attendant on our admiration rather than our admiration on our pleasure? It is easier to ask such questions than to answer them; we may be content with the surer ground that Kipling is Kipling, and that without Kipling we should never have had the poem; and we are glad to have got it. But this almost implies that the writer must have an idiosyncrasy allied to his style. Here is another example. In the very beautiful story of *The Brushwood Boy* every one will remember that the discovery is made by the device of the girl being overheard singing the song in which she narrates her lifelong dream. It is essential to the story that the song should be pathetic and worthy. She was a musician, and had composed both the music and the words. Now one line in her refrain (or did her creator write it for her?) is this:—

We must go back with Policeman Day

As an apparition in the dream we did not quarrel with Policeman Day, for the dream is irresponsible; but in the song he is out of place, because the song is conscious art and responsible, and he is comic. An artist composing an emotional song would never have allowed the 'common country policeman' to imperil its ideality. Lack of humour is not among Mr. Kipling's faults; and since he can make fun of the policeman motif when he chooses, he must have a callosity somewhere on his artistic feelers, for else he would never have admitted the policeman into his song. We are 10 disposed to think that he may have infected himself, and that—to return to our comparison—he is in this respect just like Wordsworth, first, in deliberately choosing a particular kind of direct diction, and, secondly, in pushing it too far. If we should examine more closely into this matter we should be exceeding our limitations, and find ourselves asking, for instance, whether in the magnificent *Soldier and Sailor too* the quality of the swagger is wholly due to the poetic method with which it is so entirely agreeable.

Mr. Kipling has written some blank verse, and in *The 20 Sacrifice of Er-Heb* we find him adopting a form of it which was specialized some fifty years ago. Though this may not indicate a considered artistic preference, it is noteworthy that the form is simple and direct, and in so far congenial to him; but its constraints are artificial and monotonous, and its rhythms poor and short; in which respects it is unlike what we might have expected of him; and we have noticed no trace of originality in his treatment of it, although he can take pains with nothing without in some way distinguishing it. He has so true a feeling for the value 30 of words, and for the right cadences of idiomatic speech, and so vast a vocabulary, that his example is generally useful to a generation whose cultured speech-rhythms are so slovenly and uncertain. This is especially true of his more accentual verse, and it is on this account to be regretted

that out of his abundance he is sometimes tempted to overload his lines with the weight either of sound or of meaning, or of both at once; for this is bad example. In this respect he is to be contrasted with Wordsworth, for Wordsworth offends notoriously by the other extreme, though when his copious and throttling neck-cloth is loosened a fine diction flows fully, as in his description of Trinity College Chapel:—

Where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
10 The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Mr. Kipling's method seems to shut him out from such heights. We do not remember anything of this quality in his poems.

WORD-BOOKS

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 4 August 1910

IT would seem as if in pure literature the classics of a dead language must have some advantage over those of a living language. First, because it must be an advantage to have the meaning of the words fixed, which is in some measure accomplished by shutting them out of currency; and
20 secondly, because any idealization of speech must be easier where the common terms are not familiarized by daily use and vulgarized by ordinary associations. It is for this latter reason that the *Arabian Nights*, for instance, is much better reading to us in an Italian translation than in our own English; and the completer enchantment which children find is greatly due to the comparative freshness of all language to them. For the same reason is it that any romantic tale will appear more romantic in an antique or foreign tongue than in our everyday speech. But as our
30 common speech has some associations which art is glad to be rid of, there are others the absence of which is as surely

a loss. For whether or not there be any greater nobility in our main conceptions, when we compare ourselves with the ancients, yet none would deny that the immense stores of our historic vocabulary gain in recognition and significance by being a still living tradition in unbroken continuity of actual growth. Shades of meaning more delicate than could ever be invented, intricate poetic allusion, with consequent command of emotion and adaptability to the most subtle varieties of feeling, glints of colour from all climes and times—these are qualities which give distinction to much 10 of the best of our modern literature. There is truly no kind of beauty more liable to mishandling, no artistic effect more uncertain and fugitive, than that produced by these half-tones, as we may call them; yet today in Europe they are the legitimate and natural wealth of our inheritance, and it would be pedantry to depreciate it. And if against this plasticity and subtlety of living speech we would balance the severer advantage which a dead language may be thought to possess in the simple definition of its terms—which would seem at first view indispensable to secure a 20 broad style, we shall find that there is some delusion. For, however the dictionaries may define the meaning of a Greek word, we cannot avoid interpreting it by aid of our modern feelings and associations. No sentiment is safe from the contamination of our shifted ideas; nor is the conscious exclusion of any conception or emotion the same as the ignorance of it. Or suppose we are contented to have stripped an old term of all adventitious and later association, it is left a naked nondescript, which we are unable to reclothe in the living nuances of emotion with which its contemporary 30 thought invested it. Scientific analysis is always thus intruding to stultify our satisfaction; and the reasoning is irreproachable that since, though a man were to spend his whole life in the task, it were impossible for him to think with the same thoughts as St. Paul or Plato thought with, it is

therefore out of his power to understand a single sentence of their writings exactly as they intended it.

We have not, however, to look far for consolation; we can quickly reassure ourselves that it is just as true that man is always the same as that he is always changing. It is demonstrable, no doubt, that absolute identity of understanding is out of our reach in our interpretations of ancient thought; but for that very reason we need not worry ourselves too punctiliously, nor be ashamed to admit that there
 10 is always something of the nature of delusion in our love of old literature. And in fact it is truer that man is always the same than that he is never the same. The universal mysterious force and unfathomably deep instincts which constitute all that can properly be termed life are but superficially affected by the conscious developments of our intellect; and it is exactly those fundamental things which are the proper subject-matter of all art. For in so far as human art is instinctive (as it seems originally to be), it is preposterous to suppose that its subject-matter can lie at all
 20 among our purely intellectual developments; while in so far as in cultivated societies it has become conscious of its aims and methods, it will still seem that the intellect is better able to deal artistically with what is outside it than with itself; for in this latter case it must become self-conscious, critical, and scientific.

Admitting, then, not only that it is impossible to exclude the constant flux of our thought from affecting our literary art, but that this flux is in itself desirable and a prolific source of beauty, we may also see that in dealing with the
 30 unchangeable things the highest literature, especially the best poetry, is wonderfully free from the great obstacle that the indefiniteness of its material would seem to oppose to it.

*Nee sine te qmcquam dias in luminis oras
 ExorituY, neque fit laetum neque amabile qmcquam.*

• • • • •

O, were it but my life
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

• • • • •
O world, O life, O time,
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before.

Almost any examples are convincing. The appeal is from emotion to emotion; and criticism of poetry is only wrestling with itself when it attempts analysis on a merely intellectual basis. We should not expect such a method to yield anything 10 more satisfactory than the analyses of the emotions themselves, as we find them in psychological treatises. Art is thus self-contained and stable; and science not only dislikes art for this very quality of permanence, but has actually been often led to deny the natural superiority and predominance of the primal instincts over the intellectual conceptions which she is always fabricating on the top of them.

Words are the material of literary art, and words are ideas; and what those ideas are is determined by the sense in which words have been used by those whose genius has 20 ruled the language. A dictionary is a book which collects authoritative uses; and it at once reveals that every word has several uses or meanings which it needs logic to discriminate. It is a pity that Lamb, in his *Detached Thoughts on Books*, never told us what he thought of Johnson's Dictionary; whether he held it worthy to rank with his beloved Burton and Browne, or whether he would have set it between Gibbon and the backgammon-board. He was himself careful of words, and knew how tenderly they should be used; and one could believe that he might have cherished a 30 fantastic devotion towards a book so full of extracts. But had he really ever made friends with the Dictionary, he would have told us. With his peculiar personal idiosyncrasy, his individual irresponsible taste, he would, likely enough,

have felt some prudish scruple at the idea of getting any knowledge of his craft at second-hand; and he could never have stomached the pedantry of some of Johnson's authorities. Of Robert Browning it is recorded that when he determined to devote himself to poetry, he read the whole of Johnson's Dictionary through, just as Gibbon, to qualify himself for his great historical task, studied the itineraries of the Roman Empire; and the Doctor's two original folios with their uncurtailed quotations are no bad reading; they are a
 10 magnificent failure to accomplish an impossible feat—that is, to compile a dictionary such as a literary artist would love to possess.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

From An Address to the Swindon Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, October 26, 1916

PHILOSOPHERS have from time to time drawn up ideal schemes of government based on the aim of greatest happiness, Utopias, as they are called; but the word Utopia has come to mean a state of society presumably desirable, but only feasible if men were different from what they really are. What is usually depicted is a small State working harmoniously on a democratic or social basis; and in small States
 20 the social basis can be worked, where home-life is simple, and external complications generally absent. Small village communities in a sort of patriarchal simplicity meet together to confer, the members are all personally known to one another, and they elect for their head and representative a man whom they have known personally all their lives. These representatives are gathered into wider councils, and in this way the common interests are easily and honestly concentrated. But in larger States these essential simplicities do not exist—and the small numbers are essential; for, as
 30 the numbers increase the separate members necessarily lose

their mutual personal relationship; and, as they cannot know their representative personally, they elect some plausible fellow, the man who flatters them most, or promises them the most immediate advantages. Such leaders are typically men of some oratorical power, who profess politics for the love of self-importance, or for private gain; and when such men meet in a national parliament there is neither honesty nor wisdom in their counsels.

Let me remind you that Athens—that famous example of successful democracy—was not a real democracy. It was 10 served by a slave population: and that, you know, avoids the main difficulty of allowing the vote of the majority to rule—because the slave-workers had no vote. We have modern examples. The United States is an example of an honest and well-considered attempt at democracy on a large scale. Its isolation from the Old World and the wide territories that were at its disposal allowed it an exceptional term of prosperity; but its present condition is not such as to convert me. And we can look nearer home: our own democracy: our Parliament in those years before the war broke 20 out: it was a spectacle to justify all the patriotic fear that reasonable people felt. I will spare you the picture. Enough to say that the Prussian statesmen, who were observing us with jealous attention, thought that it was impossible that we could pull ourselves together; so they set off on the war-path. And they are still exhibiting to us the very superior organization of an autocracy.

But the unexpected happened. The British democracy slowly, slowly, slowly awoke to the situation. I confess that I did not expect this; much as I hoped for it. I did not think 30 that the working-men of England would perceive that the strife was between democracy and militarism; that, if Prussia won, then the hope of democracy was crushed for ever. Ever is hardly too big a word. The situation now is that you have gone in determined to win; and it lies with

you to be faithful to the end, and to see perhaps more clearly than you yet do, that you must sacrifice all else, all present considerations, to the one purpose of a victory that shall deliver the earth from terrorism, tyranny, and slavery.

Now you who are met here today not only know all this, but you have also come to be convinced that an uneducated democracy can never be stable. Education is necessary for strength and stability, and some of you at least have a
 10 wholesome appetite for the requisite food. And since you cannot get your education without leisure, and cannot have leisure without some easement of the conditions of labour, and this reform involves legislation, you claim such legislation. If our democracy is to be stable, such legislation is imperative. Here I am with you all along: and it is of this education that I shall speak—not of politics nor of war. . . .

What then is education ?

To educate means to draw out, and if we are to seek to draw out the human mind we must first have some clear
 20 notion as to what the mind is like, of what sort those faculties are which are both the object and means of education.

Suppose some one should tell us that education is the development and exercise of human Reason.

Now Reason is the intellectual faculty, which distinguishes man from the brutes, and, so far as we know, man is the only form of life in which conscious Reason exists—for the rudiments of it which we find in some animals are negligible. It is the intellectual quality which has conquered material
 30 obstacles and raised man from a state of savagery to his present condition. It judges itself to be the unique agent of all his knowledge and attainment, and being not only his highest mental power but the consciousness of it, he is perhaps almost incapable of imagining anything higher. Thus Aristotle, in his definition of God as the eternal mind and

first cause of all, supposes the Mind of God, though incomparably more perfect, to be of the same nature as the Reason of man. I could not myself assent to this assumption. But let that pass. We may readily admit that Reason is man's highest intellectual faculty. Let us ask Reason to tell us something about the other faculties of the mind.

We must remember that Reason is the only tool that we have to work with, and that a tool cannot work on itself. Temper and sharpen it as you may, your chisel cannot cut itself. We should therefore not expect too much. 10

Now, first of all, our Reason is distinguished by being a conscious process: for example, I know at this moment what I am driving at, and you consciously take cognizance of my statements; and we are agreed that animals cannot do this sort of thing. But though they lack our logical Reason, we see that they have some other kind of mental activity whereby they are able to act rightly, with an ingenuity that often baffles our conscious skill, and a method which escapes our Reason to unravel. One or two examples will suffice. In the insect world it is not uncommon to find 20 that an insect which has but a few weeks of life will lay hundreds of eggs—of the nature and purpose of which it can have absolutely no reasonable knowledge—yet it will spend the chief part of its short life in the careful disposal of these eggs in the manner best calculated to ensure their survival, and thereby the continuation of the species—concerning all which again it can know nothing; nor could all our Reason inform it. Again, I have read of the horse, that on the wide American prairies a horse-dealer will often make a circuit of a hundred miles or more, visiting the farms and 30 settlements, and buying at each what beasts he may. If, in any part of his round, a horse escapes from his drove, it will return in a straight line to its native homestead. It does not retrace its steps, but takes a bee-line, as it is called, from the spot where it escapes to the spot whence it was taken.

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It does not matter which you may choose: they are all alike in principle. They are often called 'the marvels of Instinct', by which is implied that we wonder at them, because we cannot understand them. But if they are the rule, and they are the rule in animal behaviour, there must be something wrong in our way of thinking if we find ourselves wondering at them as strange. I do not forbid myself to marvel: I mean that a theory of mind is self-condemned if it has to treat as
10 an exception what it finds to be a rule.

It is plain that there is a sort of mind which is not our logical Reason, but which performs purposive actions without conscience of their purpose; or if it have conscience of a purpose (as we may suppose the homing horse to have), yet it accomplishes that purpose without knowing how.

Whether mankind when in a savage state ever possessed very much of this sort of instinctive faculty we cannot tell. It is certain that we now perform by the aid of logical Reason and deliberation most of those purposive acts which
20 animals perform without reasoning; but we have too much in common with the lower animals to suppose that we can be lacking in the whole sphere of that unconscious faculty so universally possessed by them. And it has never been questioned that we share with them the great fundamental Instincts (self-preservation, and so on)—these are present in children and adults. What I wish to make clear is that beside these universal primal Instincts (which are the motive power of all animal life) we have a vast unconscious Mind that is always active, and a much vaster personal experience
30 than our conscious Reason can pretend to.

A simple consideration will explain what I mean. If I walk down the street with my mind busily engaged and absorbed in some remote train of thought, I observe nothing (though automatically I guide my steps none the worse for that); but afterwards, when I am aroused from my abstrac-

tion, I may remember to have seen certain persons or things on my way. The longer my abstraction continues, the less I recall: but that I consciously remember anything which I did not consciously observe at the time, shows that experience was unconsciously recorded; and much that I never remember, and never shall remember, was likewise recorded. It is even probable, with some of us at least, that when we peruse a column of the newspaper, our eyes may receive impressions from the neighbouring columns, and convey to the mind, through the brain, information concerning wholly 10 unrelated matters; although the Conscience (I mean the conscious Reason) takes no note of them. They enter the mind unperceived; and this sort of unconscious experience is always going on.

We have no conscious memory of this unconscious experience. Any experience which we observed and were conscious of at the time, we are able, more or less, to recall at will and reason upon. But our will has no power of recalling those other items of personal knowledge that have been unconsciously absorbed. But they are not for that dead or 20 inactive. They are absorbed and organized. So that a man holds, hidden away from his memory, a vaster wealth of knowledge than he is aware of, or can draw on at pleasure.

One might map out the strata of the mind in a sort of spatial diagram of three layers, the deepest being the inherited animal Instincts; the uppermost the conscious Intellect or Reason; and between these two would lie the region of unconscious personal knowledge acquired during life; the greater part of which is entirely unconscious, while the upper part of it would be mixed up with the memories 30 of conscious]experience. This dim middle place is the magazine of our common sense; it is the garden where our ideals grow, and its spontaneous fruiting is genius.

We must not be deceived by the simplicity of such a diagram. Its use is to give definition to the vague terms that

we are driven to use in talking of the functions of the Mind. And I think it is of no use to talk of the Mind and of its education unless we recognize how large and trustworthy a portion of it lies in this intermediate state between the animal Instincts and the conscious Reason.

Orthodox philosophy dislikes, and even repudiates, the term subconscious Mind, or unconscious Mind. It urges that the word Mind presupposes self-consciousness. But think what really happens, and how it is unconsciously and not
10 consciously that each man's Mind grows to be what it is. A man is born with certain feelings and likings—and it is in this respect that men most differ—and as they grow up in what is called their environment, their bias and special predispositions unconsciously select and organize their experiences to feed and develop their special liking; each man differently, as we may see in our children, how one child with a musical turn will observe sounds, another with a mechanical turn will be delighted by taking a clock to
20 pieces, while a born painter will be unhappy without a box of colours. These inborn feelings and likings are—together with the great primal Instincts and Passions—the motive power of all our conduct, and they lie like an engine-room hidden away in the basement. And moral philosophers explain that the Reason is set over them to regulate them: its chief function in this respect being to observe and govern. All will agree: for example, Love and Hatred are motive inborn forces; Reason approves Love but disapproves of Hatred as a working principle, and keeps it under.

Art and Morals were not invented by Reason. They come
30 to life and are nourished in this middle section. Every man is born with a 'desire of Beauty' or of 'Good' in some degree and in some kind, and he instinctively feeds that desire or liking on what is agreeable to it. He selects. Consider any object presented to the senses, how various and almost infinite its qualities are, and how impossible it is for any

man, even the most trained observer, to perceive them all. Each will first perceive those qualities that are most nearly related to him and that appeal to his liking. And in this way he feeds his own strength, and develops his native faculty. And this unconsciously growing self gradually comes to observe itself, becomes conscious, and takes Reason for its guide.

The purpose of education is to draw out or educate this inborn love of Beauty. And if any of you doubt whether there is such a thing, I do not think that it matters what you 10 call it, if you admit (what you cannot deny) that you have a desire, and that that desire is for something 'better' or 'good'. That desire—whatever you may call it—the Greeks called the Desire of Beauty or the Desire of Good; and you will find it difficult to get behind that, or to substitute anything for it. It is what has brought you here this afternoon; it is what is making me talk to you. And it is the basis of our Religion. . . .

Vulgarity—that is our national blemish and sin. And if I had begun my talk with it I should not have got very far 20 yet. It is blindness to Values; it is spiritual death. It pervades all classes: but the middle classes are the most deeply infected, and they stand as a dense barrier between you and the higher education. It is seen outwardly in their manner of life, their petty class distinctions, and uneasy pretensions to be just a little better off than they are; the waste of their money in aping art and luxury, by which they only make themselves ridiculous and more uncomfortable; their incapacity to see that simplicity, honesty, and thrift are fair and good, while their pitiful ambitions and restless affecta- 30 tions are contemptible. I hope that *all pretension* is as shocking to you as it must be familiar. May God grant that our present sorrows and trials and the searching of our hearts may force on us a spiritual distinction of the true Values of life, and that the stubborn necessities of thrift may compel

us to see the sin of self-indulgence and the graces of simplicity. Remember how it is because we have set our Rights so much above our Duties that we are now harrowed by this awful excess of Duty; and that it is at the feet of the idol of our old self-seeking that our dearest are devotedly sacrificing their young lives.

POETIC DICTION

From *The Forum*, May 1923

POETIC Diction is a wide subject, and this paper will deal with only one little corner of it; it will examine the dislike which poets of today exhibit towards the traditional forms: 10 and since even this, to be thorough, would involve a completer description of the traditional forms than a short discourse allows of, we must be contented to outline the situation with a few typical illustrations.

The revolt against the old diction is a reaction which in its general attitude is rational: and it is in line with the reaction of 'The Lake School' of Poetry, familiar to all students in Wordsworth's statement, and Coleridge's criticism and correction of that statement in his 'Biographia Literaria'. Both movements alike protest against all 20 archaisms of vocabulary and grammar and what are called literary forms, and plead for the simple terms and direct forms of common speech.

As my method is to be by illustration, I will begin with an extreme example, Milton's *Lycidas*, a poem which, though Dr. Johnson's common-sense condemned it without reserve, has in spite of the extravagance of its conventions grown in favour, and firmly holds its claim to be one of the most beautiful of the great masterpieces of English verse.

Only a few days ago I received a new German translation 30 of it, in the preface whereto it is stated to be 'Ein Gipfel,

vielleicht der Gipfel aller schäferlichen, aller Renaissance-lyrik, unerreicht die Schönheit u. s. w.¹

The undisguised conventionality of *Lycidas* is sufficiently obvious in its properties. Muses, Fauns, Satyrs and Nymphs, with Druids and River-gods associate with St. Peter and the Pope, and in their company a new River-god, Camus, invented on a bogus etymology: but the remoteness from common-sense which offended Dr. Johnson can be fully exposed by quoting a single line: the poet bewailing the death of a college friend by shipwreck in the Irish Channel, 10 concludes the section of his lament over the unburied body in these words:

And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

We have to face the fact that this strange and meaningless invocation does not sound frigid or foolish in the poem. Rather it is evident that it was the very strength of the poet's feeling that has forced the transmutation of his memories and of the practical aspects of life into a dreamy passionate flux, where all is so heightened and inspired that we do not wonder to find embedded therein the clear 20 prophecy of a conspicuous historical event: though the whole of literature can scarcely show any comparable example.

This is poetic magic. Certainly it was not to common-sense that Milton turned for consolation; and a work of sheer beauty was the only worthy offering that Poetry could make.

After reading *Lycidas* let us see how it is with Shelley's *Adonais*. Though as a whole this poem cannot compete with Milton, yet it contains lines and passages of unsurpassable beauty, both of diction and verse, and it is worthy to 30 be compared; and since (especially towards the end) it is in closer contact with our natural expression of feeling, it appeals more strongly to some tastes. Well, the properties are as literary as in Milton. We have the Muses and Urania:

Milton's 'where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep ?' becomes 'where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay ?' and in company with Urania we have Albion and Cain and Apollo and the Wandering Jew and living persons, all magisterially blended by Shelley's usual phantasmagoria. And in one respect he is even more conventional or pedantic than Milton, because he borrows more directly from his Greek models, and with marvellous Englishing makes Hellenic beauties his own. Moreover he works Bion's
 10 machinery: Aphrodite bewailing Adonis becomes Urania bewailing Keats—the difference in the circumstances needing all the resources of his free symbolism to adapt it. We must not, however, be led away from the question of mere diction, and I mentioned this point merely to show that Shelley's diction is more conventional than Milton's and sometimes when it least appears to be so, because many of its beauties are more directly borrowed. He has, indeed, no one line to match Milton's call to the dolphins, but many which common-sense would rate as equally extravagant.

20 Thirdly, let us look at Arnold's *Thyrsis*, a Victorian poem in direct line with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, consciously affiliated with them and plainly inspired by Milton. I remember many years ago how Ingram By water, when we were both young, contended against me that *Thyrsis* was as good a poem as *Lycidas*: I do not know how far he was in earnest.

Now in Arnold's poem he and his friend are Corydon and Thyrsis, they have their shepherd's pipes, and the Hellenic properties are practically the same as Milton's and Shelley's; but they are frankly set in a modern English landscape and
 30 introduced naturally as actual figures of the mental world wherein the two friends had lived and loved. Their mutual sympathy in this symbolism makes it possible almost to confound Enna with Cumnor, and that is skilfully accomplished, but amid the strong details of native colour and homely affections we have an Ionian folk-tale of obscure

antiquity, the relevancy of which is hardly cleared up by a long note. Since there is no trace of Christian symbolism in the poem, the Properties are simpler than Milton's or Shelley's, and the Diction may be styled Wordsworthian; it would hardly have offended Dr. Johnson: it is plainly not intended to be in what Arnold has called 'the grand style', and he was never in danger of attempting Shelley's heavenward flights, which he thought ineffectual. Thus we may say that, compared with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, Arnold's *Thyrsis* is in simplified diction.

10

What then is the effect of such a diction? In judging this we must remember that Arnold is not Milton, and I am probably myself too much biased in favour of the greater poet: but if a 'rational' diction is any decided poetic advantage, then that advantage should appear, whereas the impression that *Thyrsis* makes on me when I compare it with *Lycidas* is that it lacks in passion, as if it were a handling of emotions rather than the compelling utterance of them, and so far as that must have the effect of insincerity it is the last thing that we should expect from the exclusion of con- 20
ventions. It does not carry the same conviction of distress that *Lycidas* does; neither the friendship nor the sorrow seems so profound, and the whole poem, though it is agreeable reading, leaves one cold at the end. This might in great part be accounted for by its fanciful argument and by the poet's mentality, nor can I pretend to decide how much is due to the diction: the example must remain a negative one; but in illustration, I will quote a passage from *Thyrsis* where Arnold follows Milton in moralizing on the 'vanity' of the sincerest human effort in the search for ideal Truth; 30
he has

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
Tis not in the world's market bought and sold!
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Milton has

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of Noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;
 But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 10 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind *Fury* with th' abhorred shears,
 And slits the thinspun life, 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears. . . .

and so on, and this in spite of old *Phoebus* and the bad grammatical inversion in the first line.

It is difficult to dissociate the quality of Diction from two other matters, namely, Properties and Keeping. Properties is a term borrowed from the stage. The mixture of Greek and Christian types in *Lycidas* and *Adonais* is a good
 20 example of Properties. The term Keeping is taken from Painting and has no convenient synonym, but it may be explained as the harmonizing of the artistic medium, and since Diction is the chief means in the harmonizing of Properties, it would seem that any restriction or limitation of the Diction must tend to limit the Properties, since without artistic keeping their absurdities would be exposed.

Dr. Johnson's common-sense might contend that all Properties were absurd if their absurdity were merely disguised by Keeping. But in aesthetic no Property is absurd if it is
 30 in Keeping. This does not decide what Properties should be used. Different Properties are indispensable for different imaginative effects. Good Keeping is a first essential in all good writing, and especially in poetry. Perhaps it is evident here that the poorer the Properties are, the less call will they make on diction for their keeping, although the simplest

Properties are on their own plane no less exigent: and again' the higher the poet's command of diction, the wider may be the field of his Properties. Also, and this is a very practical point, if a writer with no command of imaginative diction should use such Properties as are difficult of harmonization, he will discredit both the Properties and the Diction.

This is as it should be. In all fields of Art the imitators are far more numerous than the artists, and they will copy the externals, in poetry the Versification and the Diction, which in their hands become futile. Criticism does not assist art 10 by exposing such incompetencies: nor can it be praised for philanthropic intention, because dabbling in the arts is one of the most harmless pleasures of life: there may be more to be said for it than for dabbling in criticism as I am doing here.

THE ART OF POETRY

From *The Necessity of Poetry, An Address given to the Tredegar and District Co-operative Society, Nov. 22, 1917*

I AM here to talk about Poetry, and you little think how surprised you ought to be. I have refused many invitations to lecture on Poetry: but most of us nowadays are doing what we most dislike, and it has come about that I have myself chosen the subject.

Let me explain why an artist is unwilling to discourse on 20 his own art. The fact is that in every art it is only the formal side which can be formulated; and that is not what people congregate to hear about, when they call for Art-lectures. The grammar of any art is dry and unintelligible to the layman: it seems unrelated to the magic of its delight. In Poetry it is even deemed beneath the dignity of a poet to betray any consciousness of such detail. But, if you bid the artist leave this dull and solid ground to expatiate on Beauty, you invite him on to a field where speculations

appear to him fanciful and unsound: and the venture cannot rashly be indulged in.

However here I am; and I hope to give such a theoretic view of the fundamental basis of Poetry as may interest us both, and justify the claim of Poetry to that high place which is and always has been granted to it by almost universal consent in all countries and languages.

In a little house which I rented for a month of last summer a volume of Macaulay's *Essays* stood on the shelves—
 10 an inscription in it recorded how it had been won by its owner in a whist-drive—and I took it up, and read the greater part of it. I fear that I risk losing either your esteem or your complete confidence, when I say that this classical work was almost new to me. But, if I had never read much in it before, I now made up for past indolence or prejudice; and I was taken aback when I found Macaulay praising Shelley in these terms:

'We doubt (he says) whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree some of the highest qualities of the greatest
 20 ancient masters. The words Bard and Inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art but an inspiration.'

It is this magic of language, which won the wide-ranging but somewhat uncongenial mind of Macaulay, that I intend to explore; and I shall avoid philosophical terms and questionable assumptions.

Words the medium of Poetry

30 Poetry is an Art,—that is, it is one of the Fine Arts,—and, using the word in this recognized sense, all Art is the expression of Ideas in some sensuous material or medium. And the Ideas, in taking material forms of beauty, make a direct appeal to the emotions through the senses.

Thus the material or medium, as it is called, of Sculpture is stone^or marble, and so on; the medium of Painting is colours; the medium of Music is sound; and the medium of Poetry is words.

NOW While it" would be manifestly preposterous to begin the study of Sculpture by an examination of stones, you will admit that in Painting a knowledge of Colours is less remote, and is even a necessary equipment of the artist: and you will further grant that in Music the study of the Sounds—i.e. the notes of the scale and their mutual rela- 10 tions—is an indispensable preliminary. So that in these three Arts, if they are taken in this order, Sculpture, Painting, Music, we see the medium in its relation to the Art rising step by step in significance: and I think it is evident that in Poetry the importance of the material is even greater than it is in Music; and the reason is very plain.

All Art, we said, was the expression of Ideas in a sensuous medium. Now Words, the medium of Poetry, actually are Ideas; whereas neither Stone nor Colour nor mere Sound can be called Ideas, though they seem in this order to make 20 a gradual approach towards them.

I hope this may reconcile you to the method of inquiring into Poetry by the examination of Words. I propose to consider Words, first as Ideas, secondly as Vocal Sounds.

Words as Ideas

Whether or no the first step of human language was to recognize certain vocal sounds as signs or symbols of objects perceived by the senses, we must now in our perfected speech admit the nouns or names of objects to be the simplest elements. 30

But the name of an object must have a different meaning to different persons, according as they know more or less about it; and it must convey a different emotion as they are differently affected towards it. And since knowledge

concerning any one thing is really of an infinite character,—for complete knowledge of any one thing would include its relations to everything else, which is more knowledge than any man may possess—these words, which appear so simple as mere names of objects, are, each one of them, of wide capacity of signification; and pass from being names of definite objects to being names of various and indefinite ideas or conceptions of things.

It is impossible to prevent a name from being the name
10 of an idea; and (unless we make the doubtful exception of certain abstract ideas) it is impossible to keep the idea always similar and definite.

It is really a matter for wonder how rational intercourse through the medium of language can be so complete and easy as it is, when the ideas conveyed by the words are so different in each person. And yet in common talk and the ordinary business of life we find little inconvenience from the discrepancy of our ideas, and usually disregard it. A man who wants to go from London to Manchester, and is
20 informed that his train will leave Euston at 10 a.m., and arrive at Manchester about 3 p.m., has no occasion to trouble himself because his informant's idea of Manchester is totally dissimilar to his own. We need not labour this point. All our practical life is carried on in this way, and whether a man speak or write, we say that he speaks or writes well, according as his meaning is plain, his ideas clear, and his language unambiguous. And this current speech, which is a most elaborate instrument,—for it has symbols not only for all the objects of the senses, but for actions and emotions, and
30 the subtlest notions of our intellect, and no less for their relations to each other—is accommodated by delicate self-adjustment to the practical needs of life, and has been further elaborated by Reason to become the sufficient apparatus for all our business, politics, science, history, and law, and whatever else is concerned with human affairs;

and through printing it has become the indestructible storehouse of human knowledge. So that one may well inquire what more could be desired or expected of it; and it is common to find that practical folk call Poetry' tosh', and maintain that if you have anything to say, it is best to say it as simply as possible.

Sir Isaac Newton, of blessed memory, wrote a book on the Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms: and the first words of his introduction are these:

'The Greek Antiquities are full of Poetical fictions, because 10
the Greeks wrote nothing in prose before the conquest of Asia by Cyrus the Persian. Then Pherecydes Scyrius and Cadmus Milesius introduced the writing in prose,'

Now whatever appreciation or respect Newton may have had for the *Iliad*, he is complaining that it was of no use to him as a scientific historian, and I imagine him asking why those old poets could not tell us plainly what they really knew, instead of inventing 'irrelevant false fancies' about the Gods, and things that never were?

The opposition which he implies between Poetry and 20
Prose cannot be absolutely insisted on: but we may take him to witness that Poetry has a field of its own, which is repudiated by Science as well as by Common-sense. The distinction is very real. The claim of prose is obviously high, and I could say more to exalt it: what I have to say will come later.

Insufficiency of Philosophy and Science

And here I would remind you of something which amid the routine and practical concerns of life we are apt to lose sight of,—and that is the incomplete and insufficient charac- 30
ter of our best knowledge. I do not mean those individual differences that I have spoken of, nor that limitation which each one of us must feel if we compare ourselves with the

wisest: but,—take the wisest man on earth, or all the wisest that have ever lived, the one thing that they agree about is that the human intellect is incapable of solving the profounder problems of life, with which we are faced when we begin to think.

I am saying nothing derogatory of science and philosophy, nor need one be in any sense a sceptic in affirming that our highest efforts of intellect do not inform us even on that primary interest of all, namely for what purpose
10 mankind exists on the earth, nor whether there be any such purpose. The so-called Laws of Nature, which we imagine to rule us, are but the latest improvements of our own most satisfactory guesses concerning the physical order of the universe: and when we ask how it is that our material bodies are able to be conscious of themselves, and to think, not only have we no answer, but we cannot imagine any *kind* of possible explanation.

Man does not know, and maybe never will know what he is. Let me quote the utterance of the good-hearted atheist
20 in Anatole France's recent novel. He speaks frankly and typically as a convinced scientist, thus:

'Nature, my only mistress and my sole teacher, has never given me any sign that she would have me think the life of a man to be of any value: on the contrary she informs me by all manner of indications that it is of no account whatever. The one final cause of all living creatures seems to be that they should be the food of other living creatures, who are themselves destined to the same end. Murder has her sanction. . . . And yet I must confess that there is something rebellious in my
30 instinct; for I do not like to see blood flow: and that is a weakness from which all my philosophy has never been able to wean me.'

He cannot reconcile his better human feelings with his Epicurean science.

How does the brag of scientific learning, the vaunt of its

scrupulous well-informed prose look now ? Does it not seem that in trying to make our ideas definite we are confining ourselves to a method which refuses to deal with the mysteries of life ? and is driven to that refusal not because it can deny the mysteries, but only because it can make nothing of them ? Are we not building up our language into something of a prison house ? And is it not just because they have never done this, that untaught men are often more contented and at home in the world, far more like the ideal 'wise man' than the best instructed men of science ?

10

THE ORDER OF WORDS

From The Necessity of Poetry

HOWEVER spontaneously the perfect poem may spring up in the poet's mind, like a melody in the mind of Mozart, the conditions to be fulfilled—over and above the elaboration of the metre—are

First, the right words: secondly, those words in the right order: thirdly, the agreeable sound of them in sequence.

And these three Tightnesses are the factors of style, that supreme gift which immortalizes the utterance of such different minds as Blaise Pascal and Robert Burns: for the laws are very similar in prose and in poetry. I shall pass 20 them over, because such a brief account of them as we should have time for would be dull.¹

¹ If any one should be curious to see how dull, he may read to the end of this note, which I append for the sake of completeness.

First as to the choice of words. What words are the right words in poetic diction ? Plainly their sound must be one ruling consideration—as may be proved by the ill effect of extreme dissonance, yet their chief power lies either in their absolute correctness, or in what is called their suggestiveness, and this, which is the greater poetic beauty, lurks commonly in the fringes of the concepts, as was explained when we spoke of words as ideas. When correctness and

On order of words

But I think I may venture a short account of order. What is meant by a right *ORDER of words* ? The principle is important

suggestiveness coincide their power can be so great that quality of sound is sometimes outclassed; and harshness is unheeded. This we willingly concede to the imperfection of language, which is not so constituted as to combine all excellencies, whence the lesser must give way. Our English words especially have been shamefully and shabbily degraded, and are daily worsening, so as to be often very ill-adapted for poetic use. And the swarming homophones need special treatment.

As to the sound of words in sequence. Pure Euphony, i.e. the agreeable sound of a sequence of syllables, is as difficult a subject as rhythm: and it is like rhythm in this, that the ultimate judge is the expert ear, which depends on a natural gift: and again, as in rhythm, there are certain conditions which almost all men would agree to call pleasant, and others which they would deem unpleasant, but there is no universal principle that can be adduced to check the vagaries of taste or false fancy, since what theories have been proposed are themselves examples of false fancy. Either, for instance, that the vowels correspond respectively to the primary colours, and should be grouped as those colours should be. or that euphony is actually a musical melody made by the inherent pitch of the vowels, the sequences of which must be determined exactly as if we were composing a musical air of those inherent notes. The great indefinable complication is that this euphony, especially in poetry, is fused with the meaning, and this fusion of sound and sense is the magic of the greatest poetry. But even where the poet's success is most conspicuous and convincing, we are often quite unable to determine on what it actually depends it is known only by its effects.

In English we find, strangely enough, that the eye comes meddling in with the business of the ear, and causes delusion. Our words are so commonly spelt so differently from their pronunciation that few writers know what sounds they are dictating; the word is a visible thing, 'pleasant to the eye and desirable to make one wise', it is perhaps of ancient and high descent, with a heroic history, it comes 'trailing clouds of glory': but that it has been phonetically degraded into an unworthy or ugly sound is overlooked.

I might give as an example the word *Dcedal* in the [passage already quoted] from Shelley The original Greek word had a pleasant sound and a rich familiar signification: in English it has no meaning for most men, and is pronounced *deedle* (like *needle*), and if it were so spelt I

and very simple, but in application so subtle that it is seldom recognized. You may easily come at it by imagining the talk of savages in a language that has no grammar. In such a language a speaker could not make himself understood except by putting his words in a certain order. If, for instance, he wished to tell you that he went from one place to another, from *A* to *B*, and had no prepositions like our *to* and *'row*, he would have to put *A* first and *B* second; that is, he would have to set his nouns in the order in which he wished the idea of his movement to enter your mind. And 10 this principle remains the primary law of order in good speech, whether prose or poetry: the words should be in the order of the ideas; and poetry differs from prose only in its more aesthetic and subtler conception of the proper sequence, and in the greater artifices that it is able to employ, and the greater difficulties that it has to overcome.

There are all manner of exceptions to this rule; but the most apparent inconsistencies are manifestly dependent on the primary value of the rule: for instance, an idea in an unexpected position in the sentence is often most effective: 20 but the surprise is due to its being either grammatically or conceptually out of order.

The commonest cause of ineffective expression in bad writers of verse is that they choose their grammar so as to set the words that they wish to use in the order most convenient to the metre. The born writer or speaker is the man whose ideas flow spontaneously in a simple grammar which

doubt if any poet would use it. Shakespeare might have made fun of it in Peter Quince's play, and have set *diddle* alongside of *Phibbus* and *Ninny* for the use of that immortal actor, bully Bottom.

Euphony must also include the purely musical effects of a metre, when this is in delicate agreement with the mood of the poem: it so enhances the emotional effect of a harmonious sequence of words as to overrule common proprieties of order, and the melody will require that the sonorous words shall respect its intention and fall into the positions that it prescribes.

preserves the right order of ideas. A fixed poetic metre must of course increase the difficulty of right order, and thus heighten the beauty and triumph and rarity of full success.

RELATION OF POETRY TO MORALS AND RELIGION

From The Necessity of Poetry

THE view of Poetry which I have presented to you suggests two enormous questions, namely, the relation of Poetry to Morals and to Religion: for it is evident that the basis of all three must be the same, that is, they all spring from those universal primary emotions of Man's Spirit, which lead us naturally towards Beauty and Truth. Indeed the difficulty
10 here is not in relating Poetry with Morals and Religion, but in discriminating between them: for we might almost contend that Morals is that part of Poetry which deals with conduct, and Religion that part of it which deals with the idea of God.

Morals

As for Morals. If you read the moral philosophers much you will find a very dry corpus of irreconcilable doctrines, which bear no comparison with what the poets can give you. The Sermon on the Mount you will recognize to be an
20 inspired moral poem, which is rejected by the philosophers.

On this vast subject I shall offer only one practical remark, which is this:

You will often hear it asserted, as an enlightened doctrine, that Art has nothing to do with Morality: Art, you will be assured, is non-moral.

Now this is true only in so far as we take Morals to mean the conventional code of conduct recognized by the society to which we happen to belong. Art, it is true, has little to

do with that. But pure Ethics is man's moral beauty, and can no more be dissociated from Art than any other kind of beauty, and, being man's highest beauty, it has the very first claim to recognition.

Morals can be excluded from Art only by the school which maintains that Art is nothing but competent *Expression*, and that, since what I call ugly can be as competently expressed as what I call beautiful, Art can make no distinction. It must be admitted that no strict line of distinction can be drawn, and that the average man's conception of 10 beauty is absurdly limited and conventional; also that as much admirable skill may be used in the expression of crime as of virtue and so on: the portrait of a man suffering from confluent small-pox might thus be a masterpiece; but if theorists assert that all these things are equally beautiful because equally capable of competent expression, and that such expression (which expression after all produces different impressions on different minds) makes all things equally beautiful,—to this I reply that we live in a free country where every one may think and say what he pleases. 20

The championship of ugliness seems to be but a part of the general denial of the ordinary distinctions between good and bad of all kinds. The argument is this. It is pointed out that the distinction which is commonly drawn between beautiful and ugly or good and bad is merely due to mankind seeing all things from a human point of view. But this is the only possible point of view for mankind to take: his pretended universal standpoint is really only one particular attitude of his mind: for it is inconceivable that the 'universality' which he imagines can be a complete universality, 30 or anything like it: and if it was so, then the object of introducing it into art could only be to make art inhuman; which is absurd.

At least that is how the case appears to me; but this summary way of disposing of it neglects many side issues,

on which agreement is not to be expected nor wholly to be desired.

Religion

As to the relation of Poetry to Religion. True Religion, the conviction and habit of a personal communion between the soul and God, is of too unique and jealous a temper to allow of any artistic predominance: and yet we find the best expression of it in Poetry: indeed the poetic expression of the spiritual life is of such force that its beauty may hold
10 the mind in slavery to false ideals.

I believe it to be greatly due to this that the English people are still mentally enslaved to a conception of God altogether unworthy and incompatible with our better notions: and, if it is the old Hebrew poetry which is greatly responsible for this delusion, then it seems reasonable to look to our own poets for our release.

On this general question of religion I shall take only that one point. We have spiritually outgrown the theology of the Reformation, and our churches, in endeavouring to make
20 their obsolete ideals work, find their most effective agent in the beauty of our English translation of the Old Testament which, while secular art was in decay, captured the artistic susceptibility of the people.

Art was discouraged by the Reformers, it was uncongenial to their furious and somewhat gross minds; and it was at the cost of the destruction of a priceless heritage of medieval art that they got rid of their mental servitude to Papistry, which its beauty embellished and sanctified. That alliance of art with the monstrous ecclesiastical system which Rome
30 had built on the Gospels drove art into disrepute: but since man cannot live in the absence of all ideals of beauty, the people satisfied their craving for it by the beauty of the religious literature, when the Bible was put into every man's hands. Art was thus diverted, and its place appropriated by

the religious ideals of the Reformation; but these being archaic and harsh, and in some respects a real defection from Christian law to the Mosaic, and from one point of view a political compromise, the substitute daily grew less convincing and satisfying, and now, when its ideal, if ever it had one, is practically dead, our people have neither one thing nor the other. Religion and art have equally suffered.

The Christian churches will not leave the old ruts. The Pope still hankers after temporal power, and to get it would crown Tiglath-Pileser in St. Peter's, while our Protestant 10 church still begins its morning devotions by singing of 'God swearing in his wrath that his people should not enter into his rest'.

Now in the religion of Christ, which, whether we will it or not, whether we know it or not, is deeply ingrained in our heart's reverence and the life of our souls, and is ever rebuking and overruling our conduct—in this world-conquering Christianity the essentials are love and unity and brotherhood. But look at the Protestant sects, all quarrelling about crude absurdities and ridiculous un- 20 essentials. And ask yourselves how the Church shall be purified and edified when those who should compose it remain outside of it.

NOTES

PAGE 2. 'Her eye saw'. This piece stands first in *Poems* 1873. Bridges never reprinted it, but it was included by Professor Gordon in his Rede Lecture, *Robert Bridges*, delivered in 1931 and published by the Cambridge University Press in 1946.

PAGE 4. PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER. First printed 'at the private press of H. Daniel, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford', 1883. The extract here given is reprinted from the text given in *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges excluding the Eight Dramas*, Oxford University Press, 1936 (hereinafter referred to as *Poetical Works*), pp. 27-28.

There is little else (save the Fire Chorus, ll. 1285-1361) that the anthologist is tempted to preserve from this, or from *Demeter A Mask* (1904), or from the Poetic Dramas, though in all of them the blank verse is interspersed with decorative lyrics, some of which are beautiful.

PAGE 5. THE GROWTH OF LOVE. This series of sonnets was many times printed and underwent many revisions (e.g. *XXIV Sonnets*, Bumpus, 1876; *LXXIX Sonnets*, Daniel Press, 1889; *LXIX Sonnets*, in Vol. i of *Poetical Works*, Smith Elder, 1898). The text and numbering here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

The sonnets are so full of excellences that selection is difficult—and none the less difficult because the excellences are often set off by lines that seem like echoes from Shakespeare, or parts of a Shakespearian exercise.

No 33. As in a number of Bridges's sonnets the octave is weak. But the sestet rises to a climax, and the last two lines are irresistible.

No. 40. This sonnet on his mother's portrait won especial praise from Hopkins, see. p. lxxi.

No. 43. Hopkins's comments are as follows: 'Beautiful in thought and expression, but the beauty gathers to the end, is least in the first quatrain, and the first two lines are commonplace. Also *he may hear* is not good. It is ambiguous: if it means *It is granted him to hear*, then it has no fault except the being easily mistaken for the other meaning, but if it means *He perhaps hears* it is feeble and downright padding. I shd. like something such as (it is d——d impertinence of me to say this)—

All drawn with thirst, all lost on sultry sand,
 The traveller fainting finds into his ear
 Fantastic music steal that lets him hear
 Some liquid fountain of his native land.

O cruel jest! he cries, as someone flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire.
 O shameless! O contempt of holy things!
 They of their wanton pastime never tire
 That, not athirst, are sitting by the springs,
 While he must quench in death his last desire—

(or "And he must", &c). For though the sequence of thought of "But of their wanton play" is beautiful, yet the dropping the connection is more austere and pathetic. . . ' *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935, P- 70 (Letter LIV: 22 Feb. 1879).

No. 59. As elsewhere, the last line ('a really magical stroke', G. M. H.) eclipses what goes before it.

No. 69. The Our Father Sonnet is very beautiful', G. M. H.

PAGE n. SHORTER POEMS. *Shorter Poems* (Books I-IV) appeared first in 1890; the poems contained in Books I-III had been previously printed at various times. Many underwent revision before their reappearance in 1890, and some before their inclusion in Vol. II of *Poetical Works* in 1899. Book V was added in 1894. The text here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

Book I is dedicated to 'H. E. W.' (the poet's friend Harry Ellis Wooldridge). All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems*, 1873.

No. 2. This *Elegy* recalls, by its subject and by its cadences, the *Souvenir* of Alfred de Musset: e.g.:

Les voila, ces buissons ou toute ma jeunesse
 Comme un essaim d'oiseaux, chante au bruit de mes pas;
 Lieux charmants, beau d6sert ou passait ma maltresse,
 Ne m'attendiez-vous pas ?
 . . . Je ne viens point jeter un regret inutile
 Dans recho de ces bois te"moins de mon bonheur:
 Fi6re est cette foret dans sa beaute tranquille,
 Et fier aussi mon cceur.

No. 16. Of this poem Desmond MacCarthy wrote (*Sunday Times*, 25 July 1948) 'For me the most perfect of all English Triolets . . . Many suppose the Triolet form to be essentially trivial; that specimen alone refutes them. Certainly it must be composed in the key of conversation; it must, with its repeti-

tions, sound like someone talking; nevertheless its content can be, as here, charged with emotion. How ingeniously that question mark breaks the repetition of the first couplet, thus turning what had at first been a quiet statement into a cry of dismay!

PAGE 21. *Book II* is dedicated 'To the memory of G. M. H.' All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love'*, 1879.

No. i. The following are Hopkins's comments on the text printed in 1879 (where the first stanza is not divided between the speakers): 'I must tell you that the first verse appears to me to be faulty. It wd. seem to be divided between the two speakers, as the rest of the piece. If so the first two lines shd. be in italics. And if so, then *lay* should be *lies*. Also *Silence!* shd. be *Hush, hush* or *O hush!* If however it is really the inmate who speaks, then the question will be an ironical, not an earnest one, and mean. How can love awake that has lain asleep so long? and if so this shd. be brought out, as by: Should love again awake. . . .? But the other sense is smoother, besides that otherwise the question seems absurd, for the longer the sleep has been the nearer must the waking be; if it is sleep and not death. And in the last verse I should prefer "And love will>wake". Now as for the meaning, of that you keep the key. Is it the lady of the Growth or another? In verse 2 you seem to say it is the same. On the other hand I thought she had gone to heaven. And indeed she seems to have been actually at the telephone, so to speak, when there was the ring of the night bell. (This is profane.) As at present advised, I think it is another (and "whom once he deigned to praise" is said by way of fresh information), but so that all the women a man falls in love with are one woman, being sort of incarnations, or successive avatars of Beauty, Wisdom, and so on, personified in the feminine. Is this so? . . . ' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 67-68 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

No. 10. Hopkins's comment is as follows: 'Unequal, because, as I told you and I now maintain my past judgment, there are two lines in it echoing Gray's: *they do it, they will do it to every ear, it is a great fault to do it, and they do it*. They are not at all the best lines and they can be easily changed and yet they echo lines which are held to be of faultless and canonical beauty. The subject and measure shd. of themselves have put you on your guard. Gray's poem may be outdone but, if you understand, it cannot be equalled. Otherwise the piece is beautiful and full of music.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, p. 69 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

With regard to the lines 'which echo Gray's' Mr. Abbott's note is as follows: 'These lines do not choose themselves. Perhaps they are:

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
Their pompous legends will no smile awake.

G. M. H. might, with more justice, have urged that the poem calls back to the mind Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse".

PAGE 31. *Book III* is dedicated to 'R. W. D.' (Canon Richard Watson Dixon, see p. 108). Most of the poems here included from this Book were contained in *Poems*, Third Series (1880) and *Poems*, Fourth Series (1882).

No. I. Printed as an Ode (ll. 1465-1480) in *Prometheus the Firegiver*. Of Hopkins's comments (on the earliest MS. version of the poem), which are in part technical, in part moral, Bridges appears hardly to have availed himself. They are as follows: 'The poem "O my vague desires" is a very noble piece, as fine, I think, as anything you have yet done. It is "all road" very remarkable. The rhythm too is correct and strong. I make a few suggestions, (i) The rhythm of line 4 wd. be a little improved by something like "arising" instead of "rising". (2) Would it not be a better stroke to have instead of "For ever soaring . . . dying? O the joy of flight!" something like "You ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying Flames of joyous flight"? (3) I would have "Ah! they burn my soul, My fires, devour my soul that once was whole". (4) The word you were in search of instead of "phantoms" must be "gledes"—and then you would continue "day after day". (5) Why should not the last short line have three feet like the others, as "Could I but control"? "Could I control" has only two. (6) The next line is the only rhythmically bad one: both rhythm and feeling are bettered by "My vague desires, my leaping flames of soul". So too in the next line I would have "my fires". (7) The last line might perhaps, but I am not sure, be improved by "still flying alas!"

The poem is autobiographical, as you would say; it tells of what you really feel in yourself. What then is the meaning of those yearnings or aspirations in the mind? You bear witness against yourself that you have them. And, as you suggest in one of your sonnets, if they are powerfully felt even now, when the mind is drawn off them and engrossed by so many things, it is likely they will be at some other time its whole life and being, whether they are gratified or not gratified. This poem as well as that sonnet express your belief that the mind is immortal.

But there are other minds that act on you now, as for instance you now follow my meaning, acting through sensible channels; hereafter there will be other spiritual powers, it is natural to suspect, which may act on the mind more directly and not by sensible channels; they may surround it and affect it as much as the body is surrounded and affected by other bodies. You cannot wisely neglect this world of being to which you imply that you will come. In it or above it is the sovereign spirit God, to whom you should now at once make your approach with the humblest and most earnest prayers.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 117-18 (Letter LXXI: 26 January 1881).

No. 2. *London Snow*. For Hopkins's comments on this and the two following poems (as they appeared in *Poems*, Third Series, 1880) see pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

No. 7. *Indolence*. 1. i. 'the city'—Oxford.

No. 19. 'A pretty close translation of a poem by Th6ophile Gautier, which is itself a translation from the English by Thomas Moore in *The Epicurean*' (R. B.'s note).

PAGE 41. *Book IV* is dedicated to 'L. B. C. L. M.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Lionel Muirhead). All the poems in this Book were printed for the first time in 1890.

PAGE 48. *Book V* is dedicated to 'M. G. K.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Montagu George Knight).

No. 2. *The Affliction of Richard*. I do not know what is the explanation of this title, or whether it owes anything to Wordsworth's *The Affliction of Margaret*.

No. ii. 'I never shall love the snow again.' 'Maurice' was the poet's brother-in-law, Maurice Waterhouse, who died on Christmas Eve, 1890.

No. 14. *Founder's Day*. 1. 56. 'The victory that made ring the meads.' Col. C. H. Wilkinson of Worcester College tells me that he has the authority of Lionel Muirhead for saying that Bridges originally wrote 'The light-blue victory of the meads', but altered it in deference to Andrew Lang, who told him that the reference to Eton would not be understood. When the poem was first printed (Daniel Press, 1893) it was dated June 1891.

PAGE 60. NEW POEMS. Collected for the first time in 1899 hi Vol II of the Smith Elder edition of the *Poetical Works* in six volumes. Nos. 14 and 15 were first printed in Elkin Mathews's *Shilling Garland*, No. II, 1896; the rest of the poems appeared for the first time in Vol II. of the *Poetical Works*, 1899.

No. 4. *The Summer-house on the Mound*. The poem (which shows vividly how far back the poet's memories of his childhood could take him) describes the house of his parents at Walmer.

No. 20. *EPQ2*, 1. 15. 'unchristen'd'. Yeats uses this word with similar effect in *Vacillation* (1932): 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.'

PAGE 70. LATER POEMS.

No. 5. First printed in *The Sheaf*, June 1902.

No. 13. *Portrait of a Grandfather*. First printed (with the date 1880) in *Wayfarer's Love*, 1904.

No. 15. The extracts are from *Ode to Music Written for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell* (music by Sir Hubert Parry), written and published in 1895. The first eight lines of Section VIII ('Rejoice, ye dead . . .') form the octave of Sonnet 19 in *The Growth of Love*.

No. 16. Extract from *A Hymn of Nature An Ode written for Music*, the music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at the Gloucester Festival in 1898.

PAGE 75. POEMS IN CLASSICAL PROSODY. Bridges's views about the applicability of the principles of classical prosody in the writing of English verse, and his explanation of the principles of 'syllabic' verse, which he discovered in Milton and adopted for his own use, will be found in the volume published by the Oxford Press in 1901 in which his essay on *Milton's Prosody* is accompanied by an essay on *Classical Metres in English Verse* by W. J. Stone, with whose views Bridges professed himself to be in agreement.

PAGE 75. 'And what if all Nature . . .'. The extract is from a 400-line Epistle 'To a Socialist in London', published in the *Monthly Review* for July 1903, together with an abstract of Stone's principles of quantitative verse, of which the Epistle is an exemplification.

PAGE 77. OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS. The collection bearing this name was published in 1920, but nearly half the poems in it (including the first three reprinted here) had already appeared in a volume *Poems written in 1913* printed at the Ashendene Press in 1914.

No. 3. *Noel: Christmas Eve*, 1913. His first poem as Laureate. He 'offered his homage to the King in some Christmas verses, which his Majesty ordered to be published' (R. B.). They were printed in *The Times*, 24 December 1913. In a note prefixed to

the *October* collection, Bridges explained that it (and three other poems in the collection) 'are strictly syllabic verse on the model left by Milton in "Samson Agonistes"', adding, 'It is probably agreed that there are possibilities in that long six-foot line which English poetry has not fully explored.' He himself explored them further in *New Verse* and *The Testament of Beauty*.

PAGE 82. NEW VERSE. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926. All the poems here selected were written in 1921. The first three are taken from Part One of the collection ('Neo-Miltonic Syllabics'); No. 8 (*To Francis Jammes*) and No. 9 (*Melancholy*) from Part Two ('Accentual Measures'); No. 12 (*The Tramps*) and No. 16 (*Low Barometer*) from Part Three ('Old Styles'). Nos. 6, 7, and 8 had previously been published, in the 'Elizabethan' number of *The Queen*, July 1923, *The London Mercury*, November 1924, and *The London Mercury*, July 1923, respectively.

No. 5. The garden of Merton College. While Chilswell House was being repaired after the fire in 1917, Bridges resided for some months in Postmasters' Hall at Merton College. The 'pensive philosopher' was F. H. Bradley.

No. 7. 'Mrs. Bridges, reading over the poem in draft remarked that there were too many *come se quando*'s. Bridges thought this might serve as a title. But he substituted the Latin *si* for the Italian *se* and it so appeared in print. When he discovered the slip, he decided to let it remain, perhaps remembering that Milton's '*Penseroso* is said to be grammatically incorrect.' Edward Thompson, *Robert Bridges*, Oxford, 1944, p.¹⁰¹ - 'Come se quando' is a stock phrase for introducing a simile in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The 'slip' has been corrected in recent editions of the *Poetical Works*. The passage quoted on p. 85 is the opening simile of a long poem.

No. 8. *Francis Jammes*. French poet (1868-1938) in whose works the road-mender and the Colonial ancestor are familiar figures.

No. 16. *Low Barometer*. 'One of the three or four greatest poems he ever wrote.' Edward Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

PAGE 91. THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY.

II, 1. 840. 'What is Beauty?' The quotation is from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part I, Act V, Sc. 2.

II, 1. 965. 'her showy Invincibles'. The Flanders poppy: 'The

"showy" flowers are so much more truly "Invincibles" than any "invincible soldiers" of Napoleon or another.' Nowell Smith, *Notes on The Testament of Beauty*, Oxford, 1931.

III, 1. 657. Bridges has been describing life at the Court of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse.

1. 667. Nowell Smith (op. cit.) explains that the 'twin day' is the day which the westward-going traveller has to divide into two in order to keep his calendar correct.

I. 669. 'thatt dreariest November'. 'The year was 1927' (Nowell Smith).

IV, 1. 317 'he who dug': Sir (then Dr.) Leonard Woolley.

II. 1279-80. 'The "mortal distress" was the death of the poet's daughter, Margaret, the wife of H. W. B. Joseph, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford' (Nowell Smith).

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT BRIDGES was never a popular poet. At the end of his long life, it is true, a brief burst of celebrity followed the publication of his *Testament of Beauty*, but the general interest awakened by that remarkable poem did not long survive its author, and little of his poetry, apart from his shorter lyrics, has ever appealed to any but a small circle of admirers. Most of those who care for poetry today look down other vistas, away from the trim garden that Bridges chose to cultivate and beyond the horizon that bounds his pleasant pastoral landscape, towards other fields of poetical experience and technique.

Bridges was a remarkable link between two literary ages: his first book appeared within six years of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, his last at a time when Eliot's *Waste Land* had already come to be widely accepted as a classic. It was difficult for those who saw him in his vigorous old age, or heard him broadcast on Poetry as Poet Laureate, to realize how distant was the past to which his earliest memories belonged. When he was born, Wordsworth was still living; among the familiar figures of his childhood were the Prince Consort and the Duke of Wellington; at Eton he came under the influence of the Tractarian Movement while it was still a living force; and he went up to Oxford in

Those changeful days that pass'd between,
Say, Verdant Green and T. H. Green.

Judged by these dates, Bridges was a Victorian—even a mid-Victorian. But the epithet does not truly describe him, for he was almost unmoved by the 'movements' and un-influenced by the 'influences' of the age. This integrity was the result of a deliberate self-seclusion. It was not change or innovation that Bridges shunned; he was always eager to

make himself master of the latest experiments and discoveries in diverse fields of philosophical and scientific speculation, of artistic and literary technique. His desire for shelter was not due to timidity or softness of body, mind, or character; for he was a strong and sinewy person; he had been an athlete in his youth and he remained in old age leonine not only in physical appearance but also in attitude of mind. His withdrawal from the world was an effort not of escape but of concentration; his aim was to shut out the ugly and the irrelevant, and so to secure the leisure and tranquillity that he needed if he was to give himself up to the writing of poetry.

He achieved his aim—but at a price. For poetry which is the fruit of such self-seclusion is not the kind of poetry that most commends itself to those readers or critics who demand that literature should be 'co-extensive with life'. Such readers expect the poet to show himself a political animal, drawing his inspiration and his material from the society of which he is himself a member, and if they are looking for a master or a model they will turn, not to Bridges, the recluse, but rather to such figures as W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot. Yeats, it is true, devoted himself in youth and age to the study of the art of words—'Words alone are certain good'—but he was always (and he so described himself) a 'public man', dedicating both the passion of rebel and the wisdom of a senator to the service of political ideals; and Mr. Eliot, though his own emotions may seem rarefied and his idols very different from those of the market-place, has become, for a whole generation of readers, the accepted exponent of what they call 'the contemporary consciousness'.

It is not surprising, then, that Bridges unlike yeats and Mr. Eliot, should have been without influence and without disciples, and that today his admirers should be comparatively few. Bridges himself was not in the least troubled by lack of appreciation; he had no desire for popular applause,

and in his seclusion he was perfectly content. The Laureateship, when it came to him, came unsought; he never wrote to order; and public murmurs at his appointment and at his subsequent taciturnity left him undisturbed. (His nature was evidently made for happiness, and fortune did little or nothing to thwart that natural disposition. True, he was acquainted with the melancholy mood; he could feel the pressure of a 'Low Barometer'; he had faced 'a wall of terror in a night of cold', and had experienced—not only as a physician in the Casualty Ward at St. Bartholomew's—

life's common plod: still to repair
The body and the thing which perisheth:
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,
The grinding enginry of blood and breath—

but those moods were not congenial to him; he was the poet of what he himself calls 'the happy moment':

not a stir
In any tree, no portent in the sky;
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
The morrow hath no name to call it by,
But life and joy are one,—we know not why . . .

and 'the best of his art is gay'—the gay expression of such moments of exaltation and delight. *Fortunatus nimium* was the title he gave to a poem in which he looked back on his long and happy life, and perhaps it is true that he was, in a sense, too happy. For a poet whose chief inspiration is the blessedness of his own lot will not find favour with a perplexed, preoccupied, and disillusioned generation, at a time when both lark and nightingale sing 'to dirty ears'; and those who wander in the Waste Land are not likely to take as their guiding beacon a fire lit at the altar of beauty on the summit of Boar's Hill.

Whether or not Bridges's life was 'too happy in its happiness'¹, it was to the worship of beauty that he devoted

it. To use his own words, he 'sought and adored' beautiful things, and felt it to be his task as a poet lovingly to create *tferri*. This impulse had its being in the depths of his nature ; it was something as different from sensuality as it was from mere good taste — alove of beauty in the ideal aswell asin the visible world, the natural beauty of flowers and faces, the spiritual beauty of "tender or exalted emotions, of noble thoughts and deeds.

Poetry, we know, "lias other fields than this : evil has its flowers, and ugliness a fascination of its own. From these ignoble' themes Bridges turned impatiently away. He had no desire to absorb and digest such materials ; rather, he thought it a poet's duty to reject them:

as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness
which Art would outlaw —

and to the question 'What is Beauty ? ' he gave the answer :

Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind Of man.

Whatever may be thought of the philosophy of this, it was a doctrine in which Bridges believed instinctively; he expounded it at length in *The Testament of Beauty* and he devoted his life to the expression of it. indeed, he might have echoed Shelley's apostrophe to Inteltec'tual Beauty :

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?

Beauty may be worshipped in various ways; and where Shelley, with a 'beating heart and streaming eyes', 'shrieked and clasped [his] hands in ecstasy', Bridges was content to sun himself among the Cheddar pinks in his rock-garden, intent on devising a new unsimplified spelling or a new pointing for the Psalms, cherished, to the end of his long life

of artistic creation and experiment, by her who had inspired the tenderest lyrics of his youth.

Chilswell, with its happy domestic scene, certainly called up an image of Farringford, and there were other likenesses between the patterns of the two poets' lives. Both were deeply and enduringly influenced by an undergraduate friendship, and after early years in London went to live in the country. Both became Laureates almost on the eve of a war, and exercised poetic gifts with undiminished vigour and increased virtuosity into a ripe old age. But Bridges also resembled Tennyson in his attitude towards his art, in his conception of what a poet's life should be and of the language in which he should write. He believed that poets—'quique pii vates et Phoebæ digna locuti'—were not as other men are; in voice, in appearance, in bearing, he was naturally an aristocrat; he looked, and lived, the part of the great poet. He was not one of those who think that the poet should look at life through the eyes of the man in the street and describe it in the language of every day: he called things 'beauteous' and 'jocund' and 'mighty'; he introduced into his verse such personified abstractions as Love and Duty and Delight; he invoked the Muse, and addressed his 'mistress' in the second person singular.

This consciously poetic manner may seem id justify those who dismiss his work as something literally 'cultured' and therefore devoid of deep or spontaneous feeling; and Bridges has made the charge of artificiality the more plausible by his preoccupation with the technique of poetry, with metres, spellings, alphabets; with questions of vocabulary and 'purity' of language and pronunciation. He was a founder of The Society for Pure English, and he devised an ingenious and elaborate phonetic typography. But it would be wrong to infer from his intense interest in *minutiae* that the feelings he put into his poetry were either shallow or artificial; that interest was due to his belief that in speech the least

inflexion may count for incalculably much, both for the ear and for the mind, and that if language is to be a fully effective instrument in the hands of the thinker or the poet its edge must not be allowed to become blunted by careless use. Even his apparently wilful archaisms were not the result of whim or affectation:

The author would explain [he says in a note to *The Testament of Beauty*] that the use of *eth* for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

Yet, when all is said, there is substance in the criticisms hinted at above. Those who most admire his poetry will be the first to admit that it is a pity that he spent so much of his talent and his time in elaborating traditional themes and embroidering archaic patterns. Masques in blank verse, interspersed with choric odes, verse dramas (of which he wrote eight) on the model of Greek tragedy or of Terence, formal odes—these are difficult to read unless they are relieved by passages of exceptional beauty or splendour—and such passages are no more frequent in Bridges than they are in Spenser or in Shelley.

His true gift was lyrical: in his *Sonnets* and his *Shorter Poems* (as Hopkins long ago pointed out) the level of excellence is so high that to choose from among them is hardly possible, and Housman did not overpraise Books I-IV of *Shorter Poems* when he said that 'probably no single volume of English verse had ever maintained such perfection'. However much Bridges may at times remind us of those who have gone before him (and one cannot mistake his debt to Shakespeare's sonnets and to the lyrics of Wyatt and Campion and the Elizabethan song-writers generally) it is always a living voice that we hear, never an echo. Sometimes he speaks almost with the tongue of Blake:

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night . . .

or again:

Open for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire . . .

Such lyrical cries are wrung from him most often by the ecstasies of love or by the contemplation of Nature, and these are the themes that inspire the greater part of the *Shorter Poems* ; but his range is not confined to them : some of his most, beautiful poems — *On a Dead Child*, for instance, *The Tramps*, and *The College Garden* — are poems of reflection ; he had a remarkable power of infusing into a landscape the feelings peculiar to the several seasons ; and he could invest with a strange beauty the plainest of descriptions :

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
Glided in line upon the windless deep . . .

Of the fifth of these lines one can only ask: Can poetry go further?

Few things are easier to write than a beautiful line of poetry ; minor poets abound in them ; but every such line of Bridges is integral with its context, its beauty is somehow one with the beauty of the stanza or the poem as a whole. To write a perfect lyric is a rare achievement, and Bridges repeated the miracle perhaps more often than any other English poet.

Bridges himself would no doubt have wished to be remembered not so much for his youthful lyrics as for the didactic poem of his old age. What is to be said of *The Testament of Beauty*? It was, in a sense, the crowning achievement of its author's long life; he sustained, through

its four books of almost unremitted argument, the intensity of the passion that inspired it; it is embellished with a profusion of images and similes which are the harvest of an unsleeping eye and a rich imagination; and the lasting impression that it leaves upon the mind of the reader, for all its peculiarity of diction and colloquiality of metre, is an impression of nobility. Like all philosophical poems that have ever been written, it will be read for its poetry, not for its philosophy: for its beauty, not for its wisdom; it is starred with lovely passages which grow naturally out of their context in the poem, but lose little by being detached from it. But the loose syllabic metre, if it made for easy writing, does not make for easy reading; the most effective lines are those which the accent marks as normal or almost normal Alexandrines, and too often the reader, deprived of any accentual aid, may find that he is counting syllables.

As a writer of prose and as a critic Bridges is easier to describe than to classify: both his manner and his matter were always very much his own. He had strong preferences which he was not concerned to justify and he did not waste his time writing—or talking—about what he did not like.

A personal reminiscence may not here be out of place. I remember paying a visit to Chilswell as an undergraduate, overflowing with admiration for John Donne and eager to hear what the great man had to say about him. The mention of Donne's name, hopefully uttered as I paced the lawn by the side of my host, was enough: Bridges was so revolted (he declared) by Donne's sensuality and by the cacophony of his verse that he simply could not understand what people saw in him. I was glad to take refuge in a change of subject. A mention of Tennyson seemed to give me my opportunity, and I asked whether he knew Churton Collins's *Illustrations* of his poems, a book which had delighted me with its discussion of Tennyson's Virgilian reminiscences. Here, it seemed, was a more fruitful opening—and, indeed, the

poet's reaction was immediate: 'Yes! yes!', he exclaimed, with a sort of melodious growl, 'Yes! yes! *terrible* stuff!'—and I perceived that this, too, was a topic that had better be abandoned.

That was altogether characteristic. Bridges was no respecter of reputations; to 'assess' a writer with whom he was out of sympathy seemed to him neither a pleasurable nor a profitable occupation; and discourse about 'Literature', however learned, did not interest him. It is not surprising that he resisted the strong pressure put upon him, in 1895, to stand for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. He thought about poetry simply as a poet; criticism meant to him either an exposition of its function or an analysis, severely technical, of how its effects might be obtained, or had actually been obtained by writers he admired. On these topics he enlarged with fearless originality, never blinded by greatness in the work he was examining to any flaws that there might be in it, striving always for truth and for exactness.

His prose falls on the ear like the spoken word, yet it is far removed from common speech, for he chose his words like instruments, with the effect sometimes of making them a little too choice; he is at the same time, one might say, colloquial and mannered. The manner is his own; it never degenerates into mannerism, but reflects exactly the quality of his mind, so that his writing is always fine in the good sense, not the bad. How moving it could be when he himself was moved may be judged by the extracts from his tributes to two of his greatest friends, Dolben and Dixon, that have been chosen for this book.

To an even closer friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Bridges paid a tribute of a different kind. Their intimacy, which began in their Oxford days, ended only with the death of Hopkins in 1889; their mutual affection recalls the friendship of Tennyson and Arthur Hallam; and their sympathy was marred only by difference about religion: Hopkins

regretted the 'paganism' of his 'dearest Bridges'; Bridges deplored any sacrifice of his friend's poetic talent on the altar of his faith.

For nearly a quarter of a century they wrote copiously to each other, but only the letters of Hopkins survive to show how close was their communion, how free and frank and sympathetic their criticism of each other's work. Bridges shared his friend's enthusiasms and encouraged his experiments in language and metre, though protesting often against the obscurity of his allusions and his syntax.

When Hopkins died, Bridges regarded himself as the trustee of the 'lov'd legacy', his friend's verse; he gradually introduced it to the public in the nineties, and gave it a wider audience by including seven of the poems in his own war-time anthology, *The Spirit of Man*. Little notice was taken of these efforts either by critics or by the common reader; but Bridges judged that by 1918 a 'genuinely poetic interest' had grown up 'both in England and America', strong enough to justify his publishing an elaborate edition of the poems. This was not an easy undertaking. From a large and confusing mass of manuscripts the editor had to decide which poems to preserve, and in which versions to print them; he had to explain not only Hopkins's metrical theories and notations but also his obscurities of syntax and expression. The task demanded sympathy as well as scholarship. For Bridges it was a labour of love—'When I came to edit the poems' (he later wrote) 'my whole intention was to make the book as he would have wished it to be. I felt completely in touch with him'—and he performed it perfectly. Even so, the poems were slow to win popularity, and ten years elapsed before the edition of 750 copies was sold out. But Bridges lived long enough to see his aim entirely realized, for when he died in 1930 the reputation of Hopkins was already being raised up to the pinnacle upon which the succeeding generation placed it, and from which it has cast

an undeserved shadow on the reputation of Bridges himself.¹ In time, no doubt, a more sober estimate of Hopkins's splendid successes and his splendid failures will prevail, and belated justice will be done to Bridges as a poet, a critic, and a friend.

What, then, will that 'justice' be—for surely it is the business of the critic to anticipate if he can the verdict of posterity? Bridges, I think, will 'live'; not simply in the anthologies, like Herrick, say, or Darley, the almost disembodied author of a number of lovely lyrics; nor as a figure in the history of letters whose name, like Southey's, is remembered better than his writings: posterity will be on equally familiar terms with the poet and with his *Collected Works*. For he impressed a distinct personality upon a body of poetry large enough to take, and to give back, the image of the whole man, so that both the writer and his work remain alive together. He spoke with a clear and individual voice, always beautiful and often passionate, though never loud or wild. Unmistakably, it was the voice of a noble human being and a true poet, and such voices do not die.

¹ There has even been an attempt, on the part of critics who ought to have known better, to suggest that Bridges failed to recognize Hopkins's poetic genius or culpably delayed its recognition by others—a false legend that persists even to this day. In 1884 Patmore communicated to Hopkins (*Further Letters* of G. M. H., Oxford, 1938, p. 208) Bridges's opinion of his poems 'He spoke with the sincerest admiration and love of your poetry.' These feelings were deep and constant, and they shine through the sonnet which R. B. prefixed to his edition of Hopkins's poems more than thirty years later.

LIFE

1844. Robert Seymour Bridges born at Walmer, Kent, 23 October: eighth Of the nine children of J. T. Bridges of Roselands, Walmer.
1853. Death of his father.
1854. His mother marries the Rev. J. E. N. Molesworth and the family moves to Rochdale, Lancashire.
- 1854—63. At Eton; among his friends are V. S. S. Coles and D. M. Dolben; comes under Tractarian influence.
- 1863-7. At Corpus Christi College, Oxford; makes friends with Gerard Manley Hopkins; Pre-Raphaelite supersedes Tractarian influence.
1866. Death of his younger brother Edward; it 'plunged me into deep sorrow . . . and considerably altered the hopes and prospects of my life'.
1867. Second Class in Literae Humaniores; strokes his college boat in Eights and in a regatta in Paris.
- 1867-74. Makes several long tours abroad.
1869. Enters St. Bartholomew's Hospital; M.B., 1874.
1873. *Poems* (favourably reviewed by Andrew Lang in *The Academy*, 17 January, 1874).
1876. *The Growth of Love*, a collection of twenty-four sonnets afterwards revised and greatly increased.
1877. Appointed casualty physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; moves on the death of his step-father from 50 Maddox Street, which he shared with H. E. Wooldridge, to 52 Bedford Square, where he made a home for his mother.
1878. Appointed assistant physician to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street; later to the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway.
1879. Makes friends with the Rev. R. W. Dixon.
- 1879-84. Publishes several series of poems in limited editions, later included in *Shorter Poems*.
1881. After a serious illness spends the winter in Italy; retires from medical practice.
1882. Goes to live, with his mother, at the Manor House, Yattendon, Berkshire.
1883. *Prometheus the Firegiver*.
1884. Marries Monica Mary, eldest daughter of the architect, Alfred Waterhouse, R.A.
- 1884-1904. Lives at Yattendon; in touch with H. C. Beeching, W. J. Stone, and others interested in poetry, music, and prosody.

1885. *Eros and Psyche*.
 'Eight Plays'—*Nero* (1885), *Pahcio* (1890), *The Return of Ulysses* (1890), *The Christian Captives* (1890), *Achilles in Scyros* (1890), *The Humours of the Court* (1893), *The Feast of Bacchus* (1894), *Nero Second Part* (1894).
1890. *Shorter Poems* (Bks. I-IV; Bk. V, 1894).
1893. *Milton's Prosody* (final edition 1921).
1895. *The Yattendon Hymnal* Part I (Part II, 1897; Part III, 1898; Part IV, 1899).
John Keats, A Critical Essay (published also as introduction to the Keats volume in 'The Muses Library').
 Declines to stand for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford.
1898. Revises poems for six-volume edition (1898-1905).
1903. *Now in wintry delights* (his first poem in classical prosody).
1905. *Demeter, A Mask* (performed 1904).
- 1905—6. Long visit to Switzerland.
1907. Builds, and moves to, Chilswell House, Boar's Hill, Oxford.
1909. Edits *Selected Poems of R. W. Dixon*, with a Memoir.
1911. Edits *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, with a Memoir.
1913. Founds the Society of Pure English, with Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Bradley, and Logan Pearsall Smith.
 Appointed Poet Laureate.
1916. *The Spirit of Man*, an anthology.
1917. Fire at Chilswell House; during part of the next two years lived in Oxford.
1918. Edits *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.
1920. *October and other Poems*.
1924. Visits the United States of America.
1925. *New Verse* (containing 'Neo-Miltonic Syllabics').
1926. *Henry Bradley, a Memoir*.
1929. *The Testament of Beauty* (published on his eighth-fifth birthday): receives the order of Merit.
1930. Dies at Chilswell House, 21 April

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES

From *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*,
ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935.

THE sonnets are truly beautiful, breathing a grave and feeling genius, and make me proud of you (which by the by is not the same as for you to be proud of yourself: I say it because you always were and I see you still are given to conceit...). I have scarcely read them all yet.... In general I do not think you have reached finality in point of execution, words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc. . . .

General remarks—In spite of the Miltonic rhythms and some other points your sonnets remind one more of Shak- 10
spere's. Milton's sonnets are not tender as Shakspeare's are. Yours are not at all like Wordsworth's, and a good thing too, for beautiful as those are they have an odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty. The ones I like least are those that have a Tennysonian touch about them, . . . not for want of admiring Tennyson to be sure but because it gives them a degree of neckcloth too. I have not yet *studied* them: at a first and second reading the drift and connection is very hard to find; you seem to mean it to be so. The Our Father sonnet [No. 69, p. 10] is very 20
beautiful, so is the one on your mother's picture [No. 40, p. 6], so is XXII [p. 5], so are they all and full of manly tenderness and a flowing and never-failing music. The more I read them the more I am delighted with them.

(Letter XXX: 3 April 1877.)

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Your precious little volume [*Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love' . . . 1879*] is to hand—also to head and heart, breathing genius everywhere, like sweet-herbs. I shd. like to criticise it in detail throughout, but that may not be.

Something however I must say. . . . The jewel of all, judice me, is no. 2 [p. 21], That is a lovely poem. . . .

The pieces in sprung rhythm—do not quite satisfy me. They do read tentative, experimental; I cannot well say where the thought is distorted by the measure, but that it is distorted I feel by turning from these to the other pieces, where the mastery is so complete. *The Downs* [p. 26] is the best. (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879.)

.

Style seems your great excellence, it is really classical. 10 What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner—not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew. Just think the blank verse these people have exuded, such as *Paracelsus*, *Aurora Leigh*, Baillie's or Bayley's *Festus*, and so on. The Brownings are very fine too in their ghastly way. . . .

London Snow [p. 32] is a most beautiful and successful piece. It is charmingly fresh, I do not know what is like it. The rhythm, as I told you, is not quite perfect. That of the 20 child-piece [p. 34] is worse and that piece is worse, indeed it is Browningsese, if you like; as for instance 'To a world, do we think, that heals the disaster of this?' or something like that. You are certainly less at your ease in sprung rhythm. In the snow-piece this has not been a hindrance however, but perhaps has helped it, by making it more original in diction. Truth compels, and modesty does not forbid, me here to say that this volume has at least three real echos (or echoes) of me: I do not wish them away, but they are there. The 'snow-mossed wonder' line recalls 'For though he is under' in the 30 *Deutschland*, 'O look at the trees' the first line of the *Starlight sonnet*, and 'throned behind' again comes from the *Deutschland*. I fancy there is another I cannot now recall. O yes, it is in the *Voice of Nature* [p. 33]—'Precipitate all o'er-rides and swerves nor abides'¹ (is it?): this is in the

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES xxiii

Deutschland too, I cannot quote it but it ends with 'abides'. It is easy to see why this is: that is the longest piece extant in sprung rhythm and could not help haunting your memory. I do not want them altered, and 'throned behind' having found its way into the midst of a lovely image would not like to be parted from its company. The Voice of Nature is very fine, but the touch in rhythm as well as diction is not quite sure. . . . The lyric 'Thou didst delight' [p. 38] is, like the others before it, a gem. (Letter LXX: 26 October 1880.)

COVENTRY PATMORE ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The St. James's Gazette*, 9 March 1885, reprinted in *Courage and Politics and Other Essays*, 1921.

'THE crowd, incapable of perfectness', is not likely ever to 10
be much attracted by such verses as those of Mr. Robert
Bridges, of which the chief merit is a quiet unpretentious
perfectness, which has the air of coming not from laboured
finish, but from finished habits of thought, feeling, and life,
combined with and aided by a scholar's attainments. Though
differing from Mr. William Barnes in almost every other
quality, Mr. Bridges resembles the Dorsetshire poet more
than any other modern writer in this character of perfectness
which bears little or no sign of work: a character the opposite
to that of the best poems of Tennyson, in which the mani- 20
festation of finish and fully accomplished labour constitutes
of itself no small grace. Another probable obstacle in the way
of Mr. Bridges's acceptance by the public is his singular
though entirely unostentatious independence of any other
poet or school. He seems to have read and felt with fulness,
but with such impartiality that people will never begin by
admiring his verses because they are like those of some one
else they may happen to admire; nor is the absence of this
great and almost universal first cause of popular favour
balanced by anything that most readers would think 30

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'striking' or 'original'¹. We feel quite sure that Mr. Bridges would be absolutely distressed if any reader whom he respected should be detained by any line or passage of his to say or think 'That's fine!' He aims at and attains a style so equabje, and the eminently beautiful lines or passages are so proportioned to and arise so naturally out of eminent occasions, that nothing is 'striking' until it is made to stand alone, and then most of the beauty vanishes because it is relative. In what he writes Mr. Bridges is thoroughly
10 'masterly', because he knows exactly the powers he is master of, and never attempts to strain them. In this, too, he resembles Mr. Barnes, who never fancies that, because he is a writer of matchless idylls and eclogues, he ought to try his hand at epics or odes. No extracts could give any idea of that equable and steady poetic flight, of which the main charm consists, not in its attitude, but its sweet and unlaboured evenness.

LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

From an essay in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, October 1891,
'reprinted as a preface to *The Growth of Love*, 1894.

THE poems of Mr. Bridges are of the lyrical kind, of the narrative, and of the dramatic: and before examining each
20 kind apart, let me say something applicable to the whole of them, in greater or less degree. These poems, then, represent, with much else that is admirable, the scholarship of poetry; a certain erudite air of mastery over the secrets of rhythm and of metre; a trained skill in music, and in those delicate devices, which give so excellent a distinction to the older English poets. To whatever Mr. Bridges sets his hand, he preserves discretion and propriety: the scholar's instinct, no less than the poet's, making it impossible for him to outrage
fine taste, by the fantastic freaks of some great men amongst
30 us.' At the present time', so he tells us with lamentable truth,

'men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art': but he, at least, reverencing the great masters, makes an 'attempt to work in their manner'. Not that he is a slavish follower of the great masters, their captive rather than their votarist: at times, he may have fallen somewhat into that attitude, but not for long, it is not characteristic of him. It is his characteristic virtue, that he moulds his thought, guides his imagination, into fresh and living forms, with a scholarly knowledge of what has been done before him, in like manner, though not in the same: thus, some among his poems are 10 noticeable for their boldness of metrical experiment and invention; but we can trust him, who wrote those two good treatises *On the Prosody of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*, and *On the Elements of Milton's Blank Verse in Paradise Lost*. The invention may displease us, the experiment prove unhappy: yet we recognize a justifiable enterprise, a scholar's venture; not the frantic impertinence of one writing, in despair of nature, and in contempt of art. And this learned competence, so abundant in his form, is naturally abundant in his matter: for matter and form, to 20 repeat a simple and neglected truth, are inseparable. Mr. Bridges is not enamoured of a new thing, for its novelty: his thoughts are his own thoughts, but his expression of them is in harmony with the matured wisdom of many ages, meditating the common, human things, with gravity or in gladness. That is Horace, we say, or Catullus; there is Theognis or Meleager; and here is Marvell, here Vaughan, here Herrick; and this brings Landor to mind, Landor, or Collins, or Wordsworth; and now Shakespeare, now Terence, now Fletcher comes across us, with elder Athenian spirits: 30 yet the final outcome is no mere freshened memory of old greatness and delights, but a recognition of the true and living poet in Mr. Bridges, who thus delicately preserves for modern use an antique charm. . . .

A thorough consideration of Mr. Bridges' poetry would

ponder long his skill in music and in metre: for in these he has something of the master's touch, and beyond the dexterity of a novice. But so full of minute and of technical scholarship is he, that a treatise were required for the exhibition of his theoretic science and actual practice. But I will say, that, if he err at all, it is in a certain concision and compactness, coming of many strong monosyllables, too little tempered and relieved by words of a more prolonged melody: it is an effect, something between briskness and loislprightliness, common in the less deft and versatile of 'Elizabethan lyrists, and unequal to occasions of great and moving beauty. Such verses are, indeed, of a pleasant tone and of a just economy; their structure is neat and clean, they are without waste and profusion of words: but coming from Mr. Bridges, they come rather as 'copies of verses', done in the scholar's humour, for the leisurely exercise' sake, than as the best products of his imagination. When he chooses to sing or to chaunt, with more of various melody and concerted music, we regret, not without some ingrati-
 20 tude, his less delicate or lofty strain. In certain measures, devised with a great subtilty of accents, equal in number upon each line, but in each line prevailing over various reaches, or disposed at various intervals, Mr. Bridges has not yet attained a perfect ease: but he contrives many pleasurable effects: witness some of the lines on *a Dead Child*

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair! . . .

Besides the *Shorter Poems*, the volume of seventy-nine
 30 sonnets, entitled *The Growth of Love*, is of noticeable beauty: it may be thought, in point of mental and imaginative strength, his finest work. Unlike most sonnets of our time, these sonnets are weighty with close thought, and rich with images, in the Shakespearian, and in Milton's ways; yet not

obscure, nor luxuriant, in the less happy manner of Rossetti. And their substance is congruous with the form: each grave or exulting thought finds within the limits of the fourteen lines, an exact place for it to fill: so Petrarch conceived the sonnet, and so Sidney. . . .

Briefly, and generally, I have touched upon the characteristic virtues, as I see them, of this excellent poet: rather indicating, than attempting to expound, his peculiar charm. It is a limited charm: not that it is one liable to decay with time, or to pass with the reader's passing moods. But it is 10 limited, in the sense that this poetry in all its simplicity, in all its skill, is too dainty a thing for common use. Unlike the poems of Arnold or of Wordsworth, of Virgil or of Keats, of Milton or of Goethe, they cannot be read daily and in all places. That is a test of great poetry: its abiding and unfailing power upon us, because of its indifference to time and place. A line of Virgil, written by the Bay of Naples, in some most private hour of meditation, all those long years ago! comes home to us, as though it were our own thought: upon each repetition, experience has made it more true and touch- 20 ing. Or take some verse of Arnold, written at Oxford or in London, some few years past: it comes home to us, as though a thousand years had pondered it, and found it true. And in beauty, in power of music and of phrase, the great poets are all contemporaries: an eternal beauty is upon the great works of art, as though they were from everlasting. Poets of exquisite charm, true to their art, true to its traditions, full of its inner spirit, may still miss that final grace and grandeur: and of these, Mr. Bridges is, in my poor judgment, the most admirable in recent times. Had a friend been 30 reading Herrick to me, or Catullus; were I lying in the gardens of New College in Oxford, or in Winchester Meads; did some one play to me a fugue of Bach: I might, at this hour, rate the *Shorter Poems of Robert Bridges* far higher than my conscience, unperturbed by delights, will suffer me.

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For they are poems, unaffected and simple, yet with an air of dainty luxury, about them: free from all trivial show and glitter/ yet not commanding and compelling us by their intrinsic greatness.

EDWARD DOWDEN ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, reprinted in
New Studies in Literature, 1895.

THERE is a lyric which is the direct outcry of passion transformed to art—such are some of the songs of Burns; a lyric which is the expression of profound and ardent contemplation—such are some of Wordsworth's poems; a lyric, which is architectonic in character, the product of an elaborate evolution—such are some of the odes of Gray. Mr. Bridges' poems are seldom mere outcries of passion; they do not often explore the heights and depths of thought; they are in general of admirable evolution, but their design is rarely (save in the choral odes of his dramas) complex and of large dimensions. Elements of many and various kinds enter into his volume of 'Shorter Poems'—delicate observation, delight in external nature, delight in art, delight in love, gladness and grief, ethical seriousness, pensive meditation, graceful play of fancy. But all are subdued to balance, measure, harmony; and sometimes our infirmity craves for some dominant note, some fine extravagance, even some splendid sins. Mr. Bridges' audacities are to be found in occasional phrases—often felicitous and of true descriptive or interpretative power, sometimes not felicitous—and in his metrical experiments. But in his metrical experiments there is nothing revolutionary; they are extensions of a true tradition in English verse; they amount to little more than nicely calculated variations of stress. No writer of verse understands his business better than Mr. Bridges; and if finer and subtler harmonies are attained unconsciously or

half-consciously by greater poets, our ear soon adapts itself to the delicate surprises and delicate satisfactions, which he has thought out and felt out as a skilled craftsman. . . .

Mr. Bridges¹ poems have been censured for a lack of warm humanity, and, with the exception of certain poems of joy and love, his lyrics are not direct and simple utterances of passion. But many of his lyrics are charged with fine and tender human sentiment, and he can express moods of dejection and meditative sorrow as well as the happiness of lovers. There is poignant grief, purged of all that is violent, 10 in the beautiful stanzas *On a Dead Child*. Even into his interpretation of nature an element of humanity enters. It was a bold enterprise, for any poet to attempt a new rendering of the nightingales¹ voices when Keats had been his predecessor; but there is magic in Mr. Bridges' poem, *Nightingales*, and half the magic is won, not from the birds' songs, but from the heart of man.

LAURENCE BINYON ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Dome*, 1899.

THAT Mr. Bridges should be neglected has seemed strange and deplorable to many of his admirers; but, however deplorable, it is not really strange. Let us not be angry with 20 the reviewers; let us rather sympathise with their misfortunes, which no one, who has not tried reviewing, can truly gauge. Compelled by cruel editors to read, digest, and pronounce on books almost before they are published, forced to proclaim their judgment before thousands and tens of thousands of readers, who will not listen if they do not shout, with what cause may they not lament, with Matthew Arnold—

What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise ?

30

They are condemned, against their will, to a hurried stripping

from the pages before them of the ornaments that glitter most, and to hang their plain columns with these brilliant trophies. There are some authors whom this treatment flatters; Mr. Bridges is one of those whom it most injures. It was quite easy by this method to prove that Alexander Smith (the classic instance) was of the rank of Keats. Read in quotations, at the breakfast-table, or on the top of an omnibus, doubtless he seemed a Shakespeare. Unfortunately for him, the world was led to read his work. He would have
10 been wiser, had he bought up the edition and placed it in safe flames, and survived as Sappho has survived. For he shone in fragments. The most extravagantly praised poet of this reign, he has now subsided into darkness. Mr. Bridges is a poet of a very different type. His beauties are not easily detachable, but inhere in the substance of his work; he cannot be known in quotations. More than this, his poetry does not reveal itself all at once. On a second reading it seems finer than on the first; on each successive reading its fine qualities grow and deepen. And this, which is the stumbling-
20 block of the reviews, is indeed its greatest merit. For poetry is made to be known, loved, enjoyed; and the poetry which wins us with tranquil and sure power is victorious in the end over that which thrills at the first reading, and chills on the third or fourth. There is too much said in our modern emotional criticism about 'thrills'; the test is too dangerously personal.... That some oracular Anonym has been thrilled tells us nothing. If, then, we are silent about our thrills, and apply other forgotten tests to Mr. Bridges' poetry, we shall find, I think, that it has virtues of a high and rare order,
30 virtues which some accepted masterpieces might envy. For the best of Mr. Bridges' poems have that structural beauty, that 'wholeness of good tissue,' which is the pith of all enduring art. Some may find them not sufficiently exciting, may complain that their hues are too sober; just as people will complain of the low tone of a Velasquez landscape. But

the main thing is achieved, without which splendours are of little avail....

This underlying beauty and organic strength are matched by similar qualities in imagery and rhythm. Mr. Bridges' images are scarcely ever 'striking'; you may search him in vain for stanzas so obviously spirited and picturesque as that admired stanza of Mr. Davidson's (perhaps the stanza most praised by the critics in all recent poetry)—

The adventurous sun took heaven by storm:
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

10

This is as successful in its way as a vigorous water-colour by David Cox; it has merits which everyone grasps in a moment; and it is perhaps only when we examine it a little, that we find that it has no imaginative, no finely poetic qualities at all. And the false note of the first line can only be excused by the excited temper in which the whole ballad is written. This example happened to be at hand; but it is not quite fair to single out Mr. Davidson, since one might mention one or two popular favourites even among our poetical classics, which will not really bear a strict analysis. Mr. Bridges is singularly free, I think, from hidden flaws in the texture of his work. He approaches his subject in a spirit so scrupulous and sincere, that his beauties are always truths, and lie deep; such touches, I mean, as that comparison in *The South Wind*:

As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower—
Like as the stem that beareth the flower
By trembling is knit to power.

30

And this is the reason why his observation is so subtle, delicate, and new, excelling, as I think, Tennyson, in one of Tennyson's main excellences.

Again, of Mr. Bridges' rhythm I would say that it has the

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finest virtue of all good rhythm, namely, a perfect expressiveness. It is organic, it flowers spontaneously from the subject, and it obeys the changing thought with an exquisitely true vibration. Mr. Bridges in this carries on the tradition which Shelley handed down to us in his divine lyric art; the tradition which has degenerated rather than developed (let us take courage to say the truth) in the too mechanical devices and the too facile melodies of Mr. Swinburne. Mr. Swinburne's stanzas always dazzle and astonish; but his
10 rhythm has almost nothing of those magic responses to the turns of emotion, those lovely natural falterings, and those victorious bursts, in which Shelley's art surpasses that of all other lyric writers.

Taken thus in every view, Mr. Bridges appears the sure master of all that he attempts; and if one is to quarrel with his poetry, it must be on the ground that he attempts too little, that he abstains from too much.

ARTHUR SYMONS ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Monthly Review*, July 1901, reprinted in
Studies in Prose and Verse, 1904.

MR. BRIDGES appears to me, in his 'Shorter Poems', to be alone in our time as a writer of purely lyric poetry, poetry
20 which aims at being an 'embodied joy', a calm rapture. Others have concerned themselves with passions more vehement, with thoughts more profound, with a wilder music, a more variable colour; others have been romantic, realistic, classical, and tumultuous; have brought a remote magic into verse, and have made verse out of sorrowful things close at hand. But while all these men have been singing themselves, and what they have counted most individual in themselves, this man has put into his verse only what remains over when all the others have finished. It is a kind
30 of essence; it is what is imperishable in perfume; it is what

is nearest in words to silence. Of the writer of 'Will love again
 awake', or 'I love all beauteous things', you know no more
 than you know of the writer of 'Kind are her answers', or
 of 'O Love, they wrong thee much', in the Elizabethan
 song-books. You know only that joy has come harmoniously
 into a soul, which, for the moment at least, has been purged
 of everything less absolute than the sheer responsiveness of
 song. And so, better than the subtlest dramatist, the lyric
 poet, in his fine, self-sacrificing simplicity, can speak for all
 the world, scarcely even knowing that he is speaking for 10
 himself at all. And in this poetry, it should be noted, nothing
 is allowed for its own sake, not even the most seductive
 virtue, as pathos, the ecstasy of love or of religion; but
 everything for the sake of poetry. Here is an artist so
 scrupulous that beauty itself must come only in sober
 apparel, joy only walking temperately, sorrow without the
 private disfiguring of tears. Made, as it is, out of what might
 be the commonplace, if it were not the most select thing in
 the world; written, as it is, with a deliberateness which might
 be cold if it were not at that quiet heat in which rapture is 20
 no longer astonished at itself; realising, as it does, Coleridge's
 requirement that 'poetry in its higher and purer sense'
 should demand 'continuous admiration, not regular re-
 currence of conscious surprise'; this poetry, more than
 almost any in English, is art for art's sake; and it shows,
 better certainly than any other, how that formula saves
 from excess, rather than induces to it. So evenly are form
 and substance set over against one another that it might
 be said, with as much or as little justice, that everything
 exists for form, or that nothing is sacrificed to it. ... 30

Mr. Bridges' style in verse has been said to lack originality,
 and it is true that his finest lyrics might have found their
 place among the lyrics in an Elizabethan song-book. And yet
 they are not archaic, a going back to the external qualities
 of style, but a thinking back, as of one who really, in

thought, lives in another age, to which his temper of mind is more akin. They are very personal, but personal in a way so abstract, so little dependent on accidents of what we call personality, that it seems the most natural thing in the world for him to turn to a style which comes to him with a great, anonymous tradition. He has never had that somewhat prosaic desire to paint himself 'with all the warts', and he is quite indifferent to the self-consciousness which goes by the name of originality. Just as, in his plays, he borrows
 10 frankly from any one who deals in his own merchandise, so in his lyrics he tries to write only what might have been written in any time or in any country. . . . He seems almost impersonal in his work, indifferent whose it is, his own or another's, as if only its excellence interested him. And this work, when it is most narrowly personal, does not so much render moods of a temperament as aspects of a character. Nobility of character, a moral largeness, which becomes one with an intellectual breadth, a certain gravity, simplicity, sincerity: these count for so much in his work, which indeed
 20 they seem to make. . . .

Made, as it is, on so firm a basis of character, his art is concerned with results rather than (as with most lyric poets) with processes. How many of his poems seem to lead from meditation straight to action; to be expressing something more definite, more formed and settled, than a feeling divorced from consequences! When, as so often, he finds words for an almost inarticulate delight, it is, for the most part, no accidental but rather an organic delight to which he gives utterance! the response of nature to his nature, of his
 30 nature to nature.

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate, emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of

subtlety endeavours to come in. Mr. Bridges' poetic heat is intermittent, and thus his felicity; for all charm in verse, however 'frail and careful', is born of some energy at white heat. At rare times, even in the short poems, and not only in so long a poem as, for instance, 'Prometheus the Fire-giver', one feels that the wave of thought or emotion does not flow broadly and strongly to the end, but breaks on the way. . . .

To Mr. Bridges, undoubtedly, there is something of an actual 'joy' in making poetry, in the mere writing of verse. 10
No one in our time has written verse more consciously and more learnedly, with a more thorough realisation of all those effects which are commonly supposed to come to poets by some divine accident. . . .

If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance. This poet, collectedly living apart, to whom the common rewards of 20 life are not so much a temptation, has meditated deeply on the conduct of life, in the freest, most universal sense; and he has attained a philosophy of austere, not unsmiling content, in which something of the cheerfulness of the Stoic unites with the more melancholy resignation of the Christian, and, limiting himself so resolutely to this sober outlook upon life, though with a sense of the whole wisdom of the ages:

Then oft I turn the page
In which our country's name,
Spoiling the Greek of fame,
Shall sound in every age:
Or some Terentian play
Renew, whose excellent
Adjusted folds betray
How once Menander went:

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limiting himself, as in his verse, to a moderation which is an infinite series of rejections, he becomes the wisest of living poets, as he is artistically the most faultless. He has left by the way all the fine and coloured and fantastic and splendid things which others have done their utmost to attain, and he has put into his poetry the peace and not the energies of life, the wisdom and not the fever of love, the silences rather than the voices of nature. . . .

SIR WALTER RALEIGH ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

ROBERT BRIDGES has just been in on the way down the hill. He is delightfully grumpy. He mentions thing after thing which is commonly believed and says that of course it's not so. He's always right. His intellect has been so completely self-indulged that it now can't understand rubbish. He has never obeyed anyone or adapted himself to anyone, so he's as clear as crystal, and can't do with fogs. (30 October 1912.)

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R. B. says he can't bear Donne, because Donne was a sensualist. R. B. is a pernickety, dainty, wilful, self-indulgent chaste old bird. Just a shade too little of a blackguard. (10 20 November 1916.)

W. B. YEATS ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

I had a short illness six months ago and the first sign of returning health was the excitement of finding that I could read poetry again and the poem that brought on this excitement was your poem on the dead child. In my weak state it produced an almost unendurable emotion.

(To Robert Bridges, 20 April 1913.)

I have always so greatly admired [his] work. It has an emotional purity and rhythmical delicacy no living man can equal. (To Siegfried Sassoon, 7 October 1924.)

I think I remember your husband most clearly as I saw him at some great house near you where there were some Servian delegates. He came through the undistinguished crowd, an image of mental and physical perfection, and one of the Servians turned to me in obvious excitement to ask his name. He has always seemed the only poet, whose influence has always heightened and purified the art of others, 10 and all who write with deliberation are his debtors.

(To Mrs. Bridges, 7 May 1930.)

From *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.

ROBERT BRIDGES seemed for a time, through his influence on Laurence Binyon and others less known, the patron saint of the movement. His influence—practice, not theory—was never deadening; he gave to lyric poetry a new cadence, a distinction as deliberate as that of Whistler's painting, an impulse moulded and checked like that in certain poems of Landor, but different, more in the nerves, less in the blood, more birdlike, less human; words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing, 20

A glitter of pleasure
And a dark tomb,

or by some trick of simplicity, not the impulsive simplicity of youth but that of age, much impulse examined and rejected.

WALTER DE LA MARE ON BRIDGES

From *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*, 30 August 1913,
reprinted in *Private View*, 1953.

TO Mr. Bridges this patience (the patience of the conscious artist) is not merely the outcome of wisdom acquired

from experience; it is an innate quality of mind. A deliberate reticence, a sedulous restraint, a hatred of revelations, are its constant marks. It is never in danger of a loose insincerity, bombast, mere prettiness. Its tendency is rather towards the impersonal and academic. It may become austere almost to the point of aridity. A trace of Augustan formality edges at times into the verse; 'rival amorous vows Amaze the scented air'; an acrostic on the revered name of Purcell diversifies the exquisitely told tale of *Eros and Psyche*. But

10 though inspiration occasionally flags or fails it, the tinder, as it were, is always there; it is the spark that is wanting. This is only another way of saying that Mr. Bridges is that too-rare combination of excellences—a scholar as well as a poet. Whatever his interest centres on, whether music, or hymnody, English speech, prosody, or technical criticism, his method and treatment are always close and thorough, and his conclusions are never extravagant. In an age of crazes and caprice, of curiosity, ostentation, and publicity, he has consistently stood aloof—but not as a mere spectator. He is

20 beyond any of his contemporaries—and forerunners, too—the poet of discipline, of a serene assurance, of an unfretful though by no means passive endurance of what a divine destiny may send and life commit to. ... A tranquil ease and mastery invariably characterize his work, an assured play of mind, a slightly astringent irony. No smoke, no fire, says the proverb; but this close artist kept even his chimney out of sight. His consistent example is a counsel of excellence.... In such poems as *The Affliction of Richard*, *Pater Filio*, *I never shall love the snow again*, a heart desperately charged

3° with grief and perplexity may still express itself in words that reveal more clearly even than these its faith and trust and courage. But though the initial spontaneity of Mr. Bridges's lyrics is never entirely hidden, it much more clearly shows itself to be a kind of distillation of reflection and reverie. And this is true although—beyond perhaps that of

any other English poet—his verse is free from regret or melancholy or sadness or reproach. And there falls across his page no Shadow of Despair.

H. W. GARROD ON BRIDGES

From a lecture (Harvard, 1929) printed in *Poetry and the Criticism of Life*, 1931.

IT becomes us, reading it [*The Testament of Beauty*], to remember that the book is, what its title proclaims it, a testament. It is the final deliverance, the last will and monition, upon the subject of beauty, of a lifelong student of the beautiful. The writer of it, making his last dispositions, is in the nature of things uninfluenced by the ordinary literary motives, vanity and love of glory. But he wishes before he 10 takes leave of the sensible world to put upon record his experience of the beautiful, what it has meant in his life, what he conceives to be its relation to truth, what promise he finds in it of immortality for man's spirit.

It is not easy, I have said, to dodge the argument of the poem. The main lines of it are easy enough to follow.

How the mind of man from inconscient existence
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning
toward spiritual conscience,

20

that is Mr. Bridges' theme. In the treatment of it, the first book is introductory, and nearly all of it is pure poetry—perhaps of any immersion in philosophy the most delightful part is trying the water with one's toe. Beginning from the origin and growth of intellectual Wonder, the book explains the spiritual as, in all its departments, a differentiation of the natural, as the flower is a differentiation of the leaf; the four sections into which the introduction is divided furnish together a brief outline of the natural history of what Mr. Bridges calls Wisdom. The two books which 30

follow deal with the two fundamental human instincts; the self-assertive instinct, which Mr. Bridges calls 'Selfhood', and the instinct of sex, which he mostly prefers to speak of as 'Breed'. Book II traces the evolution of Selfhood into altruism, the passion of benevolence, an evolution conditioned naturally by the fact of 'Motherhood'. Book III instructs us how Breed is by like natural process converted into spiritual love. The fourth book is concerned with Ethick—the origin of the idea of duty, the place of pleasure
 10 in the good life, disposition and education, the relation of Reason to the idea of Beauty and to the material of the senses generally,

If it is not easy to dodge the argument, neither is it easy for Mr. Bridges to dodge the question whether there ought to be one. But he does—it suffices for him to have written, against all odds, the only readable philosophical poem since Lucretius. I fancy that he thinks his argument better, abstractly, than it is, i.e., better than I think it; and newer than it is, i.e., not as old as the hills and the human heart.¹
 20 But I am sure, in any case, that the best comment upon the whole of it is to be given in his own words:

and the secret of a poem
 lieth in the intimate echo of the poet's life:

The power of the argument, I mean, consists in the manner in which it reflects an experience. The same is in some degree true, no doubt, of the *De Rerum Natura*—though the power of Lucretius derives mainly, perhaps, from his proselytising ardour (Mr. Bridges is not much concerned to proselytise). But argument is reason, and poetry is beauty;
 30 and when I have read these four books—and four times have I read them with close attention, reasoning as best I could, and submitting (not always with the best grace in the world) to be reasoned with—after all this reading and

¹ What is new is Mr. Bridges' audacious eclecticism.

re-reading I have to confess that I still do not know how Mr. Bridges relates Reason to Beauty. By Beauty he says,

by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,
but not by Reason at Beauty.

Yet Reason, or reasoning, has a front place in this *Testament of Beauty*; and when I hope that Mr. Bridges is at length going to tell me why, he breaks off:

here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me,
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

Of the things that cannot be told Mr. Bridges has 10 managed, none the less, to tell some in a manner of which the deep and original power cannot, I persuade myself, be matched outside the very greatest poetry.

G. S. GORDON ON BRIDGES

From *Robert Bridges* (The Rede Lecture 1931), 1946.

DOLBEN'S assumption that emotional urgency will find or make its own form is the romantic, and also the amateur, view in all the arts, and can only be disproved by failure. Neither on this nor on one other point to which he draws attention did Bridges change. I mean his inability to suppose that the emotions of the poets he read were any better than his own, or his own than another's. Many years later, in his 20 famous essay on Keats he reaffirms this:

'There must be thousands and thousands of persons alive at this moment in England, who, if they could only give poetic expression to those mysterious feelings with which they are moved in the presence of natural beauty, would be one and all of them greater poets than have ever yet been.¹ This is easily said, but Bridges meant it. What these thousands of people want, of course, is art; an art equal to that mystery. But their souls are right. No less than his respect

for art is his faith in the human spirit, at whatever stage of articulation, and this was a tenet of his creed to the end. It is so declared in his last poem, and indeed is a necessity of its reasoning. I speak of it now because the thorough-paced artist, as Bridges was, has so seldom held this view. It is of a piece with his devout humanity. . . .

He came to have some half a dozen languages at his command, and was a wide and intent but increasingly selective and capricious reader. There had so seldom been
10 any reason why he should persevere with what he did not like, or open, indeed, at all, what failed to invite him. It was his one complaint against Mr. W. P. Ker that he was so catholic, that not content with the appalling self-sacrifice of reading everything, he actually tried (could it be believed?) to *like* everything also—for something. When Mr. Bridges had decided that Dryden, for example, had nothing that he wanted, it was no good speaking to him of Dryden's other abilities; he was done with Dryden. It is the difference between the reading of the scholar and the artist, even when
20 the artist is a scholar: the mature artist, at any rate, reads not so much to enlarge his taste as to confirm or refine it....

The loose and roomy metre of the *Testament* is, in fact, the last fruit of prosodic investigation, of a series of experiments carried on by the poet with perfect frankness for many years, and to that, and that alone, we owe that the poem was ever written. This is not the usual order in the genesis of poetry, but it was Bridges' order. Had he failed to discover the metre of the *Testament*, I will not say that he would never have written his philosophy. He spoke often of doing
30 so, sometimes, in despair, of doing it in prose. I have noticed, indeed, that his Broadcast Lecture on Poetry, given in 1929, is an advance statement of the principles of his poem. But he would not have written the *Testament of Beauty*....

No man was more steadily true to himself. His physical

and mental beauty matched each other, and equipped him superbly for the life he chose. He was of noble and even heroic presence, and his careless outdoor strength and grace, growing more picturesque with age, expressed the colour and delicacy as well as the masculine humour and outspoken freedom of his mind. He was poet, scientist, philosopher, naturalist, musician, philologist, typographer, and country gentleman—a mixture of qualities that would have been surprising in another man, and probably ineffectual, but that in him achieved their harmony.—He grew up, through 10 the kindness of fortune, unwarped by the struggle of living, with none of the inevitable vices of a profession. He used the gifts of fortune responsibly, setting an example of high-minded devotion to all the arts of Beauty and to the spiritual advancement of mankind. Before he died he delivered in the *Testament of Beauty* his message of belief in the goodness of the human heart, and of faith in the religious foundation of human life.

CYRIL CONNOLLY ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Sunday Times*, 11 January 1953.

IT is interesting to reconsider this late Victorian bard of Boar's Hill, scholar and muscular metrical Christian, from 20 our disadvantage point in 1953, surrounded by

the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings, the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art.

The defect is obvious: lack of inspiration. No poet seems so consistently without it; and yet, unblessed by any heavenly visitation, he worked bravely on, steeping himself in the true and beautiful—Plato, Dante, Wordsworth, and, above all, Milton—studiously observing the minutiae of the country- 30

side, dryly doing his best as our official poet during a momentous war, sitting on Hopkins's manuscript and pondering problems of prosody: until suddenly, in his eighties, the Muse took pity on him and changed his Martha into Mary. Grace flowed, inspiration descended, and the long and difficult but also intelligent and beautiful 'Testament of Beauty'¹ appeared, dedicated to the King and running into fourteen editions, a modern miracle, a swansong of Victorian integrity, Edwardian learning and Georgian
10 questioning, where Christian platonism

passionat soul and sense
blend in a rich reverie with the dying year.

The five volumes of shorter poems which appeared between 1873 and 1893 contain, however, some lovely things in which nicety of observation and felicity of rhythm compensate for a certain monotony of diction and feeling: a gardener-poet, a walker and a boatman quietly develops, growing familiar with the moods of the countryside and constituting himself the poet of winterspring, the season
20 when January bequeaths to February and March its faltering authority:

Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,
Doth to his heiress shew
His kingdom fair.
In patient russet is his forest spread,
All bright with bramble red,
With beechen moss
And holly sheen: the oak silver and stark
Sunneth his aged bark
And wrinkled boss.

30

'January,' 'November,' 'The Palm Willow,' 'London Snow,' 'A Robin,' 'The Upper Skies,' 'Screaming Tarn'—these and many other slight but haunting and graceful poems end by producing a quiet intoxication in the reader, an aquatinted calendar of the English scene.

Selections from
ROBERT BRIDGES

From POEMS, 1873

HER eye saw, her eye stumbled:
 Her fingers spread and touched it:
 It was so ripe it tumbled
 Off in her hand, that clutched it.

She raised it up to smell it: 5
 Her jealous tongue ran o'er it:
 Ere the thought rose to quell it,
 Her keen teeth closed and tore it.

There as she stood in wonder,
 And smacked the flavour fruity, 10
 She scanned it o'er and under,
 And marvelled at its beauty.

'It's fair,' she said, 'and fairest
 Just where the sun's rays strike it;
 The tastes's the strangest, rarest; 15
 It's bitter, but I like it,'

To man she brought it, bitten,
 She brought it, she the woman,
 The fruit, of which 'tis written
 The eating should undo man. 20

'Taste, taste!' she cried, 'thou starvest;
 Eat as I ate, nor fear it,
 For of all the garden's harvest
 There's nothing like or near it.

' Fair to the eyes, and fairest 25
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
But oh! the taste's the rarest,
It's bitter, but thou'lt like it.

He took the fruit she gave him,
Took it for pain or pleasure: 3°
There was no help could save him,
Her measure was his measure.

Through her teeth's print, the door of it,
He sent his own in after;
He ate rind, flesh, and core of it, 35
And burst out into laughter.

'Tis fair,' he cried, 'and fairest
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
The taste's the strangest, rarest,
It's bitter, and I like it.¹

From PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

ODE

A COY inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,
 Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things
 Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under. 815
 It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings
 Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,
 And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her:
 She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820
 The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth; and later
 The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night;
 'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,
 With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah! how surely, 825
 How soon and surely will disenchantment come,
 When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,
 And drives the master spirit away from his home;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning
 Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830
 Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,
 As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,
 And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning;
 Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite!

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest 835
 To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright:
 To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest;
 Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting

The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest
 With wonder everlasting. 840

From THE GROWTH OF LOVE

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,
 And carry purpose up to the ends of the air:
 In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where
 By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies:
 Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise 5
 The silence: over plains in the moonlight bare
 I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare
 In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds! then I cry,
 Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd 10
 By the only joy of knowing that ye fly;
 Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,
 The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
 Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
 That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
 Hailing in each the citadel divine
 The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago;
 Until at length your feeble steps and slow 5
 Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
 And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine
 Whether it be Jerusalem or no:

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you;
 For, having worshipped many a barren face, 10
 I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to:
 I stand a pagan in the holy place;
 Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
 And question with the God that I embrace.

33

I CARE not if I live, tho¹ life and breath
 Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
 I care not if I die, for I could meet—
 Being so happy—happily my death.
 I care not if I love; to-day she saith 5
 She loveth, and love's history is complete.
 Nor care I if she love me; at her feet
 My spirit bows entranced and worshippeth.

I have no care for what was most my care,
 But all around me see fresh beauty born, 10
 And common sights grown lovelier than they were:
 I dream of love, and in the light of morn
 Tremble, beholding all things very fair
 And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.

40

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,
 Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,
 Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,
 Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer,
 Tears of contrition; all tears whatsoever 5
 Of tenderness or kindness had she shed
 Who here is pictured, ere upon her head
 The fine gold might be turn'd to silver there.

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place
 Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son; 10
 But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace:
 So that I praise the artist, who hath done
 A portrait, for my worship, of the face
 Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize
 The prize of life from age and likelihood,
 I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
 Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.
 For in the forest among many trees 5
 Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
 The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
 That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high
 Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare; 10
 Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
 So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
 From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
 When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

WHEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand
 The traveller faints, upon his closing ear
 Steals a fantastic music: he may hear
 The babbling fountain of his native land.
 Before his eyes the vision seems to stand, 5
 Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,
 Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,
 And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire— 10
 O shameless, O contempt of holy things.
 But never of their wanton play they tire,
 As not athirst they sit beside the springs,
 While he must quench in death his lost desire.

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice
 Of works unperfected and broken schemes,
 Where is the promise of my early dreams,
 The smile of beauty and the pearl of price?
 No charm is left now that could once entice 5
 Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,
 And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,
 Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air
 Has chill'd endeavour: sickly memories reign 10
 In every room, and ghosts are on the stair:
 And hope behind the dusty window-pane
 Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care
 Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

51

0 MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
 That in my secret book with so much care
 I write you, this one here and that one there,
 Marking the time and order of your birth?
 How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth, 5
 A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
 Look ye for any welcome anywhere
 From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd
 To write you such as once, when I was young, 10
 Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.
 Twere something yet to live again among
 The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd
 My art, be there remember'd for my song.

SINCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond
 Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
 Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
 Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond;
 Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond 5
 Is writ my promise of eternity;
 Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,
 That if thou look but from me I despond;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this:
 Think of the dedication of my youth: 10
 Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss:
 Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
 My sheer annihilation if I miss:
 Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

TWAS on the very day winter took leave
 Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies
 The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise
 At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,
 I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve; 5
 Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise
 As Adam went alone in Paradise,
 Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around
 I laid me down beneath a flowering tree, 10
 And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound;
 In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,
 Rending my body, where with hurried sound
 I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

THE dark and serious angel, who so long
 Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,
 Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
 To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
 Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong, 5
 Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
 God's purpose in a soul of such degree;
 And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
 He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay, 10
 And work confusion of so many foes:
 The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,
 Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes
 Unto what great reward I cannot say.

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,
 In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,
 To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,
 Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.
 Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state, 5
 That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve
 Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,
 Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
 And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin, 10
 Even as our anger soon is past and dead
 Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
 By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
 And in the vale of terror comforted.

(II)

From SHORTER POEMS

Book I

I

ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day; 5
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament 10
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit 15
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray, 20
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

(12)

Many an afternoon 25
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums 30
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon 35
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem 40
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content 45
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

2

ELEGY

THE wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

(13)

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten, 5
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:— 10
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her, 15
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls. 20

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches 25
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:
And birds that love the South have taken wing. 30
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

5

I HEARD a linnet courting
 His lady in the spring:
 His mates were idly sporting,
 Nor stayed to hear him sing
 His song of love.— 5
 I fear my speech distorting
 His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading
 Were full of young delight;
 And she that gave him heeding 10
 Interpreted aright
 His gay, sweet notes,—
 So sadly marred in the reading,—
 His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer 15
 Awaited the refrain,
 Till swiftly perching nearer
 He sang his song again,
 His pretty song:—
 Would that my verse spake clearer 20
 His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!
 That in the merry spring
 Think not of what misfeatures
 Or cares the year may bring; 25
 But unto love
 Resign your simple natures,
 To tender love.

7

I WILL not let thee go.
Ends all our month-long love in this?
Can it be summed up so,
Quit in a single kiss?
I will not let thee go. 5

I will not let thee go.
If thy words¹ breath could scare thy deeds,
As the soft south can blow
And toss the feathered seeds,
Then might I let thee go. 10

I will not let thee go.
Had not the great sun seen, I might;
Or were he reckoned slow
To bring the false to light,
Then might I let thee go. 15

I will not let thee go.
The stars that crowd the summer skies
Have watched us so below
With all their million eyes,
I dare not let thee go. 20

I will not let thee go.
Have we not chid the changeful moon,
Now rising late, and now
Because she set too soon,
And shall I let thee go? 25

(16)

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go. 30

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go. 35

9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late:
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought, 5
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn: 10
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

ii

LONG are the hours the sun is above,
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

(17)

She does not meet me upon the stair,—
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :
I always walk straight up to my love;

And she lets me take my wonted place
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face. 10

There as I sit, from her head thrown back
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear, 15
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,
The firelight hours are a dream of gold. 20

And so I sit here night by night,
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair,
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay: 25
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,
That I sit so much by myself alone.

ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,
And all ye loves, assemble; far and wide
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before
Has been deferred to this late eventide :

For on this night the bride, 5
The days of her betrothal over,
Leaves the parental hearth for evermore;
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain
Yet all unvisited, the silken gown: 10
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain
Her dearer friends provided: sere and brown

Bring out the festal crown,
And set it on her forehead lightly:
Though it be withered, twine no wreath again; 15
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,
While her attendants, chosen from among 20

Her faithful virgin throng,
May lay her in her cedar litter,
Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.

(19)

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be 25
Not without music, nor with these alone;
But let the viol lead the melody,
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan
Of sinking semitone;
And, all in choir, the virgin voices 30
Rest not from singing in skilled harmony
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night, 35
And then the maidens, in a double row,
Each singing soft and low,
And each on high a torch upstaying:
Unto her lover lead her forth with light,
With music, and with singing, and with praying. 40

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,
And found her trusty window open wide,
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,
That long the restless curtain would not hide
Her form that stood beside; 45
As scarce she dared to be delighted,
Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn: 50
And watching she has seen no shadow pass
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne
Upon her ear forlorn.
In vain has she looked out to greet him;
He has not come, he will not come, alas! 55
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

Now to the river bank the priests are come:
 The bark is ready to receive its freight:
 Let some prepare her place therein, and some
 Embark the litter with its slender weight: 60

 The rest stand by in state,
 And sing her a safe passage over;
 While she is oared across to her new home,
 Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thott, O lover, that art on the watch, 65
 Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,
 The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch
 The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

 Thou, when the torchlight gleams,
 When thou shalt see the slow procession, 70
 And when thine ears the fitful music catch,
 Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

16

TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master;
 Of more than common friendliness
 When first we met we did not guess.
 Who could foretell this sore distress, 5
 This irretrievable disaster
 When first we met?—We did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master.

Book II

I

MUSE

WILL Love again awake,
That lies asleep so long?

POET

O hush! ye tongues that shake
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE

It is a lady fair 5
Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET

She must be fair of face, 10
As bold of heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
With the delight of dreams.

MUSE

Her beauty would surprise
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise 15
Upon the scattered sheaves.

(22)

POET

O sweet must be the voice
He shall descend to hear,
Who doth in Heaven rejoice
His most enchanted ear. 20

MUSE

The smile, that rests to play
Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
Tricks her sweet syllables.

POET

And yet her smiles have danced 25
In vain, if her discourse
Win not the soul entranced
In divine intercourse.

MUSE

She will encounter all
This trial without shame, 30
Her eyes men Beauty call,
And Wisdom is her name.

POET

Throw back the portals then,
Ye guards, your watch that keep,
Love will awake again 35
That lay so long asleep.

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest ?
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest, 5
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
 In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air: 10
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
 grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair 15
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
 That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
 As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
 From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
 In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place 5
 Their thick tops interlace,
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
 Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade, 10
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare
 The stout roots in the air:
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played 15
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
 Robbing the golden market of the bees: 20

And laden barges float
 By banks of myosote;
 And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool 25
 Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
 The drowning nenuphars, 30
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows 35
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:

 Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high. 4°

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;

 And dreams, or falls asleep, 45
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
 In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care 50
 Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
 May by the pathway of the forest fare:

 As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
 Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware 55
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam; 60

 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

(26)

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames? 65
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:
 Lest ere I come the while
 Strange feet your shades defile; 70
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
 Within your guardian isle.

7

THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;
O still solitude, only matched in the skies:
 Perilous in steep places,
 Soft in the level races,
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies; 5
With lovely undulation of fall and rise;
 Entrenched with thickets thorned,
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned!

1 climb your crown, and lo! a sight surprising
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide: 10
 And scattered ships ascending
 To heaven, lost in the blending
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,
Urging their engines against wind and tide,
 And all so small and slow 15
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,
 Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,
 Takes my ear, in the veering
 Baffled wind, as rearing 20
 Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;
 And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;
 While again at the foot of the downs
 He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.

10

ELEGY

AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews
 I come, unquiet sorrows to control;
 Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse
 With my neglected solitary soul;
 And to poetic sadness care confide, 5
 Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide:

They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,
 Among the tombs finding my rare delight,
 Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,
 Or in the windy moon-enchanted night, 10
 Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,
 And given them water from the well divine.—

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun
 Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;
 The seeds are perfected: his work is done, 15
 And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May;
 Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear
 Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,
 The world my solemn fancy leaves behind, 20
 Come! pass within the inviolable wall,
 Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind;
 Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,
 And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears; 25
 For many eyes have sanctified this spot,
 Where grief's unbroken lineage endears
 The charm untimely Folly injures not,
 And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap
 The simple fence its holiness doth keep. 30

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
 Their pompous legends will no smile awake;
 Even the vainglorious title o'er the head
 Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake;
 And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize, 35
 Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,
 Here where a lover left his bride, below
 The treasured names their own are added on
 To those whom they have followed long ago: 40
 Sealing the record of the tears they shed,
 That 'where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

(29)

Grandfather, father, son, and then again
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath
Numbered in turn among the sons of men, 45
And gathered each one in his turn to death:
While he that occupies their house and name
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits? Ah! could we tell
The manner of our being when we die, 50
And see beyond the scene we know so well
The country that so much obscured doth lie!
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,
Or crown our melancholy with despair;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come: 55
Since of this world the essential joy must fall
In all distributed, in each thing some,
In nothing all, and all complete in all;
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace. 60

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here:
Though in most black habiliments attired,
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit 65
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet
Back to the busy town return, but yet
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,
Or touch their hands, or share without regret 70
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents:
 A honeymoon delight,— 5
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour:—
 My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ 10
 Along a liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere:— 15
 My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom:
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb! 20
 Fly with delight, fly hence!
 Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast; now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

Book III

I

OMY vague desires!
Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires:
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime
Rising and flying to heaven before her time:

What doth tempt you forth 5
To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north?
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

Joy, the joy of flight!
They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night; 10
Gone up, gone out of sight: and ever again
Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah! they burn my soul,
The fires, devour my soul that once was whole:
She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day, 15
But whither, whither? ay whither? away, away!

Could I but control
These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul:
Could I but quench the fire: ah! could I stay
My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away! 20

LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing; 5
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven 10
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
 The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
 The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness; 15

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze 20
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
 'O look at the trees!' they cried, 'O look at the trees!'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder, 25
 Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day. 30

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
 And trams of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken, 35
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
 they have broken.

3

THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea:
 Whose smile severe and chaste 5
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever:
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides; 10
 Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
 Precipitate all overrides, and turns, nor abides:
 For you sad birds and fair,
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air;
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature, 15
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames Valley,
 The silent river glides by flowery banks:
 And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
 Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks: 20
 Where if a light air stray,
 Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever:
 Serve thy sweet desire: despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entranced river, 25
 That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,
 Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;
 Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them:
 For you my bowers green,
 My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between, 30
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

4

ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 A he bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.
 Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer 5
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be
 Thy father's pride;—ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make
 stronger.
 To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond; 10
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.
 Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;
 Yet feels to my hand as if 15
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

(35)

So lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—
Propping thy wise, sad head,
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing. 20

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither
hath he taken thee?

To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and
awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us 25
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and have
heard of, fail us.

7

INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day
Had verged already on its hot decline,
And charmed Indolence in languor lay
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine:
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream!' 5
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
Upon our proposed travel well begun,
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
Past shallow islets floating in the sun, 10
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

(36)

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam, 15
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass 20
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;
And pulling for the middle span, we drew
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below! 25
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
And with its easy flood no murmur made:
And weeds spread on its surface, and about
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out. 30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove:
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank, 35
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green; 40
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

(37)

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks; 45
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along, 50
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip 55
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore;
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by. Co

II

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest
In fancy rising now to re-awaken
My love unshaken;

All thou 'st forgotten, but no change can free thee, 5
No hate unmake thee; as thou wert I see thee,
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting
Its ample greeting.

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy, 10
The only joy of all the joys I cherished
That hast not perished,

(38)

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure:
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest, 15
Me thou delightest ?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,
And faery fancy leaves her habitation
To desolation. 20

Of two things open left for lovers parted
 Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted:
 But I would ever dream I still possess it,
 And thus caress it.

12

THOU didst delight my eyes:
Yet who am I? nor first
Nor last nor best, that durst
Once dream of thee for prize;
Nor this the only time
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear:
Ah! little praise; thy voice
Makes other hearts rejoice,
Makes all ears glad that hear; 10
And short my joy: but yet,
O song, do not forget!

For what wert thou to me ?
How shall I say? The moon,
That poured her midnight noon
Upon his wrecking sea;—
A sail, that for a day
Has cheered the castaway.

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake!
 The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,
 It leaps in the sky: unrisen lustres slake
 The overtaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake!

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee; 5
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,
 Already they watch the path thy feet shall take:
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—
 She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee; 10
 For thee would unashamed herself forsake:
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake!

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,
 Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:
 And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake; 15
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee:
 She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,
 And awake my heart to be loved: awake, awake!' 20

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,
 Hast loved me best and longest,
 And now with trust the strongest
 The joy of my heart renewest;

Since thou art dearer and dearer 5
 While other hearts grow colder
 And ever, as love is older,
 More lovingly drawest nearer:

(40)

Since now I see in the measure
Of all my giving and taking, 10
Thou wert my hand in the making,
The sense and soul of my pleasure;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee
In heaven I pray be recorded,
And all thy love rewarded 15
By God, thy master that made thee.

19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly 5
Through tempest, flood and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire, 10
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless quire
Soon shall thine eager cry 15
Be numbered and expire.

Book IV

I

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them. **5**

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Altho' to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking. **10**

4

THE clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb **5**
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurried foam
Up on the dusky shore.

(42)

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats, 10
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home, 15
My shadow walks before.

6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh;
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May:
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth:
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower 5
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's
drouth:

On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower
In bulging hea^' that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

12

THE hill pines were sighing,
O'ercast and chill was the day:
A mist in the valley lying
Blotted the pleasant May.

(43)

But deep in the glen's bosom 5
Slimmer slept in the fire
Of the odorous gorse-blossom
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
And out of the copse the stroke 10
Of the iron axe that hammered
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,
As a hundred years of pride
Crashed, in the silence falling: 15
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,
White-robed, with silver hair;
In your meadows fair,
Where the willows weep,
And the sad moonbeam 5
On the gliding stream
Writes her scattered dream:

Angel spirits of sleep,
Dancing to the weir
In the hollow roar 10
Of its waters deep;
Know ye how men say
That ye haunt no more
Isle and grassy shore
With your moonlit play; 15

(44)

21

Like autumn flowers that brave the frost, 5
And make their show when hope is lost,
These 'mong the fruits and mellow scent
Mourn not the high-sunned summer spent.

Their notes thro' all the jocund spring
 Were mixed in merry musicking: 10
 They sang for love the whole day long,
 But now their love is all for song.

Now each hath perfected his lay
To praise the year that hastes away:
They sit on boughs apart, and vie 15
In single songs and rich reply:

And oft as in the copse I hear
These anthems of the dying year,
The passions, once her peace that stole,
With flattering love my heart console. 20

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
 The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
 Is fallen back in the west
 To couch with the sinking sun.
 The last clouds fare 5
 With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
 In melting drifts of the sky.
 Already the birds in the air
 Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,
 And one by one, 10
 Proclaiming aloud their care,
 Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,
 They trim afresh the fair
 Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm, 15
 And awhile will be handsome yet.
 To-morrow's sun shall caress
 Their remnant of loveliness:
 In quiet days for a time
 Sad Autumn lingering warm 20
 Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!
 What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,
 That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,
 That sheltered the cooing doves at noon, 25
 Of airy fans the delicate throng,—
 Torn and scattered around:
 Far out afield they lie,
 In the watery furrows die,
 In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown, 30
 Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,
 The high year's flaunting crown
 Shattered and trampled down.

(46)

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep 35
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light 40
Sleep falls on forest and field.
S6e! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,
And whitens all the marshy lea:
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,
The day is dark and black the sea.
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves 5
With driven foam the offing fleck:
The ebb is low and barely laves
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach
My childhood chanced and chose to be: 10
'Twas here I played, and musing made
My friend the melancholy sea.
He from his dim enchanted caves
With shuddering roar and onrush wild
Fell down in sacrificial waves 15
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee:—
My heart is now too fixed to bow
Tho' all his tempests howl at me: 20

Book V

I

THE WINNOWERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs
The little hamlet lies,
And nothing sees but the bald crowns
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent 5
And grey slopes of the wold,
The red roofs nestle, oversprent
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun
Basking, what time of year 10
The thrush his singing has begun,
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
His faggots on the stack:
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched 15
Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne
A steady muffled din,
By which we knew that threshed corn
Was winnowing, and went in. 20

(49)

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed 25
The hopper, lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught; 30
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet 35
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not gat us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity: 40

But here we found ourselves again.
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little grain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

LOVE not too much. But how,
 When thou hast made me such,
 And dost thy gifts bestow,
 How can I love too much?

Though I must fear to lose, 5
 And drown my joy in care,
 With all its thorns I choose
 The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,
 Didst kill my childish trust, 10
 That breach with toil did I
 Repair, because I must:

And spite of frightening schemes,
 With which the fiends of Hell
 Blaspheme thee in my dreams, 15
 So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,
 What marvel in me wrought
 Shall quite exculpate thee,
 I have no shadow of thought. 20

What am I that complain?
 The love, from which began
 My question sad and vain,
 Justifies thee to man.

THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams
 Of the September sun: his golden gleams
 On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows
 Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows
 That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers; 5
 Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads
 Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds;
 And in the feathery aster bees on wing
 Seize and set free the honied flowers,
 Till thousand stars leap with their visiting: 10
 While ever across the path mazily flit,
 Unpiloted in the sun,
 The dreamy butterflies
 With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,
 White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes, 15
 Or on chance flowers sit,
 With idle effort plundering one by one
 The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze
 Into the garden saileth, 20
 Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,
 For his sharpness he vaileth:
 So long a comrade of the bearded corn,
 Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,
 O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray, 25
 As mindful of the kisses and soft play
 Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,
 Ere he deserted her;
 Lover of fragrance, and too late repents;
 Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink, 30
 Nor spicy pink,

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,
 But the few lingering scents
 Of streaked pea, and gillyflower, and stocks
 Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox. 35

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones
 Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,
 With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,
 Or the wild cry
 Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare 40
 The distant blue, to watering as they fare
 With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,
 If aught their ancient polity displease,—
 Come gathering to their colony, and there
 Settling in ragged parliament, 45
 Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
 When first we kissed beside the thorn,
 So strangely sweet, it was not strange
 We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told— 5
 That love will change in growing old;
 Though day by day is nought to see,
 So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
 Quite to forget what once he was, 10
 Nor even in fancy to recall
 The pleasure that was ah¹ in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
 So deep in summer floods is drowned,
 I wonder, bathed in joy complete, 15
 How love so young could be so sweet.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again
 Since Maurice died:
 With corniced drift it blocked the lane
 And sheeted in a desolate plain
 The country side. 5

The trees with silvery rime bedight
 Their branches bare.
 By day no sun appeared; by night
 The hidden moon shed thievish light
 In the misty air. 10

We fed the birds that flew around
 In flocks to be fed:
 No shelter in holly or brake they found.
 The speckled thrush on the frozen ground
 Lay frozen and dead. 15

We skated on stream and pond; we cut
 The crinching snow
 To Doric temple or Arctic hut;
 We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut
 By the fireside glow. 20

Yet grudged we our keen delights before
 Maurice should come.
 We said, In-door or out-of-door
 We shall love life for a month or more,
 When he is home. 25

They brought him home; 'twas two days late
 For Christmas day:
 Wrapped in white, in solemn state,
 A flower in his hand, all still and straight
 Our Maurice lay. 30

(54)

And two days ere the year outgave
We laid him low.
The best of us truly were not brave,
When we laid Maurice down in his grave
Under the snow.

35

12

NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air 5
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound, 10
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn 15
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of
May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE
ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF
ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,
Mary, in whose fair name was laid
Eton's corner, bless our youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth!

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June, 5
By silver Thames's lulling tune,
In shade of willow or oak, who try
The golden gates of poesy;

Or on the tabled sward all day
Match your strength in England's play, 10
Scholars of Henry, giving grace
To toil and force in game or race;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came
Here in his realm a realm to found, 15
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing
Ye plunge in the lashing weir; or dashing
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain
Round the rushes and home again;— 20

Or what pursuit soe'er it be
That makes your mingled presence free,
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes;

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death, 25
 Temper for you her sword of faith;
 Crown with honour the loving eyes,
 And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring: for you
 The very stars of heaven are new; 30
 And aged Fame again is born,
 Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,
 Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,
 Homer his bardic hymn rehearse, 35
 Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best;
 Each in one thing excel the rest:
 Strive; and hold fast this truth of heaven—
 To him that hath shall more be given. 40

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,
 So many hours for food and sleep,
 So many hours till study tire,
 So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save, 45
 Mirrors bright for her magic cave;
 Wherein may steadfast eyes behold
 A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,
 And when ye leave regret it not; 50
 With wishing gifts in festal state
 Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

(57)

Then to the world let shine your light,
Children in play be lions in fight,
And match with red immortal deeds 55
The victory that made ring the meads:

Or by firm wisdom save your land
From giddy head and grasping hand:
IMPROVE THE BEST; so shall your sons
Better what ye have bettered once. 60

Send them here to the court of grace
Bearing your name to fill your place:
Ye in their time shall live again
The happy dream of Henry's reign:

And on his day your steps be bent 65
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

15

THE north wind came up yesternight
With the new year's full moon,
And rising as she gained her height,
Grew to a tempest soon.
Yet found he not on heaven's face 5
A task of cloud to clear;
There was no speck that he might chase
Off the blue hemisphere,
Nor vapour from the land to drive:
The frost-bound country held 10
Nought motionable or alive,
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.
There scarce was hanging in the wood
A shrivelled leaf to reave;

No bud had burst its swathing hood	15
That he could rend or grieve:	
Only the tall tree-skeletons,	
Where they were shadowed all,	
Wavered a little on the stones,	
And on the white church-wall.	20
—Like as an artist in his mood,	
Who reckons all as nought,	
So he may quickly paint his nude,	
Unutterable thought:	
So Nature in a frenzied hour	25
By day or night will show	
Dim indications of the power	
That doometh man to woe.	
Ah, many have my visions been,	
And some I know full well:	30
I would that all that I have seen	
Were fit for speech to tell.—	
And by the churchyard as I came,	
It seemed my spirit passed	
Into a land that hath no name,	35
Grey, melancholy and vast;	
Where nothing comes: but Memory,	
The widowed queen of Death,	
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye	
All slumber banisheth.	40
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes	
That sickly, staring shore,	
Its old chaotic change of shapes	
Remembers evermore.	
And ghosts of cities long decayed	45
And ruined shrines of Fate	
Gather the paths, that Time hath made	
Foolish and desolate.	

(59)

Nor winter there hath hope of spring,
Nor the pale night of day, 50
Since the old king with scorpion sting
Hath done himself away.

▼ ▼
The morn was calm; the wind's last breath
Had fal'n: in solemn hush
The golden moon went down beneath 55
The dawning's crimson flush.

19

WEEP not to-day: why should this sadness be?
Learn in present fears
To o'ermaster those tears
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise: 5
Up, sad heart, nor faint
In ungracious complaint,
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace 10
Draweth surely nigh,
When good-night is good-bye;
For sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away
Deem, nor strange thy doom.
Like this sorrow 'twill come, 15
And the day will be to-day.

From NEW POEMS

4

ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path!
 My homing heart no happier playground hath.
 I need not close my lids but it appears
 Through the bewilderment of forty years
 To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between 5
 Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green;
 Fairer than dreams of sleep, than Hope more' fair
 Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,
 Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees, 10
 Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar
 From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,
 Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,
 A mossy terrace of the native chalk
 Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around 15
 Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.
 There live the memories of my early days,
 There still with childish heart my spirit plays;
 Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair
 When she hath fled me, I have found her there; 20
 And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring
 Alternate days of summer and of spring,
 With childish thought, and childish faces bright,
 And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood, 25
 A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood:
 Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,
 Whereby unto the southern front we went,
 And from the dark plantation climbing free,
 Over a valley look'd out on the sea. 30

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky
 Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie
 High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,
 Or nearer in the roads pass within hail
 Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride 35
 At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch; nay, now
 The brazen disk is cold against my brow,
 And in my sight a circle of the sea
 Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee, 40
 And ships in stately motion pass so near
 That what I see is speaking to my ear:
 I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,
 The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain
 That runs out thro¹ the hawse, the clank of the winch 45
 Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,
 Till half I wonder if they have no care,
 Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear
 On all their doings, if I vex them not
 On every petty task of their rough lot 50
 Prying and spying, searching every craft
 From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—
 Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean
 Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen
 Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length, 55
 Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some
 Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come
 Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up
 Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop, 60
 By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,
 The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,
 Or some immense three-decker of the line,
 Romantic as the tale of Troy divine;
 Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall 65
 The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,
 And for the engines of a mightier Mars
 Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.
 The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave
 That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave 70
 Lost then their merriment, nor look to play
 With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
 Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound:
 Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea, 75
 As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
 Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
 Glided in line upon the windless deep :
 For in those days was first seen low and black
 Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack, 80
 And neath their stern revolv'd the twisted fan.
 Many I knew as soon as I might scan,
 The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,
 The *Rogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright
 Others that I remember now no more; 85
 But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,
 With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,
 The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,
 Whereon saiTd George, who in her gig had flown
 The silken ensign by our sisters sewn. 90

The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame
 To England's proudest ship had given her name,
 And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene
 Had scarce more honoured than accustom'd been,—
 Was two years since to his last haven past: 95
 I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast
 One morn as I sat looking on the sea,
 When thus all England's grief came first to me,
 Who hold my childhood favoured that I knew
 So well the face that won at Waterloo. 100

But now 'tis other wars, and other men;—
 The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—
 Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found:
 A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,
 The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers, 105
 And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.
 Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,
 The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

9

MY delight and thy delight
 Walking, like two angels white,
 In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
 Twining to a tongue of fire, 5
 Leaping live, and laughing higher;
 Thro' the everlasting strife
 In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
 Hath the secret of the sun. 10

(64)

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life. and.S3£££Li& breath: 15

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay 20
In the dawning of the day.

II

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,
His waves come rolling evermore;
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I, 5
Under the pine upon the hill,
The sadness of the clouded sky,
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,
The seamew's melancholy cry
With loving fancy suit but ill. 10

We talk of moons and cooling suns,
Of geologic time and tide,
The eternal sluggards that abide
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent 15
That man should guess her dreary scheme
Lest he should live too well content
In his fair house of mirth and dream:

(65)

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,
His heart that wearies of desire, 20
Being so fugitive a part
Of what so slowly must expire.

She in her agelong toil and care
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,
Mocking alike hope and despair. 25

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,
Days that are one with human art,
Worthy of the Virgilian muse, 30
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

12

RIDING adown the country lanes

One day in spring,
Heavy at heart with all the pains
Of man's imagining:—

The mist was not yet melted quite 5
Into the sky:

The small round sun was dazzling white,
The merry larks sang high:

The grassy northern slopes were laid
In sparkling dew, 10
Out of the slow-retreating shade
Turning from sleep anew:

Deep in the sunny vale a burn
Ran with the lane,
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern 15
It laughed in joyful strain:

(66)

And primroses shot long and lush
 Their clustered cream;
Robin and wren and amorous thrush
 Carol'd above the stream: 20

The stillness of the lenten air
 Call'd into sound
The motions of all life that were
 In field and farm around:

So fair it was, so sweet and bright, 25
 The jocund Spring
Awoke in me the old delight
 Of man's imagining,

Riding adown the country lanes:
 The larks sang high.— 30
O heart! for all thy griefs and pains
 Thou shalt be loth to die.

14

NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed;
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands 5
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear
The teams following and crossing far and near,
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands
Of the striped fields; and behind them firk and prance 10
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance:
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)

(67)

They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by
Above the lane they shout lifting the share, 15
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air;
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out
The small wrens glide
With a happy note of cheer, 20
And yellow amoretts flutter above and about,
Gay, familiar in fear.

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,
All the afternoon to the gardens fly, 25
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel:
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,
In an isolated tree a congregation
Of starlings chatter and chide, 30
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel:
Suddenly they hush as one,—
The tree top springs,—
And off, with a whirr of wings,
They fly by the score 35
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more
Dispute for the roosts; and from the unseen nation
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly, 40
While falls the night on them self-occupied;
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,
And soon to bury in snow •
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole, 45
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole
Of how her end shall be.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—

Its course is done:

But nothing tells the place

Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,

5

And up the lane

You may hear, but cannot see,

The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums

In the farm hard by:

10

Its lowering smoke is lost

In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,

And all night through

The dropping will not cease

15

In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house

Must keep his chair:

He knows he will never again

Breathe the spring air:

20

His heart is worn with work;

He is giddy and sick

If he rise to go as far

As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,

25

His hale, strong years;

And braves as he may the night

Of darkness and tears.

WHEN Death to either shall come,—

I pray it be first to me,—

(69)

Be happy as ever at home,

If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own;

5

And sing to the child on thy knee,

Or read to thyself alone

The songs that I made for thee.

20

EPftl

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?

Thou idol of the human race,

Thou tyrant of the human heart,

The flower of lovely youth that art;

Yea, and that standest in thy youth

5

An image of eternal Truth,

With thy exuberant flesh so fair,

That only Pheidias might compare,

Ere from his chaste marmoreal form

Time had decayed the colours warm;

10

Like to his gods in thy proud dress,

Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,

For in thy face is nought to find,

Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,

15

That shadows neither love nor guile,

But shameless will and power immense,

In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?

I dream thou knowest it is nought,

20

And wouldst in darkness come, but thou

Makest the light where'er thou go.

Ah yet no victim of thy grace,

None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,

Hath cared to look upon thy face.

25

From LATER POEMS

5

ONE grief of thine
 if truth be confest
 Was joy to me;
 for it drave to my breast
 Thee, to my heart 5
 to find thy rest.

How long it was
 I never shall know:
 I watcht the earth 10
 so stately and slow,
 And the ancient things
 that waste and grow.

But now for me
 what speed devours
 Our heavenly life, 15
 our brilliant hours!
 How fast they fly,
 the stars and flowers!

13

THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,
 Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,
 One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek:
 It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,
 Imagine fathering my father; when he, in sonship afore, 5
 Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictured agaze,
 The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,
 O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,
 The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows
 my going, 10
 How had I stray'd without thee! and yet how few will seek
 The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,
 Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid the
 weak.

And Thee! ah what of thee, thou lover of men? if truly
 A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to
 speak, 15
 In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,
 —Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—
 Ever ready to speak to us, if we will hearken duly,
 'Come, O come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden!'

15

ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION
 OF HENRY PURCELL

Performed at the Leeds Festival, 1895

V

I

LOVE to Love calleth,
 Love unto Love replieth:
 From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,
 Over the dawning and darkening lands
 Love cometh to Love. 5

To the pangs of desire;
 To the heart by courage and might
 Escaped from hell,
 From the torment of raging fire,
 From the sighs of the drowning main, 10
 From shipwreck of fear and pain,
 From the terror of night.

2

All mankind by Love shall be banded
 To combat Evil, the many-handed:
 For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth, 15
 The airy fancy he heedeth,
 He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,
 In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,
 The sovran sun that knows not the night;
 He loveth the beauty of earth, 20
 And the sweet birds' mirth;
 And out of his heart there falleth
 A melody-making river
 Of passion, that runneth ever
 To the ends of the earth and crieth, 25
 That yearneth and calleth;
 And Love from the heart of man
 To the heart of man replieth:
 On the wings of desire
 Love cometh to Love. 30

VIII

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
 Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,
 And that your names, remember'd day and night,
 Live on the lips of those who love you well.

(73)

Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Hell 5
Each with the special grace of your delight;
Ye are the world's creators, and by might
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names
Behind the sun ye climb 10
To light the glooms of Time
With deathless flames.

IX

OPEN for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire;
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire
Have planted the trees of life.—
The branches in beauty are spread, 5
Their fruit divine
To the nations is given for bread,
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams; 10
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,
The sea the trust of his streams:
And the rapture of woodland spring
Is stay'd in its flying;
And Death cannot sting 15
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine
Their aching beams in colours fine;
Pain and woe forgo their might.
After darkness thy leaping sight, 20
After dumbness thy dancing sound,

(74)

After fainting thy heavenly flight,
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:
O enter the garden of thy delight,
Thy solace is found.

25

16

A HYMN OF NATURE

Performed at the Gloucester Festival, 1898

VI

SWEET compassionate tears
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Tears of love, the showers wherewith
The eternal morn is bright:
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.
With tears my eyes are wet,
Tears not of vain regret,
Tears of no lost delight,
Dews of the heav'nly spheres
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Sweet compassionate tears.

5

10

From POEMS IN CLASSICAL
PROSODY

2

EPISTLE II

TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

. . . AND what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90
 If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,
 Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,
 Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd
 Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;
 Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers 95
 Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,
 Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;
 Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy
 Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy
 roamers;
 Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100
 Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;
 Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds;
 All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,
 Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers, 104
 Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading
 Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd
 Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning
 With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:
 All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine
 Centenarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance no
 Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffling ephemeral insect,
 Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,
 Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:

Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring, 114
 'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,
 MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute apparatus,
 ratus,

So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:
 What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?
 That the select creatures, who^vinherit earth's domination,
 Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120
 Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles
 Chanting a brief paeon for victory on the battlefield?

6

JOHANNES MILTON, Senex
Scazons

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,
 'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him
 praise,

Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
 Nor unto Him^vin suff'ring and sorrow turn me: 5
 Nay how coud I withdraw me from^vHis embracing?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,
 Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly
 His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose eternal;
 Therefore will I be bound to no studied system 10
 Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,
 Nor seek to please Him in any foolish invention,
 Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty
 And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy:

But I cherish my freedom in loving service, 15
 Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking
 Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness
 Confiding always on^vHis excellent greatness.

From OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS

3

NOEL: CHRISTMAS EVE, 1913

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

A FROSTY Christmas Eve , ' when the stars were shining
 Fared I forth alone , ' where westward falls the hill,
 And from many a village , ' in the water'd valley
 Distant music reach'd me , ' peals of bells aringing:
 The constellated sounds , ' ran sprinkling on earth's floor 5
 As the dark vault above , ' with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep , ' that first Christmas of all
 When the shepherds watching , ' by their folds ere the dawn
 Heard music in the fields , ' and marveling could not tell
 Whether it were angels , ' or the bright stars singing. 10

Now blessed be the tow'rs , ' that crown England so fair
 That stand up strong in prayer , ' unto God for our souls:
 Blessed be their founders , ' (said I) an' our country folk
 Who are ringing for Christ , ' in the belfries to-night
 With arms lifted to clutch , ' the rattling ropes that race 15
 Into the dark above , ' and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar , ' it was starry music
 Angels¹ song, comforting , ' as the comfort of Christ
 When he spake tenderly , ' to his sorrowful flock:
 The old words came to me , ' by the riches of time 20
 Mellow'd and transfigured , ' as I stood on the hill
 Hearn'ing in the aspect , ' of th' eternal silence.

IN DER FREMDE

AH! wild-hearted wand'rer
 far in the world away
 Restless nor knowest why
 only thou canst not stay
 And now turnest trembling 5
 hearing the wind to sigh:
 Twas thy lover calling
 whom thou didst leave forby.

So faint and yet so far
 so far and yet so fain— 10
 'Return belov'd to me'
 but thou must onward strain:
 Thy trembling is in vain
 as thy wand'ring shall be.
 What so well thou lovest 15
 thou nevermore shalt see.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISTRESS

WE watch'd the wintry moon
 Suffer her full eclipse
 Riding at night's high noon
 Beyond the earth's ellipse.

The conquering shadow quell'd 5
Her splendour in its robe:
And darkling we beheld
A dim and lurid globe;

Yet felt thereat no dread,
Nor waited we to see
The sullen dragon fled,
The heav'nly Queen go free.

So if my heart of pain
 One hour o'ershadow thine,
 I fear for thee no stain,
 Thou wilt come forth and shine: 15

And far my sorrowing shade
Will slip to empty space
Invisible, but made
Happier for that embrace. 20

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

September, 1917.

FOOL that I was: my heart was sore,
Yea sick for the myriad wounded men,
The maim'd in the war: I had grief for each one:
And I came in the gay September sun
To the open smile of Trafalgar Square; 5
Where many a lad with a limb fordone
Loll'd by the lion-guarded column
That holdeth Nelson statued thereon
Upright in the air.

The Parliament towers and the Abbey towers, 10
 The white Horseguards and grey Whitehall,
 He looketh on all,
 Past Somerset House and the river's bend
 To the pillar'd dome of St. Paul,
 That slumbers confessing God's solemn blessing 15
 On England's glory, to keep it ours—
 While children true her prowess renew
 And throng from the ends of the earth to defend
 Freedom and honour—till Earth shall end.

The gentle unjealous Shakespeare, I trow, 20
 In his country tomb of peaceful fame,
 Must feel exiled from life and glow
 If he think of this man with his warrior claim,
 Who looketh o'er London as if 'twere his own,
 As he standeth in stone, aloft and alone, 25
 Sailing the sky with one arm and one eye.

26

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun
 I have toil'd as I might
 I have thought as I would
 And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep
 My heart of content
 For friends that I met
 The way that I went.

(81)

I welcome fatigue
While frenzy and care
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air. 10

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds
And the sun on the hill. 15

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake ? 20

What good have I wrought ?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be. 25

From NEW VERSE

5

THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

THE infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,
 a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,
 and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool
 as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.

There is no beauty of love or peace, no joy nor mirth 5
 but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanced
 decketh his sovranty with immortalities.

Jewels of imagination hath he, purities
 and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God
 plenishing his temples with incense of music 10
 in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ:
 his Destiny is one with the eternal skies: he lieth
 a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth
 inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air
 that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious 15
 to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.

And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief
 sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he
 will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.
 Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn 20
 whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood!
 See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces
 how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic
 cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions!
 He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong 25
 till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find

his one nobility is but to suffer bravely
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart:
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing 30
basking this summer day under the stately limes
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment— 35
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy
of their return, Alas! for how few shall return! 40
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death!
And yet some shall return, and others with them come:
life will renew; tho' now none cometh here all day
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought, 45
and the aged gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours— 50
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels
punctilious subdivisions of infinity
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours
these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'er-
thrown— 55
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.

Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me 60

the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be
 and me as I am, as unreluctant in the stream
 I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn
 among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon
 in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook 65
 and for animal recreation of hot fatigue
 hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste
 the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh
 and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky
 supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass 70
 until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream
 as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there
 stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones
 blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current
 ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt 75
 into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

6

THE PSALM

WHILE Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees
 as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,
 the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears
 gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church
 stood to their evening psalm praising God together— 5
 and when it came to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air
 with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping
 through the responsive figures of a stately dance
 conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array 10
 in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,
 then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew;

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly
 fresh as in springtime when, four centuries ago,
 it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n 15
 chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots

standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines, 20
thou wast the unconquerable paeon of resolute men
who fell in coward massacre or with Freedom fled
from the palatial horror into far lands away,
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel 25
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold;
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them;
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song. 29
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew!

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery
burst in and searched but found nor living man nor maid
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not 35
but when it wound to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes
where unabsolved crime yet calleth plagues on France
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night 40
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.
O evermore great Psalm spring forth! spring forth anew!

7

COME SE QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains

climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:
 Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought
 and the infinite architecture of our darkness,
 the dim essence and being of our mortalities, 10
 is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
 whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays....

8

TO FRANCIS JAMMES

Tis April again in my garden, again the grey stone-wall
 Is pranked with yellow alyssum and lilac aubrey-cresses;
 Half-hidden the mavis caroleth in the tassely birchen
 tresses
 And awhile on the sunny air a cuckoo tuneth his call: 4
 Now cometh to mind a singer whom country joys enthral,
 Francis Jammes, so grippeth him Nature in her caresses
 She hath steep'd his throat in the honey'd air of her
 wildernesses
 With beauty that countervails the Lutetian therewithal.
 You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,
 Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly trousseau— 10
 The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques
 Rousseau,
 Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,
 Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson
 Crusoe,
 And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

9

MELANCHOLY

TWAS mid of the moon but the night was dark with rain,
 Drops lashed the pane, the wind howl'd under the door;

For me, my heart heard nought but the cannon-roar
 On fields of war, where Hell was raging amain:
 My heart was sore for the slain:— 5
 As when on an Autumn plain the storm lays low the wheat,
 So fell the flower of England, her golden grain,
 Her harvesting hope trodden under the feet
 Of Moloch, Woden and Thor,
 And the lovingkindness of Christ held in disdain. 10

My heart gave way to the strain, renouncing more & more;
 Its bloodstream fainted down to the slothful weary beat
 Of the age-long moment, that swelleth where ages meet,
 Marking time 'twixt dark Hereafter and Long-before;
 Which greet awhile and awhile, again to retreat; 15
 The Never-the-same repeating again and again,
 Completing itself in monotony incomplete,
 A wash of beauty and horror in shadows that fleet,
 Always the Never-the-same still to repeat,
 The devouring glide of a dream that keepeth no store. 20

Meseem'd I stood on the flats of a waveless shore,
 Where MELANCHOLY unrobed of her earthly weeds,
 Haunteth in naked beauty without stain;
 In reconcilment of Death, and Vanity of all needs;
 A melting of life in oblivion of all deeds; 25
 No other beauty nor passion nor love nor lore;
 No other goddess abideth for man to adore;
 All things remaining nowhere with nought to remain;
 The consummation of thought in nought to attain.

I had come myself to that ultimate Ocean-shore, 30
 Like Labourer Love when his life-day is o'er,
 Who home returning fatigued is fain to regain
 The house where he was unconsciously born of yore;
 Stumbling on the threshold he sinketh down on the floor;
 Half-hearteth a prayer as he lieth, and nothing heeds, 35
 If only he sleep and sleep and have rest for evermore.

THE TRAMPS

A SCHOOLBOY lay one night a-bed
 Under his window wide,
 When dusk is lovelier than day
 In the high summertime;

The jasmin neath the casement throng'd 5
 Its ivory stars abloom;
 With freaking peas and mignonette
 Their perfume fill'd the room:

Across the garden and beyond
 He look'd out on the skies, 10
 And through black elmen boughs afar
 Watch'd where the moon should rise:

A warm rain fed the thirsty earth,
 Drops patter'd from the eaves
 And from the tall trees as the shower 15
 Fell lisping on their leaves:

His heart was full, and pleasant thoughts
 Made music in his mind,
 Like separate songs of birds, that are
 By general joy combined. 20

It seem'd the hour had gathered up
 For every sense a bliss
 To crown the faith of all desire
 With one assuaging kiss ;

So that he fought with sleep to hold 25
 The rapture while he might,
 Lest it should sink and drowning die
 Into the blank of night;

Nor kenn'd it was no passing thing
 Nor ever should be pass'd 30
 But with him bide a joy to be
 As long as Life should last.

For though young thoughts be quite forgone,
 The pleasure of their dream
 Can mesh them in its living mood 35
 And draw them in the stream:

So I can fancy when I will
 That there I lie intent
 To hear the gentle whispering rain
 And drink the jasmin scent: 40

And then there sounds a distant tread
 Of men, that night who strode
 Along the highway step by step
 Approaching down the road,

A company of three or four 45
 That hastening home again
 After a Sabbath holiday
 Came talking in the rain:

Aloof from all my world and me
 They pass aneath the wall, 50
 Till voice and footstep die away
 And into silence fall:

Into the maze of my delight
 Those blind intruders walk;
 And ever I wonder who they be 55
 And of what things they talk.

LOW BAROMETER

THE south-wind strengthens to a gale,
 Across the moon the clouds fly fast,
 The house is smitten as with a flail,
 The chimney shudders to the blast.

On such a night, when Air has loosed 5
 Its guardian grasp on blood and brain,
 Old terrors then of god or ghost
 Creep from their caves to life again;

And Reason kens he herits in
 A haunted house. Tenants unknown 10
 Assert their squalid lease of sin
 With earlier title than his own.

Unbodied presences, the pack'd
 Pollution and remorse of Time,
 Slipp'd from oblivion reenact 15
 The horrors of unhoueld crime.

Some men would quell the thing with prayer
 Whose sightless footsteps pad the floor,
 Whose fearful trespass mounts the stair
 Or bursts the lock'd forbidden door. 20

Some have seen corpses long interr'd
 Escape from hallowing control,
 Pale chanel forms—nay ev'n have heard
 The shrilling of a troubled soul,

That wanders till the dawn hath cross'd 25
 The dolorous dark, or Earth hath wound
 Closer her storm-spredd cloke, and thrust
 The baleful phantoms underground.

From THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY*Book I*

INTRODUCTION

TWAS late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
 the path was narrowing and the company few,
 a glow of childlike wonder enthal'd me, as if my sense 10
 had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
 re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;
 with like surprise of joy as any man may know
 who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
 to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spredd 15
 mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged
 he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
 maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June
 bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come
 afar 20

on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced
 thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was
 of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made
 a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:
 But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness, 25
 the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent
 lawns,

I would have lain me down and long'd, as then I did,
 to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch
 the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,
 waving in a gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30
 each telling of its own incontinent happiness,
 each *type* a faultless essence of God's will, such gems

as magic master-minds in painting or music
threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;
things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd 35
in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play
sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now
stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous
mountainous snowbillyow up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280
Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,
Now scattered wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze
disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane
highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl
freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close overhead,
wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain 286
gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:
Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms
mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb
deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching
flood 290

rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend
 til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully
 clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils
 layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;
 and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space 295
 twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks
of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:
agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles 655
and promontories of the blue Ionian shore
—where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing
old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—
and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,
wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660

whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right
 knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land
 whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win
 heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue
 that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd, 665
 and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus
 motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took
 her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis
 of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670
 patterning heavily beauty, a pictured idea
 that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:
 for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told
 by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,
 nor is discernible in logic, but is itself 675
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,
 hid only from our eyes by skies that will not clear:
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,
 like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence, 685
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,

flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying 695
 scattered its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:
 nor ever again hath like bloom appeared among men.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness
 with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,
 men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
 crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame, 775
 in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
 wider than Alexander's and more enduring;
 since from his death it took its everlasting life.

HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple
 not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. ^780

They who understand not cannot forget, and they
 who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.

He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,
 and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,
 be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast: 785

But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed
 that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,
 thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;

While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX
 the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790

Book II

SELFHOOD

NAY, some I hav seen wil choose a beehive for their sign
 and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought, 201
 picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,

a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;
 Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour
 is spiritual attainment, individual worth, 205
 at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,
 to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;
 not such material ease as might be attain'd for all
 by cheap production and distribution of common needs,
 wer ah¹ life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210
 Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,
 man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them
 how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake
 the maximum of toil that is found tolerable
 upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance; 215
 and stay from procreation at thatt just number of men,
 hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth
 under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.
 And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,
 life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220
 and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,
 lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:
 then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,
 the system will be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy 225
 is thinking to distribute indivisibles,
 and make equality in things incommensurable:
 forged under such delusions, all Utopias
 are castles in the air or counsels of despair.

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May, 345
 when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,
 nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350

of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells* 355
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues
 surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

What is Beauty P saith my sufferings then.—I answer 840
 the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:
 Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
 the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
 wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
 And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty, 845
 awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
 in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence
 to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death, 955
 and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—
 we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,
 sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,
 horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,
 dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960
 yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;
 and memory is so complacent that we well may fear
 lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,
 regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,

hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain 965
the trenches, and re clothed the devastated lands.

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted
re'entering hath possessed her desolated halls;
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and
games, 970

their live abounding mirth reechoing from the walls,
where among antique monuments their brothers' names
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory 975
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh
find health in mutilation: as if our agony
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,
and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself 980
disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,
the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right
prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities, 985
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd
the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,
desperatly unrepentant to the 'scourge of God',
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990
punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor
stay;

for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness; 995
so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,
our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

Book III

BREED

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me
 in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing 355
 patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,
 as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow
 submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!
 They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now
 squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360
 a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro
 combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,
 blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,
 hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn, 365
 were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,
 a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,
 and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,
 swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,
 that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370
 clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,
 as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:
 and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,
 whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke 375
 the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach
 against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft
 toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,

and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry
 it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380
 that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield
 with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile
 the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints
 feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,
 Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—
 a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;
 tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660
 Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,
 Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon
 and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names
 of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes
 Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World 665
 far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home
 westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms
 of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,
 damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670
 whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be
 i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held
 place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line
 wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montelimar, Narbonne,
 Beziers, Castelnaudary, Beam and Carcassonne, 675
 and truly I could hav shared their fancy could I have hVd
 among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,
 and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will
 which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn
 that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. 680

Book IV

ETHICK

FOR social Ethick with its legalized virtue 265
 is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,
 a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,
 the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,
 beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.
 Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,
 whereon to found their creed in the true history
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto, 275
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
 who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280
 Chaldaean KISH and UR; while for all life today
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls 285
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290
 a city and folk undremt of in archaeology,
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust

the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold, 295
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,
 cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems
 of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;
 withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff 300
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today
 Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys
 gathered to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack
 in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand
 his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp, 305
 his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas
 the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride
 was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film
 of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds
 that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold, 310
 wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow
 great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,
 impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work
 whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name
 and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up 315
 thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,
 finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men
 who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,
 had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320
 til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep
 he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile
 in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;
 for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones
 of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones 325
 lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughtered at their post
 all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,
 in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp

the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her
 dirge,
 lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330
 two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience
 whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,
 the uniform decoration of their young service,
 mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed
 to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth 335
 to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
 congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun
 squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood
 his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 1270
 and all the towers and temples and mansions of men
 face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp
 naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes
 'tis given, if so they close not of fatigue, nor strain
 at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon 1275
 to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch
 where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space
 Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul
 in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280
 walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,
 discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams
 that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when
 the small bats, issued from their hangings, flitter o'erhead
 thru¹ the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro 1285
 hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;
 for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed
 may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright
 pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290
 with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake

methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream me-
thought

I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances 1295
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,
and I remember wondring the while I told it
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300
as once when she took thought to adjust theology,
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids
wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM, 1305
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.
Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dolben's *Poems*, 1911

I HAD not visited Eton for many years, when one day passing from the Fellows' Library into the Gallery I caught sight of the portrait of my school-friend Digby Dolben hanging just without the door among our most distinguished contemporaries. I was wholly arrested, and as I stood gazing on it, my companion asked me if I knew who it was. I was thinking that, beyond a few whom I could name, I must be almost the only person who would know. Far memories of my boyhood were crowding freshly upon me: he was standing again beside me in the eager promise of his youth; I could hear his voice; nothing of him was changed; while I, wrapt from him in a confused mist of time, was wondering what he would think, could he know that at this actual moment he would have been dead thirty years, and that his memory would be thus preserved and honoured in the beloved school, where his delicate spirit had been so strangely troubled.

This portrait-gallery of old Etonians is very select: pre-eminent distinction of birth or merit may win you a place there, or again official connexion with the school, which rightly loves to keep up an unbroken panorama of its teachers, and to vivify its annals with the faces and figures of the personalities who carried on its traditions. But how came Dolben there? It was because he was a poet,—that I knew;—and yet his poems were not known; they were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends: indeed such of his poems as could have come to the eyes of the authorities who sanctioned this memorial would not justify it. There was another reason; and the portrait bears it own credentials; for though you might not perhaps divine the

poet in it, you can see the saint, the soul rapt in contemplation, the habit of stainless life, of devotion, of enthusiasm for high ideals. Such a being must have stood out conspicuously among his fellows; the facts of his life would have been the ground of the faith in his genius; and when his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn. . . .

With such friends as Coles, Hankey, Lionel Muirhead, Bickersteth, and Manning, he was well off,—he could not 10 have had more congenial companions; but without them he would have been miserably isolated at Eton, for he had no common interests of any kind with the average school-boy, scarcely even the burning question of the quality of the food provided to develop our various potentialities. He seemed of a different species, among the little ruffians a saint, among sportive animals a distressful spirit. By what steps our intimacy at first grew I cannot now tell. As neither work nor play threw us together, I saw but little of him during the day: he never even in my last term accompanied me in my frequent 20 visits to St. George's Chapel, where it was my custom to go on short after-fours and sit in the north aisle or organ-loft, stealing out at the end of the anthem in time to be not very late for five o'clock school. Our meetings were therefore generally after lock-up, when, if we both had work to do, he would sometimes bring his to my room, but more often I would go uninvited to sit with him. His room looked over the Slough road, a small narrow room with the door at the end of one long side, and a window at the opposite diagonal corner. Against the wall facing the window stood his plain oaken 30 bureau, at which he would sit with his back to the window, while I occupied most of the rest of the room at right angles to him. The clearest picture that I have of him is thus seated, with his hands linked behind his head, tilting his chair backward as he deliberated his careful utterances: or

sometimes he would balance it on one leg, and steady himself by keeping the fingers of his outstretched arms in touch with the walls. There was moreover a hole in the boards of the floor, and if the chair-leg went through and precipitated him on to the carpet, that was a part of the performance and gave him a kind of satisfaction. The bureau-lid lay open before him as a desk, and in the top drawer on the right he kept his poems. His face whether grave or laughing was always full of thought: he would sometimes throw himself
10 backward as if to escape from the stress of it, or he would lean forward with meditative earnestness and appear to concentrate his attention on the tallow dip, which in its brazen saucer was the only illumination, feeding it anxiously with grease from the point of the snuffers, or snuffing it to the quick till he put it out. When he spoke it was with a gentle voice and slowly as if he pondered every word. . . .

Our instinctive attitudes towards poetry were very dissimilar, he regarded it from the emotional, and I from the
20 artistic side; and he was thus of a much intenser poetic temperament than I, for when he began to write poetry he would never have written on any subject that did not deeply move him, nor would he attend to poetry unless it expressed his own emotions; and I should say that he liked poetry on account of the power that it had of exciting his valued emotions, and he may perhaps have recognized it as the language of faith. What had led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the
30 material: it was an art which I hoped to learn. An instinctive lightness was essential, but, given that, I did not suppose that the poet's emotions were in any way better than mine, nor mine than another's: and, though I should not at that time have put it in these words, I think that Dolben imagined poetic form to be the naive outcome of peculiar

personal emotion; just as one imagines in nature the universal mind conquering matter by the urgency of life,—as he himself describes it in his 'Core':

Poetry, the hand that wrings
(Bruised albeit at the strings)
Music from the soul of things.

There is a point in art where these two ways merge and unite, but in apprenticeship they are opposite approaches....

No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins, and I am glad to have preserved the 10 letter which he then wrote, having met Dolben but once, for it must give some idea of the grief which his more intimate friends suffered at his death; some measure too of the shock to their hopes, since it records the full appreciation which his genius received from them during his life. This was, no doubt, chiefly due to the great charm of his personality, for his character was transparent; nor did the strange spontaneous beauty and significance, that invested the actions of his life, desert him in the circumstances of his death. It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental 20 perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of healthy bodily enjoyment: and premature as his end was, and the stroke of it unlocked for, and apparently sudden, yet his last poems show him waiting and expectant, and his last action had all the dignity and fitness of artistic preparation.

My story of the accidents of his life can give no picture of his charm; his perpetual humour and light merriment are what will least appear: though I may hope that the truthful- 30 ness of the story reveals more than I can myself perceive. As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dixon's *Poems*, 1909

IN one of the loveliest cities of the world—for almost all that may now hinder Oxford from holding her title is the work of the last fifty years—in a university whose antiquity and slumbering pre-eminence encourage her scholars to consider themselves the *elite* of the nation, there stood apart a company of enthusiastic spirits, in the flourish and flower of their youth, united in an ideal conspiracy to reform society by means of beauty. In the frankest friendship that man can know, when its ecstasy seems eternal, and time only
 10 an unlimited opportunity for agreeable endeavour, before experience has sobered enterprise or thought has troubled faith, these young men devoted the intention and hope of their lives to the most congenial task that they could imagine. Their lightheartedness never questioned their wisdom, and to their self-confidence all appeared as easy as the prospect was pleasant. They inherited the devotion that had built their schools and temples, and regarding the beauty that had been handed down to their enjoyment as peculiarly their own, since they alone worthily loved and
 20 adored it, they aspired to enrol themselves in the same consecration and rekindle a torpid generation with the fire that burned in their souls. Almost every one of the group was intending to take Holy Orders, and looked to pursue his vocation within the Ministry of the Church. We are warned that Morris was in those days an aristocratical High Churchman, and Burne-Jones tells us of himself that he knew nothing of Painting; but it was the liberty of their ideal, the vagueness of their aspiration, the rebellion against convention, the boyish contempt for authority and discipline that animated
 30 their mutual affection and made the charm of their life....

I have already commemorated my visit in a poem which

begins, 'Man hath with man on earth no holier bond'. The sentiment there is from life, but the incidents and scene are fictitious. The facts were that, after staying with my friend Mandell Creighton at Embleton, I proposed to explore the Roman Wall on foot from Newcastle to Carlisle, and conclude my holiday under the poet's roof. The summer of that year was wet in the North, and the persistent rain delaying my start made me relinquish the western end of my ramble, so it was by train that I arrived one afternoon, and first saw Dixon awaiting me on the platform of How Mill station. 10 Emotion graven the scene on my memory: a tallish, elderly figure, its liteness lost in a slight, scholarly stoop which gave to the shoulders an appearance of heaviness, wearing unimpeachable black cloth negligently, and a low-crowned clerical hat banded with twisted silk. His attitude and gait as he walked on the platform were those of a man who, through abstraction or indifference, is but half aware of his surroundings, and his attention to the train as he gazed along the carriages to discover me had that sort of awkwardness that comes from the body not expressing the intention 20 of the mind. His face, I saw, was dark and solemn, and as he drew near I could see that the full lips gave it a tender expression, for the beard did not hide the mouth. Nothing further could be read, only the old mystery and melancholy of the earth, and that under the heavy black brows his eyes did their angelic service to the soul without distraction. His hearty welcome was in a voice that startled me with its sonority and depth; but in its convincing sincerity there was nothing expansive or avenant. He then became so silent that I half suspected him of common tactics, and was slow to 30 interpret his silence as mere courtesy, which it was; indeed, he would never speak unless he were assured that he was not preventing another, a habit which made a singularly untrue disguise of his eager, ingenuous temper. However, as we approached the village it was his call to talk, and he set me

wondering by his anxiety that I should admire the church. It was a dreary, modern stone building with round-headed windows and a wide slate roof; the shrunken degradation of a tower stuck on to one end and the after-concession of a brick chancel at the other. I have a letter from him, dated 1895, where, in narrating a visit to Carlisle from Warkworth, he writes—

I also went to Hayton, and as I walked from the station I thought of my first sight of you there. . . . The church is
10 externally the same, but it has a clock now; internally it is translated from the consistent ugliness and Presbyterian arrangement of sittings which you saw, into a sort of music-hall or sacred concert-room; nothing of the old preserved, and entirely devoid of interest.

It is as if he remembered how he had praised the church on that day. I suppose he loved it as the home of his ministry, and perhaps from the link which it made with the Wesleyanism of his family. He would, too, have preferred the simplicity and spiritual ease of making the best of
20 poor circumstances to the labour of ineffectively exploiting luxurious opportunities. There is surely not one of our meanest churches that has not been sanctified by loving service, but few can have known such poetical idealization as Dixon lavished on Hayton. . . .

Some characters give the idea of a personality that has attained to certain qualities; in others we seem to see qualities composing a character. Without assuming the validity of this distinction one may use it as a real description. Dixon was of the latter type. His imagination, since
30 that is an inborn gift beyond conscious control, would, of course, have this effect, and seem a visitation from without, and he merely the happy dispenser of it. His insight, clear judgement, and memory were gifts of a similar kind; but even in his humility he did not appear like a man who had put it on, but as an incarnation of the quality, whose essence

was distilled or reflected in him. And so with his good temper, humour, patience, tenderness, and sympathy, which made up his social aspect, all seemed to flow from the deeper perennial sources, uncontaminated and inexhaustible. This great ingenuous being went about among men almost unrecognized, though influencing nearly every one with whom he came in contact. As he respected every man, he won respect from all, and any lengthened intercourse with him awoke the best affinities of his associates, who became infected with his grace. One might see around him the 10 common Christian virtues propagating themselves in a natural state like healthy plants that, without a gardener's care, flourish and multiply from year to year. He was truly revered, and where he bestowed his affection the gift was so unmeasured that the mere flattery of it must have been injurious, were it not that spiritual love has no excess, but is always beneficent. It was more than any one could repay, and, however I have rejoiced in it, the remembrance, now that he is taken away, shames me with the thought of my unworthiness.

20

HENRY BRADLEY

From a Memoir, 1926

WHATEVER outward honour can be shown to the dead was paid to Henry Bradley when his mortal spoils were borne into Magdalen College Chapel for the requiem before burial. It seemed as if Alma Mater in her respect for this stranger had ordered the ceremonies with a greater care and solemnity than for her own sons. It was a gloomy day: the sky was overcast and dark; and within the choir, lined with ranks of grave academic figures, the long rows of candles brightened the noon with their ritual illumination. The music was a consummate rendering of the severe English dirge which, 30 discarding all vain sentiment in a dignity that will not relax

even before the face of death, has rivalled for two hundred years whatsoever else has been written to interpret man's emotion in that hour. All was in true keeping with Bradley's spirit, and the crowd of his assembled friends who moved out to the subdued strains of the Dead March, following his coffin to the grave, felt that they bade him a worthy farewell, and while the flowers were scattering could rejoice with him for the peaceful end of his long life of toil. . . .

He was one of those who having neither inclination nor
10 temptation to accept the world as it stands, are early driven to live to themselves, and by instinctive self-protection preserve that simplicity and purity of mind which is the foundation of all that is good whether in thought or conduct. In that contemplative detachment from conventional valuations, human sensibility is heightened both in delicacy and emotion by a profounder perception of the ideal significance of Appearance, and the feelings are transported into a spiritual world where accidents of Being are but ephemeral shows. Bradley lived in that ideal world with assured faith
20 in the promises of man's desire, and in a life after death where they would be fulfilled. Though no man could better understand the objections with which material science would forbid such hopes,—and he was presumably no better able than another to picture any sort of future existence which should be sufficiently like our present state to continue our mortal sympathies, or, if it should continue them, could continue to satisfy them—yet this Agnosticism did not destroy the faith in which Bradley lived and died.

And difficult as it is with our sorrowful experience to face
30 with any comfort the prospect of a general resurrection, yet there is none of us who would not desire to meet his old friends again, and cannot picture the joy of it. I myself would risk a good deal on the chance of meeting Henry Bradley: indeed all my memories of him are so pleasant that I can almost imagine the delight of his company enduring *in eternum*.

JOHN KEATS

From *Jahn Keats A Critical Essay*, 1895, revised 1916

IN these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats¹ poetry have been incidentally brought out; there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and that is the very seal of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time as- 10
tonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it; the difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree that Shakespeare does; indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subjects that his poems afford illustrations; but these are, as far as they go, not 20
only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field. Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these—

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.—*Macbeth*.
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.—*Hamlet*.
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.—*Tempest*.

Examples from Keats are—

The journey homeward to habitual self.
 Solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven.
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams.

In most of Keats' phrases of this sort there is a quality which makes them unlike Shakespeare; and if we should put into one group all those which are absolutely satisfactory, and then make a second group of those which are
 10 not so simply convincing, we should find in these last that the un-Shakespearian quality was more declared, and came out as something fanciful, or rather too vaguely or venturesomely suggestive; the whole phrase displaying its poetry rather than its meaning, and being in consequence less apt and masterly. This second group would contain many of the most admired lines of Keats, and these are very characteristic of him. Such are—

Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks,

20 and—

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.

The *Revision of Hyperion* shows that Keats himself was dissatisfied with his 'senators'; and one can see the reason without condemning the passage or approving its omission. Finally, there would be left a third group of such-like phrases which plainly miss the mark.

Closely allied to these imaginative phrases, and perhaps more characteristic of Keats and peculiar to him, are the short vivid pictures which may be called his masterpieces
 30 of word-painting, in which with a few words he contrives completely to finish a picture which is often of vast size. Good examples of this are the sestet of the *Leander* sonnet; the last four lines of the *Chapman's Homer*; the passage

beginning 'Golden his hair' in *Hyperion* ii. 371; and, to quote one from *Endymion*—

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks.

For its wealth in such rare strokes of descriptive imagination Keats' poetry must always take the very first rank; and it is his imaginative quality of phrase which sets him more than any other poet of his time in creative antagonism to the eighteenth-century writers; for it was not only foreign 10 to their style, but incomprehensible and repugnant to their pseudo-classic taste, which preferred a 'reasonable propriety of thought', such as Hume found to be lacking in Shakespeare, to the shadowy powers of imagination, however sublime.

The limitation that we found of Keats' faculty when compared with Shakespeare—which, if it may be ascribed wholly to his youth, amply justifies the sentiment of the opening lines of this essay—leads us on naturally to another of his chief characteristics, and that is his close relationship 20 with common Nature: he is for ever drawing his imagery from common things, which are for the first time represented as beautiful: and again in this we see his opposition to the eighteenth-century writers, who mainly contented themselves with conventional commonplaces for their natural imagery; whereas Keats discovers in the most usual objects either beauty or sources of delight or comfort, or sometimes even of imaginative horror, which are all new; and here his originality seems inexhaustible, and his wide poetic sympathies the strongest. Nor does he confine himself to matters 3° of which he could have had much experience; he makes Nature the object of his imaginative faculty—Nature apart from man, or related to man as an enchantress to a dreamer. This is, I suppose, what he means when, comparing himself with Byron, he says, 'There is this great difference

between us: he describes what he sees,—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task: now see the immense difference,' Here he shows a vast wealth which makes his poems a mine of pleasure. *Endymion* is crowded to excess with a variety of these images, and as they came up in his mind in an endless stream to illustrate his ideas, the ideas sometimes fare rather badly; for though they were no doubt generally held firm in his own mind, they are yet drowned by the images of their objective presentation; until these
 10 themselves at last lose even their own virtue, and fatigue the reader, who feels like a sight-seer in a gallery overcrowded with pictures, which by degrees he ceases to regard with attention.

And in this devotion to natural beauty lies, I believe, one true reason of Keats' failure in the delineation of human passion. The only passion delineated by Keats is the imaginative love of Nature, and human love is regarded by him as a part of this, and his lover is happy merely because admitted into communion with new forms of natural beauty.
 20 This, which appeared in theory in the explanation of the allegory of *Endymion*, is practically exposed in the second stanza of the *Ode to Melancholy*, where, among the objects on which a sensitive mind is recommended to indulge its melancholy fit, the anger of his mistress is enumerated with roses, peonies, and rainbows, as a beautiful phenomenon, plainly without respect to its cause, meaning, or effect. And so in *Lamia*—

He took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new,

30 and

Fine was the mitigated fury.

How different is the parallel passage of Shakespeare, which at once occurs to one—

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!

This is not artistic admiration, but a lover's entire devotion.

In the criticism of *Endymion* we found a want of taste in Keats' idea of woman; we have now to add a charge of lack of true insight into human passion. If this was wholly due to the absence of awakening experience, it is at least unfortunate that in *Lamia*, in which from its date we might have expected something mature, he should have chosen so low a type. Though perhaps suggested by the original of his story, it was not necessary to it; and even if he preferred to have his snake-woman bad, there was every reason why Lycius¹ passion should have been of a higher type. How unworthy it is is shown in the description of their meeting and in the following sentiment—

But too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.

This love is an association for mutual pleasure, the end of which is satiety and revulsion, and it is, I repeat, at least unfortunate that Keats, after he had known love, should, in his first attempt to delineate it, have been satisfied with so vulgar a type. The ideal passion in *Isabella* is insipid, and even in *The Eve of St. Agnes* the passion, as expressed in stanzas xxxv-xxxix, is at best of a conventional type, and has to have a good deal read into it by the light of the story.

But Keats¹ doctrine of beauty, which might be defended if it was spiritualized, which it never is by him, may often be reconciled with true feeling by the allowance which is due to his objective method; concerning this, as illustrations have been given, I shall say no more here except to repeat that Keats' imagery probably always followed, if it did not always clearly picture, some train of ideas; and when he says in the Ode *To Fanny*

My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual. yet divine to me;—
 Divine, I say! What sea-bird o'er the sea
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes ?

these words should not be taken as a disavowal of meaning in 'those abstractions which were his only life', but as an
 10 apology for immaturity, and they must be interpreted in the light of his high idea of philosophy. Keats was conscious, like Virgil, of a double inclination. He said of himself, April 1818: 'I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy. Were I calculated for the former, I should be glad; but as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter,' This would be a strange variant of

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae

if we need suppose it to be anything more than an utterance
 20 of that contrarious mood so common to introspection; it is nevertheless evidence that Keats was unlikely to have depreciated the intellectual element of his art: but the intellectual element is always in league with emotion, and would have been, I imagine, considered by him as worthless in poetry without such mixture. In the *Epistle to Reynolds* even the unpleasantness of the consideration of what we call the struggle for existence would, simply presented, have been flat and commonplace; but he shows it as a 'horrid mood'¹, by which he is haunted, and uses great
 30 skill and a wealth of contrasted beauty in introducing it under this enhanced aspect, 'wreathing a flowery band spite of the unhealthy ways made for his searching'; and in calling his Muse unintellectual, he was no doubt uttering his reiterated impatience for more knowledge, the expression of which recurs so often in his poems and letters,

that it is needless to quote any one, and which rises to a sort of consummation in the *Revision of Hyperion*, where it seems as if he had imagined himself to have at length attained to an insight of the mystery.

There is less opposition, it seems to me, between Keats' true instinct for ideal philosophy and his luxurious poetry (which seems rather its young expression), than between these on the one hand and his practical human qualities, as revealed by his letters, on the other. The bond of all was an unbroken and unflagging earnestness, which is so utterly 10 unconscious and unobservant of itself as to be almost unmatched. It is always present in his poetry both for good and ill, in the spontaneous and felt quality of his epithets, and the absence of any barrier even, it would sometimes seem, of consideration or judgement between his mind and his pen. Whether this earnestness is the account of his failure in his purely comic freaks I do not know, but it may certainly account for his want of humour, for which, in spite of some traces in his letters, it does not appear to have left any room. The best of the letters are serious and full of 20 good matter, a few are quite foolish, and a great number are written in a high-spirited jocular vein, which seems to be carelessly assumed for the double purpose of amusing his correspondent and relaxing his own mind. The chief charm in all of them is their unalloyed sincerity: there is nothing between the pen and the mind, not always even an effort or desire to write what should be worth reading: it is enough that it is he that writes, and his brother or friend that will read.

In spite of this earnestness and philosophy, it is certainly 30 true that Keats' mind was of a luxurious habit; and it must have been partly due to this temperament that he showed so little severity towards himself in the castigation of his poems, though that was, as I said before, chiefly caused by the prolific activity of his imagination, which was always

providing him with fresh material to work on. In this respect he is above all poets an example of what is meant by inspiration: the mood which all artists require, covet, and find most rare was the common mood with him; and I should say that, being amply supplied with this, what as an artist he most lacked was self-restraint and self-castigation,—which was indeed foreign to his luxurious temperament, unselfish and devoted to his art as he was,—the presence of which was most needful to watch, choose, and reject the 10 images which crowded on him as he thought or wrote.

EMILY BRONTE

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 January 1911

THE transcendent genius of Emily Bronte is now well recognized; *Wuthering Heights* has taken its place among the unique creations of literature. But what of the poetess? There is no question of her poetic faculties. The wide intellectual grasp, the unsurpassed power of vivid representation, the almost isolated originality, the concentrated fire of native passion are all undisputed; and yet, with one or two exceptions, her poems—which are her most personal revelation—have made no impression at all. The editor of this 20 collection almost apologizes for them. 'No one today', he says, 'will deny them a certain bibliographical interest'; while Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in his introductory essay writes, 'It is not claimed for a moment that the intrinsic merits of the verses are of a special kind,' Emily herself wrote:—

Dreams have encircled me.

.

But now when I had hoped to sing,
My fingers strike a tuneless string;
And still the burden of the strain—
I strive no more, 'tis all in vain.

And the casual reader of this book will, likely enough, look into a few pages and then close it with indifference or disappointment. What is the impediment? Why, when such a genius brought her supreme gifts to bear on the task, and loved it, why did she produce something which is at first sight cold and worthless? We do not forget that Matthew Arnold said of one of her poems that it 'shook my soul', nor that she herself never wrote anything so unlike poetry as the poem in which he praised her; and we know that stanzas chosen from her poems might exhibit her as a poet of the 10 first order—still, the general effect is what it is, and the reasons may be perceived and stated.

First of all, Emily Bronte is very direct, and eschews ornament. Indeed, it seems probable that what artistic defect her instinct had was indifference to artistic beauty, and that therefore the beauty in her work is that which comes of bare truth and insight rather than of aesthetic handling and ornament. Secondly, she never mastered the technique of poetry, and took what she had chiefly from poets like Cowper. Her biographers, it is true, assert that 20 she was musical; but proficiency in her day, and at a girls' boarding school, implies little; and it would be difficult to find in her writings any evidence of the true musical faculty. In her poems she is certainly not delicately conscious of the music either of her rhythm or of her rhyme; she is rather indifferent, for she will consent to break the rhythm at any obstacle, without respect to its effect; and in her treatment of rhyme she is sometimes quite childish; where the rhymes are not common they are often awkward or bad, and are allowed to nullify themselves by unconsidered assonances. 30 It is pitiful to see her working with 'anguish' and 'languish' and such-like commonplaces, not knowing how tarnished the ornaments are, or else revolting from them to do something worse. And for this reason many of her poems would show to greater advantage in a translation. Incompetence

in technique is a ready source of obscurity or awkwardness of grammar; and indifference to aesthetic beauty allows the diction to fall; nor is Emily incapable of stumbling into the mannerisms of the school with which she was most familiar. The reader may remember the poem beginning—

On a sunny brae alone I lay
 One summer afternoon :
 It was the marriage-time of May
 With her young lover June.

10 and how after the characteristic lines—

But her father smiled on the fairest child
 He ever held in his arms.

she continues—

In sooth, I did not know
 Why , ' had brought a clouded eye
 To greet the general glow.

And in the following quotation see how a profound thought, poetically illuminated by a masterly image, is damaged by prosaic diction, while the grammar leaves the application
 20 of the image ambiguous; for 'all' and 'each one' may suggest persons, not the thoughts as intended:—

And yet there is—or seems at least to be—
 A general scheme of thought that colours all;
 So though each one be different, all agree
 In the same melancholy shade-like pall;
 Even as the shadows look the same to me,
 Though cast, I know, from many a varying wall
 In this vast city—hut and temple sharing
 In the same light, and the same darkness wearing.

30 Emily has not, therefore, a perfected style. We must not expect either full artistic technique or sustained height of diction; she works without them: and this plainness may deceive; for it is a genius that is speaking, and in her speech

the common words have regained their essential and primal significance, and, being the simplest, are therefore for her the best means of direct verbal touch with felt realities. As a French critic, whose book on the Brontës is just published—M. Dimnet—says of the poems with true perspicacity:—'Avec des mots simples, Emily atteint a chaque instant l'effet rare . . . cette Me extraordinaire a garde la puissance de regarder face a face la realite pres de laquelle nous passons sans la voir.' It is just because we are so familiarized by language with ideas that the simple presentation of reality 10 in that language does not stir our emotion, nor carry us beyond the mere recognition of the accustomed idea. And thus Arthur Symonds wrote of her, using the same word 'rare', 'A rare and strong beauty comes into the bare outlines, quickening them with splendour'. Indeed, a near acquaintance with her poems—which with few exceptions are the plainest revelation that she can make of herself—brings one to give the same value to her commonest expressions that one gives to the most consummate artistic diction. Never was there a poet who so much requires to be kept 20 apart from others, away from conventional contagion; and when one has got accustomed to her voice it is wonderful what a range it covers, and how various are her successes.

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

From The Times Literary Supplement, 29 February 1912

IT is true in all art that when a great master appears he so exhausts the material at his disposal as to make it impossible for any succeeding artist to be original, unless he can either find new material or invent some new method of handling the old. In painting and music this is almost demonstrable to the uninitiated; in poetry the law may not be so strict, but it still holds; and anyone may see that serious rhyme 30

is now exhausted in English verse, or that Milton's blank verse practically ended as an original form with Milton. There are abundant signs that English syllabic verse has long been in the stage of artistic exhaustion of form which follows great artistic achievement. Now as far as regards the verse-form Wordsworth was apparently unconscious of this predicament. It never occurred to him that he was working with blunted tools. His idea was to purify the diction and revivify English poetry by putting a new content into the
10 old verse-forms; and two reasons may be given for this conservatism. First, that in his time an artificial school of poetry had separated itself *oft* from the older tradition, so that any return to the older style appeared to be a freshness; and, secondly, he was a part of that unaccountable flood of inspiration which in Keats and Shelley and in a few of Coleridge's lyrics transcended in some vital qualities whatever had been done before, and actually wrought miracles of original beauty within the old forms; but these bond-breaking efforts, we should say, more than completed the
20 exhaustion, while the tedious quality of much of their work shows under what hampering conditions the genius of these poets attained excellence. Keats speaks very plainly; he says, for instance, that he relinquished his *Hyperion* because he could not get away from Milton. . . .

Mr. Kipling's genius is very varied, and though he has written much verse he has won his reputation chiefly by his prose tales. Now we shall concern ourselves only with his verse, and only with the style and diction of that. With Mr. Kipling, then, nothing in diction is common or unclean;
30 nor can we draw any strict line to separate the diction of such poems as *The Barrack-room Ballads*, which are professedly and wholly in the low dialect of the characters, from those other poems where it is not so prominent nor so evidently in place. A good many poems, it is true, are entirely free from it; but these rather show the author's

liberty to take up with whatever manner he may choose; and their conventionalities of rhyme and diction, from which not even the obsolete is rejected, are not to be reckoned among his inventions. Now as vehicle for this kind of diction (which need not be more nearly described) he chooses the Elizabethan ballad stanza, the nursery rhyme, the popular song, and whatever other accentual lilt he may devise of a similar character, and with these material resources (of diction and metre) he will treat almost any subject. As an example to exhibit the result we will take *The Looking Glass*, 10 in *Rewards and Fairies*. In this masterly poem the motive is heroic and almost tragic. Great Queen Bess is portrayed with the vain woman's vanity and the tyrant's bad conscience, and with a vast pride, sufficient to drown them both; and the picture is done with such force that many readers will have the four stanzas by heart when they have read them twice. Now observe the diction; the first line runs thus:—

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was middling old.

This is of course founded on 20

The Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey,

and the key of the emotion is thus deliberately pitched at the level of the nonsensical nursery rhyme. Observe, too, the expression 'middling old'. This sets the Queen down among the homeliest of her subjects; but in so doing it may humanize and provoke common sympathy. Later on Lord Leicester's ghost comes 'scratching and singing' at the door, which degrades the ghost; and yet, in spite of those things, the whole has an irresistible force, so that our dislike of the incongruities, if we feel any, is overpowered; and this force, 30 though it may not be due to the apparent obstacles, may seem the greater for its victory over them. That 'was' (= woz) is rhymed in the refrain with 'lass' is a convention

no doubt congenial to the nursery rhyme, and we only mention it because it is not otherwise reconcilable with Mr. Kipling's method, which at its best refuses the foolish inversions and bad rhymes that lower the standard of so many of Wordsworth's scholastic stanzas, because they are conventions of another school, retained for obvious convenience—mere resources of imperfect execution. (Criticism of this poem cannot omit notice of the phrase 'her sins were on her head', which must be reckoned as a slip in artistic accomplishment, because, since the Queen is looking at herself in the mirror, one is too conscious of her actual head to escape visualizing at once some sort of bundle on the top of it. This by the way.)

Now suppose that we had never heard the rhyme of the Queen and her bread and honey, and did not know English well enough to understand the true values of 'middling' and 'scratching', would the poem affect us less or more powerfully than it does with this knowledge? What would it be without the queer quality that it actually has? Or again, is our pleasure attendant on our admiration rather than our admiration on our pleasure? It is easier to ask such questions than to answer them; we may be content with the surer ground that Kipling is Kipling, and that without Kipling we should never have had the poem; and we are glad to have got it. But this almost implies that the writer must have an idiosyncrasy allied to his style. Here is another example. In the very beautiful story of *The Brushwood Boy* every one will remember that the discovery is made by the device of the girl being overheard singing the song in which she narrates her lifelong dream. It is essential to the story that the song should be pathetic and worthy. She was a musician, and had composed both the music and the words. Now one line in her refrain (or did her creator write it for her?) is this:—

We must go back with Policeman Day

As an apparition in the dream we did not quarrel with Policeman Day, for the dream is irresponsible; but in the song he is out of place, because the song is conscious art and responsible, and he is comic. An artist composing an emotional song would never have allowed the 'common country policeman' to imperil its ideality. Lack of humour is not among Mr. Kipling's faults; and since he can make fun of the policeman motif when he chooses, he must have a callosity somewhere on his artistic feelers, for else he would never have admitted the policeman into his song. We are 10 disposed to think that he may have infected himself, and that—to return to our comparison—he is in this respect just like Wordsworth, first, in deliberately choosing a particular kind of direct diction, and, secondly, in pushing it too far. If we should examine more closely into this matter we should be exceeding our limitations, and find ourselves asking, for instance, whether in the magnificent *Soldier and Sailor too* the quality of the swagger is wholly due to the poetic method with which it is so entirely agreeable.

Mr. Kipling has written some blank verse, and in *The 20 Sacrifice of Er-Heb* we find him adopting a form of it which was specialized some fifty years ago. Though this may not indicate a considered artistic preference, it is noteworthy that the form is simple and direct, and in so far congenial to him; but its constraints are artificial and monotonous, and its rhythms poor and short; in which respects it is unlike what we might have expected of him; and we have noticed no trace of originality in his treatment of it, although he can take pains with nothing without in some way distinguishing it. He has so true a feeling for the value 30 of words, and for the right cadences of idiomatic speech, and so vast a vocabulary, that his example is generally useful to a generation whose cultured speech-rhythms are so slovenly and uncertain. This is especially true of his more accentual verse, and it is on this account to be regretted

that out of his abundance he is sometimes tempted to overload his lines with the weight either of sound or of meaning, or of both at once; for this is bad example. In this respect he is to be contrasted with Wordsworth, for Wordsworth offends notoriously by the other extreme, though when his copious and throttling neck-cloth is loosened a fine diction flows fully, as in his description of Trinity College Chapel:—

Where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
10 The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Mr. Kipling's method seems to shut him out from such heights. We do not remember anything of this quality in his poems.

WORD-BOOKS

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 4 August 1910

IT would seem as if in pure literature the classics of a dead language must have some advantage over those of a living language. First, because it must be an advantage to have the meaning of the words fixed, which is in some measure accomplished by shutting them out of currency; and
20 secondly, because any idealization of speech must be easier where the common terms are not familiarized by daily use and vulgarized by ordinary associations. It is for this latter reason that the *Arabian Nights*, for instance, is much better reading to us in an Italian translation than in our own English; and the completer enchantment which children find is greatly due to the comparative freshness of all language to them. For the same reason is it that any romantic tale will appear more romantic in an antique or foreign tongue than in our everyday speech. But as our
30 common speech has some associations which art is glad to be rid of, there are others the absence of which is as surely

a loss. For whether or not there be any greater nobility in our main conceptions, when we compare ourselves with the ancients, yet none would deny that the immense stores of our historic vocabulary gain in recognition and significance by being a still living tradition in unbroken continuity of actual growth. Shades of meaning more delicate than could ever be invented, intricate poetic allusion, with consequent command of emotion and adaptability to the most subtle varieties of feeling, glints of colour from all climes and times—these are qualities which give distinction to much 10 of the best of our modern literature. There is truly no kind of beauty more liable to mishandling, no artistic effect more uncertain and fugitive, than that produced by these half-tones, as we may call them; yet today in Europe they are the legitimate and natural wealth of our inheritance, and it would be pedantry to depreciate it. And if against this plasticity and subtlety of living speech we would balance the severer advantage which a dead language may be thought to possess in the simple definition of its terms—which would seem at first view indispensable to secure a 20 broad style, we shall find that there is some delusion. For, however the dictionaries may define the meaning of a Greek word, we cannot avoid interpreting it by aid of our modern feelings and associations. No sentiment is safe from the contamination of our shifted ideas; nor is the conscious exclusion of any conception or emotion the same as the ignorance of it. Or suppose we are contented to have stripped an old term of all adventitious and later association, it is left a naked nondescript, which we are unable to reclothe in the living nuances of emotion with which its contemporary 30 thought invested it. Scientific analysis is always thus intruding to stultify our satisfaction; and the reasoning is irreproachable that since, though a man were to spend his whole life in the task, it were impossible for him to think with the same thoughts as St. Paul or Plato thought with, it is

therefore out of his power to understand a single sentence of their writings exactly as they intended it.

We have not, however, to look far for consolation; we can quickly reassure ourselves that it is just as true that man is always the same as that he is always changing. It is demonstrable, no doubt, that absolute identity of understanding is out of our reach in our interpretations of ancient thought; but for that very reason we need not worry ourselves too punctiliously, nor be ashamed to admit that there
 10 is always something of the nature of delusion in our love of old literature. And in fact it is truer that man is always the same than that he is never the same. The universal mysterious force and unfathomably deep instincts which constitute all that can properly be termed life are but superficially affected by the conscious developments of our intellect; and it is exactly those fundamental things which are the proper subject-matter of all art. For in so far as human art is instinctive (as it seems originally to be), it is preposterous to suppose that its subject-matter can lie at all
 20 among our purely intellectual developments; while in so far as in cultivated societies it has become conscious of its aims and methods, it will still seem that the intellect is better able to deal artistically with what is outside it than with itself; for in this latter case it must become self-conscious, critical, and scientific.

Admitting, then, not only that it is impossible to exclude the constant flux of our thought from affecting our literary art, but that this flux is in itself desirable and a prolific source of beauty, we may also see that in dealing with the
 30 unchangeable things the highest literature, especially the best poetry, is wonderfully free from the great obstacle that the indefiniteness of its material would seem to oppose to it.

*Nee sine te qmcquam dias in luminis oras
 ExorituY, neque fit laetum neque amabile qmcquam.*

• • • • •

O, were it but my life
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

• • • • •
O world, O life, O time,
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before.

Almost any examples are convincing. The appeal is from emotion to emotion; and criticism of poetry is only wrestling with itself when it attempts analysis on a merely intellectual basis. We should not expect such a method to yield anything 10 more satisfactory than the analyses of the emotions themselves, as we find them in psychological treatises. Art is thus self-contained and stable; and science not only dislikes art for this very quality of permanence, but has actually been often led to deny the natural superiority and predominance of the primal instincts over the intellectual conceptions which she is always fabricating on the top of them.

Words are the material of literary art, and words are ideas; and what those ideas are is determined by the sense in which words have been used by those whose genius has 20 ruled the language. A dictionary is a book which collects authoritative uses; and it at once reveals that every word has several uses or meanings which it needs logic to discriminate. It is a pity that Lamb, in his *Detached Thoughts on Books*, never told us what he thought of Johnson's Dictionary; whether he held it worthy to rank with his beloved Burton and Browne, or whether he would have set it between Gibbon and the backgammon-board. He was himself careful of words, and knew how tenderly they should be used; and one could believe that he might have cherished a 30 fantastic devotion towards a book so full of extracts. But had he really ever made friends with the Dictionary, he would have told us. With his peculiar personal idiosyncrasy, his individual irresponsible taste, he would, likely enough,

have felt some prudish scruple at the idea of getting any knowledge of his craft at second-hand; and he could never have stomached the pedantry of some of Johnson's authorities. Of Robert Browning it is recorded that when he determined to devote himself to poetry, he read the whole of Johnson's Dictionary through, just as Gibbon, to qualify himself for his great historical task, studied the itineraries of the Roman Empire; and the Doctor's two original folios with their uncurtailed quotations are no bad reading; they are a
 10 magnificent failure to accomplish an impossible feat—that is, to compile a dictionary such as a literary artist would love to possess.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

From An Address to the Swindon Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, October 26, 1916

PHILOSOPHERS have from time to time drawn up ideal schemes of government based on the aim of greatest happiness, Utopias, as they are called; but the word Utopia has come to mean a state of society presumably desirable, but only feasible if men were different from what they really are. What is usually depicted is a small State working harmoniously on a democratic or social basis; and in small States
 20 the social basis can be worked, where home-life is simple, and external complications generally absent. Small village communities in a sort of patriarchal simplicity meet together to confer, the members are all personally known to one another, and they elect for their head and representative a man whom they have known personally all their lives. These representatives are gathered into wider councils, and in this way the common interests are easily and honestly concentrated. But in larger States these essential simplicities do not exist—and the small numbers are essential; for, as
 30 the numbers increase the separate members necessarily lose

their mutual personal relationship; and, as they cannot know their representative personally, they elect some plausible fellow, the man who flatters them most, or promises them the most immediate advantages. Such leaders are typically men of some oratorical power, who profess politics for the love of self-importance, or for private gain; and when such men meet in a national parliament there is neither honesty nor wisdom in their counsels.

Let me remind you that Athens—that famous example of successful democracy—was not a real democracy. It was 10 served by a slave population: and that, you know, avoids the main difficulty of allowing the vote of the majority to rule—because the slave-workers had no vote. We have modern examples. The United States is an example of an honest and well-considered attempt at democracy on a large scale. Its isolation from the Old World and the wide territories that were at its disposal allowed it an exceptional term of prosperity; but its present condition is not such as to convert me. And we can look nearer home: our own democracy: our Parliament in those years before the war broke 20 out: it was a spectacle to justify all the patriotic fear that reasonable people felt. I will spare you the picture. Enough to say that the Prussian statesmen, who were observing us with jealous attention, thought that it was impossible that we could pull ourselves together; so they set off on the war-path. And they are still exhibiting to us the very superior organization of an autocracy.

But the unexpected happened. The British democracy slowly, slowly, slowly awoke to the situation. I confess that I did not expect this; much as I hoped for it. I did not think 30 that the working-men of England would perceive that the strife was between democracy and militarism; that, if Prussia won, then the hope of democracy was crushed for ever. Ever is hardly too big a word. The situation now is that you have gone in determined to win; and it lies with

you to be faithful to the end, and to see perhaps more clearly than you yet do, that you must sacrifice all else, all present considerations, to the one purpose of a victory that shall deliver the earth from terrorism, tyranny, and slavery.

Now you who are met here today not only know all this, but you have also come to be convinced that an uneducated democracy can never be stable. Education is necessary for strength and stability, and some of you at least have a
 10 wholesome appetite for the requisite food. And since you cannot get your education without leisure, and cannot have leisure without some easement of the conditions of labour, and this reform involves legislation, you claim such legislation. If our democracy is to be stable, such legislation is imperative. Here I am with you all along: and it is of this education that I shall speak—not of politics nor of war. . . .

What then is education ?

To educate means to draw out, and if we are to seek to draw out the human mind we must first have some clear
 20 notion as to what the mind is like, of what sort those faculties are which are both the object and means of education.

Suppose some one should tell us that education is the development and exercise of human Reason.

Now Reason is the intellectual faculty, which distinguishes man from the brutes, and, so far as we know, man is the only form of life in which conscious Reason exists—for the rudiments of it which we find in some animals are negligible. It is the intellectual quality which has conquered material
 30 obstacles and raised man from a state of savagery to his present condition. It judges itself to be the unique agent of all his knowledge and attainment, and being not only his highest mental power but the consciousness of it, he is perhaps almost incapable of imagining anything higher. Thus Aristotle, in his definition of God as the eternal mind and

first cause of all, supposes the Mind of God, though incomparably more perfect, to be of the same nature as the Reason of man. I could not myself assent to this assumption. But let that pass. We may readily admit that Reason is man's highest intellectual faculty. Let us ask Reason to tell us something about the other faculties of the mind.

We must remember that Reason is the only tool that we have to work with, and that a tool cannot work on itself. Temper and sharpen it as you may, your chisel cannot cut itself. We should therefore not expect too much. 10

Now, first of all, our Reason is distinguished by being a conscious process: for example, I know at this moment what I am driving at, and you consciously take cognizance of my statements; and we are agreed that animals cannot do this sort of thing. But though they lack our logical Reason, we see that they have some other kind of mental activity whereby they are able to act rightly, with an ingenuity that often baffles our conscious skill, and a method which escapes our Reason to unravel. One or two examples will suffice. In the insect world it is not uncommon to find 20 that an insect which has but a few weeks of life will lay hundreds of eggs—of the nature and purpose of which it can have absolutely no reasonable knowledge—yet it will spend the chief part of its short life in the careful disposal of these eggs in the manner best calculated to ensure their survival, and thereby the continuation of the species—concerning all which again it can know nothing; nor could all our Reason inform it. Again, I have read of the horse, that on the wide American prairies a horse-dealer will often make a circuit of a hundred miles or more, visiting the farms and 30 settlements, and buying at each what beasts he may. If, in any part of his round, a horse escapes from his drove, it will return in a straight line to its native homestead. It does not retrace its steps, but takes a bee-line, as it is called, from the spot where it escapes to the spot whence it was taken.

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It does not matter which you may choose: they are all alike in principle. They are often called 'the marvels of Instinct', by which is implied that we wonder at them, because we cannot understand them. But if they are the rule, and they are the rule in animal behaviour, there must be something wrong in our way of thinking if we find ourselves wondering at them as strange. I do not forbid myself to marvel: I mean that a theory of mind is self-condemned if it has to treat as
10 an exception what it finds to be a rule.

It is plain that there is a sort of mind which is not our logical Reason, but which performs purposive actions without conscience of their purpose; or if it have conscience of a purpose (as we may suppose the homing horse to have), yet it accomplishes that purpose without knowing how.

Whether mankind when in a savage state ever possessed very much of this sort of instinctive faculty we cannot tell. It is certain that we now perform by the aid of logical Reason and deliberation most of those purposive acts which
20 animals perform without reasoning; but we have too much in common with the lower animals to suppose that we can be lacking in the whole sphere of that unconscious faculty so universally possessed by them. And it has never been questioned that we share with them the great fundamental Instincts (self-preservation, and so on)—these are present in children and adults. What I wish to make clear is that beside these universal primal Instincts (which are the motive power of all animal life) we have a vast unconscious Mind that is always active, and a much vaster personal experience
30 than our conscious Reason can pretend to.

A simple consideration will explain what I mean. If I walk down the street with my mind busily engaged and absorbed in some remote train of thought, I observe nothing (though automatically I guide my steps none the worse for that); but afterwards, when I am aroused from my abstrac-

tion, I may remember to have seen certain persons or things on my way. The longer my abstraction continues, the less I recall: but that I consciously remember anything which I did not consciously observe at the time, shows that experience was unconsciously recorded; and much that I never remember, and never shall remember, was likewise recorded. It is even probable, with some of us at least, that when we peruse a column of the newspaper, our eyes may receive impressions from the neighbouring columns, and convey to the mind, through the brain, information concerning wholly 10 unrelated matters; although the Conscience (I mean the conscious Reason) takes no note of them. They enter the mind unperceived; and this sort of unconscious experience is always going on.

We have no conscious memory of this unconscious experience. Any experience which we observed and were conscious of at the time, we are able, more or less, to recall at will and reason upon. But our will has no power of recalling those other items of personal knowledge that have been unconsciously absorbed. But they are not for that dead or 20 inactive. They are absorbed and organized. So that a man holds, hidden away from his memory, a vaster wealth of knowledge than he is aware of, or can draw on at pleasure.

One might map out the strata of the mind in a sort of spatial diagram of three layers, the deepest being the inherited animal Instincts; the uppermost the conscious Intellect or Reason; and between these two would lie the region of unconscious personal knowledge acquired during life; the greater part of which is entirely unconscious, while the upper part of it would be mixed up with the memories 30 of conscious]experience. This dim middle place is the magazine of our common sense; it is the garden where our ideals grow, and its spontaneous fruiting is genius.

We must not be deceived by the simplicity of such a diagram. Its use is to give definition to the vague terms that

we are driven to use in talking of the functions of the Mind. And I think it is of no use to talk of the Mind and of its education unless we recognize how large and trustworthy a portion of it lies in this intermediate state between the animal Instincts and the conscious Reason.

Orthodox philosophy dislikes, and even repudiates, the term subconscious Mind, or unconscious Mind. It urges that the word Mind presupposes self-consciousness. But think what really happens, and how it is unconsciously and not
10 consciously that each man's Mind grows to be what it is. A man is born with certain feelings and likings—and it is in this respect that men most differ—and as they grow up in what is called their environment, their bias and special predispositions unconsciously select and organize their experiences to feed and develop their special liking; each man differently, as we may see in our children, how one child with a musical turn will observe sounds, another with a mechanical turn will be delighted by taking a clock to
20 pieces, while a born painter will be unhappy without a box of colours. These inborn feelings and likings are—together with the great primal Instincts and Passions—the motive power of all our conduct, and they lie like an engine-room hidden away in the basement. And moral philosophers explain that the Reason is set over them to regulate them: its chief function in this respect being to observe and govern. All will agree: for example, Love and Hatred are motive inborn forces; Reason approves Love but disapproves of Hatred as a working principle, and keeps it under.

Art and Morals were not invented by Reason. They come
30 to life and are nourished in this middle section. Every man is born with a 'desire of Beauty' or of 'Good' in some degree and in some kind, and he instinctively feeds that desire or liking on what is agreeable to it. He selects. Consider any object presented to the senses, how various and almost infinite its qualities are, and how impossible it is for any

man, even the most trained observer, to perceive them all. Each will first perceive those qualities that are most nearly related to him and that appeal to his liking. And in this way he feeds his own strength, and develops his native faculty. And this unconsciously growing self gradually comes to observe itself, becomes conscious, and takes Reason for its guide.

The purpose of education is to draw out or educate this inborn love of Beauty. And if any of you doubt whether there is such a thing, I do not think that it matters what you 10 call it, if you admit (what you cannot deny) that you have a desire, and that that desire is for something 'better' or 'good'. That desire—whatever you may call it—the Greeks called the Desire of Beauty or the Desire of Good; and you will find it difficult to get behind that, or to substitute anything for it. It is what has brought you here this afternoon; it is what is making me talk to you. And it is the basis of our Religion. . . .

Vulgarity—that is our national blemish and sin. And if I had begun my talk with it I should not have got very far 20 yet. It is blindness to Values; it is spiritual death. It pervades all classes: but the middle classes are the most deeply infected, and they stand as a dense barrier between you and the higher education. It is seen outwardly in their manner of life, their petty class distinctions, and uneasy pretensions to be just a little better off than they are; the waste of their money in aping art and luxury, by which they only make themselves ridiculous and more uncomfortable; their incapacity to see that simplicity, honesty, and thrift are fair and good, while their pitiful ambitions and restless affecta- 30 tions are contemptible. I hope that *all pretension* is as shocking to you as it must be familiar. May God grant that our present sorrows and trials and the searching of our hearts may force on us a spiritual distinction of the true Values of life, and that the stubborn necessities of thrift may compel

us to see the sin of self-indulgence and the graces of simplicity. Remember how it is because we have set our Rights so much above our Duties that we are now harrowed by this awful excess of Duty; and that it is at the feet of the idol of our old self-seeking that our dearest are devotedly sacrificing their young lives.

POETIC DICTION

From *The Forum*, May 1923

POETIC Diction is a wide subject, and this paper will deal with only one little corner of it; it will examine the dislike which poets of today exhibit towards the traditional forms: 10 and since even this, to be thorough, would involve a completer description of the traditional forms than a short discourse allows of, we must be contented to outline the situation with a few typical illustrations.

The revolt against the old diction is a reaction which in its general attitude is rational: and it is in line with the reaction of 'The Lake School' of Poetry, familiar to all students in Wordsworth's statement, and Coleridge's criticism and correction of that statement in his 'Biographia Literaria'. Both movements alike protest against all 20 archaisms of vocabulary and grammar and what are called literary forms, and plead for the simple terms and direct forms of common speech.

As my method is to be by illustration, I will begin with an extreme example, Milton's *Lycidas*, a poem which, though Dr. Johnson's common-sense condemned it without reserve, has in spite of the extravagance of its conventions grown in favour, and firmly holds its claim to be one of the most beautiful of the great masterpieces of English verse.

Only a few days ago I received a new German translation 30 of it, in the preface whereto it is stated to be 'Ein Gipfel,

vielleicht der Gipfel aller schäferlichen, aller Renaissance-lyrik, unerreicht die Schönheit u. s. w.¹

The undisguised conventionality of *Lycidas* is sufficiently obvious in its properties. Muses, Fauns, Satyrs and Nymphs, with Druids and River-gods associate with St. Peter and the Pope, and in their company a new River-god, Camus, invented on a bogus etymology: but the remoteness from common-sense which offended Dr. Johnson can be fully exposed by quoting a single line: the poet bewailing the death of a college friend by shipwreck in the Irish Channel, 10 concludes the section of his lament over the unburied body in these words:

And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

We have to face the fact that this strange and meaningless invocation does not sound frigid or foolish in the poem. Rather it is evident that it was the very strength of the poet's feeling that has forced the transmutation of his memories and of the practical aspects of life into a dreamy passionate flux, where all is so heightened and inspired that we do not wonder to find embedded therein the clear 20 prophecy of a conspicuous historical event: though the whole of literature can scarcely show any comparable example.

This is poetic magic. Certainly it was not to common-sense that Milton turned for consolation; and a work of sheer beauty was the only worthy offering that Poetry could make.

After reading *Lycidas* let us see how it is with Shelley's *Adonais*. Though as a whole this poem cannot compete with Milton, yet it contains lines and passages of unsurpassable beauty, both of diction and verse, and it is worthy to 30 be compared; and since (especially towards the end) it is in closer contact with our natural expression of feeling, it appeals more strongly to some tastes. Well, the properties are as literary as in Milton. We have the Muses and Urania:

Milton's 'where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep ?' becomes 'where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay ?' and in company with Urania we have Albion and Cain and Apollo and the Wandering Jew and living persons, all magisterially blended by Shelley's usual phantasmagoria. And in one respect he is even more conventional or pedantic than Milton, because he borrows more directly from his Greek models, and with marvellous Englishing makes Hellenic beauties his own. Moreover he works Bion's
 10 machinery: Aphrodite bewailing Adonis becomes Urania bewailing Keats—the difference in the circumstances needing all the resources of his free symbolism to adapt it. We must not, however, be led away from the question of mere diction, and I mentioned this point merely to show that Shelley's diction is more conventional than Milton's and sometimes when it least appears to be so, because many of its beauties are more directly borrowed. He has, indeed, no one line to match Milton's call to the dolphins, but many which common-sense would rate as equally extravagant.

20 Thirdly, let us look at Arnold's *Thyrsis*, a Victorian poem in direct line with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, consciously affiliated with them and plainly inspired by Milton. I remember many years ago how Ingram By water, when we were both young, contended against me that *Thyrsis* was as good a poem as *Lycidas*: I do not know how far he was in earnest.

Now in Arnold's poem he and his friend are Corydon and Thyrsis, they have their shepherd's pipes, and the Hellenic properties are practically the same as Milton's and Shelley's; but they are frankly set in a modern English landscape and
 30 introduced naturally as actual figures of the mental world wherein the two friends had lived and loved. Their mutual sympathy in this symbolism makes it possible almost to confound Enna with Cumnor, and that is skilfully accomplished, but amid the strong details of native colour and homely affections we have an Ionian folk-tale of obscure

antiquity, the relevancy of which is hardly cleared up by a long note. Since there is no trace of Christian symbolism in the poem, the Properties are simpler than Milton's or Shelley's, and the Diction may be styled Wordsworthian; it would hardly have offended Dr. Johnson: it is plainly not intended to be in what Arnold has called 'the grand style', and he was never in danger of attempting Shelley's heavenward flights, which he thought ineffectual. Thus we may say that, compared with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, Arnold's *Thyrsis* is in simplified diction.

10

What then is the effect of such a diction? In judging this we must remember that Arnold is not Milton, and I am probably myself too much biased in favour of the greater poet: but if a 'rational' diction is any decided poetic advantage, then that advantage should appear, whereas the impression that *Thyrsis* makes on me when I compare it with *Lycidas* is that it lacks in passion, as if it were a handling of emotions rather than the compelling utterance of them, and so far as that must have the effect of insincerity it is the last thing that we should expect from the exclusion of con- 20
ventions. It does not carry the same conviction of distress that *Lycidas* does; neither the friendship nor the sorrow seems so profound, and the whole poem, though it is agreeable reading, leaves one cold at the end. This might in great part be accounted for by its fanciful argument and by the poet's mentality, nor can I pretend to decide how much is due to the diction: the example must remain a negative one; but in illustration, I will quote a passage from *Thyrsis* where Arnold follows Milton in moralizing on the 'vanity' of the sincerest human effort in the search for ideal Truth; 30
he has

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
Tis not in the world's market bought and sold!
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Milton has

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of Noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;
 But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 10 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind *Fury* with th' abhorred shears,
 And slits the thinspun life, 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears. . . .

and so on, and this in spite of old *Phoebus* and the bad grammatical inversion in the first line.

It is difficult to dissociate the quality of Diction from two other matters, namely, Properties and Keeping. Properties is a term borrowed from the stage. The mixture of Greek and Christian types in *Lycidas* and *Adonais* is a good
 20 example of Properties. The term Keeping is taken from Painting and has no convenient synonym, but it may be explained as the harmonizing of the artistic medium, and since Diction is the chief means in the harmonizing of Properties, it would seem that any restriction or limitation of the Diction must tend to limit the Properties, since without artistic keeping their absurdities would be exposed.

Dr. Johnson's common-sense might contend that all Properties were absurd if their absurdity were merely disguised by Keeping. But in aesthetic no Property is absurd if it is
 30 in Keeping. This does not decide what Properties should be used. Different Properties are indispensable for different imaginative effects. Good Keeping is a first essential in all good writing, and especially in poetry. Perhaps it is evident here that the poorer the Properties are, the less call will they make on diction for their keeping, although the simplest

Properties are on their own plane no less exigent: and again' the higher the poet's command of diction, the wider may be the field of his Properties. Also, and this is a very practical point, if a writer with no command of imaginative diction should use such Properties as are difficult of harmonization, he will discredit both the Properties and the Diction.

This is as it should be. In all fields of Art the imitators are far more numerous than the artists, and they will copy the externals, in poetry the Versification and the Diction, which in their hands become futile. Criticism does not assist art 10 by exposing such incompetencies: nor can it be praised for philanthropic intention, because dabbling in the arts is one of the most harmless pleasures of life: there may be more to be said for it than for dabbling in criticism as I am doing here.

THE ART OF POETRY

From *The Necessity of Poetry, An Address given to the Tredegar and District Co-operative Society, Nov. 22, 1917*

I AM here to talk about Poetry, and you little think how surprised you ought to be. I have refused many invitations to lecture on Poetry: but most of us nowadays are doing what we most dislike, and it has come about that I have myself chosen the subject.

Let me explain why an artist is unwilling to discourse on 20 his own art. The fact is that in every art it is only the formal side which can be formulated; and that is not what people congregate to hear about, when they call for Art-lectures. The grammar of any art is dry and unintelligible to the layman: it seems unrelated to the magic of its delight. In Poetry it is even deemed beneath the dignity of a poet to betray any consciousness of such detail. But, if you bid the artist leave this dull and solid ground to expatiate on Beauty, you invite him on to a field where speculations

appear to him fanciful and unsound: and the venture cannot rashly be indulged in.

However here I am; and I hope to give such a theoretic view of the fundamental basis of Poetry as may interest us both, and justify the claim of Poetry to that high place which is and always has been granted to it by almost universal consent in all countries and languages.

In a little house which I rented for a month of last summer a volume of Macaulay's *Essays* stood on the shelves—
 10 an inscription in it recorded how it had been won by its owner in a whist-drive—and I took it up, and read the greater part of it. I fear that I risk losing either your esteem or your complete confidence, when I say that this classical work was almost new to me. But, if I had never read much in it before, I now made up for past indolence or prejudice; and I was taken aback when I found Macaulay praising Shelley in these terms:

'We doubt (he says) whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree some of the highest qualities of the greatest
 20 ancient masters. The words Bard and Inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art but an inspiration.'

It is this magic of language, which won the wide-ranging but somewhat uncongenial mind of Macaulay, that I intend to explore; and I shall avoid philosophical terms and questionable assumptions.

Words the medium of Poetry

30 Poetry is an Art,—that is, it is one of the Fine Arts,—and, using the word in this recognized sense, all Art is the expression of Ideas in some sensuous material or medium. And the Ideas, in taking material forms of beauty, make a direct appeal to the emotions through the senses.

Thus the material or medium, as it is called, of Sculpture is stone^or marble, and so on; the medium of Painting is colours; the medium of Music is sound; and the medium of Poetry is words.

NOW While it" would be manifestly preposterous to begin the study of Sculpture by an examination of stones, you will admit that in Painting a knowledge of Colours is less remote, and is even a necessary equipment of the artist: and you will further grant that in Music the study of the Sounds—i.e. the notes of the scale and their mutual rela- 10 tions—is an indispensable preliminary. So that in these three Arts, if they are taken in this order, Sculpture, Painting, Music, we see the medium in its relation to the Art rising step by step in significance: and I think it is evident that in Poetry the importance of the material is even greater than it is in Music; and the reason is very plain.

All Art, we said, was the expression of Ideas in a sensuous medium. Now Words, the medium of Poetry, actually are Ideas; whereas neither Stone nor Colour nor mere Sound can be called Ideas, though they seem in this order to make 20 a gradual approach towards them.

I hope this may reconcile you to the method of inquiring into Poetry by the examination of Words. I propose to consider Words, first as Ideas, secondly as Vocal Sounds.

Words as Ideas

Whether or no the first step of human language was to recognize certain vocal sounds as signs or symbols of objects perceived by the senses, we must now in our perfected speech admit the nouns or names of objects to be the simplest elements. 30

But the name of an object must have a different meaning to different persons, according as they know more or less about it; and it must convey a different emotion as they are differently affected towards it. And since knowledge

concerning any one thing is really of an infinite character,—for complete knowledge of any one thing would include its relations to everything else, which is more knowledge than any man may possess—these words, which appear so simple as mere names of objects, are, each one of them, of wide capacity of signification; and pass from being names of definite objects to being names of various and indefinite ideas or conceptions of things.

It is impossible to prevent a name from being the name
10 of an idea; and (unless we make the doubtful exception of certain abstract ideas) it is impossible to keep the idea always similar and definite.

It is really a matter for wonder how rational intercourse through the medium of language can be so complete and easy as it is, when the ideas conveyed by the words are so different in each person. And yet in common talk and the ordinary business of life we find little inconvenience from the discrepancy of our ideas, and usually disregard it. A man who wants to go from London to Manchester, and is
20 informed that his train will leave Euston at 10 a.m., and arrive at Manchester about 3 p.m., has no occasion to trouble himself because his informant's idea of Manchester is totally dissimilar to his own. We need not labour this point. All our practical life is carried on in this way, and whether a man speak or write, we say that he speaks or writes well, according as his meaning is plain, his ideas clear, and his language unambiguous. And this current speech, which is a most elaborate instrument,—for it has symbols not only for all the objects of the senses, but for actions and emotions, and
30 the subtlest notions of our intellect, and no less for their relations to each other—is accommodated by delicate self-adjustment to the practical needs of life, and has been further elaborated by Reason to become the sufficient apparatus for all our business, politics, science, history, and law, and whatever else is concerned with human affairs;

and through printing it has become the indestructible store-house of human knowledge. So that one may well inquire what more could be desired or expected of it; and it is common to find that practical folk call Poetry' tosh', and maintain that if you have anything to say, it is best to say it as simply as possible.

Sir Isaac Newton, of blessed memory, wrote a book on the Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms: and the first words of his introduction are these:

'The Greek Antiquities are full of Poetical fictions, because 10
the Greeks wrote nothing in prose before the conquest of Asia by Cyrus the Persian. Then Pherecydes Scyrius and Cadmus Milesius introduced the writing in prose,'

Now whatever appreciation or respect Newton may have had for the *Iliad*, he is complaining that it was of no use to him as a scientific historian, and I imagine him asking why those old poets could not tell us plainly what they really knew, instead of inventing 'irrelevant false fancies' about the Gods, and things that never were?

The opposition which he implies between Poetry and 20
Prose cannot be absolutely insisted on: but we may take him to witness that Poetry has a field of its own, which is repudiated by Science as well as by Common-sense. The distinction is very real. The claim of prose is obviously high, and I could say more to exalt it: what I have to say will come later.

Insufficiency of Philosophy and Science

And here I would remind you of something which amid the routine and practical concerns of life we are apt to lose sight of,—and that is the incomplete and insufficient charac- 30
ter of our best knowledge. I do not mean those individual differences that I have spoken of, nor that limitation which each one of us must feel if we compare ourselves with the

wisest: but,—take the wisest man on earth, or all the wisest that have ever lived, the one thing that they agree about is that the human intellect is incapable of solving the profounder problems of life, with which we are faced when we begin to think.

I am saying nothing derogatory of science and philosophy, nor need one be in any sense a sceptic in affirming that our highest efforts of intellect do not inform us even on that primary interest of all, namely for what purpose
10 mankind exists on the earth, nor whether there be any such purpose. The so-called Laws of Nature, which we imagine to rule us, are but the latest improvements of our own most satisfactory guesses concerning the physical order of the universe: and when we ask how it is that our material bodies are able to be conscious of themselves, and to think, not only have we no answer, but we cannot imagine any *kind* of possible explanation.

Man does not know, and maybe never will know what he is. Let me quote the utterance of the good-hearted atheist
20 in Anatole France's recent novel. He speaks frankly and typically as a convinced scientist, thus:

'Nature, my only mistress and my sole teacher, has never given me any sign that she would have me think the life of a man to be of any value: on the contrary she informs me by all manner of indications that it is of no account whatever. The one final cause of all living creatures seems to be that they should be the food of other living creatures, who are themselves destined to the same end. Murder has her sanction. . . . And yet I must confess that there is something rebellious in my
30 instinct; for I do not like to see blood flow: and that is a weakness from which all my philosophy has never been able to wean me.'

He cannot reconcile his better human feelings with his Epicurean science.

How does the brag of scientific learning, the vaunt of its

scrupulous well-informed prose look now ? Does it not seem that in trying to make our ideas definite we are confining ourselves to a method which refuses to deal with the mysteries of life ? and is driven to that refusal not because it can deny the mysteries, but only because it can make nothing of them ? Are we not building up our language into something of a prison house ? And is it not just because they have never done this, that untaught men are often more contented and at home in the world, far more like the ideal 'wise man' than the best instructed men of science ?

10

THE ORDER OF WORDS

From The Necessity of Poetry

HOWEVER spontaneously the perfect poem may spring up in the poet's mind, like a melody in the mind of Mozart, the conditions to be fulfilled—over and above the elaboration of the metre—are

First, the right words: secondly, those words in the right order: thirdly, the agreeable sound of them in sequence.

And these three Tightnesses are the factors of style, that supreme gift which immortalizes the utterance of such different minds as Blaise Pascal and Robert Burns: for the laws are very similar in prose and in poetry. I shall pass 20 them over, because such a brief account of them as we should have time for would be dull.¹

¹ If any one should be curious to see how dull, he may read to the end of this note, which I append for the sake of completeness.

First as to the choice of words. What words are the right words in poetic diction ? Plainly their sound must be one ruling consideration—as may be proved by the ill effect of extreme dissonance, yet their chief power lies either in their absolute correctness, or in what is called their suggestiveness, and this, which is the greater poetic beauty, lurks commonly in the fringes of the concepts, as was explained when we spoke of words as ideas. When correctness and

On order of words

But I think I may venture a short account of order. What is meant by a right *ORDER of words* ? The principle is important

suggestiveness coincide their power can be so great that quality of sound is sometimes outclassed; and harshness is unheeded. This we willingly concede to the imperfection of language, which is not so constituted as to combine all excellencies, whence the lesser must give way. Our English words especially have been shamefully and shabbily degraded, and are daily worsening, so as to be often very ill-adapted for poetic use. And the swarming homophones need special treatment.

As to the sound of words in sequence. Pure Euphony, i.e. the agreeable sound of a sequence of syllables, is as difficult a subject as rhythm: and it is like rhythm in this, that the ultimate judge is the expert ear, which depends on a natural gift: and again, as in rhythm, there are certain conditions which almost all men would agree to call pleasant, and others which they would deem unpleasant, but there is no universal principle that can be adduced to check the vagaries of taste or false fancy, since what theories have been proposed are themselves examples of false fancy. Either, for instance, that the vowels correspond respectively to the primary colours, and should be grouped as those colours should be. or that euphony is actually a musical melody made by the inherent pitch of the vowels, the sequences of which must be determined exactly as if we were composing a musical air of those inherent notes. The great indefinable complication is that this euphony, especially in poetry, is fused with the meaning, and this fusion of sound and sense is the magic of the greatest poetry. But even where the poet's success is most conspicuous and convincing, we are often quite unable to determine on what it actually depends it is known only by its effects.

In English we find, strangely enough, that the eye comes meddling in with the business of the ear, and causes delusion. Our words are so commonly spelt so differently from their pronunciation that few writers know what sounds they are dictating; the word is a visible thing, 'pleasant to the eye and desirable to make one wise', it is perhaps of ancient and high descent, with a heroic history, it comes 'trailing clouds of glory': but that it has been phonetically degraded into an unworthy or ugly sound is overlooked.

I might give as an example the word *Dcedal* in the [passage already quoted] from Shelley The original Greek word had a pleasant sound and a rich familiar signification: in English it has no meaning for most men, and is pronounced *deedle* (like *needle*), and if it were so spelt I

and very simple, but in application so subtle that it is seldom recognized. You may easily come at it by imagining the talk of savages in a language that has no grammar. In such a language a speaker could not make himself understood except by putting his words in a certain order. If, for instance, he wished to tell you that he went from one place to another, from *A* to *B*, and had no prepositions like our *to* and *'row*, he would have to put *A* first and *B* second; that is, he would have to set his nouns in the order in which he wished the idea of his movement to enter your mind. And 10 this principle remains the primary law of order in good speech, whether prose or poetry: the words should be in the order of the ideas; and poetry differs from prose only in its more aesthetic and subtler conception of the proper sequence, and in the greater artifices that it is able to employ, and the greater difficulties that it has to overcome.

There are all manner of exceptions to this rule; but the most apparent inconsistencies are manifestly dependent on the primary value of the rule: for instance, an idea in an unexpected position in the sentence is often most effective: 20 but the surprise is due to its being either grammatically or conceptually out of order.

The commonest cause of ineffective expression in bad writers of verse is that they choose their grammar so as to set the words that they wish to use in the order most convenient to the metre. The born writer or speaker is the man whose ideas flow spontaneously in a simple grammar which

doubt if any poet would use it. Shakespeare might have made fun of it in Peter Quince's play, and have set *diddle* alongside of *Phibbus* and *Ninny* for the use of that immortal actor, bully Bottom.

Euphony must also include the purely musical effects of a metre, when this is in delicate agreement with the mood of the poem: it so enhances the emotional effect of a harmonious sequence of words as to overrule common proprieties of order, and the melody will require that the sonorous words shall respect its intention and fall into the positions that it prescribes.

preserves the right order of ideas. A fixed poetic metre must of course increase the difficulty of right order, and thus heighten the beauty and triumph and rarity of full success.

RELATION OF POETRY TO MORALS AND RELIGION

From The Necessity of Poetry

THE view of Poetry which I have presented to you suggests two enormous questions, namely, the relation of Poetry to Morals and to Religion: for it is evident that the basis of all three must be the same, that is, they all spring from those universal primary emotions of Man's Spirit, which lead us naturally towards Beauty and Truth. Indeed the difficulty
10 here is not in relating Poetry with Morals and Religion, but in discriminating between them: for we might almost contend that Morals is that part of Poetry which deals with conduct, and Religion that part of it which deals with the idea of God.

Morals

As for Morals. If you read the moral philosophers much you will find a very dry corpus of irreconcilable doctrines, which bear no comparison with what the poets can give you. The Sermon on the Mount you will recognize to be an
20 inspired moral poem, which is rejected by the philosophers.

On this vast subject I shall offer only one practical remark, which is this:

You will often hear it asserted, as an enlightened doctrine, that Art has nothing to do with Morality: Art, you will be assured, is non-moral.

Now this is true only in so far as we take Morals to mean the conventional code of conduct recognized by the society to which we happen to belong. Art, it is true, has little to

do with that. But pure Ethics is man's moral beauty, and can no more be dissociated from Art than any other kind of beauty, and, being man's highest beauty, it has the very first claim to recognition.

Morals can be excluded from Art only by the school which maintains that Art is nothing but competent *Expression*, and that, since what I call ugly can be as competently expressed as what I call beautiful, Art can make no distinction. It must be admitted that no strict line of distinction can be drawn, and that the average man's conception of 10 beauty is absurdly limited and conventional; also that as much admirable skill may be used in the expression of crime as of virtue and so on: the portrait of a man suffering from confluent small-pox might thus be a masterpiece; but if theorists assert that all these things are equally beautiful because equally capable of competent expression, and that such expression (which expression after all produces different impressions on different minds) makes all things equally beautiful,—to this I reply that we live in a free country where every one may think and say what he pleases. 20

The championship of ugliness seems to be but a part of the general denial of the ordinary distinctions between good and bad of all kinds. The argument is this. It is pointed out that the distinction which is commonly drawn between beautiful and ugly or good and bad is merely due to mankind seeing all things from a human point of view. But this is the only possible point of view for mankind to take: his pretended universal standpoint is really only one particular attitude of his mind: for it is inconceivable that the 'universality' which he imagines can be a complete universality, 30 or anything like it: and if it was so, then the object of introducing it into art could only be to make art inhuman; which is absurd.

At least that is how the case appears to me; but this summary way of disposing of it neglects many side issues,

on which agreement is not to be expected nor wholly to be desired.

Religion

As to the relation of Poetry to Religion. True Religion, the conviction and habit of a personal communion between the soul and God, is of too unique and jealous a temper to allow of any artistic predominance: and yet we find the best expression of it in Poetry: indeed the poetic expression of the spiritual life is of such force that its beauty may hold
10 the mind in slavery to false ideals.

I believe it to be greatly due to this that the English people are still mentally enslaved to a conception of God altogether unworthy and incompatible with our better notions: and, if it is the old Hebrew poetry which is greatly responsible for this delusion, then it seems reasonable to look to our own poets for our release.

On this general question of religion I shall take only that one point. We have spiritually outgrown the theology of the Reformation, and our churches, in endeavouring to make
20 their obsolete ideals work, find their most effective agent in the beauty of our English translation of the Old Testament which, while secular art was in decay, captured the artistic susceptibility of the people.

Art was discouraged by the Reformers, it was uncongenial to their furious and somewhat gross minds; and it was at the cost of the destruction of a priceless heritage of medieval art that they got rid of their mental servitude to Papistry, which its beauty embellished and sanctified. That alliance of art with the monstrous ecclesiastical system which Rome
30 had built on the Gospels drove art into disrepute: but since man cannot live in the absence of all ideals of beauty, the people satisfied their craving for it by the beauty of the religious literature, when the Bible was put into every man's hands. Art was thus diverted, and its place appropriated by

the religious ideals of the Reformation; but these being archaic and harsh, and in some respects a real defection from Christian law to the Mosaic, and from one point of view a political compromise, the substitute daily grew less convincing and satisfying, and now, when its ideal, if ever it had one, is practically dead, our people have neither one thing nor the other. Religion and art have equally suffered.

The Christian churches will not leave the old ruts. The Pope still hankers after temporal power, and to get it would crown Tiglath-Pileser in St. Peter's, while our Protestant 10 church still begins its morning devotions by singing of 'God swearing in his wrath that his people should not enter into his rest'.

Now in the religion of Christ, which, whether we will it or not, whether we know it or not, is deeply ingrained in our heart's reverence and the life of our souls, and is ever rebuking and overruling our conduct—in this world-conquering Christianity the essentials are love and unity and brotherhood. But look at the Protestant sects, all quarrelling about crude absurdities and ridiculous un- 20 essentials. And ask yourselves how the Church shall be purified and edified when those who should compose it remain outside of it.

NOTES

PAGE 2. 'Her eye saw'. This piece stands first in *Poems* 1873. Bridges never reprinted it, but it was included by Professor Gordon in his Rede Lecture, *Robert Bridges*, delivered in 1931 and published by the Cambridge University Press in 1946.

PAGE 4. PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER. First printed 'at the private press of H. Daniel, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford', 1883. The extract here given is reprinted from the text given in *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges excluding the Eight Dramas*, Oxford University Press, 1936 (hereinafter referred to as *Poetical Works*), pp. 27-28.

There is little else (save the Fire Chorus, ll. 1285-1361) that the anthologist is tempted to preserve from this, or from *Demeter A Mask* (1904), or from the Poetic Dramas, though in all of them the blank verse is interspersed with decorative lyrics, some of which are beautiful.

PAGE 5. THE GROWTH OF LOVE. This series of sonnets was many times printed and underwent many revisions (e.g. *XXIV Sonnets*, Bumpus, 1876; *LXXIX Sonnets*, Daniel Press, 1889; *LXIX Sonnets*, in Vol. i of *Poetical Works*, Smith Elder, 1898). The text and numbering here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

The sonnets are so full of excellences that selection is difficult—and none the less difficult because the excellences are often set off by lines that seem like echoes from Shakespeare, or parts of a Shakespearian exercise.

No 33. As in a number of Bridges's sonnets the octave is weak. But the sestet rises to a climax, and the last two lines are irresistible.

No. 40. This sonnet on his mother's portrait won especial praise from Hopkins, see. p. lxxi.

No. 43. Hopkins's comments are as follows: 'Beautiful in thought and expression, but the beauty gathers to the end, is least in the first quatrain, and the first two lines are commonplace. Also *he may hear* is not good. It is ambiguous: if it means *It is granted him to hear*, then it has no fault except the being easily mistaken for the other meaning, but if it means *He perhaps hears* it is feeble and downright padding. I shd. like something such as (it is d——d impertinence of me to say this)—

All drawn with thirst, all lost on sultry sand,
 The traveller fainting finds into his ear
 Fantastic music steal that lets him hear
 Some liquid fountain of his native land.

O cruel jest! he cries, as someone flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire.
 O shameless! O contempt of holy things!
 They of their wanton pastime never tire
 That, not athirst, are sitting by the springs,
 While he must quench in death his last desire—

(or "And he must", &c). For though the sequence of thought of "But of their wanton play" is beautiful, yet the dropping the connection is more austere and pathetic. . . ' *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935, P- 70 (Letter LIV: 22 Feb. 1879).

No. 59. As elsewhere, the last line ('a really magical stroke', G. M. H.) eclipses what goes before it.

No. 69. The Our Father Sonnet is very beautiful', G. M. H.

PAGE n. SHORTER POEMS. *Shorter Poems* (Books I-IV) appeared first in 1890; the poems contained in Books I-III had been previously printed at various times. Many underwent revision before their reappearance in 1890, and some before their inclusion in Vol. II of *Poetical Works* in 1899. Book V was added in 1894. The text here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

Book I is dedicated to 'H. E. W.' (the poet's friend Harry Ellis Wooldridge). All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems*, 1873.

No. 2. This *Elegy* recalls, by its subject and by its cadences, the *Souvenir* of Alfred de Musset: e.g.:

Les voila, ces buissons ou toute ma jeunesse
 Comme un essaim d'oiseaux, chante au bruit de mes pas;
 Lieux charmants, beau d6sert ou passait ma maltresse,
 Ne m'attendiez-vous pas ?
 . . . Je ne viens point jeter un regret inutile
 Dans recho de ces bois te"moins de mon bonheur:
 Fi6re est cette foret dans sa beaute tranquille,
 Et fier aussi mon cceur.

No. 16. Of this poem Desmond MacCarthy wrote (*Sunday Times*, 25 July 1948) 'For me the most perfect of all English Triolets . . . Many suppose the Triolet form to be essentially trivial; that specimen alone refutes them. Certainly it must be composed in the key of conversation; it must, with its repeti-

tions, sound like someone talking; nevertheless its content can be, as here, charged with emotion. How ingeniously that question mark breaks the repetition of the first couplet, thus turning what had at first been a quiet statement into a cry of dismay!

PAGE 21. *Book II* is dedicated 'To the memory of G. M. H.' All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love'*, 1879.

No. i. The following are Hopkins's comments on the text printed in 1879 (where the first stanza is not divided between the speakers): 'I must tell you that the first verse appears to me to be faulty. It wd. seem to be divided between the two speakers, as the rest of the piece. If so the first two lines shd. be in italics. And if so, then *lay* should be *lies*. Also *Silence!* shd. be *Hush, hush* or *O hush!* If however it is really the inmate who speaks, then the question will be an ironical, not an earnest one, and mean. How can love awake that has lain asleep so long? and if so this shd. be brought out, as by: Should love again awake. . . .? But the other sense is smoother, besides that otherwise the question seems absurd, for the longer the sleep has been the nearer must the waking be; if it is sleep and not death. And in the last verse I should prefer "And love will>wake". Now as for the meaning, of that you keep the key. Is it the lady of the Growth or another? In verse 2 you seem to say it is the same. On the other hand I thought she had gone to heaven. And indeed she seems to have been actually at the telephone, so to speak, when there was the ring of the night bell. (This is profane.) As at present advised, I think it is another (and "whom once he deigned to praise" is said by way of fresh information), but so that all the women a man falls in love with are one woman, being sort of incarnations, or successive avatars of Beauty, Wisdom, and so on, personified in the feminine. Is this so? . . . ' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 67-68 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

No. 10. Hopkins's comment is as follows: 'Unequal, because, as I told you and I now maintain my past judgment, there are two lines in it echoing Gray's: *they do it, they will do it to every ear, it is a great fault to do it, and they do it*. They are not at all the best lines and they can be easily changed and yet they echo lines which are held to be of faultless and canonical beauty. The subject and measure shd. of themselves have put you on your guard. Gray's poem may be outdone but, if you understand, it cannot be equalled. Otherwise the piece is beautiful and full of music.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, p. 69 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

With regard to the lines 'which echo Gray's' Mr. Abbott's note is as follows: 'These lines do not choose themselves. Perhaps they are:

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
Their pompous legends will no smile awake.

G. M. H. might, with more justice, have urged that the poem calls back to the mind Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse".

PAGE 31. *Book III* is dedicated to 'R. W. D.' (Canon Richard Watson Dixon, see p. 108). Most of the poems here included from this Book were contained in *Poems*, Third Series (1880) and *Poems*, Fourth Series (1882).

No. I. Printed as an Ode (ll. 1465-1480) in *Prometheus the Firegiver*. Of Hopkins's comments (on the earliest MS. version of the poem), which are in part technical, in part moral, Bridges appears hardly to have availed himself. They are as follows: 'The poem "O my vague desires" is a very noble piece, as fine, I think, as anything you have yet done. It is "all road" very remarkable. The rhythm too is correct and strong. I make a few suggestions, (i) The rhythm of line 4 wd. be a little improved by something like "arising" instead of "rising". (2) Would it not be a better stroke to have instead of "For ever soaring . . . dying? O the joy of flight!" something like "You ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying Flames of joyous flight"? (3) I would have "Ah! they burn my soul, My fires, devour my soul that once was whole". (4) The word you were in search of instead of "phantoms" must be "gledes"—and then you would continue "day after day". (5) Why should not the last short line have three feet like the others, as "Could I but control"? "Could I control" has only two. (6) The next line is the only rhythmically bad one: both rhythm and feeling are bettered by "My vague desires, my leaping flames of soul". So too in the next line I would have "my fires". (7) The last line might perhaps, but I am not sure, be improved by "still flying alas!"

The poem is autobiographical, as you would say; it tells of what you really feel in yourself. What then is the meaning of those yearnings or aspirations in the mind? You bear witness against yourself that you have them. And, as you suggest in one of your sonnets, if they are powerfully felt even now, when the mind is drawn off them and engrossed by so many things, it is likely they will be at some other time its whole life and being, whether they are gratified or not gratified. This poem as well as that sonnet express your belief that the mind is immortal.

But there are other minds that act on you now, as for instance you now follow my meaning, acting through sensible channels; hereafter there will be other spiritual powers, it is natural to suspect, which may act on the mind more directly and not by sensible channels; they may surround it and affect it as much as the body is surrounded and affected by other bodies. You cannot wisely neglect this world of being to which you imply that you will come. In it or above it is the sovereign spirit God, to whom you should now at once make your approach with the humblest and most earnest prayers.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 117-18 (Letter LXXI: 26 January 1881).

No. 2. *London Snow*. For Hopkins's comments on this and the two following poems (as they appeared in *Poems*, Third Series, 1880) see pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

No. 7. *Indolence*. 1. i. 'the city'—Oxford.

No. 19. 'A pretty close translation of a poem by Th6ophile Gautier, which is itself a translation from the English by Thomas Moore in *The Epicurean*' (R. B.'s note).

PAGE 41. *Book IV* is dedicated to 'L. B. C. L. M.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Lionel Muirhead). All the poems in this Book were printed for the first time in 1890.

PAGE 48. *Book V* is dedicated to 'M. G. K.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Montagu George Knight).

No. 2. *The Affliction of Richard*. I do not know what is the explanation of this title, or whether it owes anything to Wordsworth's *The Affliction of Margaret*.

No. ii. 'I never shall love the snow again.' 'Maurice' was the poet's brother-in-law, Maurice Waterhouse, who died on Christmas Eve, 1890.

No. 14. *Founder's Day*. 1. 56. 'The victory that made ring the meads.' Col. C. H. Wilkinson of Worcester College tells me that he has the authority of Lionel Muirhead for saying that Bridges originally wrote 'The light-blue victory of the meads', but altered it in deference to Andrew Lang, who told him that the reference to Eton would not be understood. When the poem was first printed (Daniel Press, 1893) it was dated June 1891.

PAGE 60. NEW POEMS. Collected for the first time in 1899 hi Vol II of the Smith Elder edition of the *Poetical Works* in six volumes. Nos. 14 and 15 were first printed in Elkin Mathews's *Shilling Garland*, No. II, 1896; the rest of the poems appeared for the first time in Vol II. of the *Poetical Works*, 1899.

No. 4. *The Summer-house on the Mound*. The poem (which shows vividly how far back the poet's memories of his childhood could take him) describes the house of his parents at Walmer.

No. 20. *EPQ2*, 1. 15. 'unchristen'd'. Yeats uses this word with similar effect in *Vacillation* (1932): 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.'

PAGE 70. LATER POEMS.

No. 5. First printed in *The Sheaf*, June 1902.

No. 13. *Portrait of a Grandfather*. First printed (with the date 1880) in *Wayfarer's Love*, 1904.

No. 15. The extracts are from *Ode to Music Written for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell* (music by Sir Hubert Parry), written and published in 1895. The first eight lines of Section VIII ('Rejoice, ye dead . . .') form the octave of Sonnet 19 in *The Growth of Love*.

No. 16. Extract from *A Hymn of Nature An Ode written for Music*, the music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at the Gloucester Festival in 1898.

PAGE 75. POEMS IN CLASSICAL PROSODY. Bridges's views about the applicability of the principles of classical prosody in the writing of English verse, and his explanation of the principles of 'syllabic' verse, which he discovered in Milton and adopted for his own use, will be found in the volume published by the Oxford Press in 1901 in which his essay on *Milton's Prosody* is accompanied by an essay on *Classical Metres in English Verse* by W. J. Stone, with whose views Bridges professed himself to be in agreement.

PAGE 75. 'And what if all Nature . . .'. The extract is from a 400-line Epistle 'To a Socialist in London', published in the *Monthly Review* for July 1903, together with an abstract of Stone's principles of quantitative verse, of which the Epistle is an exemplification.

PAGE 77. OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS. The collection bearing this name was published in 1920, but nearly half the poems in it (including the first three reprinted here) had already appeared in a volume *Poems written in 1913* printed at the Ashendene Press in 1914.

No. 3. *Noel: Christmas Eve*, 1913. His first poem as Laureate. He 'offered his homage to the King in some Christmas verses, which his Majesty ordered to be published' (R. B.). They were printed in *The Times*, 24 December 1913. In a note prefixed to

the *October* collection, Bridges explained that it (and three other poems in the collection) 'are strictly syllabic verse on the model left by Milton in "Samson Agonistes"', adding, 'It is probably agreed that there are possibilities in that long six-foot line which English poetry has not fully explored.' He himself explored them further in *New Verse* and *The Testament of Beauty*.

PAGE 82. NEW VERSE. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926. All the poems here selected were written in 1921. The first three are taken from Part One of the collection ('Neo-Miltonic Syllabics'); No. 8 (*To Francis Jammes*) and No. 9 (*Melancholy*) from Part Two ('Accentual Measures'); No. 12 (*The Tramps*) and No. 16 (*Low Barometer*) from Part Three ('Old Styles'). Nos. 6, 7, and 8 had previously been published, in the 'Elizabethan' number of *The Queen*, July 1923, *The London Mercury*, November 1924, and *The London Mercury*, July 1923, respectively.

No. 5. The garden of Merton College. While Chilswell House was being repaired after the fire in 1917, Bridges resided for some months in Postmasters' Hall at Merton College. The 'pensive philosopher' was F. H. Bradley.

No. 7. 'Mrs. Bridges, reading over the poem in draft remarked that there were too many *come se quando*'s. Bridges thought this might serve as a title. But he substituted the Latin *si* for the Italian *se* and it so appeared in print. When he discovered the slip, he decided to let it remain, perhaps remembering that Milton's '*Penseroso* is said to be grammatically incorrect.' Edward Thompson, *Robert Bridges*, Oxford, 1944, p.¹⁰¹ - 'Come se quando' is a stock phrase for introducing a simile in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The 'slip' has been corrected in recent editions of the *Poetical Works*. The passage quoted on p. 85 is the opening simile of a long poem.

No. 8. *Francis Jammes*. French poet (1868-1938) in whose works the road-mender and the Colonial ancestor are familiar figures.

No. 16. *Low Barometer*. 'One of the three or four greatest poems he ever wrote.' Edward Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

PAGE 91. THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY.

II, 1. 840. 'What is Beauty?' The quotation is from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part I, Act V, Sc. 2.

II, 1. 965. 'her showy Invincibles'. The Flanders poppy: 'The

"showy" flowers are so much more truly "Invincibles" than any "invincible soldiers" of Napoleon or another.' Nowell Smith, *Notes on The Testament of Beauty*, Oxford, 1931.

III, 1. 657. Bridges has been describing life at the Court of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse.

1. 667. Nowell Smith (op. cit.) explains that the 'twin day' is the day which the westward-going traveller has to divide into two in order to keep his calendar correct.

I. 669. 'thatt dreariest November'. 'The year was 1927' (Nowell Smith).

IV, 1. 317 'he who dug': Sir (then Dr.) Leonard Woolley.

II. 1279-80. 'The "mortal distress" was the death of the poet's daughter, Margaret, the wife of H. W. B. Joseph, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford' (Nowell Smith).

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JOHN SPARROW

OXFORD

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT BRIDGES was never a popular poet. At the end of his long life, it is true, a brief burst of celebrity followed the publication of his *Testament of Beauty*, but the general interest awakened by that remarkable poem did not long survive its author, and little of his poetry, apart from his shorter lyrics, has ever appealed to any but a small circle of admirers. Most of those who care for poetry today look down other vistas, away from the trim garden that Bridges chose to cultivate and beyond the horizon that bounds his pleasant pastoral landscape, towards other fields of poetical experience and technique.

Bridges was a remarkable link between two literary ages: his first book appeared within six years of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, his last at a time when Eliot's *Waste Land* had already come to be widely accepted as a classic. It was difficult for those who saw him in his vigorous old age, or heard him broadcast on Poetry as Poet Laureate, to realize how distant was the past to which his earliest memories belonged. When he was born, Wordsworth was still living; among the familiar figures of his childhood were the Prince Consort and the Duke of Wellington; at Eton he came under the influence of the Tractarian Movement while it was still a living force; and he went up to Oxford in

Those changeful days that pass'd between,
Say, Verdant Green and T. H. Green.

Judged by these dates, Bridges was a Victorian—even a mid-Victorian. But the epithet does not truly describe him, for he was almost unmoved by the 'movements' and un-influenced by the 'influences' of the age. This integrity was the result of a deliberate self-seclusion. It was not change or innovation that Bridges shunned; he was always eager to

make himself master of the latest experiments and discoveries in diverse fields of philosophical and scientific speculation, of artistic and literary technique. His desire for shelter was not due to timidity or softness of body, mind, or character; for he was a strong and sinewy person; he had been an athlete in his youth and he remained in old age leonine not only in physical appearance but also in attitude of mind. His withdrawal from the world was an effort not of escape but of concentration; his aim was to shut out the ugly and the irrelevant, and so to secure the leisure and tranquillity that he needed if he was to give himself up to the writing of poetry.

He achieved his aim—but at a price. For poetry which is the fruit of such self-seclusion is not the kind of poetry that most commends itself to those readers or critics who demand that literature should be 'co-extensive with life'. Such readers expect the poet to show himself a political animal, drawing his inspiration and his material from the society of which he is himself a member, and if they are looking for a master or a model they will turn, not to Bridges, the recluse, but rather to such figures as W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot. Yeats, it is true, devoted himself in youth and age to the study of the art of words—'Words alone are certain good'—but he was always (and he so described himself) a 'public man', dedicating both the passion of rebel and the wisdom of a senator to the service of political ideals; and Mr. Eliot, though his own emotions may seem rarefied and his idols very different from those of the market-place, has become, for a whole generation of readers, the accepted exponent of what they call 'the contemporary consciousness'.

It is not surprising, then, that Bridges unlike yeats and Mr. Eliot, should have been without influence and without disciples, and that today his admirers should be comparatively few. Bridges himself was not in the least troubled by lack of appreciation; he had no desire for popular applause,

and in his seclusion he was perfectly content. The Laureateship, when it came to him, came unsought; he never wrote to order; and public murmurs at his appointment and at his subsequent taciturnity left him undisturbed. (His nature was evidently made for happiness, and fortune did little or nothing to thwart that natural disposition. True, he was acquainted with the melancholy mood; he could feel the pressure of a 'Low Barometer'; he had faced 'a wall of terror in a night of cold', and had experienced—not only as a physician in the Casualty Ward at St. Bartholomew's—

life's common plod: still to repair
The body and the thing which perisheth:
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,
The grinding enginry of blood and breath—

but those moods were not congenial to him; he was the poet of what he himself calls 'the happy moment':

not a stir
In any tree, no portent in the sky;
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
The morrow hath no name to call it by,
But life and joy are one,—we know not why . . .

and 'the best of his art is gay'—the gay expression of such moments of exaltation and delight. *Fortunatus nimium* was the title he gave to a poem in which he looked back on his long and happy life, and perhaps it is true that he was, in a sense, too happy. For a poet whose chief inspiration is the blessedness of his own lot will not find favour with a perplexed, preoccupied, and disillusioned generation, at a time when both lark and nightingale sing 'to dirty ears'; and those who wander in the Waste Land are not likely to take as their guiding beacon a fire lit at the altar of beauty on the summit of Boar's Hill.

Whether or not Bridges's life was 'too happy in its happiness'¹, it was to the worship of beauty that he devoted

it. To use his own words, he 'sought and adored' beautiful things, and felt it to be his task as a poet lovingly to create *tferri*. This impulse had its being in the depths of his nature ; it was something as different from sensuality as it was from mere good taste — alove of beauty in the ideal aswell asin the visible world, the natural beauty of flowers and faces, the spiritual beauty of "tender or exalted emotions, of noble thoughts and deeds.

Poetry, we know, "lias other fields than this : evil has its flowers, and ugliness a fascination of its own. From these ignoble' themes Bridges turned impatiently away. He had no desire to absorb and digest such materials ; rather, he thought it a poet's duty to reject them:

as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness
which Art would outlaw —

and to the question 'What is Beauty ? ' he gave the answer :

Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind Of man.

Whatever may be thought of the philosophy of this, it was a doctrine in which Bridges believed instinctively; he expounded it at length in *The Testament of Beauty* and he devoted his life to the expression of it. indeed, he might have echoed Shelley's apostrophe to Inteltec'tual Beauty :

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?

Beauty may be worshipped in various ways; and where Shelley, with a 'beating heart and streaming eyes', 'shrieked and clasped [his] hands in ecstasy', Bridges was content to sun himself among the Cheddar pinks in his rock-garden, intent on devising a new unsimplified spelling or a new pointing for the Psalms, cherished, to the end of his long life

of artistic creation and experiment, by her who had inspired the tenderest lyrics of his youth.

Chilswell, with its happy domestic scene, certainly called up an image of Farringford, and there were other likenesses between the patterns of the two poets' lives. Both were deeply and enduringly influenced by an undergraduate friendship, and after early years in London went to live in the country. Both became Laureates almost on the eve of a war, and exercised poetic gifts with undiminished vigour and increased virtuosity into a ripe old age. But Bridges also resembled Tennyson in his attitude towards his art, in his conception of what a poet's life should be and of the language in which he should write. He believed that poets—'quique pii vates et Phoebæ digna locuti'—were not as other men are; in voice, in appearance, in bearing, he was naturally an aristocrat; he looked, and lived, the part of the great poet. He was not one of those who think that the poet should look at life through the eyes of the man in the street and describe it in the language of every day: he called things 'beauteous' and 'jocund' and 'mighty'; he introduced into his verse such personified abstractions as Love and Duty and Delight; he invoked the Muse, and addressed his 'mistress' in the second person singular.

This consciously poetic manner may seem id justify those who dismiss his work as something literally 'cultured' and therefore devoid of deep or spontaneous feeling; and Bridges has made the charge of artificiality the more plausible by his preoccupation with the technique of poetry, with metres, spellings, alphabets; with questions of vocabulary and 'purity' of language and pronunciation. He was a founder of The Society for Pure English, and he devised an ingenious and elaborate phonetic typography. But it would be wrong to infer from his intense interest in *minutiae* that the feelings he put into his poetry were either shallow or artificial; that interest was due to his belief that in speech the least

inflexion may count for incalculably much, both for the ear and for the mind, and that if language is to be a fully effective instrument in the hands of the thinker or the poet its edge must not be allowed to become blunted by careless use. Even his apparently wilful archaisms were not the result of whim or affectation:

The author would explain [he says in a note to *The Testament of Beauty*] that the use of *eth* for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

Yet, when all is said, there is substance in the criticisms hinted at above. Those who most admire his poetry will be the first to admit that it is a pity that he spent so much of his talent and his time in elaborating traditional themes and embroidering archaic patterns. Masques in blank verse, interspersed with choric odes, verse dramas (of which he wrote eight) on the model of Greek tragedy or of Terence, formal odes—these are difficult to read unless they are relieved by passages of exceptional beauty or splendour—and such passages are no more frequent in Bridges than they are in Spenser or in Shelley.

His true gift was lyrical: in his *Sonnets* and his *Shorter Poems* (as Hopkins long ago pointed out) the level of excellence is so high that to choose from among them is hardly possible, and Housman did not overpraise Books I-IV of *Shorter Poems* when he said that 'probably no single volume of English verse had ever maintained such perfection'. However much Bridges may at times remind us of those who have gone before him (and one cannot mistake his debt to Shakespeare's sonnets and to the lyrics of Wyatt and Campion and the Elizabethan song-writers generally) it is always a living voice that we hear, never an echo. Sometimes he speaks almost with the tongue of Blake:

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night . . .

or again:

Open for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire . . .

Such lyrical cries are wrung from him most often by the ecstasies of love or by the contemplation of Nature, and these are the themes that inspire the greater part of the *Shorter Poems* ; but his range is not confined to them : some of his most, beautiful poems — *On a Dead Child*, for instance, *The Tramps*, and *The College Garden* — are poems of reflection ; he had a remarkable power of infusing into a landscape the feelings peculiar to the several seasons ; and he could invest with a strange beauty the plainest of descriptions :

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
Glided in line upon the windless deep . . .

Of the fifth of these lines one can only ask: Can poetry go further?

Few things are easier to write than a beautiful line of poetry ; minor poets abound in them ; but every such line of Bridges is integral with its context, its beauty is somehow one with the beauty of the stanza or the poem as a whole. To write a perfect lyric is a rare achievement, and Bridges repeated the miracle perhaps more often than any other English poet.

Bridges himself would no doubt have wished to be remembered not so much for his youthful lyrics as for the didactic poem of his old age. What is to be said of *The Testament of Beauty*? It was, in a sense, the crowning achievement of its author's long life; he sustained, through

its four books of almost unremitted argument, the intensity of the passion that inspired it; it is embellished with a profusion of images and similes which are the harvest of an unsleeping eye and a rich imagination; and the lasting impression that it leaves upon the mind of the reader, for all its peculiarity of diction and colloquiality of metre, is an impression of nobility. Like all philosophical poems that have ever been written, it will be read for its poetry, not for its philosophy: for its beauty, not for its wisdom; it is starred with lovely passages which grow naturally out of their context in the poem, but lose little by being detached from it. But the loose syllabic metre, if it made for easy writing, does not make for easy reading; the most effective lines are those which the accent marks as normal or almost normal Alexandrines, and too often the reader, deprived of any accentual aid, may find that he is counting syllables.

As a writer of prose and as a critic Bridges is easier to describe than to classify: both his manner and his matter were always very much his own. He had strong preferences which he was not concerned to justify and he did not waste his time writing—or talking—about what he did not like.

A personal reminiscence may not here be out of place. I remember paying a visit to Chilswell as an undergraduate, overflowing with admiration for John Donne and eager to hear what the great man had to say about him. The mention of Donne's name, hopefully uttered as I paced the lawn by the side of my host, was enough: Bridges was so revolted (he declared) by Donne's sensuality and by the cacophony of his verse that he simply could not understand what people saw in him. I was glad to take refuge in a change of subject. A mention of Tennyson seemed to give me my opportunity, and I asked whether he knew Churton Collins's *Illustrations* of his poems, a book which had delighted me with its discussion of Tennyson's Virgilian reminiscences. Here, it seemed, was a more fruitful opening—and, indeed, the

poet's reaction was immediate: 'Yes! yes!', he exclaimed, with a sort of melodious growl, 'Yes! yes! *terrible* stuff!'—and I perceived that this, too, was a topic that had better be abandoned.

That was altogether characteristic. Bridges was no respecter of reputations; to 'assess' a writer with whom he was out of sympathy seemed to him neither a pleasurable nor a profitable occupation; and discourse about 'Literature', however learned, did not interest him. It is not surprising that he resisted the strong pressure put upon him, in 1895, to stand for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. He thought about poetry simply as a poet; criticism meant to him either an exposition of its function or an analysis, severely technical, of how its effects might be obtained, or had actually been obtained by writers he admired. On these topics he enlarged with fearless originality, never blinded by greatness in the work he was examining to any flaws that there might be in it, striving always for truth and for exactness.

His prose falls on the ear like the spoken word, yet it is far removed from common speech, for he chose his words like instruments, with the effect sometimes of making them a little too choice; he is at the same time, one might say, colloquial and mannered. The manner is his own; it never degenerates into mannerism, but reflects exactly the quality of his mind, so that his writing is always fine in the good sense, not the bad. How moving it could be when he himself was moved may be judged by the extracts from his tributes to two of his greatest friends, Dolben and Dixon, that have been chosen for this book.

To an even closer friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Bridges paid a tribute of a different kind. Their intimacy, which began in their Oxford days, ended only with the death of Hopkins in 1889; their mutual affection recalls the friendship of Tennyson and Arthur Hallam; and their sympathy was marred only by difference about religion: Hopkins

regretted the 'paganism' of his 'dearest Bridges'; Bridges deplored any sacrifice of his friend's poetic talent on the altar of his faith.

For nearly a quarter of a century they wrote copiously to each other, but only the letters of Hopkins survive to show how close was their communion, how free and frank and sympathetic their criticism of each other's work. Bridges shared his friend's enthusiasms and encouraged his experiments in language and metre, though protesting often against the obscurity of his allusions and his syntax.

When Hopkins died, Bridges regarded himself as the trustee of the 'lov'd legacy', his friend's verse; he gradually introduced it to the public in the nineties, and gave it a wider audience by including seven of the poems in his own war-time anthology, *The Spirit of Man*. Little notice was taken of these efforts either by critics or by the common reader; but Bridges judged that by 1918 a 'genuinely poetic interest' had grown up 'both in England and America', strong enough to justify his publishing an elaborate edition of the poems. This was not an easy undertaking. From a large and confusing mass of manuscripts the editor had to decide which poems to preserve, and in which versions to print them; he had to explain not only Hopkins's metrical theories and notations but also his obscurities of syntax and expression. The task demanded sympathy as well as scholarship. For Bridges it was a labour of love—'When I came to edit the poems' (he later wrote) 'my whole intention was to make the book as he would have wished it to be. I felt completely in touch with him'—and he performed it perfectly. Even so, the poems were slow to win popularity, and ten years elapsed before the edition of 750 copies was sold out. But Bridges lived long enough to see his aim entirely realized, for when he died in 1930 the reputation of Hopkins was already being raised up to the pinnacle upon which the succeeding generation placed it, and from which it has cast

an undeserved shadow on the reputation of Bridges himself.¹ In time, no doubt, a more sober estimate of Hopkins's splendid successes and his splendid failures will prevail, and belated justice will be done to Bridges as a poet, a critic, and a friend.

What, then, will that 'justice' be—for surely it is the business of the critic to anticipate if he can the verdict of posterity? Bridges, I think, will 'live'; not simply in the anthologies, like Herrick, say, or Darley, the almost disembodied author of a number of lovely lyrics; nor as a figure in the history of letters whose name, like Southey's, is remembered better than his writings: posterity will be on equally familiar terms with the poet and with his *Collected Works*. For he impressed a distinct personality upon a body of poetry large enough to take, and to give back, the image of the whole man, so that both the writer and his work remain alive together. He spoke with a clear and individual voice, always beautiful and often passionate, though never loud or wild. Unmistakably, it was the voice of a noble human being and a true poet, and such voices do not die.

¹ There has even been an attempt, on the part of critics who ought to have known better, to suggest that Bridges failed to recognize Hopkins's poetic genius or culpably delayed its recognition by others—a false legend that persists even to this day. In 1884 Patmore communicated to Hopkins (*Further Letters* of G. M. H., Oxford, 1938, p. 208) Bridges's opinion of his poems 'He spoke with the sincerest admiration and love of your poetry.' These feelings were deep and constant, and they shine through the sonnet which R. B. prefixed to his edition of Hopkins's poems more than thirty years later.

LIFE

1844. Robert Seymour Bridges born at Walmer, Kent, 23 October: eighth Of the nine children of J. T. Bridges of Roselands, Walmer.
1853. Death of his father.
1854. His mother marries the Rev. J. E. N. Molesworth and the family moves to Rochdale, Lancashire.
- 1854—63. At Eton; among his friends are V. S. S. Coles and D. M. Dolben; comes under Tractarian influence.
- 1863-7. At Corpus Christi College, Oxford; makes friends with Gerard Manley Hopkins; Pre-Raphaelite supersedes Tractarian influence.
1866. Death of his younger brother Edward; it 'plunged me into deep sorrow . . . and considerably altered the hopes and prospects of my life'.
1867. Second Class in Literae Humaniores; strokes his college boat in Eights and in a regatta in Paris.
- 1867-74. Makes several long tours abroad.
1869. Enters St. Bartholomew's Hospital; M.B., 1874.
1873. *Poems* (favourably reviewed by Andrew Lang in *The Academy*, 17 January, 1874).
1876. *The Growth of Love*, a collection of twenty-four sonnets afterwards revised and greatly increased.
1877. Appointed casualty physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; moves on the death of his step-father from 50 Maddox Street, which he shared with H. E. Wooldridge, to 52 Bedford Square, where he made a home for his mother.
1878. Appointed assistant physician to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street; later to the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway.
1879. Makes friends with the Rev. R. W. Dixon.
- 1879-84. Publishes several series of poems in limited editions, later included in *Shorter Poems*.
1881. After a serious illness spends the winter in Italy; retires from medical practice.
1882. Goes to live, with his mother, at the Manor House, Yattendon, Berkshire.
1883. *Prometheus the Firegiver*.
1884. Marries Monica Mary, eldest daughter of the architect, Alfred Waterhouse, R.A.
- 1884-1904. Lives at Yattendon; in touch with H. C. Beeching, W. J. Stone, and others interested in poetry, music, and prosody.

1885. *Eros and Psyche*.
 'Eight Plays'—*Nero* (1885), *Pahcio* (1890), *The Return of Ulysses* (1890), *The Christian Captives* (1890), *Achilles in Scyros* (1890), *The Humours of the Court* (1893), *The Feast of Bacchus* (1894), *Nero Second Part* (1894).
1890. *Shorter Poems* (Bks. I-IV; Bk. V, 1894).
1893. *Milton's Prosody* (final edition 1921).
1895. *The Yattendon Hymnal* Part I (Part II, 1897; Part III, 1898; Part IV, 1899).
John Keats, A Critical Essay (published also as introduction to the Keats volume in 'The Muses Library').
 Declines to stand for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford.
1898. Revises poems for six-volume edition (1898-1905).
1903. *Now in wintry delights* (his first poem in classical prosody).
1905. *Demeter, A Mask* (performed 1904).
- 1905—6. Long visit to Switzerland.
1907. Builds, and moves to, Chilswell House, Boar's Hill, Oxford.
1909. Edits *Selected Poems of R. W. Dixon*, with a Memoir.
1911. Edits *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, with a Memoir.
1913. Founds the Society of Pure English, with Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Bradley, and Logan Pearsall Smith.
 Appointed Poet Laureate.
1916. *The Spirit of Man*, an anthology.
1917. Fire at Chilswell House; during part of the next two years lived in Oxford.
1918. Edits *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.
1920. *October and other Poems*.
1924. Visits the United States of America.
1925. *New Verse* (containing 'Neo-Miltonic Syllabics').
1926. *Henry Bradley, a Memoir*.
1929. *The Testament of Beauty* (published on his eighth-fifth birthday): receives the order of Merit.
1930. Dies at Chilswell House, 21 April

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES

From *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*,
ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935.

THE sonnets are truly beautiful, breathing a grave and feeling genius, and make me proud of you (which by the by is not the same as for you to be proud of yourself: I say it because you always were and I see you still are given to conceit...). I have scarcely read them all yet.... In general I do not think you have reached finality in point of execution, words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc. . . .

General remarks—In spite of the Miltonic rhythms and some other points your sonnets remind one more of Shak- 10
spere's. Milton's sonnets are not tender as Shakspeare's are. Yours are not at all like Wordsworth's, and a good thing too, for beautiful as those are they have an odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty. The ones I like least are those that have a Tennysonian touch about them, . . . not for want of admiring Tennyson to be sure but because it gives them a degree of neckcloth too. I have not yet *studied* them: at a first and second reading the drift and connection is very hard to find; you seem to mean it to be so. The Our Father sonnet [No. 69, p. 10] is very 20
beautiful, so is the one on your mother's picture [No. 40, p. 6], so is XXII [p. 5], so are they all and full of manly tenderness and a flowing and never-failing music. The more I read them the more I am delighted with them.

(Letter XXX: 3 April 1877.)

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Your precious little volume [*Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love' . . . 1879*] is to hand—also to head and heart, breathing genius everywhere, like sweet-herbs. I shd. like to criticise it in detail throughout, but that may not be.

Something however I must say. . . . The jewel of all, judice me, is no. 2 [p. 21], That is a lovely poem. . . .

The pieces in sprung rhythm—do not quite satisfy me. They do read tentative, experimental; I cannot well say where the thought is distorted by the measure, but that it is distorted I feel by turning from these to the other pieces, where the mastery is so complete. *The Downs* [p. 26] is the best. (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879.)

.

Style seems your great excellence, it is really classical. 10 What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner—not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew. Just think the blank verse these people have exuded, such as *Paracelsus*, *Aurora Leigh*, Baillie's or Bayley's *Festus*, and so on. The Brownings are very fine too in their ghastly way. . . .

London Snow [p. 32] is a most beautiful and successful piece. It is charmingly fresh, I do not know what is like it. The rhythm, as I told you, is not quite perfect. That of the 20 child-piece [p. 34] is worse and that piece is worse, indeed it is Browningsese, if you like; as for instance 'To a world, do we think, that heals the disaster of this?' or something like that. You are certainly less at your ease in sprung rhythm. In the snow-piece this has not been a hindrance however, but perhaps has helped it, by making it more original in diction. Truth compels, and modesty does not forbid, me here to say that this volume has at least three real echos (or echoes) of me: I do not wish them away, but they are there. The 'snow-mossed wonder' line recalls 'For though he is under' in the 30 *Deutschland*, 'O look at the trees' the first line of the *Starlight sonnet*, and 'throned behind' again comes from the *Deutschland*. I fancy there is another I cannot now recall. O yes, it is in the *Voice of Nature* [p. 33]—'Precipitate all o'er-rides and swerves nor abides'¹ (is it?): this is in the

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES xxiii

Deutschland too, I cannot quote it but it ends with 'abides'. It is easy to see why this is: that is the longest piece extant in sprung rhythm and could not help haunting your memory. I do not want them altered, and 'throned behind' having found its way into the midst of a lovely image would not like to be parted from its company. The Voice of Nature is very fine, but the touch in rhythm as well as diction is not quite sure. . . . The lyric 'Thou didst delight' [p. 38] is, like the others before it, a gem. (Letter LXX: 26 October 1880.)

COVENTRY PATMORE ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The St. James's Gazette*, 9 March 1885, reprinted in *Courage and Politics and Other Essays*, 1921.

'THE crowd, incapable of perfectness', is not likely ever to 10
be much attracted by such verses as those of Mr. Robert
Bridges, of which the chief merit is a quiet unpretentious
perfectness, which has the air of coming not from laboured
finish, but from finished habits of thought, feeling, and life,
combined with and aided by a scholar's attainments. Though
differing from Mr. William Barnes in almost every other
quality, Mr. Bridges resembles the Dorsetshire poet more
than any other modern writer in this character of perfectness
which bears little or no sign of work: a character the opposite
to that of the best poems of Tennyson, in which the mani- 20
festation of finish and fully accomplished labour constitutes
of itself no small grace. Another probable obstacle in the way
of Mr. Bridges's acceptance by the public is his singular
though entirely unostentatious independence of any other
poet or school. He seems to have read and felt with fulness,
but with such impartiality that people will never begin by
admiring his verses because they are like those of some one
else they may happen to admire; nor is the absence of this
great and almost universal first cause of popular favour
balanced by anything that most readers would think 30

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'striking' or 'original'¹. We feel quite sure that Mr. Bridges would be absolutely distressed if any reader whom he respected should be detained by any line or passage of his to say or think 'That's fine!' He aims at and attains a style so equabje, and the eminently beautiful lines or passages are so proportioned to and arise so naturally out of eminent occasions, that nothing is 'striking' until it is made to stand alone, and then most of the beauty vanishes because it is relative. In what he writes Mr. Bridges is thoroughly
10 'masterly', because he knows exactly the powers he is master of, and never attempts to strain them. In this, too, he resembles Mr. Barnes, who never fancies that, because he is a writer of matchless idylls and eclogues, he ought to try his hand at epics or odes. No extracts could give any idea of that equable and steady poetic flight, of which the main charm consists, not in its attitude, but its sweet and unlaboured evenness.

LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

From an essay in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, October 1891,
'reprinted as a preface to *The Growth of Love*, 1894.

THE poems of Mr. Bridges are of the lyrical kind, of the narrative, and of the dramatic: and before examining each
20 kind apart, let me say something applicable to the whole of them, in greater or less degree. These poems, then, represent, with much else that is admirable, the scholarship of poetry; a certain erudite air of mastery over the secrets of rhythm and of metre; a trained skill in music, and in those delicate devices, which give so excellent a distinction to the older English poets. To whatever Mr. Bridges sets his hand, he preserves discretion and propriety: the scholar's instinct, no less than the poet's, making it impossible for him to outrage
fine taste, by the fantastic freaks of some great men amongst
30 us.' At the present time', so he tells us with lamentable truth,

'men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art': but he, at least, reverencing the great masters, makes an 'attempt to work in their manner'. Not that he is a slavish follower of the great masters, their captive rather than their votarist: at times, he may have fallen somewhat into that attitude, but not for long, it is not characteristic of him. It is his characteristic virtue, that he moulds his thought, guides his imagination, into fresh and living forms, with a scholarly knowledge of what has been done before him, in like manner, though not in the same: thus, some among his poems are 10 noticeable for their boldness of metrical experiment and invention; but we can trust him, who wrote those two good treatises *On the Prosody of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*, and *On the Elements of Milton's Blank Verse in Paradise Lost*. The invention may displease us, the experiment prove unhappy: yet we recognize a justifiable enterprise, a scholar's venture; not the frantic impertinence of one writing, in despair of nature, and in contempt of art. And this learned competence, so abundant in his form, is naturally abundant in his matter: for matter and form, to 20 repeat a simple and neglected truth, are inseparable. Mr. Bridges is not enamoured of a new thing, for its novelty: his thoughts are his own thoughts, but his expression of them is in harmony with the matured wisdom of many ages, meditating the common, human things, with gravity or in gladness. That is Horace, we say, or Catullus; there is Theognis or Meleager; and here is Marvell, here Vaughan, here Herrick; and this brings Landor to mind, Landor, or Collins, or Wordsworth; and now Shakespeare, now Terence, now Fletcher comes across us, with elder Athenian spirits: 30 yet the final outcome is no mere freshened memory of old greatness and delights, but a recognition of the true and living poet in Mr. Bridges, who thus delicately preserves for modern use an antique charm. . . .

A thorough consideration of Mr. Bridges' poetry would

ponder long his skill in music and in metre: for in these he has something of the master's touch, and beyond the dexterity of a novice. But so full of minute and of technical scholarship is he, that a treatise were required for the exhibition of his theoretic science and actual practice. But I will say, that, if he err at all, it is in a certain concision and compactness, coming of many strong monosyllables, too little tempered and relieved by words of a more prolonged melody: it is an effect, something between briskness and loislprightliness, common in the less deft and versatile of 'Elizabethan lyrists, and unequal to occasions of great and moving beauty. Such verses are, indeed, of a pleasant tone and of a just economy; their structure is neat and clean, they are without waste and profusion of words: but coming from Mr. Bridges, they come rather as 'copies of verses', done in the scholar's humour, for the leisurely exercise' sake, than as the best products of his imagination. When he chooses to sing or to chaunt, with more of various melody and concerted music, we regret, not without some ingrati-
 20 tude, his less delicate or lofty strain. In certain measures, devised with a great subtilty of accents, equal in number upon each line, but in each line prevailing over various reaches, or disposed at various intervals, Mr. Bridges has not yet attained a perfect ease: but he contrives many pleasurable effects: witness some of the lines on *a Dead Child*

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair! . . .

Besides the *Shorter Poems*, the volume of seventy-nine
 30 sonnets, entitled *The Growth of Love*, is of noticeable beauty: it may be thought, in point of mental and imaginative strength, his finest work. Unlike most sonnets of our time, these sonnets are weighty with close thought, and rich with images, in the Shakespearian, and in Milton's ways; yet not

obscure, nor luxuriant, in the less happy manner of Rossetti. And their substance is congruous with the form: each grave or exulting thought finds within the limits of the fourteen lines, an exact place for it to fill: so Petrarch conceived the sonnet, and so Sidney. . . .

Briefly, and generally, I have touched upon the characteristic virtues, as I see them, of this excellent poet: rather indicating, than attempting to expound, his peculiar charm. It is a limited charm: not that it is one liable to decay with time, or to pass with the reader's passing moods. But it is 10 limited, in the sense that this poetry in all its simplicity, in all its skill, is too dainty a thing for common use. Unlike the poems of Arnold or of Wordsworth, of Virgil or of Keats, of Milton or of Goethe, they cannot be read daily and in all places. That is a test of great poetry: its abiding and unfailing power upon us, because of its indifference to time and place. A line of Virgil, written by the Bay of Naples, in some most private hour of meditation, all those long years ago! comes home to us, as though it were our own thought: upon each repetition, experience has made it more true and touch- 20 ing. Or take some verse of Arnold, written at Oxford or in London, some few years past: it comes home to us, as though a thousand years had pondered it, and found it true. And in beauty, in power of music and of phrase, the great poets are all contemporaries: an eternal beauty is upon the great works of art, as though they were from everlasting. Poets of exquisite charm, true to their art, true to its traditions, full of its inner spirit, may still miss that final grace and grandeur: and of these, Mr. Bridges is, in my poor judgment, the most admirable in recent times. Had a friend been 30 reading Herrick to me, or Catullus; were I lying in the gardens of New College in Oxford, or in Winchester Meads; did some one play to me a fugue of Bach: I might, at this hour, rate the *Shorter Poems of Robert Bridges* far higher than my conscience, unperturbed by delights, will suffer me.

xxviii LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

For they are poems, unaffected and simple, yet with an air of dainty luxury, about them: free from all trivial show and glitter/ yet not commanding and compelling us by their intrinsic greatness.

EDWARD DOWDEN ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, reprinted in
New Studies in Literature, 1895.

THERE is a lyric which is the direct outcry of passion transformed to art—such are some of the songs of Burns; a lyric which is the expression of profound and ardent contemplation—such are some of Wordsworth's poems; a lyric, which is architectonic in character, the product of an elaborate evolution—such are some of the odes of Gray. Mr. Bridges' poems are seldom mere outcries of passion; they do not often explore the heights and depths of thought; they are in general of admirable evolution, but their design is rarely (save in the choral odes of his dramas) complex and of large dimensions. Elements of many and various kinds enter into his volume of 'Shorter Poems'—delicate observation, delight in external nature, delight in art, delight in love, gladness and grief, ethical seriousness, pensive meditation, graceful play of fancy. But all are subdued to balance, measure, harmony; and sometimes our infirmity craves for some dominant note, some fine extravagance, even some splendid sins. Mr. Bridges' audacities are to be found in occasional phrases—often felicitous and of true descriptive or interpretative power, sometimes not felicitous—and in his metrical experiments. But in his metrical experiments there is nothing revolutionary; they are extensions of a true tradition in English verse; they amount to little more than nicely calculated variations of stress. No writer of verse understands his business better than Mr. Bridges; and if finer and subtler harmonies are attained unconsciously or

half-consciously by greater poets, our ear soon adapts itself to the delicate surprises and delicate satisfactions, which he has thought out and felt out as a skilled craftsman. . . .

Mr. Bridges¹ poems have been censured for a lack of warm humanity, and, with the exception of certain poems of joy and love, his lyrics are not direct and simple utterances of passion. But many of his lyrics are charged with fine and tender human sentiment, and he can express moods of dejection and meditative sorrow as well as the happiness of lovers. There is poignant grief, purged of all that is violent, 10 in the beautiful stanzas *On a Dead Child*. Even into his interpretation of nature an element of humanity enters. It was a bold enterprise, for any poet to attempt a new rendering of the nightingales¹ voices when Keats had been his predecessor; but there is magic in Mr. Bridges' poem, *Nightingales*, and half the magic is won, not from the birds' songs, but from the heart of man.

LAURENCE BINYON ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Dome*, 1899.

THAT Mr. Bridges should be neglected has seemed strange and deplorable to many of his admirers; but, however deplorable, it is not really strange. Let us not be angry with 20 the reviewers; let us rather sympathise with their misfortunes, which no one, who has not tried reviewing, can truly gauge. Compelled by cruel editors to read, digest, and pronounce on books almost before they are published, forced to proclaim their judgment before thousands and tens of thousands of readers, who will not listen if they do not shout, with what cause may they not lament, with Matthew Arnold—

What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise ?

30

They are condemned, against their will, to a hurried stripping

from the pages before them of the ornaments that glitter most, and to hang their plain columns with these brilliant trophies. There are some authors whom this treatment flatters; Mr. Bridges is one of those whom it most injures. It was quite easy by this method to prove that Alexander Smith (the classic instance) was of the rank of Keats. Read in quotations, at the breakfast-table, or on the top of an omnibus, doubtless he seemed a Shakespeare. Unfortunately for him, the world was led to read his work. He would have
10 been wiser, had he bought up the edition and placed it in safe flames, and survived as Sappho has survived. For he shone in fragments. The most extravagantly praised poet of this reign, he has now subsided into darkness. Mr. Bridges is a poet of a very different type. His beauties are not easily detachable, but inhere in the substance of his work; he cannot be known in quotations. More than this, his poetry does not reveal itself all at once. On a second reading it seems finer than on the first; on each successive reading its fine qualities grow and deepen. And this, which is the stumbling-
20 block of the reviews, is indeed its greatest merit. For poetry is made to be known, loved, enjoyed; and the poetry which wins us with tranquil and sure power is victorious in the end over that which thrills at the first reading, and chills on the third or fourth. There is too much said in our modern emotional criticism about 'thrills'; the test is too dangerously personal.... That some oracular Anonym has been thrilled tells us nothing. If, then, we are silent about our thrills, and apply other forgotten tests to Mr. Bridges' poetry, we shall find, I think, that it has virtues of a high and rare order,
30 virtues which some accepted masterpieces might envy. For the best of Mr. Bridges' poems have that structural beauty, that 'wholeness of good tissue,' which is the pith of all enduring art. Some may find them not sufficiently exciting, may complain that their hues are too sober; just as people will complain of the low tone of a Velasquez landscape. But

the main thing is achieved, without which splendours are of little avail....

This underlying beauty and organic strength are matched by similar qualities in imagery and rhythm. Mr. Bridges' images are scarcely ever 'striking'; you may search him in vain for stanzas so obviously spirited and picturesque as that admired stanza of Mr. Davidson's (perhaps the stanza most praised by the critics in all recent poetry)—

The adventurous sun took heaven by storm:
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

10

This is as successful in its way as a vigorous water-colour by David Cox; it has merits which everyone grasps in a moment; and it is perhaps only when we examine it a little, that we find that it has no imaginative, no finely poetic qualities at all. And the false note of the first line can only be excused by the excited temper in which the whole ballad is written. This example happened to be at hand; but it is not quite fair to single out Mr. Davidson, since one might mention one or two popular favourites even among our poetical classics, which will not really bear a strict analysis. Mr. Bridges is singularly free, I think, from hidden flaws in the texture of his work. He approaches his subject in a spirit so scrupulous and sincere, that his beauties are always truths, and lie deep; such touches, I mean, as that comparison in *The South Wind*:

As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower—
Like as the stem that beareth the flower
By trembling is knit to power.

30

And this is the reason why his observation is so subtle, delicate, and new, excelling, as I think, Tennyson, in one of Tennyson's main excellences.

Again, of Mr. Bridges' rhythm I would say that it has the

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finest virtue of all good rhythm, namely, a perfect expressiveness. It is organic, it flowers spontaneously from the subject, and it obeys the changing thought with an exquisitely true vibration. Mr. Bridges in this carries on the tradition which Shelley handed down to us in his divine lyric art; the tradition which has degenerated rather than developed (let us take courage to say the truth) in the too mechanical devices and the too facile melodies of Mr. Swinburne. Mr. Swinburne's stanzas always dazzle and astonish; but his
10 rhythm has almost nothing of those magic responses to the turns of emotion, those lovely natural falterings, and those victorious bursts, in which Shelley's art surpasses that of all other lyric writers.

Taken thus in every view, Mr. Bridges appears the sure master of all that he attempts; and if one is to quarrel with his poetry, it must be on the ground that he attempts too little, that he abstains from too much.

ARTHUR SYMONS ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Monthly Review*, July 1901, reprinted in
Studies in Prose and Verse, 1904.

MR. BRIDGES appears to me, in his 'Shorter Poems', to be alone in our time as a writer of purely lyric poetry, poetry
20 which aims at being an 'embodied joy', a calm rapture. Others have concerned themselves with passions more vehement, with thoughts more profound, with a wilder music, a more variable colour; others have been romantic, realistic, classical, and tumultuous; have brought a remote magic into verse, and have made verse out of sorrowful things close at hand. But while all these men have been singing themselves, and what they have counted most individual in themselves, this man has put into his verse only what remains over when all the others have finished. It is a kind
30 of essence; it is what is imperishable in perfume; it is what

is nearest in words to silence. Of the writer of 'Will love again awake', or 'I love all beauteous things', you know no more than you know of the writer of 'Kind are her answers', or of 'O Love, they wrong thee much', in the Elizabethan song-books. You know only that joy has come harmoniously into a soul, which, for the moment at least, has been purged of everything less absolute than the sheer responsiveness of song. And so, better than the subtlest dramatist, the lyric poet, in his fine, self-sacrificing simplicity, can speak for all the world, scarcely even knowing that he is speaking for 10 himself at all. And in this poetry, it should be noted, nothing is allowed for its own sake, not even the most seductive virtue, as pathos, the ecstasy of love or of religion; but everything for the sake of poetry. Here is an artist so scrupulous that beauty itself must come only in sober apparel, joy only walking temperately, sorrow without the private disfiguring of tears. Made, as it is, out of what might be the commonplace, if it were not the most select thing in the world; written, as it is, with a deliberateness which might be cold if it were not at that quiet heat in which rapture is 20 no longer astonished at itself; realising, as it does, Coleridge's requirement that 'poetry in its higher and purer sense' should demand 'continuous admiration, not regular recurrence of conscious surprise'; this poetry, more than almost any in English, is art for art's sake; and it shows, better certainly than any other, how that formula saves from excess, rather than induces to it. So evenly are form and substance set over against one another that it might be said, with as much or as little justice, that everything exists for form, or that nothing is sacrificed to it. ... 30

Mr. Bridges' style in verse has been said to lack originality, and it is true that his finest lyrics might have found their place among the lyrics in an Elizabethan song-book. And yet they are not archaic, a going back to the external qualities of style, but a thinking back, as of one who really, in

thought, lives in another age, to which his temper of mind is more akin. They are very personal, but personal in a way so abstract, so little dependent on accidents of what we call personality, that it seems the most natural thing in the world for him to turn to a style which comes to him with a great, anonymous tradition. He has never had that somewhat prosaic desire to paint himself 'with all the warts', and he is quite indifferent to the self-consciousness which goes by the name of originality. Just as, in his plays, he borrows
 10 frankly from any one who deals in his own merchandise, so in his lyrics he tries to write only what might have been written in any time or in any country. . . . He seems almost impersonal in his work, indifferent whose it is, his own or another's, as if only its excellence interested him. And this work, when it is most narrowly personal, does not so much render moods of a temperament as aspects of a character. Nobility of character, a moral largeness, which becomes one with an intellectual breadth, a certain gravity, simplicity, sincerity: these count for so much in his work, which indeed
 20 they seem to make. . . .

Made, as it is, on so firm a basis of character, his art is concerned with results rather than (as with most lyric poets) with processes. How many of his poems seem to lead from meditation straight to action; to be expressing something more definite, more formed and settled, than a feeling divorced from consequences! When, as so often, he finds words for an almost inarticulate delight, it is, for the most part, no accidental but rather an organic delight to which he gives utterance! the response of nature to his nature, of his
 30 nature to nature.

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate, emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of

subtlety endeavours to come in. Mr. Bridges' poetic heat is intermittent, and thus his felicity; for all charm in verse, however 'frail and careful', is born of some energy at white heat. At rare times, even in the short poems, and not only in so long a poem as, for instance, 'Prometheus the Fire-giver', one feels that the wave of thought or emotion does not flow broadly and strongly to the end, but breaks on the way. . . .

To Mr. Bridges, undoubtedly, there is something of an actual 'joy' in making poetry, in the mere writing of verse. 10
No one in our time has written verse more consciously and more learnedly, with a more thorough realisation of all those effects which are commonly supposed to come to poets by some divine accident. . . .

If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance. This poet, collectedly living apart, to whom the common rewards of 20 life are not so much a temptation, has meditated deeply on the conduct of life, in the freest, most universal sense; and he has attained a philosophy of austere, not unsmiling content, in which something of the cheerfulness of the Stoic unites with the more melancholy resignation of the Christian, and, limiting himself so resolutely to this sober outlook upon life, though with a sense of the whole wisdom of the ages:

Then oft I turn the page
In which our country's name, 30
Spoiling the Greek of fame,
Shall sound in every age:
Or some Terentian play
Renew, whose excellent
Adjusted folds betray
How once Menander went:

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limiting himself, as in his verse, to a moderation which is an infinite series of rejections, he becomes the wisest of living poets, as he is artistically the most faultless. He has left by the way all the fine and coloured and fantastic and splendid things which others have done their utmost to attain, and he has put into his poetry the peace and not the energies of life, the wisdom and not the fever of love, the silences rather than the voices of nature. . . .

SIR WALTER RALEIGH ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

ROBERT BRIDGES has just been in on the way down the 10 hill. He is delightfully grumpy. He mentions thing after thing which is commonly believed and says that of course it's not so. He's always right. His intellect has been so completely self-indulged that it now can't understand rubbish. He has never obeyed anyone or adapted himself to anyone, so he's as clear as crystal, and can't do with fogs. (30 October 1912.)

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R. B. says he can't bear Donne, because Donne was a sensualist. R. B. is a pernickety, dainty, wilful, self-indulgent chaste old bird. Just a shade too little of a blackguard. (10 20 November 1916.)

W. B. YEATS ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

I had a short illness six months ago and the first sign of returning health was the excitement of finding that I could read poetry again and the poem that brought on this excitement was your poem on the dead child. In my weak state it produced an almost unendurable emotion.

(To Robert Bridges, 20 April 1913.)

I have always so greatly admired [his] work. It has an emotional purity and rhythmical delicacy no living man can equal. (To Siegfried Sassoon, 7 October 1924.)

I think I remember your husband most clearly as I saw him at some great house near you where there were some Servian delegates. He came through the undistinguished crowd, an image of mental and physical perfection, and one of the Servians turned to me in obvious excitement to ask his name. He has always seemed the only poet, whose influence has always heightened and purified the art of others, 10 and all who write with deliberation are his debtors.

(To Mrs. Bridges, 7 May 1930.)

From *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.

ROBERT BRIDGES seemed for a time, through his influence on Laurence Binyon and others less known, the patron saint of the movement. His influence—practice, not theory—was never deadening; he gave to lyric poetry a new cadence, a distinction as deliberate as that of Whistler's painting, an impulse moulded and checked like that in certain poems of Landor, but different, more in the nerves, less in the blood, more birdlike, less human; words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing, 20

A glitter of pleasure
And a dark tomb,

or by some trick of simplicity, not the impulsive simplicity of youth but that of age, much impulse examined and rejected.

WALTER DE LA MARE ON BRIDGES

From *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*, 30 August 1913,
reprinted in *Private View*, 1953.

TO Mr. Bridges this patience (the patience of the conscious artist) is not merely the outcome of wisdom acquired

from experience; it is an innate quality of mind. A deliberate reticence, a sedulous restraint, a hatred of revelations, are its constant marks. It is never in danger of a loose insincerity, bombast, mere prettiness. Its tendency is rather towards the impersonal and academic. It may become austere almost to the point of aridity. A trace of Augustan formality edges at times into the verse; 'rival amorous vows Amaze the scented air'; an acrostic on the revered name of Purcell diversifies the exquisitely told tale of *Eros and Psyche*. But

10 though inspiration occasionally flags or fails it, the tinder, as it were, is always there; it is the spark that is wanting. This is only another way of saying that Mr. Bridges is that too-rare combination of excellences—a scholar as well as a poet. Whatever his interest centres on, whether music, or hymnody, English speech, prosody, or technical criticism, his method and treatment are always close and thorough, and his conclusions are never extravagant. In an age of crazes and caprice, of curiosity, ostentation, and publicity, he has consistently stood aloof—but not as a mere spectator. He is

20 beyond any of his contemporaries—and forerunners, too—the poet of discipline, of a serene assurance, of an unfretful though by no means passive endurance of what a divine destiny may send and life commit to. ... A tranquil ease and mastery invariably characterize his work, an assured play of mind, a slightly astringent irony. No smoke, no fire, says the proverb; but this close artist kept even his chimney out of sight. His consistent example is a counsel of excellence.... In such poems as *The Affliction of Richard*, *Pater Filio*, *I never shall love the snow again*, a heart desperately charged

3° with grief and perplexity may still express itself in words that reveal more clearly even than these its faith and trust and courage. But though the initial spontaneity of Mr. Bridges's lyrics is never entirely hidden, it much more clearly shows itself to be a kind of distillation of reflection and reverie. And this is true although—beyond perhaps that of

any other English poet—his verse is free from regret or melancholy or sadness or reproach. And there falls across his page no Shadow of Despair.

H. W. GARROD ON BRIDGES

From a lecture (Harvard, 1929) printed in *Poetry and the Criticism of Life*, 1931.

IT becomes us, reading it [*The Testament of Beauty*], to remember that the book is, what its title proclaims it, a testament. It is the final deliverance, the last will and monition, upon the subject of beauty, of a lifelong student of the beautiful. The writer of it, making his last dispositions, is in the nature of things uninfluenced by the ordinary literary motives, vanity and love of glory. But he wishes before he 10 takes leave of the sensible world to put upon record his experience of the beautiful, what it has meant in his life, what he conceives to be its relation to truth, what promise he finds in it of immortality for man's spirit.

It is not easy, I have said, to dodge the argument of the poem. The main lines of it are easy enough to follow.

How the mind of man from inconscient existence
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning
toward spiritual conscience,

20

that is Mr. Bridges' theme. In the treatment of it, the first book is introductory, and nearly all of it is pure poetry—perhaps of any immersion in philosophy the most delightful part is trying the water with one's toe. Beginning from the origin and growth of intellectual Wonder, the book explains the spiritual as, in all its departments, a differentiation of the natural, as the flower is a differentiation of the leaf; the four sections into which the introduction is divided furnish together a brief outline of the natural history of what Mr. Bridges calls Wisdom. The two books which 30

follow deal with the two fundamental human instincts; the self-assertive instinct, which Mr. Bridges calls 'Selfhood', and the instinct of sex, which he mostly prefers to speak of as 'Breed'. Book II traces the evolution of Selfhood into altruism, the passion of benevolence, an evolution conditioned naturally by the fact of 'Motherhood'. Book III instructs us how Breed is by like natural process converted into spiritual love. The fourth book is concerned with Ethick—the origin of the idea of duty, the place of pleasure
 10 in the good life, disposition and education, the relation of Reason to the idea of Beauty and to the material of the senses generally,

If it is not easy to dodge the argument, neither is it easy for Mr. Bridges to dodge the question whether there ought to be one. But he does—it suffices for him to have written, against all odds, the only readable philosophical poem since Lucretius. I fancy that he thinks his argument better, abstractly, than it is, i.e., better than I think it; and newer than it is, i.e., not as old as the hills and the human heart.¹
 20 But I am sure, in any case, that the best comment upon the whole of it is to be given in his own words:

and the secret of a poem
 lieth in the intimate echo of the poet's life:

The power of the argument, I mean, consists in the manner in which it reflects an experience. The same is in some degree true, no doubt, of the *De Rerum Natura*—though the power of Lucretius derives mainly, perhaps, from his proselytising ardour (Mr. Bridges is not much concerned to proselytise). But argument is reason, and poetry is beauty;
 30 and when I have read these four books—and four times have I read them with close attention, reasoning as best I could, and submitting (not always with the best grace in the world) to be reasoned with—after all this reading and

¹ What is new is Mr. Bridges' audacious eclecticism.

re-reading I have to confess that I still do not know how Mr. Bridges relates Reason to Beauty. By Beauty he says,

by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,
but not by Reason at Beauty.

Yet Reason, or reasoning, has a front place in this *Testament of Beauty*; and when I hope that Mr. Bridges is at length going to tell me why, he breaks off:

here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me,
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

Of the things that cannot be told Mr. Bridges has 10 managed, none the less, to tell some in a manner of which the deep and original power cannot, I persuade myself, be matched outside the very greatest poetry.

G. S. GORDON ON BRIDGES

From *Robert Bridges* (The Rede Lecture 1931), 1946.

DOLBEN'S assumption that emotional urgency will find or make its own form is the romantic, and also the amateur, view in all the arts, and can only be disproved by failure. Neither on this nor on one other point to which he draws attention did Bridges change. I mean his inability to suppose that the emotions of the poets he read were any better than his own, or his own than another's. Many years later, in his 20 famous essay on Keats he reaffirms this:

'There must be thousands and thousands of persons alive at this moment in England, who, if they could only give poetic expression to those mysterious feelings with which they are moved in the presence of natural beauty, would be one and all of them greater poets than have ever yet been.¹ This is easily said, but Bridges meant it. What these thousands of people want, of course, is art; an art equal to that mystery. But their souls are right. No less than his respect

for art is his faith in the human spirit, at whatever stage of articulation, and this was a tenet of his creed to the end. It is so declared in his last poem, and indeed is a necessity of its reasoning. I speak of it now because the thorough-paced artist, as Bridges was, has so seldom held this view. It is of a piece with his devout humanity. . . .

He came to have some half a dozen languages at his command, and was a wide and intent but increasingly selective and capricious reader. There had so seldom been
10 any reason why he should persevere with what he did not like, or open, indeed, at all, what failed to invite him. It was his one complaint against Mr. W. P. Ker that he was so catholic, that not content with the appalling self-sacrifice of reading everything, he actually tried (could it be believed?) to *like* everything also—for something. When Mr. Bridges had decided that Dryden, for example, had nothing that he wanted, it was no good speaking to him of Dryden's other abilities; he was done with Dryden. It is the difference between the reading of the scholar and the artist, even when
20 the artist is a scholar: the mature artist, at any rate, reads not so much to enlarge his taste as to confirm or refine it....

The loose and roomy metre of the *Testament* is, in fact, the last fruit of prosodic investigation, of a series of experiments carried on by the poet with perfect frankness for many years, and to that, and that alone, we owe that the poem was ever written. This is not the usual order in the genesis of poetry, but it was Bridges' order. Had he failed to discover the metre of the *Testament*, I will not say that he would never have written his philosophy. He spoke often of doing
30 so, sometimes, in despair, of doing it in prose. I have noticed, indeed, that his Broadcast Lecture on Poetry, given in 1929, is an advance statement of the principles of his poem. But he would not have written the *Testament of Beauty*....

No man was more steadily true to himself. His physical

and mental beauty matched each other, and equipped him superbly for the life he chose. He was of noble and even heroic presence, and his careless outdoor strength and grace, growing more picturesque with age, expressed the colour and delicacy as well as the masculine humour and outspoken freedom of his mind. He was poet, scientist, philosopher, naturalist, musician, philologist, typographer, and country gentleman—a mixture of qualities that would have been surprising in another man, and probably ineffectual, but that in him achieved their harmony.—He grew up, through 10 the kindness of fortune, unwarped by the struggle of living, with none of the inevitable vices of a profession. He used the gifts of fortune responsibly, setting an example of high-minded devotion to all the arts of Beauty and to the spiritual advancement of mankind. Before he died he delivered in the *Testament of Beauty* his message of belief in the goodness of the human heart, and of faith in the religious foundation of human life.

CYRIL CONNOLLY ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Sunday Times*, 11 January 1953.

IT is interesting to reconsider this late Victorian bard of Boar's Hill, scholar and muscular metrical Christian, from 20 our disadvantage point in 1953, surrounded by

the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings, the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art.

The defect is obvious: lack of inspiration. No poet seems so consistently without it; and yet, unblessed by any heavenly visitation, he worked bravely on, steeping himself in the true and beautiful—Plato, Dante, Wordsworth, and, above all, Milton—studiously observing the minutiae of the country- 30

side, dryly doing his best as our official poet during a momentous war, sitting on Hopkins's manuscript and pondering problems of prosody: until suddenly, in his eighties, the Muse took pity on him and changed his Martha into Mary. Grace flowed, inspiration descended, and the long and difficult but also intelligent and beautiful 'Testament of Beauty'¹ appeared, dedicated to the King and running into fourteen editions, a modern miracle, a swansong of Victorian integrity, Edwardian learning and Georgian
10 questioning, where Christian platonism

passionat soul and sense
blend in a rich reverie with the dying year.

The five volumes of shorter poems which appeared between 1873 and 1893 contain, however, some lovely things in which nicety of observation and felicity of rhythm compensate for a certain monotony of diction and feeling: a gardener-poet, a walker and a boatman quietly develops, growing familiar with the moods of the countryside and constituting himself the poet of winterspring, the season
20 when January bequeaths to February and March its faltering authority:

Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,
Doth to his heiress shew
His kingdom fair.
In patient russet is his forest spread,
All bright with bramble red,
With beechen moss
And holly sheen: the oak silver and stark
Sunneth his aged bark
And wrinkled boss.

30

'January,' 'November,' 'The Palm Willow,' 'London Snow,' 'A Robin,' 'The Upper Skies,' 'Screaming Tarn'—these and many other slight but haunting and graceful poems end by producing a quiet intoxication in the reader, an aquatinted calendar of the English scene.

Selections from
ROBERT BRIDGES

From POEMS, 1873

HER eye saw, her eye stumbled:
 Her fingers spread and touched it:
 It was so ripe it tumbled
 Off in her hand, that clutched it.

She raised it up to smell it: 5
 Her jealous tongue ran o'er it:
 Ere the thought rose to quell it,
 Her keen teeth closed and tore it.

There as she stood in wonder,
 And smacked the flavour fruity, 10
 She scanned it o'er and under,
 And marvelled at its beauty.

'It's fair,' she said, 'and fairest
 Just where the sun's rays strike it;
 The tastes's the strangest, rarest; 15
 It's bitter, but I like it,'

To man she brought it, bitten,
 She brought it, she the woman,
 The fruit, of which 'tis written
 The eating should undo man. 20

'Taste, taste!' she cried, 'thou starvest;
 Eat as I ate, nor fear it,
 For of all the garden's harvest
 There's nothing like or near it.

' Fair to the eyes, and fairest 25
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
But oh! the taste's the rarest,
It's bitter, but thou'lt like it.

He took the fruit she gave him,
Took it for pain or pleasure: 3°
There was no help could save him,
Her measure was his measure.

Through her teeth's print, the door of it,
He sent his own in after;
He ate rind, flesh, and core of it, 35
And burst out into laughter.

'Tis fair,' he cried, 'and fairest
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
The taste's the strangest, rarest,
It's bitter, and I like it.¹

From PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

ODE

A COY inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,
 Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things
 Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under. 815
 It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings
 Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,
 And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her:
 She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820
 The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth; and later
 The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night;
 'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,
 With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah! how surely, 825
 How soon and surely will disenchantment come,
 When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,
 And drives the master spirit away from his home;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning
 Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830
 Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,
 As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,
 And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning;
 Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite!

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest 835
 To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright:
 To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest;
 Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting
 The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest
 With wonder everlasting. 840

From THE GROWTH OF LOVE

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,
 And carry purpose up to the ends of the air:
 In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where
 By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies:
 Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise 5
 The silence: over plains in the moonlight bare
 I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare
 In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds! then I cry,
 Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd 10
 By the only joy of knowing that ye fly;
 Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,
 The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
 Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
 That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
 Hailing in each the citadel divine
 The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago;
 Until at length your feeble steps and slow 5
 Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
 And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine
 Whether it be Jerusalem or no:

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you;
 For, having worshipped many a barren face, 10
 I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to:
 I stand a pagan in the holy place;
 Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
 And question with the God that I embrace.

33

I CARE not if I live, tho¹ life and breath
 Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
 I care not if I die, for I coud meet—
 Being so happy—happily my death.
 I care not if I love; to-day she saith 5
 She loveth, and love's history is complete.
 Nor care I if she love me; at her feet
 My spirit bows entranced and worshippeth.

I have no care for what was most my care,
 But all around me see fresh beauty born, 10
 And common sights grown lovelier than they were:
 I dream of love, and in the light of morn
 Tremble, beholding all things very fair
 And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.

40

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,
 Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,
 Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,
 Tears of hope, pride and pity, tiust and prayer,
 Tears of contrition; all tears whatsoe'er 5
 Of tenderness or kindness had she shed
 Who here is pictured, ere upon her head
 The fine gold might be turn'd to silver there.

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place
 Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son; 10
 But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace:
 So that I praise the artist, who hath done
 A portrait, for my worship, of the face
 Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize
 The prize of life from age and likelihood,
 I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
 Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.
 For in the forest among many trees 5
 Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
 The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
 That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high
 Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare; 10
 Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
 So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
 From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
 When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

WHEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand
 The traveller faints, upon his closing ear
 Steals a fantastic music: he may hear
 The babbling fountain of his native land.
 Before his eyes the vision seems to stand, 5
 Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,
 Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,
 And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire— 10
 O shameless, O contempt of holy things.
 But never of their wanton play they tire,
 As not athirst they sit beside the springs,
 While he must quench in death his lost desire.

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice
 Of works unperfected and broken schemes,
 Where is the promise of my early dreams,
 The smile of beauty and the pearl of price?
 No charm is left now that could once entice 5
 Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,
 And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,
 Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air
 Has chill'd endeavour: sickly memories reign 10
 In every room, and ghosts are on the stair:
 And hope behind the dusty window-pane
 Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care
 Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

51

0 MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
 That in my secret book with so much care
 I write you, this one here and that one there,
 Marking the time and order of your birth?
 How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth, 5
 A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
 Look ye for any welcome anywhere
 From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd
 To write you such as once, when I was young, 10
 Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.
 Twere something yet to live again among
 The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd
 My art, be there remember'd for my song.

SINCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond
 Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
 Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
 Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond;
 Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond 5
 Is writ my promise of eternity;
 Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,
 That if thou look but from me I despond;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this:
 Think of the dedication of my youth: 10
 Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss:
 Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
 My sheer annihilation if I miss:
 Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

TWAS on the very day winter took leave
 Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies
 The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise
 At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,
 I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve; 5
 Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise
 As Adam went alone in Paradise,
 Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around
 I laid me down beneath a flowering tree, 10
 And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound;
 In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,
 Rending my body, where with hurried sound
 I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

THE dark and serious angel, who so long
 Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,
 Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
 To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
 Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong, 5
 Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
 God's purpose in a soul of such degree;
 And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
 He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay, 10
 And work confusion of so many foes:
 The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,
 Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes
 Unto what great reward I cannot say.

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,
 In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,
 To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,
 Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.
 Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state, 5
 That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve
 Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,
 Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
 And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin, 10
 Even as our anger soon is past and dead
 Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
 By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
 And in the vale of terror comforted.

(II)

From SHORTER POEMS

Book I

I

ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day; 5
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament 10
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit 15
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray, 20
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

(12)

Many an afternoon 25
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums 30
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon 35
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem 40
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content 45
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

2

ELEGY

THE wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

(13)

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten, 5
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:— 10
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her, 15
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls. 20

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches 25
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:
And birds that love the South have taken wing. 30
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

5

I HEARD a linnet courting
 His lady in the spring:
 His mates were idly sporting,
 Nor stayed to hear him sing
 His song of love.— 5
 I fear my speech distorting
 His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading
 Were full of young delight;
 And she that gave him heeding 10
 Interpreted aright
 His gay, sweet notes,—
 So sadly marred in the reading,—
 His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer 15
 Awaited the refrain,
 Till swiftly perching nearer
 He sang his song again,
 His pretty song:—
 Would that my verse spake clearer 20
 His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!
 That in the merry spring
 Think not of what misfeatures
 Or cares the year may bring; 25
 But unto love
 Resign your simple natures,
 To tender love.

7

I WILL not let thee go.
 Ends all our month-long love in this?
 Can it be summed up so,
 Quit in a single kiss?
 I will not let thee go. 5

I will not let thee go.
 If thy words¹ breath could scare thy deeds,
 As the soft south can blow
 And toss the feathered seeds,
 Then might I let thee go. 10

I will not let thee go.
 Had not the great sun seen, I might;
 Or were he reckoned slow
 To bring the false to light,
 Then might I let thee go. 15

I will not let thee go.
 The stars that crowd the summer skies
 Have watched us so below
 With all their million eyes,
 I dare not let thee go. 20

I will not let thee go.
 Have we not chid the changeful moon,
 Now rising late, and now
 Because she set too soon,
 And shall I let thee go? 25

(16)

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go. 30

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go. 35

9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late:
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought, 5
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn: 10
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

ii

LONG are the hours the sun is above,
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

(17)

She does not meet me upon the stair,—
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :
I always walk straight up to my love;

And she lets me take my wonted place
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face. 10

There as I sit, from her head thrown back
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear, 15
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,
The firelight hours are a dream of gold. 20

And so I sit here night by night,
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair,
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay: 25
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,
That I sit so much by myself alone.

ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,
And all ye loves, assemble; far and wide
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before
Has been deferred to this late eventide :

For on this night the bride, 5
The days of her betrothal over,
Leaves the parental hearth for evermore;
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain
Yet all unvisited, the silken gown: 10
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain
Her dearer friends provided: sere and brown

Bring out the festal crown,
And set it on her forehead lightly:
Though it be withered, twine no wreath again; 15
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,
While her attendants, chosen from among 20

Her faithful virgin throng,
May lay her in her cedar litter,
Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.

(19)

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be 25
Not without music, nor with these alone;
But let the viol lead the melody,
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan
Of sinking semitone;
And, all in choir, the virgin voices 30
Rest not from singing in skilled harmony
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night, 35
And then the maidens, in a double row,
Each singing soft and low,
And each on high a torch upstaying:
Unto her lover lead her forth with light,
With music, and with singing, and with praying. 40

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,
And found her trusty window open wide,
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,
That long the restless curtain would not hide
Her form that stood beside; 45
As scarce she dared to be delighted,
Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn: 50
And watching she has seen no shadow pass
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne
Upon her ear forlorn.
In vain has she looked out to greet him;
He has not come, he will not come, alas! 55
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

Now to the river bank the priests are come:
 The bark is ready to receive its freight:
 Let some prepare her place therein, and some
 Embark the litter with its slender weight: 60

The rest stand by in state,
 And sing her a safe passage over;
 While she is oared across to her new home,
 Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thott, O lover, that art on the watch, 65
 Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,
 The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch
 The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

Thou, when the torchlight gleams,
 When thou shalt see the slow procession, 70
 And when thine ears the fitful music catch,
 Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

16

TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master;
 Of more than common friendliness
 When first we met we did not guess.
 Who could foretell this sore distress, 5
 This irretrievable disaster
 When first we met?—We did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master.

Book II

I

MUSE

WILL Love again awake,
That lies asleep so long?

POET

O hush! ye tongues that shake
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE

It is a lady fair 5
Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET

She must be fair of face, 10
As bold of heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
With the delight of dreams.

MUSE

Her beauty would surprise
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise 15
Upon the scattered sheaves.

(22)

POET

O sweet must be the voice
He shall descend to hear,
Who doth in Heaven rejoice
His most enchanted ear. 20

MUSE

The smile, that rests to play
Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
Tricks her sweet syllables.

POET

And yet her smiles have danced 25
In vain, if her discourse
Win not the soul entranced
In divine intercourse.

MUSE

She will encounter all
This trial without shame, 30
Her eyes men Beauty call,
And Wisdom is her name.

POET

Throw back the portals then,
Ye guards, your watch that keep,
Love will awake again 35
That lay so long asleep.

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest ?
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest, 5
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
 In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air: 10
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
 grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair 15
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
 That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
 As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
 From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
 In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place 5
 Their thick tops interlace,
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
 Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade, 10
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare
 The stout roots in the air:
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played 15
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
 Robbing the golden market of the bees: 20

And laden barges float
 By banks of myosote;
 And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool 25
 Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
 The drowning nenuphars, 30
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows 35
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:

 Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high. 40

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;
 And dreams, or falls asleep, 45
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
 In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care 50
 Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
 May by the pathway of the forest fare:
 As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
 Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware 55
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam; 60
 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

(26)

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames? 65
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:
 Lest ere I come the while
 Strange feet your shades defile; 70
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
 Within your guardian isle.

7

THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;
O still solitude, only matched in the skies:
 Perilous in steep places,
 Soft in the level races,
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies; 5
With lovely undulation of fall and rise;
 Entrenched with thickets thorned,
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned!

1 climb your crown, and lo! a sight surprising
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide: 10
 And scattered ships ascending
 To heaven, lost in the blending
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,
Urging their engines against wind and tide,
 And all so small and slow 15
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,
 Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,
 Takes my ear, in the veering
 Baffled wind, as rearing 20
 Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;
 And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;
 While again at the foot of the downs
 He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.

10

ELEGY

AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews
 I come, unquiet sorrows to control;
 Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse
 With my neglected solitary soul;
 And to poetic sadness care confide, 5
 Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide:

They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,
 Among the tombs finding my rare delight,
 Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,
 Or in the windy moon-enchanted night, 10
 Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,
 And given them water from the well divine.—

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun
 Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;
 The seeds are perfected: his work is done, 15
 And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May;
 Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear
 Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,
 The world my solemn fancy leaves behind, 20
 Come! pass within the inviolable wall,
 Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind;
 Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,
 And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears; 25
 For many eyes have sanctified this spot,
 Where grief's unbroken lineage endears
 The charm untimely Folly injures not,
 And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap
 The simple fence its holiness doth keep. 30

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
 Their pompous legends will no smile awake;
 Even the vainglorious title o'er the head
 Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake;
 And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize, 35
 Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,
 Here where a lover left his bride, below
 The treasured names their own are added on
 To those whom they have followed long ago: 40
 Sealing the record of the tears they shed,
 That 'where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

(29)

Grandfather, father, son, and then again
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath
Numbered in turn among the sons of men, 45
And gathered each one in his turn to death:
While he that occupies their house and name
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits? Ah! could we tell
The manner of our being when we die, 50
And see beyond the scene we know so well
The country that so much obscured doth lie!
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,
Or crown our melancholy with despair;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come: 55
Since of this world the essential joy must fall
In all distributed, in each thing some,
In nothing all, and all complete in all;
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace. 60

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here:
Though in most black habiliments attired,
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit 65
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet
Back to the busy town return, but yet
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,
Or touch their hands, or share without regret 70
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents:
 A honeymoon delight,— 5
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour:—
 My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ 10
 Along a liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere:— 15
 My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom:
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb! 20
 Fly with delight, fly hence!
 Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast; now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

*Book III***I**

O MY vague desires!
 Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires:
 That are my soul herself in pangs sublime
 Rising and flying to heaven before her time:

What doth tempt you forth 5
 To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north?
 What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
 Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

Joy, the joy of flight!
 They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night; 10
 Gone up, gone out of sight: and ever again
 Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah! they burn my soul,
 The fires, devour my soul that once was whole:
 She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day, 15
 But whither, whither? ay whither? away, away!

Could I but control
 These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul:
 Could I but quench the fire: ah! could I stay
 My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away! 20

LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing; 5
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven 10
 It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
 The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
 The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness; 15

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze 20
 Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
 Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
 'O look at the trees!' they cried, 'O look at the trees!'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder, 25
 Following along the white deserted way,
 A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day. 30

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
 And trams of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken, 35
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
 they have broken.

3

THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea:
 Whose smile severe and chaste 5
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever:
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides; 10
 Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
 Precipitate all overrides, and turns, nor abides:
 For you sad birds and fair,
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air;
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature, 15
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames Valley,
 The silent river glides by flowery banks:
 And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
 Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks: 20
 Where if a light air stray,
 Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever:
 Serve thy sweet desire: despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entranced river, 25
 That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,
 Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;
 Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them:
 For you my bowers green,
 My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between, 30
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

4

ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 A he bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.
 Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer 5
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be
 Thy father's pride;—ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make
 stronger.
 To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond; 10
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.
 Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;
 Yet feels to my hand as if 15
 'Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

(35)

So lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—
Propping thy wise, sad head,
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing. 20

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither
hath he taken thee?

To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and
awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us 25
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and have
heard of, fail us.

7

INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day
Had verged already on its hot decline,
And charmed Indolence in languor lay
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine:
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream!' 5
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
Upon our proposed travel well begun,
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
Past shallow islets floating in the sun, 10
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

(36)

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam, 15
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass 20
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;
And pulling for the middle span, we drew
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below! 25
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
And with its easy flood no murmur made:
And weeds spread on its surface, and about
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out. 30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove:
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank, 35
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green; 40
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

(37)

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks; 45
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along, 50
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip 55
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore;
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by. Co

II

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest
In fancy rising now to re-awaken
My love unshaken;

All thou 'st forgotten, but no change can free thee, 5
No hate unmake thee; as thou wert I see thee,
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting
Its ample greeting.

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy, 10
The only joy of all the joys I cherished
That hast not perished,

(38)

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure:
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest, 15
Me thou delightest ?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,
And faery fancy leaves her habitation
To desolation. 20

Of two things open left for lovers parted
 Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted:
 But I would ever dream I still possess it,
 And thus caress it.

12

THOU didst delight my eyes:
Yet who am I? nor first
Nor last nor best, that durst
Once dream of thee for prize;
Nor this the only time
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear:
Ah! little praise; thy voice
Makes other hearts rejoice,
Makes all ears glad that hear; 10
And short my joy: but yet,
O song, do not forget!

For what wert thou to me ?
How shall I say? The moon,
That poured her midnight noon
Upon his wrecking sea;—
A sail, that for a day
Has cheered the castaway.

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake!
 The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,
 It leaps in the sky: unrisen lustres slake
 The overtaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake!

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee; 5
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,
 Already they watch the path thy feet shall take:
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—
 She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee; 10
 For thee would unashamed herself forsake:
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake!

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,
 Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:
 And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake; 15
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee:
 She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,
 And awake my heart to be loved: awake, awake!' 20

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,
 Hast loved me best and longest,
 And now with trust the strongest
 The joy of my heart renewest;

Since thou art dearer and dearer 5
 While other hearts grow colder
 And ever, as love is older,
 More lovingly drawest nearer:

(40)

Since now I see in the measure
Of all my giving and taking, 10
Thou wert my hand in the making,
The sense and soul of my pleasure;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee
In heaven I pray be recorded,
And all thy love rewarded 15
By God, thy master that made thee.

19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly 5
Through tempest, flood and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire, 10
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless quire
Soon shall thine eager cry 15
Be numbered and expire.

Book IV

I

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them. **5**

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Altho' to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking. **10**

4

THE clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb **5**
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurried foam
Up on the dusky shore.

(42)

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats, 10
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home, 15
My shadow walks before.

6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh;
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May:
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth:
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower 5
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's
drouth:

On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower
In bulging hea^' that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

12

THE hill pines were sighing,
O'ercast and chill was the day:
A mist in the valley lying
Blotted the pleasant May.

(43)

But deep in the glen's bosom 5
Slimmer slept in the fire
Of the odorous gorse-blossom
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
And out of the copse the stroke 10
Of the iron axe that hammered
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,
As a hundred years of pride
Crashed, in the silence falling: 15
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,
White-robed, with silver hair;
In your meadows fair,
Where the willows weep,
And the sad moonbeam 5
On the gliding stream
Writes her scattered dream:

Angel spirits of sleep,
Dancing to the weir
In the hollow roar 10
Of its waters deep;
Know ye how men say
That ye haunt no more
Isle and grassy shore
With your moonlit play; 15

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
 The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
 Is fallen back in the west
 To couch with the sinking sun.
 The last clouds fare 5
 With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
 In melting drifts of the sky.
 Already the birds in the air
 Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,
 And one by one, 10
 Proclaiming aloud their care,
 Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,
 They trim afresh the fair
 Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm, 15
 And awhile will be handsome yet.
 To-morrow's sun shall caress
 Their remnant of loveliness:
 In quiet days for a time
 Sad Autumn lingering warm 20
 Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!
 What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,
 That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,
 That sheltered the cooing doves at noon, 25
 Of airy fans the delicate throng,—
 Torn and scattered around:
 Far out afield they lie,
 In the watery furrows die,
 In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown, 30
 Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,
 The high year's flaunting crown
 Shattered and trampled down.

(46)

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep 35
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light 40
Sleep falls on forest and field.
S6e! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,
And whitens all the marshy lea:
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,
The day is dark and black the sea.
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves 5
With driven foam the offing fleck:
The ebb is low and barely laves
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach
My childhood chanced and chose to be: 10
'Twas here I played, and musing made
My friend the melancholy sea.
He from his dim enchanted caves
With shuddering roar and onrush wild
Fell down in sacrificial waves 15
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee:—
My heart is now too fixed to bow
Tho' all his tempests howl at me: 20

Book V

I

THE WINNOWNERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs
The little hamlet lies,
And nothing sees but the bald crowns
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent 5
And grey slopes of the wold,
The red roofs nestle, oversprent
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun
Basking, what time of year 10
The thrush his singing has begun,
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
His faggots on the stack:
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched 15
Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne
A steady muffled din,
By which we knew that threshed corn
Was winnowing, and went in. 20

(49)

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed 25
The hopper, lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught; 30
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet 35
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not gat us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity: 40

But here we found ourselves again.
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little grain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

LOVE not too much. But how,
When thou hast made me such,
And dost thy gifts bestow,
How can I love too much?

Though I must fear to lose, 5
And drown my joy in care,
With all its thorns I choose
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,
Didst kill my childish trust, 10
That breach with toil did I
Repair, because I must:

And spite of frightening schemes,
With which the fiends of Hell
Blaspheme thee in my dreams, 15
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,
What marvel in me wrought
Shall quite exculpate thee,
I have no shadow of thought. 20

What am I that complain?
The love, from which began
My question sad and vain,
Justifies thee to man.

THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams
 Of the September sun: his golden gleams
 On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows
 Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows
 That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers; 5
 Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads
 Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds;
 And in the feathery aster bees on wing
 Seize and set free the honied flowers,
 Till thousand stars leap with their visiting: 10
 While ever across the path mazily flit,
 Unpiloted in the sun,
 The dreamy butterflies
 With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,
 White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes, 15
 Or on chance flowers sit,
 With idle effort plundering one by one
 The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze
 Into the garden saileth, 20
 Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,
 For his sharpness he vaileth:
 So long a comrade of the bearded corn,
 Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,
 O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray, 25
 As mindful of the kisses and soft play
 Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,
 Ere he deserted her;
 Lover of fragrance, and too late repents;
 Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink, 30
 Nor spicy pink,

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,
 But the few lingering scents
 Of streaked pea, and gillyflower, and stocks
 Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox. 35

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones
 Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,
 With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,
 Or the wild cry
 Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare 40
 The distant blue, to watering as they fare
 With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,
 If aught their ancient polity displease,—
 Come gathering to their colony, and there
 Settling in ragged parliament, 45
 Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
 When first we kissed beside the thorn,
 So strangely sweet, it was not strange
 We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told— 5
 That love will change in growing old;
 Though day by day is nought to see,
 So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
 Quite to forget what once he was, 10
 Nor even in fancy to recall
 The pleasure that was ah¹ in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
 So deep in summer floods is drowned,
 I wonder, bathed in joy complete, 15
 How love so young could be so sweet.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again
 Since Maurice died:
 With corniced drift it blocked the lane
 And sheeted in a desolate plain
 The country side. 5

The trees with silvery rime bedight
 Their branches bare.
 By day no sun appeared; by night
 The hidden moon shed thievish light
 In the misty air. 10

We fed the birds that flew around
 In flocks to be fed:
 No shelter in holly or brake they found.
 The speckled thrush on the frozen ground
 Lay frozen and dead. 15

We skated on stream and pond; we cut
 The crinching snow
 To Doric temple or Arctic hut;
 We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut
 By the fireside glow. 20

Yet grudged we our keen delights before
 Maurice should come.
 We said, In-door or out-of-door
 We shall love life for a month or more,
 When he is home. 25

They brought him home; 'twas two days late
 For Christmas day:
 Wrapped in white, in solemn state,
 A flower in his hand, all still and straight
 Our Maurice lay. 30

(54)

And two days ere the year outgave
We laid him low.
The best of us truly were not brave,
When we laid Maurice down in his grave
Under the snow.

35

12

NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air 5
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound, 10
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn 15
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of
May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE
ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF
ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,
Mary, in whose fair name was laid
Eton's corner, bless our youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth!

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June, 5
By silver Thames's lulling tune,
In shade of willow or oak, who try
The golden gates of poesy;

Or on the tabled sward all day
Match your strength in England's play, 10
Scholars of Henry, giving grace
To toil and force in game or race;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came
Here in his realm a realm to found, 15
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing
Ye plunge in the lashing weir; or dashing
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain
Round the rushes and home again;— 20

Or what pursuit soe'er it be
That makes your mingled presence free,
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes;

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death, 25
 Temper for you her sword of faith;
 Crown with honour the loving eyes,
 And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring: for you
 The very stars of heaven are new; 30
 And aged Fame again is born,
 Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,
 Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,
 Homer his bardic hymn rehearse, 35
 Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best;
 Each in one thing excel the rest:
 Strive; and hold fast this truth of heaven—
 To him that hath shall more be given. 40

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,
 So many hours for food and sleep,
 So many hours till study tire,
 So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save, 45
 Mirrors bright for her magic cave;
 Wherein may steadfast eyes behold
 A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,
 And when ye leave regret it not; 50
 With wishing gifts in festal state
 Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

(57)

Then to the world let shine your light,
Children in play be lions in fight,
And match with red immortal deeds 55
The victory that made ring the meads:

Or by firm wisdom save your land
From giddy head and grasping hand:
IMPROVE THE BEST; so shall your sons
Better what ye have bettered once. 60

Send them here to the court of grace
Bearing your name to fill your place:
Ye in their time shall live again
The happy dream of Henry's reign:

And on his day your steps be bent 65
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

15

THE north wind came up yesternight
With the new year's full moon,
And rising as she gained her height,
Grew to a tempest soon.
Yet found he not on heaven's face 5
A task of cloud to clear;
There was no speck that he might chase
Off the blue hemisphere,
Nor vapour from the land to drive:
The frost-bound country held 10
Nought motionable or alive,
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.
There scarce was hanging in the wood
A shrivelled leaf to reave;

No bud had burst its swathing hood	15
That he could rend or grieve:	
Only the tall tree-skeletons,	
Where they were shadowed all,	
Wavered a little on the stones,	
And on the white church-wall.	20
—Like as an artist in his mood,	
Who reckons all as nought,	
So he may quickly paint his nude,	
Unutterable thought:	
So Nature in a frenzied hour	25
By day or night will show	
Dim indications of the power	
That doometh man to woe.	
Ah, many have my visions been,	
And some I know full well:	30
I would that all that I have seen	
Were fit for speech to tell.—	
And by the churchyard as I came,	
It seemed my spirit passed	
Into a land that hath no name,	35
Grey, melancholy and vast;	
Where nothing comes: but Memory,	
The widowed queen of Death,	
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye	
All slumber banisheth.	40
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes	
That sickly, staring shore,	
Its old chaotic change of shapes	
Remembers evermore.	
And ghosts of cities long decayed	45
And ruined shrines of Fate	
Gather the paths, that Time hath made	
Foolish and desolate.	

(59)

Nor winter there hath hope of spring,
Nor the pale night of day, 50
Since the old king with scorpion sting
Hath done himself away.

▼ ▼
The morn was calm; the wind's last breath
Had fal'n: in solemn hush
The golden moon went down beneath 55
The dawning's crimson flush.

19

WEEP not to-day: why should this sadness be?
Learn in present fears
To o'ermaster those tears
That unhindered conquer thee.

Think on thy past valour, thy future praise: 5
Up, sad heart, nor faint
In ungracious complaint,
Or a prayer for better days.

Daily thy life shortens, the grave's dark peace 10
Draweth surely nigh,
When good-night is good-bye;
For sleeping shall not cease.

Fight, to be found fighting: nor far away
Deem, nor strange thy doom.
Like this sorrow 'twill come, 15
And the day will be to-day.

From NEW POEMS

4

ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path!
 My homing heart no happier playground hath.
 I need not close my lids but it appears
 Through the bewilderment of forty years
 To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between 5
 Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green;
 Fairer than dreams of sleep, than Hope more' fair
 Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,
 Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees, 10
 Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar
 From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,
 Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,
 A mossy terrace of the native chalk
 Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around 15
 Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.
 There live the memories of my early days,
 There still with childish heart my spirit plays;
 Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair
 When she hath fled me, I have found her there; 20
 And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring
 Alternate days of summer and of spring,
 With childish thought, and childish faces bright,
 And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood, 25
 A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood:
 Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,
 Whereby unto the southern front we went,
 And from the dark plantation climbing free,
 Over a valley look'd out on the sea. 30

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky
 Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie
 High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,
 Or nearer in the roads pass within hail
 Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride 35
 At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch; nay, now
 The brazen disk is cold against my brow,
 And in my sight a circle of the sea
 Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee, 40
 And ships in stately motion pass so near
 That what I see is speaking to my ear:
 I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,
 The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain
 That runs out thro¹ the hawse, the clank of the winch 45
 Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,
 Till half I wonder if they have no care,
 Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear
 On all their doings, if I vex them not
 On every petty task of their rough lot 50
 Prying and spying, searching every craft
 From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—
 Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean
 Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen
 Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length, 55
 Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some
 Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come
 Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up
 Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop, 60
 By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,
 The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,
 Or some immense three-decker of the line,
 Romantic as the tale of Troy divine;
 Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall 65
 The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,
 And for the engines of a mightier Mars
 Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.
 The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave
 That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave 70
 Lost then their merriment, nor look to play
 With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
 Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound:
 Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea, 75
 As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
 Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
 Glided in line upon the windless deep :
 For in those days was first seen low and black
 Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack, 80
 And neath their stern revolv'd the twisted fan.
 Many I knew as soon as I might scan,
 The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,
 The *Rogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright
 Others that I remember now no more; 85
 But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,
 With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,
 The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,
 Whereon saiTd George, who in her gig had flown
 The silken ensign by our sisters sewn. 90

The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame
 To England's proudest ship had given her name,
 And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene
 Had scarce more honoured than accustom'd been,—
 Was two years since to his last haven past: 95
 I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast
 One morn as I sat looking on the sea,
 When thus all England's grief came first to me,
 Who hold my childhood favoured that I knew
 So well the face that won at Waterloo. 100

But now 'tis other wars, and other men;—
 The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—
 Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found:
 A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,
 The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers, 105
 And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.
 Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,
 The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

9

MY delight and thy delight
 Walking, like two angels white,
 In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
 Twining to a tongue of fire, 5
 Leaping live, and laughing higher;
 Thro' the everlasting strife
 In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
 Hath the secret of the sun. 10

(64)

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life. and.S3£££Li& breath: 15

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay 20
In the dawning of the day.

II

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,
His waves come rolling evermore;
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I, 5
Under the pine upon the hill,
The sadness of the clouded sky,
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,
The seamew's melancholy cry
With loving fancy suit but ill. 10

We talk of moons and cooling suns,
Of geologic time and tide,
The eternal sluggards that abide
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent 15
That man should guess her dreary scheme
Lest he should live too well content
In his fair house of mirth and dream:

(65)

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,
His heart that wearies of desire, 20
Being so fugitive a part
Of what so slowly must expire.

She in her agelong toil and care
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,
Mocking alike hope and despair. 25

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,
Days that are one with human art,
Worthy of the Virgilian muse, 30
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

12

RIDING adown the country lanes

One day in spring,
Heavy at heart with all the pains
Of man's imagining:—

The mist was not yet melted quite 5
Into the sky:

The small round sun was dazzling white,
The merry larks sang high:

The grassy northern slopes were laid
In sparkling dew, 10
Out of the slow-retreating shade
Turning from sleep anew:

Deep in the sunny vale a burn
Ran with the lane,
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern 15
It laughed in joyful strain:

(66)

And primroses shot long and lush
 Their clustered cream;
Robin and wren and amorous thrush
 Carol'd above the stream: 20

The stillness of the lenten air
 Call'd into sound
The motions of all life that were
 In field and farm around:

So fair it was, so sweet and bright, 25
 The jocund Spring
Awoke in me the old delight
 Of man's imagining,

Riding adown the country lanes:
 The larks sang high.— 30
O heart! for all thy griefs and pains
 Thou shalt be loth to die.

14

NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed;
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands 5
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear
The teams following and crossing far and near,
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands
Of the striped fields; and behind them firk and prance 10
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance:
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)

(67)

They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by
Above the lane they shout lifting the share, 15
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air;
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out
The small wrens glide
With a happy note of cheer, 20
And yellow amoretts flutter above and about,
Gay, familiar in fear.

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,
All the afternoon to the gardens fly, 25
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel:
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,
In an isolated tree a congregation
Of starlings chatter and chide, 30
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel:
Suddenly they hush as one,—
The tree top springs,—
And off, with a whirr of wings,
They fly by the score 35
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more
Dispute for the roosts; and from the unseen nation
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly, 40
While falls the night on them self-occupied;
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,
And soon to bury in snow •
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole, 45
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole
Of how her end shall be.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—

Its course is done:

But nothing tells the place

Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,

5

And up the lane

You may hear, but cannot see,

The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums

In the farm hard by:

10

Its lowering smoke is lost

In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,

And all night through

The dropping will not cease

15

In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house

Must keep his chair:

He knows he will never again

Breathe the spring air:

20

His heart is worn with work;

He is giddy and sick

If he rise to go as far

As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,

25

His hale, strong years;

And braves as he may the night

Of darkness and tears.

WHEN Death to either shall come,—

I pray it be first to me,—

(69)

Be happy as ever at home,

If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own;

5

And sing to the child on thy knee,

Or read to thyself alone

The songs that I made for thee.

20

EPftl

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?

Thou idol of the human race,

Thou tyrant of the human heart,

The flower of lovely youth that art;

Yea, and that standest in thy youth

5

An image of eternal Truth,

With thy exuberant flesh so fair,

That only Pheidias might compare,

Ere from his chaste marmoreal form

Time had decayed the colours warm;

10

Like to his gods in thy proud dress,

Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,

For in thy face is nought to find,

Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,

15

That shadows neither love nor guile,

But shameless will and power immense,

In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?

I dream thou knowest it is nought,

20

And wouldst in darkness come, but thou

Makest the light where'er thou go.

Ah yet no victim of thy grace,

None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,

Hath cared to look upon thy face.

25

From LATER POEMS

5

ONE grief of thine
 if truth be confest
 Was joy to me;
 for it drave to my breast
 Thee, to my heart 5
 to find thy rest.

How long it was
 I never shall know:
 I watcht the earth 10
 so stately and slow,
 And the ancient things
 that waste and grow.

But now for me
 what speed devours
 Our heavenly life, 15
 our brilliant hours!
 How fast they fly,
 the stars and flowers!

13

THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,
 Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,
 One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek:
 It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,
 Imagine fathering my father; when he, in sonship afore, 5
 Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictured agaze,
 The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,
 O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,
 The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows
 my going, 10
 How had I stray'd without thee! and yet how few will seek
 The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,
 Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid the
 weak.

And Thee! ah what of thee, thou lover of men? if truly
 A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to
 speak, 15
 In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,
 —Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—
 Ever ready to speak to us, if we will hearken duly,
 'Come, O come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden!'

15

ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION
 OF HENRY PURCELL

Performed at the Leeds Festival, 1895

V

I

LOVE to Love calleth,
 Love unto Love replieth:
 From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,
 Over the dawning and darkening lands
 Love cometh to Love. 5

To the pangs of desire;
 To the heart by courage and might
 Escaped from hell,
 From the torment of raging fire,
 From the sighs of the drowning main, 10
 From shipwreck of fear and pain,
 From the terror of night.

2

All mankind by Love shall be banded
 To combat Evil, the many-handed:
 For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth, 15
 The airy fancy he heedeth,
 He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,
 In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,
 The sovran sun that knows not the night;
 He loveth the beauty of earth, 20
 And the sweet birds' mirth;
 And out of his heart there falleth
 A melody-making river
 Of passion, that runneth ever
 To the ends of the earth and crieth, 25
 That yearneth and calleth;
 And Love from the heart of man
 To the heart of man replieth:
 On the wings of desire
 Love cometh to Love. 30

VIII

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
 Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,
 And that your names, remember'd day and night,
 Live on the lips of those who love you well.

(73)

Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Hell 5
Each with the special grace of your delight;
Ye are the world's creators, and by might
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names
Behind the sun ye climb 10
To light the glooms of Time
With deathless flames.

IX

OPEN for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire;
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire
Have planted the trees of life.—
The branches in beauty are spread, 5
Their fruit divine
To the nations is given for bread,
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams; 10
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,
The sea the trust of his streams:
And the rapture of woodland spring
Is stay'd in its flying;
And Death cannot sting 15
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine
Their aching beams in colours fine;
Pain and woe forgo their might.
After darkness thy leaping sight, 20
After dumbness thy dancing sound,

(74)

After fainting thy heavenly flight,
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:
O enter the garden of thy delight,
Thy solace is found.

25

16

A HYMN OF NATURE

Performed at the Gloucester Festival, 1898

VI

SWEET compassionate tears
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Tears of love, the showers wherewith
The eternal morn is bright:
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.
With tears my eyes are wet,
Tears not of vain regret,
Tears of no lost delight,
Dews of the heav'nly spheres
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Sweet compassionate tears.

5

10

From POEMS IN CLASSICAL
PROSODY

2

EPISTLE II

TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

. . . AND what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90
 If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,
 Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,
 Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd
 Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;
 Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers 95
 Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,
 Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;
 Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy
 Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy
 roamers;
 Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100
 Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;
 Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds;
 All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,
 Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers, 104
 Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading
 Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd
 Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning
 With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:
 All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine
 Centenarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance no
 Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffing ephemeral insect,
 Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,
 Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:

Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring, 114
 'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,
 MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute apparatus,
 ratus,

So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:
 What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?
 That the select creatures, who^vinherit earth's domination,
 Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120
 Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles
 Chanting a brief paeon for victory on the battlefield?

6

JOHANNES MILTON, Senex
Scazons

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,
 'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him
 praise,

Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
 Nor unto Him^vin suff'ring and sorrow turn me: 5
 Nay how could I withdraw me from^vHis embracing?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,
 Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly
 His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose eternal;
 Therefore will I be bound to no studied system 10
 Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,
 Nor seek to please Him in any foolish invention,
 Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty
 And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy:

But I cherish my freedom in loving service, 15
 Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking
 Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness
 Confiding always on^vHis excellent greatness.

From OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS

3

NOEL: CHRISTMAS EVE, 1913

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

A FROSTY Christmas Eve , ' when the stars were shining
 Fared I forth alone , ' where westward falls the hill,
 And from many a village , ' in the water'd valley
 Distant music reach'd me , ' peals of bells aringing:
 The constellated sounds , ' ran sprinkling on earth's floor 5
 As the dark vault above , ' with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep , ' that first Christmas of all
 When the shepherds watching , ' by their folds ere the dawn
 Heard music in the fields , ' and marveling could not tell
 Whether it were angels , ' or the bright stars singing. 10

Now blessed be the tow'rs , ' that crown England so fair
 That stand up strong in prayer , ' unto God for our souls:
 Blessed be their founders , ' (said I) an' our country folk
 Who are ringing for Christ , ' in the belfries to-night
 With arms lifted to clutch , ' the rattling ropes that race 15
 Into the dark above , ' and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar , ' it was starry music
 Angels¹ song, comforting , ' as the comfort of Christ
 When he spake tenderly , ' to his sorrowful flock:
 The old words came to me , ' by the riches of time 20
 Mellow'd and transfigured , ' as I stood on the hill
 Hearn'ing in the aspect , ' of th' eternal silence.

IN DER FREMDE

AH! wild-hearted wand'rer
 far in the world away
 Restless nor knowest why
 only thou canst not stay
 And now turnest trembling 5
 hearing the wind to sigh:
 Twas thy lover calling
 whom thou didst leave forby.

So faint and yet so far
 so far and yet so fain— 10
 'Return belov'd to me'
 but thou must onward strain:
 Thy trembling is in vain
 as thy wand'ring shall be.
 What so well thou lovest 15
 thou nevermore shalt see.

THE PHILOSOPHER AND HIS MISTRESS

WE watch'd the wintry moon
 Suffer her full eclipse
 Riding at night's high noon
 Beyond the earth's ellipse.

The conquering shadow quell'd 5
Her splendour in its robe:
And darkling we beheld
A dim and lurid globe;

Yet felt thereat no dread,
Nor waited we to see
The sullen dragon fled,
The heav'nly Queen go free.

So if my heart of pain
 One hour o'ershadow thine,
 I fear for thee no stain,
 Thou wilt come forth and shine: 15

And far my sorrowing shade
Will slip to empty space
Invisible, but made
Happier for that embrace. 20

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

September, 1917.

FOOL that I was: my heart was sore,
Yea sick for the myriad wounded men,
The maim'd in the war: I had grief for each one:
And I came in the gay September sun
To the open smile of Trafalgar Square; 5
Where many a lad with a limb fordone
Loll'd by the lion-guarded column
That holdeth Nelson statued thereon
Upright in the air.

The Parliament towers and the Abbey towers, 10
 The white Horseguards and grey Whitehall,
 He looketh on all,
 Past Somerset House and the river's bend
 To the pillar'd dome of St. Paul,
 That slumbers confessing God's solemn blessing 15
 On England's glory, to keep it ours—
 While children true her prowess renew
 And throng from the ends of the earth to defend
 Freedom and honour—till Earth shall end.

The gentle unjealous Shakespeare, I trow, 20
 In his country tomb of peaceful fame,
 Must feel exiled from life and glow
 If he think of this man with his warrior claim,
 Who looketh o'er London as if 'twere his own,
 As he standeth in stone, aloft and alone, 25
 Sailing the sky with one arm and one eye.

26

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun
 I have toil'd as I might
 I have thought as I would
 And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep
 My heart of content
 For friends that I met
 The way that I went.

(81)

I welcome fatigue
While frenzy and care 10
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air.

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds 15
And the sun on the hill.

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake ? 20

What good have I wrought ?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot 25
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be.

From NEW VERSE

5

THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

THE infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,
 a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,
 and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool
 as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.

There is no beauty of love or peace, no joy nor mirth 5
 but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanced
 decketh his sovranty with immortalities.

Jewels of imagination hath he, purities
 and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God
 plenishing his temples with incense of music 10
 in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ:
 his Destiny is one with the eternal skies: he lieth
 a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth
 inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air
 that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious 15
 to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.

And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief
 sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he
 will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.
 Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn 20
 whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood!
 See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces
 how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic
 cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions!
 He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong 25
 till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find

his one nobility is but to suffer bravely
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart:
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing 30
basking this summer day under the stately limes
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment— 35
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy
of their return, Alas! for how few shall return! 40
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death!
And yet some shall return, and others with them come:
life will renew; tho' now none cometh here all day
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought, 45
and the aged gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours— 50
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels
punctilious subdivisions of infinity
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours
these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'er-
thrown— 55
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.

Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me 60

the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be
 and me as I am, as reluctant in the stream
 I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn
 among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon
 in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook 65
 and for animal recreation of hot fatigue
 hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste
 the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh
 and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky
 supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass 70
 until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream
 as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there
 stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones
 blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current
 ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt 75
 into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

6

THE PSALM

WHILE Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees
 as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,
 the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears
 gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church
 stood to their evening psalm praising God together— 5
 and when it came to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air
 with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping
 through the responsive figures of a stately dance
 conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array 10
 in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,
 then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew;

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly
 fresh as in springtime when, four centuries ago,
 it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n 15
 chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots

standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines, 20
thou wast the unconquerable paeon of resolute men
who fell in coward massacre or with Freedom fled
from the palatial horror into far lands away,
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel 25
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold;
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them;
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song. 29
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew!

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery
burst in and searched but found nor living man nor maid
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not 35
but when it wound to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes
where unabsolved crime yet calleth plagues on France
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night 40
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.
O evermore great Psalm spring forth! spring forth anew!

7

COME SE QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains

climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:
 Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought
 and the infinite architecture of our darkness,
 the dim essence and being of our mortalities, 10
 is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
 whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays....

8

TO FRANCIS JAMMES

Tis April again in my garden, again the grey stone-wall
 Is pranked with yellow alyssum and lilac aubrey-cresses;
 Half-hidden the mavis caroleth in the tassely birchen
 tresses
 And awhile on the sunny air a cuckoo tuneth his call: 4
 Now cometh to mind a singer whom country joys enthral,
 Francis Jammes, so grippeth him Nature in her caresses
 She hath steep'd his throat in the honey'd air of her
 wildernesses
 With beauty that countervails the Lutetian therewithal.
 You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,
 Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly trousseau— 10
 The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques
 Rousseau,
 Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,
 Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson
 Crusoe,
 And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

9

MELANCHOLY

TWAS mid of the moon but the night was dark with rain,
 Drops lashed the pane, the wind howl'd under the door;

For me, my heart heard nought but the cannon-roar
 On fields of war, where Hell was raging amain:
 My heart was sore for the slain:— 5
 As when on an Autumn plain the storm lays low the wheat,
 So fell the flower of England, her golden grain,
 Her harvesting hope trodden under the feet
 Of Moloch, Woden and Thor,
 And the lovingkindness of Christ held in disdain. 10

My heart gave way to the strain, renouncing more & more;
 Its bloodstream fainted down to the slothful weary beat
 Of the age-long moment, that swelleth where ages meet,
 Marking time 'twixt dark Hereafter and Long-before;
 Which greet awhile and awhile, again to retreat; 15
 The Never-the-same repeating again and again,
 Completing itself in monotony incomplete,
 A wash of beauty and horror in shadows that fleet,
 Always the Never-the-same still to repeat,
 The devouring glide of a dream that keepeth no store. 20

Meseem'd I stood on the flats of a waveless shore,
 Where MELANCHOLY unrobed of her earthly weeds,
 Haunteth in naked beauty without stain;
 In reconcilment of Death, and Vanity of all needs;
 A melting of life in oblivion of all deeds; 25
 No other beauty nor passion nor love nor lore;
 No other goddess abideth for man to adore;
 All things remaining nowhere with nought to remain;
 The consummation of thought in nought to attain.

I had come myself to that ultimate Ocean-shore, 30
 Like Labourer Love when his life-day is o'er,
 Who home returning fatigued is fain to regain
 The house where he was unconsciously born of yore;
 Stumbling on the threshold he sinketh down on the floor;
 Half-hearteth a prayer as he lieth, and nothing heeds, 35
 If only he sleep and sleep and have rest for evermore.

THE TRAMPS

A SCHOOLBOY lay one night a-bed
 Under his window wide,
 When dusk is lovelier than day
 In the high summertime;

The jasmin neath the casement throng'd 5
 Its ivory stars abloom;
 With freaking peas and mignonette
 Their perfume fill'd the room:

Across the garden and beyond
 He look'd out on the skies, 10
 And through black elmen boughs afar
 Watch'd where the moon should rise:

A warm rain fed the thirsty earth,
 Drops patter'd from the eaves
 And from the tall trees as the shower 15
 Fell lisping on their leaves:

His heart was full, and pleasant thoughts
 Made music in his mind,
 Like separate songs of birds, that are
 By general joy combined. 20

It seem'd the hour had gathered up
 For every sense a bliss
 To crown the faith of all desire
 With one assuaging kiss ;

So that he fought with sleep to hold 25
 The rapture while he might,
 Lest it should sink and drowning die
 Into the blank of night;

Nor kenn'd it was no passing thing
Nor ever should be pass'd 30
But with him bide a joy to be
As long as Life should last.

For though young thoughts be quite forgone,
The pleasure of their dream
Can mesh them in its living mood 35
And draw them in the stream:

So I can fancy when I will
That there I lie intent
To hear the gentle whispering rain
And drink the jasmin scent: 40

And then there sounds a distant tread
Of men, that night who strode
Along the highway step by step
Approaching down the road,

A company of three or four 45
That hastening home again
After a Sabbath holiday
Came talking in the rain:

Aloof from all my world and me
They pass aneath the wall, 50
Till voice and footstep die away
And into silence fall:

Into the maze of my delight
Those blind intruders walk;
And ever I wonder who they be 55
And of what things they talk.

LOW BAROMETER

THE south-wind strengthens to a gale,
 Across the moon the clouds fly fast,
 The house is smitten as with a flail,
 The chimney shudders to the blast.

On such a night, when Air has loosed 5
 Its guardian grasp on blood and brain,
 Old terrors then of god or ghost
 Creep from their caves to life again;

And Reason kens he herits in
 A haunted house. Tenants unknown 10
 Assert their squalid lease of sin
 With earlier title than his own.

Unbodied presences, the pack'd
 Pollution and remorse of Time,
 Slipp'd from oblivion reenact 15
 The horrors of unhouheld crime.

Some men would quell the thing with prayer
 Whose sightless footsteps pad the floor,
 Whose fearful trespass mounts the stair
 Or bursts the lock'd forbidden door. 20

Some have seen corpses long interr'd
 Escape from hallowing control,
 Pale chanel forms—nay ev'n have heard
 The shrilling of a troubled soul,

That wanders till the dawn hath cross'd 25
 The dolorous dark, or Earth hath wound
 Closer her storm-spredd cloke, and thrust
 The baleful phantoms underground.

From THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY*Book I*

INTRODUCTION

TWAS late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
 the path was narrowing and the company few,
 a glow of childlike wonder enthal'd me, as if my sense 10
 had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
 re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;
 with like surprise of joy as any man may know
 who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
 to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spredd 15
 mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged
 he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
 maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June
 bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come
 afar 20

on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced
 thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was
 of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made
 a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:
 But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness, 25
 the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent
 lawns,

I would have lain me down and long'd, as then I did,
 to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch
 the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,
 waving in a gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30
 each telling of its own incontinent happiness,
 each *type* a faultless essence of God's will, such gems

as magic master-minds in painting or music
 threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;
 things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd 35
 in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play
 sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now
 stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous
 mountainous snowbillowy up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280
 Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,
 Now scattered wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze
 disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane
 highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl
 freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close overhead,
 wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain 286
 gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:
 Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms
 mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb
 deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching
 flood 290
 rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend
 til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully
 clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils
 layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;
 and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space 295
 twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼
 Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks
 of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:
 agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles 655
 and promontories of the blue Ionian shore
 —where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing
 old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—
 and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,
 wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660

whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right
 knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land
 whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win
 heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue
 that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd, 665
 and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus
 motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took
 her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis
 of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670
 patterning heavily beauty, a pictured idea
 that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:
 for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told
 by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,
 nor is discernible in logic, but is itself 675
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,
 hid only from our eyes by skies that will not clear:
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,
 like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence, 685
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,

flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying 695
 scattered its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:
 nor ever again hath like bloom appeared among men.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness
 with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,
 men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
 crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame, 775
 in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
 wider than Alexander's and more enduring;
 since from his death it took its everlasting life.

HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple
 not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. ^780

They who understand not cannot forget, and they
 who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.

He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,
 and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,
 be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast: 785

But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed
 that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,
 thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;

While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX
 the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790

Book II

SELFHOOD

NAY, some I hav seen wil choose a beehive for their sign
 and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought, 201
 picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,

a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;
 Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour
 is spiritual attainment, individual worth, 205
 at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,
 to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;
 not such material ease as might be attain'd for all
 by cheap production and distribution of common needs,
 wer ah¹ life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210
 Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,
 man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them
 how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake
 the maximum of toil that is found tolerable
 upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance; 215
 and stay from procreation at thatt just number of men,
 hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth
 under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.
 And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,
 life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220
 and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,
 lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:
 then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,
 the system will be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy 225
 is thinking to distribute indivisibles,
 and make equality in things incommensurable:
 forged under such delusions, all Utopias
 are castles in the air or counsels of despair.

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May, 345
 when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,
 nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350

of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells* 355
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues
 surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

What is Beauty P saith my sufferings then.—I answer 840
 the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:
 Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
 the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
 wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
 And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty, 845
 awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
 in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence
 to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death, 955
 and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—
 we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,
 sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,
 horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,
 dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960
 yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;
 and memory is so complacent that we well may fear
 lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,
 regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,

hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain 965
the trenches, and re clothed the devastated lands.

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted
re'entering hath possessed her desolated halls;
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and
games, 970

their live abounding mirth reechoing from the walls,
where among antique monuments their brothers' names
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory 975
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh
find health in mutilation: as if our agony
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,
and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself 980
disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,
the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right
prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities, 985
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd
the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,
desperatly unrepentant to the 'scourge of God',
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990
punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor
stay;

for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness; 995
so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,
our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

Book III

BREED

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me
 in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing 355
 patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,
 as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow
 submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!
 They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now
 squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360
 a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro
 combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,
 blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,
 hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn, 365
 were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,
 a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,
 and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,
 swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,
 that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370
 clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,
 as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:
 and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,
 whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke 375
 the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach
 against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft
 toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,

and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry
 it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380
 that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield
 with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile
 the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints
 feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,
 Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—
 a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;
 tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660
 Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,
 Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon
 and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names
 of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes
 Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World 665
 far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home
 westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms
 of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,
 damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670
 whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be
 i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held
 place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line
 wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montelimar, Narbonne,
 Beziers, Castelnaudary, Beam and Carcassonne, 675
 and truly I could hav shared their fancy could I have hVd
 among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,
 and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will
 which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn
 that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. 680

Book IV

ETHICK

FOR social Ethick with its legalized virtue 265
 is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,
 a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,
 the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,
 beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.
 Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,
 whereon to found their creed in the true history
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto, 275
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
 who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280
 Chaldaean KISH and UR; while for all life today
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls 285
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290
 a city and folk undremt of in archaeology,
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust

the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold, 295
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,
 cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems
 of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;
 withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff 300
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today
 Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys
 gathered to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack
 in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand
 his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp, 305
 his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas
 the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride
 was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film
 of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds
 that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold, 310
 wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow
 great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,
 impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work
 whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name
 and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up 315
 thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,
 finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men
 who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,
 had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320
 til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep
 he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile
 in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;
 for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones
 of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones 325
 lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughtered at their post
 all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,
 in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp

the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her
 dirge,
 lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330
 two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience
 whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,
 the uniform decoration of their young service,
 mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed
 to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth 335
 to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
 congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

'Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun
 squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood
 his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 1270
 and all the towers and temples and mansions of men
 face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp
 naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes
 'tis given, if so they close not of fatigue, nor strain
 at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon 1275
 to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch
 where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space
 Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul
 in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280
 walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,
 discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams
 that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when
 the small bats, issued from their hangings, flitter o'erhead
 thru¹ the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro 1285
 hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;
 for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed
 may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright
 pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290
 with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake

methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream me-
thought

I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances 1295
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,
and I remember wondring the while I told it
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300
as once when she took thought to adjust theology,
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids
wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM, 1305
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.
Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dolben's *Poems*, 1911

I HAD not visited Eton for many years, when one day passing from the Fellows' Library into the Gallery I caught sight of the portrait of my school-friend Digby Dolben hanging just without the door among our most distinguished contemporaries. I was wholly arrested, and as I stood gazing on it, my companion asked me if I knew who it was. I was thinking that, beyond a few whom I could name, I must be almost the only person who would know. Far memories of my boyhood were crowding freshly upon me: he was standing again beside me in the eager promise of his youth; I could hear his voice; nothing of him was changed; while I, wrapt from him in a confused mist of time, was wondering what he would think, could he know that at this actual moment he would have been dead thirty years, and that his memory would be thus preserved and honoured in the beloved school, where his delicate spirit had been so strangely troubled.

This portrait-gallery of old Etonians is very select: pre-eminent distinction of birth or merit may win you a place there, or again official connexion with the school, which rightly loves to keep up an unbroken panorama of its teachers, and to vivify its annals with the faces and figures of the personalities who carried on its traditions. But how came Dolben there? It was because he was a poet,—that I knew;—and yet his poems were not known; they were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends: indeed such of his poems as could have come to the eyes of the authorities who sanctioned this memorial would not justify it. There was another reason; and the portrait bears it own credentials; for though you might not perhaps divine the

poet in it, you can see the saint, the soul rapt in contemplation, the habit of stainless life, of devotion, of enthusiasm for high ideals. Such a being must have stood out conspicuously among his fellows; the facts of his life would have been the ground of the faith in his genius; and when his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn. . . .

With such friends as Coles, Hankey, Lionel Muirhead, Bickersteth, and Manning, he was well off,—he could not 10 have had more congenial companions; but without them he would have been miserably isolated at Eton, for he had no common interests of any kind with the average school-boy, scarcely even the burning question of the quality of the food provided to develop our various potentialities. He seemed of a different species, among the little ruffians a saint, among sportive animals a distressful spirit. By what steps our intimacy at first grew I cannot now tell. As neither work nor play threw us together, I saw but little of him during the day: he never even in my last term accompanied me in my frequent 20 visits to St. George's Chapel, where it was my custom to go on short after-fours and sit in the north aisle or organ-loft, stealing out at the end of the anthem in time to be not very late for five o'clock school. Our meetings were therefore generally after lock-up, when, if we both had work to do, he would sometimes bring his to my room, but more often I would go uninvited to sit with him. His room looked over the Slough road, a small narrow room with the door at the end of one long side, and a window at the opposite diagonal corner. Against the wall facing the window stood his plain oaken 30 bureau, at which he would sit with his back to the window, while I occupied most of the rest of the room at right angles to him. The clearest picture that I have of him is thus seated, with his hands linked behind his head, tilting his chair backward as he deliberated his careful utterances: or

sometimes he would balance it on one leg, and steady himself by keeping the fingers of his outstretched arms in touch with the walls. There was moreover a hole in the boards of the floor, and if the chair-leg went through and precipitated him on to the carpet, that was a part of the performance and gave him a kind of satisfaction. The bureau-lid lay open before him as a desk, and in the top drawer on the right he kept his poems. His face whether grave or laughing was always full of thought: he would sometimes throw himself
10 backward as if to escape from the stress of it, or he would lean forward with meditative earnestness and appear to concentrate his attention on the tallow dip, which in its brazen saucer was the only illumination, feeding it anxiously with grease from the point of the snuffers, or snuffing it to the quick till he put it out. When he spoke it was with a gentle voice and slowly as if he pondered every word. . . .

Our instinctive attitudes towards poetry were very dissimilar, he regarded it from the emotional, and I from the
20 artistic side; and he was thus of a much intenser poetic temperament than I, for when he began to write poetry he would never have written on any subject that did not deeply move him, nor would he attend to poetry unless it expressed his own emotions; and I should say that he liked poetry on account of the power that it had of exciting his valued emotions, and he may perhaps have recognized it as the language of faith. What had led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the
30 material: it was an art which I hoped to learn. An instinctive lightness was essential, but, given that, I did not suppose that the poet's emotions were in any way better than mine, nor mine than another's: and, though I should not at that time have put it in these words, I think that Dolben imagined poetic form to be the naive outcome of peculiar

personal emotion; just as one imagines in nature the universal mind conquering matter by the urgency of life,—as he himself describes it in his 'Core':

Poetry, the hand that wrings
(Bruised albeit at the strings)
Music from the soul of things.

There is a point in art where these two ways merge and unite, but in apprenticeship they are opposite approaches....

No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins, and I am glad to have preserved the 10 letter which he then wrote, having met Dolben but once, for it must give some idea of the grief which his more intimate friends suffered at his death; some measure too of the shock to their hopes, since it records the full appreciation which his genius received from them during his life. This was, no doubt, chiefly due to the great charm of his personality, for his character was transparent; nor did the strange spontaneous beauty and significance, that invested the actions of his life, desert him in the circumstances of his death. It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental 20 perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of healthy bodily enjoyment: and premature as his end was, and the stroke of it unlocked for, and apparently sudden, yet his last poems show him waiting and expectant, and his last action had all the dignity and fitness of artistic preparation.

My story of the accidents of his life can give no picture of his charm; his perpetual humour and light merriment are what will least appear: though I may hope that the truthful- 30 ness of the story reveals more than I can myself perceive. As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dixon's *Poems*, 1909

IN one of the loveliest cities of the world—for almost all that may now hinder Oxford from holding her title is the work of the last fifty years—in a university whose antiquity and slumbering pre-eminence encourage her scholars to consider themselves the *elite* of the nation, there stood apart a company of enthusiastic spirits, in the flourish and flower of their youth, united in an ideal conspiracy to reform society by means of beauty. In the frankest friendship that man can know, when its ecstasy seems eternal, and time only
 10 an unlimited opportunity for agreeable endeavour, before experience has sobered enterprise or thought has troubled faith, these young men devoted the intention and hope of their lives to the most congenial task that they could imagine. Their lightheartedness never questioned their wisdom, and to their self-confidence all appeared as easy as the prospect was pleasant. They inherited the devotion that had built their schools and temples, and regarding the beauty that had been handed down to their enjoyment as peculiarly their own, since they alone worthily loved and
 20 adored it, they aspired to enrol themselves in the same consecration and rekindle a torpid generation with the fire that burned in their souls. Almost every one of the group was intending to take Holy Orders, and looked to pursue his vocation within the Ministry of the Church. We are warned that Morris was in those days an aristocratical High Churchman, and Burne-Jones tells us of himself that he knew nothing of Painting; but it was the liberty of their ideal, the vagueness of their aspiration, the rebellion against convention, the boyish contempt for authority and discipline that animated
 30 their mutual affection and made the charm of their life....

I have already commemorated my visit in a poem which

begins, 'Man hath with man on earth no holier bond'. The sentiment there is from life, but the incidents and scene are fictitious. The facts were that, after staying with my friend Mandell Creighton at Embleton, I proposed to explore the Roman Wall on foot from Newcastle to Carlisle, and conclude my holiday under the poet's roof. The summer of that year was wet in the North, and the persistent rain delaying my start made me relinquish the western end of my ramble, so it was by train that I arrived one afternoon, and first saw Dixon awaiting me on the platform of How Mill station. 10 Emotion graven the scene on my memory: a tallish, elderly figure, its liteness lost in a slight, scholarly stoop which gave to the shoulders an appearance of heaviness, wearing unimpeachable black cloth negligently, and a low-crowned clerical hat banded with twisted silk. His attitude and gait as he walked on the platform were those of a man who, through abstraction or indifference, is but half aware of his surroundings, and his attention to the train as he gazed along the carriages to discover me had that sort of awkwardness that comes from the body not expressing the intention 20 of the mind. His face, I saw, was dark and solemn, and as he drew near I could see that the full lips gave it a tender expression, for the beard did not hide the mouth. Nothing further could be read, only the old mystery and melancholy of the earth, and that under the heavy black brows his eyes did their angelic service to the soul without distraction. His hearty welcome was in a voice that startled me with its sonority and depth; but in its convincing sincerity there was nothing expansive or avenant. He then became so silent that I half suspected him of common tactics, and was slow to 30 interpret his silence as mere courtesy, which it was; indeed, he would never speak unless he were assured that he was not preventing another, a habit which made a singularly untrue disguise of his eager, ingenuous temper. However, as we approached the village it was his call to talk, and he set me

wondering by his anxiety that I should admire the church. It was a dreary, modern stone building with round-headed windows and a wide slate roof; the shrunken degradation of a tower stuck on to one end and the after-concession of a brick chancel at the other. I have a letter from him, dated 1895, where, in narrating a visit to Carlisle from Warkworth, he writes—

I also went to Hayton, and as I walked from the station I thought of my first sight of you there. . . . The church is
10 externally the same, but it has a clock now; internally it is translated from the consistent ugliness and Presbyterian arrangement of sittings which you saw, into a sort of music-hall or sacred concert-room; nothing of the old preserved, and entirely devoid of interest.

It is as if he remembered how he had praised the church on that day. I suppose he loved it as the home of his ministry, and perhaps from the link which it made with the Wesleyanism of his family. He would, too, have preferred the simplicity and spiritual ease of making the best of
20 poor circumstances to the labour of ineffectively exploiting luxurious opportunities. There is surely not one of our meanest churches that has not been sanctified by loving service, but few can have known such poetical idealization as Dixon lavished on Hayton. . . .

Some characters give the idea of a personality that has attained to certain qualities; in others we seem to see qualities composing a character. Without assuming the validity of this distinction one may use it as a real description. Dixon was of the latter type. His imagination, since
30 that is an inborn gift beyond conscious control, would, of course, have this effect, and seem a visitation from without, and he merely the happy dispenser of it. His insight, clear judgement, and memory were gifts of a similar kind; but even in his humility he did not appear like a man who had put it on, but as an incarnation of the quality, whose essence

was distilled or reflected in him. And so with his good temper, humour, patience, tenderness, and sympathy, which made up his social aspect, all seemed to flow from the deeper perennial sources, uncontaminated and inexhaustible. This great ingenuous being went about among men almost unrecognized, though influencing nearly every one with whom he came in contact. As he respected every man, he won respect from all, and any lengthened intercourse with him awoke the best affinities of his associates, who became infected with his grace. One might see around him the 10 common Christian virtues propagating themselves in a natural state like healthy plants that, without a gardener's care, flourish and multiply from year to year. He was truly revered, and where he bestowed his affection the gift was so unmeasured that the mere flattery of it must have been injurious, were it not that spiritual love has no excess, but is always beneficent. It was more than any one could repay, and, however I have rejoiced in it, the remembrance, now that he is taken away, shames me with the thought of my unworthiness.

20

HENRY BRADLEY

From a *Memoir*, 1926

WHATEVER outward honour can be shown to the dead was paid to Henry Bradley when his mortal spoils were borne into Magdalen College Chapel for the requiem before burial. It seemed as if Alma Mater in her respect for this stranger had ordered the ceremonies with a greater care and solemnity than for her own sons. It was a gloomy day: the sky was overcast and dark; and within the choir, lined with ranks of grave academic figures, the long rows of candles brightened the noon with their ritual illumination. The music was a consummate rendering of the severe English dirge which, 30 discarding all vain sentiment in a dignity that will not relax

even before the face of death, has rivalled for two hundred years whatsoever else has been written to interpret man's emotion in that hour. All was in true keeping with Bradley's spirit, and the crowd of his assembled friends who moved out to the subdued strains of the Dead March, following his coffin to the grave, felt that they bade him a worthy farewell, and while the flowers were scattering could rejoice with him for the peaceful end of his long life of toil. . . .

He was one of those who having neither inclination nor
10 temptation to accept the world as it stands, are early driven to live to themselves, and by instinctive self-protection preserve that simplicity and purity of mind which is the foundation of all that is good whether in thought or conduct. In that contemplative detachment from conventional valuations, human sensibility is heightened both in delicacy and emotion by a profounder perception of the ideal significance of Appearance, and the feelings are transported into a spiritual world where accidents of Being are but ephemeral shows. Bradley lived in that ideal world with assured faith
20 in the promises of man's desire, and in a life after death where they would be fulfilled. Though no man could better understand the objections with which material science would forbid such hopes,—and he was presumably no better able than another to picture any sort of future existence which should be sufficiently like our present state to continue our mortal sympathies, or, if it should continue them, could continue to satisfy them—yet this Agnosticism did not destroy the faith in which Bradley lived and died.

And difficult as it is with our sorrowful experience to face
30 with any comfort the prospect of a general resurrection, yet there is none of us who would not desire to meet his old friends again, and cannot picture the joy of it. I myself would risk a good deal on the chance of meeting Henry Bradley: indeed all my memories of him are so pleasant that I can almost imagine the delight of his company enduring *in eternum*.

JOHN KEATS

From *Jahn Keats A Critical Essay*, 1895, revised 1916

IN these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats¹ poetry have been incidentally brought out; there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and that is the very seal of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time as- 10
tonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it; the difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree that Shakespeare does; indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subjects that his poems afford illustrations; but these are, as far as they go, not 20
only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field. Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these—

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.—*Macbeth*.
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.—*Hamlet*.
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.—*Tempest*.

Examples from Keats are—

The journey homeward to habitual self.
 Solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven.
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams.

In most of Keats' phrases of this sort there is a quality which makes them unlike Shakespeare; and if we should put into one group all those which are absolutely satisfactory, and then make a second group of those which are
 10 not so simply convincing, we should find in these last that the un-Shakespearian quality was more declared, and came out as something fanciful, or rather too vaguely or venturesomely suggestive; the whole phrase displaying its poetry rather than its meaning, and being in consequence less apt and masterly. This second group would contain many of the most admired lines of Keats, and these are very characteristic of him. Such are—

Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks,

20 and—

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.

The *Revision of Hyperion* shows that Keats himself was dissatisfied with his 'senators'; and one can see the reason without condemning the passage or approving its omission. Finally, there would be left a third group of such-like phrases which plainly miss the mark.

Closely allied to these imaginative phrases, and perhaps more characteristic of Keats and peculiar to him, are the short vivid pictures which may be called his masterpieces
 30 of word-painting, in which with a few words he contrives completely to finish a picture which is often of vast size. Good examples of this are the sestet of the *Leander* sonnet; the last four lines of the *Chapman's Homer*; the passage

beginning 'Golden his hair' in *Hyperion* ii. 371; and, to quote one from *Endymion*—

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks.

For its wealth in such rare strokes of descriptive imagination Keats' poetry must always take the very first rank; and it is his imaginative quality of phrase which sets him more than any other poet of his time in creative antagonism to the eighteenth-century writers; for it was not only foreign 10 to their style, but incomprehensible and repugnant to their pseudo-classic taste, which preferred a 'reasonable propriety of thought', such as Hume found to be lacking in Shakespeare, to the shadowy powers of imagination, however sublime.

The limitation that we found of Keats' faculty when compared with Shakespeare—which, if it may be ascribed wholly to his youth, amply justifies the sentiment of the opening lines of this essay—leads us on naturally to another of his chief characteristics, and that is his close relationship 20 with common Nature: he is for ever drawing his imagery from common things, which are for the first time represented as beautiful: and again in this we see his opposition to the eighteenth-century writers, who mainly contented themselves with conventional commonplaces for their natural imagery; whereas Keats discovers in the most usual objects either beauty or sources of delight or comfort, or sometimes even of imaginative horror, which are all new; and here his originality seems inexhaustible, and his wide poetic sympathies the strongest. Nor does he confine himself to matters 3° of which he could have had much experience; he makes Nature the object of his imaginative faculty—Nature apart from man, or related to man as an enchantress to a dreamer. This is, I suppose, what he means when, comparing himself with Byron, he says, 'There is this great difference

between us: he describes what he sees,—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task: now see the immense difference,' Here he shows a vast wealth which makes his poems a mine of pleasure. *Endymion* is crowded to excess with a variety of these images, and as they came up in his mind in an endless stream to illustrate his ideas, the ideas sometimes fare rather badly; for though they were no doubt generally held firm in his own mind, they are yet drowned by the images of their objective presentation; until these
 10 themselves at last lose even their own virtue, and fatigue the reader, who feels like a sight-seer in a gallery overcrowded with pictures, which by degrees he ceases to regard with attention.

And in this devotion to natural beauty lies, I believe, one true reason of Keats' failure in the delineation of human passion. The only passion delineated by Keats is the imaginative love of Nature, and human love is regarded by him as a part of this, and his lover is happy merely because admitted into communion with new forms of natural beauty.
 20 This, which appeared in theory in the explanation of the allegory of *Endymion*, is practically exposed in the second stanza of the *Ode to Melancholy*, where, among the objects on which a sensitive mind is recommended to indulge its melancholy fit, the anger of his mistress is enumerated with roses, peonies, and rainbows, as a beautiful phenomenon, plainly without respect to its cause, meaning, or effect. And so in *Lamia*—

He took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new,

30 and

Fine was the mitigated fury.

How different is the parallel passage of Shakespeare, which at once occurs to one—

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!

This is not artistic admiration, but a lover's entire devotion.

In the criticism of *Endymion* we found a want of taste in Keats' idea of woman; we have now to add a charge of lack of true insight into human passion. If this was wholly due to the absence of awakening experience, it is at least unfortunate that in *Lamia*, in which from its date we might have expected something mature, he should have chosen so low a type. Though perhaps suggested by the original of his 10 story, it was not necessary to it; and even if he preferred to have his snake-woman bad, there was every reason why Lycius¹ passion should have been of a higher type. How unworthy it is is shown in the description of their meeting and in the following sentiment—

But too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.

This love is an association for mutual pleasure, the end of which is satiety and revulsion, and it is, I repeat, at least unfortunate that Keats, after he had known love, should, 20 in his first attempt to delineate it, have been satisfied with so vulgar a type. The ideal passion in *Isabella* is insipid, and even in *The Eve of St. Agnes* the passion, as expressed in stanzas xxxv-xxxix, is at best of a conventional type, and has to have a good deal read into it by the light of the story.

But Keats¹ doctrine of beauty, which might be defended if it was spiritualized, which it never is by him, may often be reconciled with true feeling by the allowance which is due to his objective method; concerning this, as illustrations have 30 been given, I shall say no more here except to repeat that Keats' imagery probably always followed, if it did not always clearly picture, some train of ideas; and when he says in the Ode *To Fanny*

My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual. yet divine to me;—
 Divine, I say! What sea-bird o'er the sea
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes ?

these words should not be taken as a disavowal of meaning in 'those abstractions which were his only life', but as an
 10 apology for immaturity, and they must be interpreted in the light of his high idea of philosophy. Keats was conscious, like Virgil, of a double inclination. He said of himself, April 1818: 'I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy. Were I calculated for the former, I should be glad; but as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter,' This would be a strange variant of

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae

if we need suppose it to be anything more than an utterance
 20 of that contrarious mood so common to introspection; it is nevertheless evidence that Keats was unlikely to have depreciated the intellectual element of his art: but the intellectual element is always in league with emotion, and would have been, I imagine, considered by him as worthless in poetry without such mixture. In the *Epistle to Reynolds* even the unpleasantness of the consideration of what we call the struggle for existence would, simply presented, have been flat and commonplace; but he shows it as a 'horrid mood'¹, by which he is haunted, and uses great
 30 skill and a wealth of contrasted beauty in introducing it under this enhanced aspect, 'wreathing a flowery band spite of the unhealthy ways made for his searching'; and in calling his Muse unintellectual, he was no doubt uttering his reiterated impatience for more knowledge, the expression of which recurs so often in his poems and letters,

that it is needless to quote any one, and which rises to a sort of consummation in the *Revision of Hyperion*, where it seems as if he had imagined himself to have at length attained to an insight of the mystery.

There is less opposition, it seems to me, between Keats' true instinct for ideal philosophy and his luxurious poetry (which seems rather its young expression), than between these on the one hand and his practical human qualities, as revealed by his letters, on the other. The bond of all was an unbroken and unflagging earnestness, which is so utterly unconscious and unobservant of itself as to be almost unmatched. It is always present in his poetry both for good and ill, in the spontaneous and felt quality of his epithets, and the absence of any barrier even, it would sometimes seem, of consideration or judgement between his mind and his pen. Whether this earnestness is the account of his failure in his purely comic freaks I do not know, but it may certainly account for his want of humour, for which, in spite of some traces in his letters, it does not appear to have left any room. The best of the letters are serious and full of good matter, a few are quite foolish, and a great number are written in a high-spirited jocular vein, which seems to be carelessly assumed for the double purpose of amusing his correspondent and relaxing his own mind. The chief charm in all of them is their unalloyed sincerity: there is nothing between the pen and the mind, not always even an effort or desire to write what should be worth reading: it is enough that it is he that writes, and his brother or friend that will read.

In spite of this earnestness and philosophy, it is certainly true that Keats' mind was of a luxurious habit; and it must have been partly due to this temperament that he showed so little severity towards himself in the castigation of his poems, though that was, as I said before, chiefly caused by the prolific activity of his imagination, which was always

providing him with fresh material to work on. In this respect he is above all poets an example of what is meant by inspiration: the mood which all artists require, covet, and find most rare was the common mood with him; and I should say that, being amply supplied with this, what as an artist he most lacked was self-restraint and self-castigation,—which was indeed foreign to his luxurious temperament, unselfish and devoted to his art as he was,—the presence of which was most needful to watch, choose, and reject the 10 images which crowded on him as he thought or wrote.

EMILY BRONTE

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 January 1911

THE transcendent genius of Emily Bronte is now well recognized; *Wuthering Heights* has taken its place among the unique creations of literature. But what of the poetess? There is no question of her poetic faculties. The wide intellectual grasp, the unsurpassed power of vivid representation, the almost isolated originality, the concentrated fire of native passion are all undisputed; and yet, with one or two exceptions, her poems—which are her most personal revelation—have made no impression at all. The editor of this 20 collection almost apologizes for them. 'No one today', he says, 'will deny them a certain bibliographical interest'; while Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in his introductory essay writes, 'It is not claimed for a moment that the intrinsic merits of the verses are of a special kind,' Emily herself wrote:—

Dreams have encircled me.

.

But now when I had hoped to sing,
My fingers strike a tuneless string;
And still the burden of the strain—
I strive no more, 'tis all in vain.

And the casual reader of this book will, likely enough, look into a few pages and then close it with indifference or disappointment. What is the impediment? Why, when such a genius brought her supreme gifts to bear on the task, and loved it, why did she produce something which is at first sight cold and worthless? We do not forget that Matthew Arnold said of one of her poems that it 'shook my soul', nor that she herself never wrote anything so unlike poetry as the poem in which he praised her; and we know that stanzas chosen from her poems might exhibit her as a poet of the 10 first order—still, the general effect is what it is, and the reasons may be perceived and stated.

First of all, Emily Bronte is very direct, and eschews ornament. Indeed, it seems probable that what artistic defect her instinct had was indifference to artistic beauty, and that therefore the beauty in her work is that which comes of bare truth and insight rather than of aesthetic handling and ornament. Secondly, she never mastered the technique of poetry, and took what she had chiefly from poets like Cowper. Her biographers, it is true, assert that 20 she was musical; but proficiency in her day, and at a girls' boarding school, implies little; and it would be difficult to find in her writings any evidence of the true musical faculty. In her poems she is certainly not delicately conscious of the music either of her rhythm or of her rhyme; she is rather indifferent, for she will consent to break the rhythm at any obstacle, without respect to its effect; and in her treatment of rhyme she is sometimes quite childish; where the rhymes are not common they are often awkward or bad, and are allowed to nullify themselves by unconsidered assonances. 30 It is pitiful to see her working with 'anguish' and 'languish' and such-like commonplaces, not knowing how tarnished the ornaments are, or else revolting from them to do something worse. And for this reason many of her poems would show to greater advantage in a translation. Incompetence

in technique is a ready source of obscurity or awkwardness of grammar; and indifference to aesthetic beauty allows the diction to fall; nor is Emily incapable of stumbling into the mannerisms of the school with which she was most familiar. The reader may remember the poem beginning—

On a sunny brae alone I lay
 One summer afternoon :
 It was the marriage-time of May
 With her young lover June.

10 and how after the characteristic lines—

But her father smiled on the fairest child
 He ever held in his arms.

she continues—

In sooth, I did not know
 Why , ' had brought a clouded eye
 To greet the general glow.

And in the following quotation see how a profound thought, poetically illuminated by a masterly image, is damaged by prosaic diction, while the grammar leaves the application
 20 of the image ambiguous; for 'all' and 'each one' may suggest persons, not the thoughts as intended:—

And yet there is—or seems at least to be—
 A general scheme of thought that colours all;
 So though each one be different, all agree
 In the same melancholy shade-like pall;
 Even as the shadows look the same to me,
 Though cast, I know, from many a varying wall
 In this vast city—hut and temple sharing
 In the same light, and the same darkness wearing.

30 Emily has not, therefore, a perfected style. We must not expect either full artistic technique or sustained height of diction; she works without them: and this plainness may deceive; for it is a genius that is speaking, and in her speech

the common words have regained their essential and primal significance, and, being the simplest, are therefore for her the best means of direct verbal touch with felt realities. As a French critic, whose book on the Brontës is just published—M. Dimnet—says of the poems with true perspicacity:—'Avec des mots simples, Emily atteint a chaque instant l'effet rare . . . cette Me extraordinaire a garde la puissance de regarder face a face la realite pres de laquelle nous passons sans la voir.' It is just because we are so familiarized by language with ideas that the simple presentation of reality 10 in that language does not stir our emotion, nor carry us beyond the mere recognition of the accustomed idea. And thus Arthur Symonds wrote of her, using the same word 'rare', 'A rare and strong beauty comes into the bare outlines, quickening them with splendour'. Indeed, a near acquaintance with her poems—which with few exceptions are the plainest revelation that she can make of herself—brings one to give the same value to her commonest expressions that one gives to the most consummate artistic diction. Never was there a poet who so much requires to be kept 20 apart from others, away from conventional contagion; and when one has got accustomed to her voice it is wonderful what a range it covers, and how various are her successes.

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

From The Times Literary Supplement, 29 February 1912

IT is true in all art that when a great master appears he so exhausts the material at his disposal as to make it impossible for any succeeding artist to be original, unless he can either find new material or invent some new method of handling the old. In painting and music this is almost demonstrable to the uninitiated; in poetry the law may not be so strict, but it still holds; and anyone may see that serious rhyme 30

is now exhausted in English verse, or that Milton's blank verse practically ended as an original form with Milton. There are abundant signs that English syllabic verse has long been in the stage of artistic exhaustion of form which follows great artistic achievement. Now as far as regards the verse-form Wordsworth was apparently unconscious of this predicament. It never occurred to him that he was working with blunted tools. His idea was to purify the diction and revivify English poetry by putting a new content into the
10 old verse-forms; and two reasons may be given for this conservatism. First, that in his time an artificial school of poetry had separated itself *oft* from the older tradition, so that any return to the older style appeared to be a freshness; and, secondly, he was a part of that unaccountable flood of inspiration which in Keats and Shelley and in a few of Coleridge's lyrics transcended in some vital qualities whatever had been done before, and actually wrought miracles of original beauty within the old forms; but these bond-breaking efforts, we should say, more than completed the
20 exhaustion, while the tedious quality of much of their work shows under what hampering conditions the genius of these poets attained excellence. Keats speaks very plainly; he says, for instance, that he relinquished his *Hyperion* because he could not get away from Milton. . . .

Mr. Kipling's genius is very varied, and though he has written much verse he has won his reputation chiefly by his prose tales. Now we shall concern ourselves only with his verse, and only with the style and diction of that. With Mr. Kipling, then, nothing in diction is common or unclean;
30 nor can we draw any strict line to separate the diction of such poems as *The Barrack-room Ballads*, which are professedly and wholly in the low dialect of the characters, from those other poems where it is not so prominent nor so evidently in place. A good many poems, it is true, are entirely free from it; but these rather show the author's

liberty to take up with whatever manner he may choose; and their conventionalities of rhyme and diction, from which not even the obsolete is rejected, are not to be reckoned among his inventions. Now as vehicle for this kind of diction (which need not be more nearly described) he chooses the Elizabethan ballad stanza, the nursery rhyme, the popular song, and whatever other accentual lilt he may devise of a similar character, and with these material resources (of diction and metre) he will treat almost any subject. As an example to exhibit the result we will take *The Looking Glass*, 10 in *Rewards and Fairies*. In this masterly poem the motive is heroic and almost tragic. Great Queen Bess is portrayed with the vain woman's vanity and the tyrant's bad conscience, and with a vast pride, sufficient to drown them both; and the picture is done with such force that many readers will have the four stanzas by heart when they have read them twice. Now observe the diction; the first line runs thus:—

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was middling old.

This is of course founded on 20

The Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey,

and the key of the emotion is thus deliberately pitched at the level of the nonsensical nursery rhyme. Observe, too, the expression 'middling old'. This sets the Queen down among the homeliest of her subjects; but in so doing it may humanize and provoke common sympathy. Later on Lord Leicester's ghost comes 'scratching and singing' at the door, which degrades the ghost; and yet, in spite of those things, the whole has an irresistible force, so that our dislike of the incongruities, if we feel any, is overpowered; and this force, 30 though it may not be due to the apparent obstacles, may seem the greater for its victory over them. That 'was' (= woz) is rhymed in the refrain with 'lass' is a convention

no doubt congenial to the nursery rhyme, and we only mention it because it is not otherwise reconcilable with Mr. Kipling's method, which at its best refuses the foolish inversions and bad rhymes that lower the standard of so many of Wordsworth's scholastic stanzas, because they are conventions of another school, retained for obvious convenience—mere resources of imperfect execution. (Criticism of this poem cannot omit notice of the phrase 'her sins were on her head', which must be reckoned as a slip in artistic accomplishment, because, since the Queen is looking at herself in the mirror, one is too conscious of her actual head to escape visualizing at once some sort of bundle on the top of it. This by the way.)

Now suppose that we had never heard the rhyme of the Queen and her bread and honey, and did not know English well enough to understand the true values of 'middling' and 'scratching', would the poem affect us less or more powerfully than it does with this knowledge? What would it be without the queer quality that it actually has? Or again, is our pleasure attendant on our admiration rather than our admiration on our pleasure? It is easier to ask such questions than to answer them; we may be content with the surer ground that Kipling is Kipling, and that without Kipling we should never have had the poem; and we are glad to have got it. But this almost implies that the writer must have an idiosyncrasy allied to his style. Here is another example. In the very beautiful story of *The Brushwood Boy* every one will remember that the discovery is made by the device of the girl being overheard singing the song in which she narrates her lifelong dream. It is essential to the story that the song should be pathetic and worthy. She was a musician, and had composed both the music and the words. Now one line in her refrain (or did her creator write it for her?) is this:—

We must go back with Policeman Day

As an apparition in the dream we did not quarrel with Policeman Day, for the dream is irresponsible; but in the song he is out of place, because the song is conscious art and responsible, and he is comic. An artist composing an emotional song would never have allowed the 'common country policeman' to imperil its ideality. Lack of humour is not among Mr. Kipling's faults; and since he can make fun of the policeman motif when he chooses, he must have a callosity somewhere on his artistic feelers, for else he would never have admitted the policeman into his song. We are 10 disposed to think that he may have infected himself, and that—to return to our comparison—he is in this respect just like Wordsworth, first, in deliberately choosing a particular kind of direct diction, and, secondly, in pushing it too far. If we should examine more closely into this matter we should be exceeding our limitations, and find ourselves asking, for instance, whether in the magnificent *Soldier and Sailor too* the quality of the swagger is wholly due to the poetic method with which it is so entirely agreeable.

Mr. Kipling has written some blank verse, and in *The 20 Sacrifice of Er-Heb* we find him adopting a form of it which was specialized some fifty years ago. Though this may not indicate a considered artistic preference, it is noteworthy that the form is simple and direct, and in so far congenial to him; but its constraints are artificial and monotonous, and its rhythms poor and short; in which respects it is unlike what we might have expected of him; and we have noticed no trace of originality in his treatment of it, although he can take pains with nothing without in some way distinguishing it. He has so true a feeling for the value 30 of words, and for the right cadences of idiomatic speech, and so vast a vocabulary, that his example is generally useful to a generation whose cultured speech-rhythms are so slovenly and uncertain. This is especially true of his more accentual verse, and it is on this account to be regretted

that out of his abundance he is sometimes tempted to overload his lines with the weight either of sound or of meaning, or of both at once; for this is bad example. In this respect he is to be contrasted with Wordsworth, for Wordsworth offends notoriously by the other extreme, though when his copious and throttling neck-cloth is loosened a fine diction flows fully, as in his description of Trinity College Chapel:—

Where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
10 The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Mr. Kipling's method seems to shut him out from such heights. We do not remember anything of this quality in his poems.

WORD-BOOKS

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 4 August 1910

IT would seem as if in pure literature the classics of a dead language must have some advantage over those of a living language. First, because it must be an advantage to have the meaning of the words fixed, which is in some measure accomplished by shutting them out of currency; and
20 secondly, because any idealization of speech must be easier where the common terms are not familiarized by daily use and vulgarized by ordinary associations. It is for this latter reason that the *Arabian Nights*, for instance, is much better reading to us in an Italian translation than in our own English; and the completer enchantment which children find is greatly due to the comparative freshness of all language to them. For the same reason is it that any romantic tale will appear more romantic in an antique or foreign tongue than in our everyday speech. But as our
30 common speech has some associations which art is glad to be rid of, there are others the absence of which is as surely

a loss. For whether or not there be any greater nobility in our main conceptions, when we compare ourselves with the ancients, yet none would deny that the immense stores of our historic vocabulary gain in recognition and significance by being a still living tradition in unbroken continuity of actual growth. Shades of meaning more delicate than could ever be invented, intricate poetic allusion, with consequent command of emotion and adaptability to the most subtle varieties of feeling, glints of colour from all climes and times—these are qualities which give distinction to much 10 of the best of our modern literature. There is truly no kind of beauty more liable to mishandling, no artistic effect more uncertain and fugitive, than that produced by these half-tones, as we may call them; yet today in Europe they are the legitimate and natural wealth of our inheritance, and it would be pedantry to depreciate it. And if against this plasticity and subtlety of living speech we would balance the severer advantage which a dead language may be thought to possess in the simple definition of its terms—which would seem at first view indispensable to secure a 20 broad style, we shall find that there is some delusion. For, however the dictionaries may define the meaning of a Greek word, we cannot avoid interpreting it by aid of our modern feelings and associations. No sentiment is safe from the contamination of our shifted ideas; nor is the conscious exclusion of any conception or emotion the same as the ignorance of it. Or suppose we are contented to have stripped an old term of all adventitious and later association, it is left a naked nondescript, which we are unable to reclothe in the living nuances of emotion with which its contemporary 30 thought invested it. Scientific analysis is always thus intruding to stultify our satisfaction; and the reasoning is irreproachable that since, though a man were to spend his whole life in the task, it were impossible for him to think with the same thoughts as St. Paul or Plato thought with, it is

therefore out of his power to understand a single sentence of their writings exactly as they intended it.

We have not, however, to look far for consolation; we can quickly reassure ourselves that it is just as true that man is always the same as that he is always changing. It is demonstrable, no doubt, that absolute identity of understanding is out of our reach in our interpretations of ancient thought; but for that very reason we need not worry ourselves too punctiliously, nor be ashamed to admit that there
 10 is always something of the nature of delusion in our love of old literature. And in fact it is truer that man is always the same than that he is never the same. The universal mysterious force and unfathomably deep instincts which constitute all that can properly be termed life are but superficially affected by the conscious developments of our intellect; and it is exactly those fundamental things which are the proper subject-matter of all art. For in so far as human art is instinctive (as it seems originally to be), it is preposterous to suppose that its subject-matter can lie at all
 20 among our purely intellectual developments; while in so far as in cultivated societies it has become conscious of its aims and methods, it will still seem that the intellect is better able to deal artistically with what is outside it than with itself; for in this latter case it must become self-conscious, critical, and scientific.

Admitting, then, not only that it is impossible to exclude the constant flux of our thought from affecting our literary art, but that this flux is in itself desirable and a prolific source of beauty, we may also see that in dealing with the
 30 unchangeable things the highest literature, especially the best poetry, is wonderfully free from the great obstacle that the indefiniteness of its material would seem to oppose to it.

*Nee sine te qmcquam dias in luminis oras
 ExorituY, neque fit laetum neque amabile qmcquam.*

• • • • •

O, were it but my life
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

• • • • •
O world, O life, O time,
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before.

Almost any examples are convincing. The appeal is from emotion to emotion; and criticism of poetry is only wrestling with itself when it attempts analysis on a merely intellectual basis. We should not expect such a method to yield anything 10 more satisfactory than the analyses of the emotions themselves, as we find them in psychological treatises. Art is thus self-contained and stable; and science not only dislikes art for this very quality of permanence, but has actually been often led to deny the natural superiority and predominance of the primal instincts over the intellectual conceptions which she is always fabricating on the top of them.

Words are the material of literary art, and words are ideas; and what those ideas are is determined by the sense in which words have been used by those whose genius has 20 ruled the language. A dictionary is a book which collects authoritative uses; and it at once reveals that every word has several uses or meanings which it needs logic to discriminate. It is a pity that Lamb, in his *Detached Thoughts on Books*, never told us what he thought of Johnson's Dictionary; whether he held it worthy to rank with his beloved Burton and Browne, or whether he would have set it between Gibbon and the backgammon-board. He was himself careful of words, and knew how tenderly they should be used; and one could believe that he might have cherished a 30 fantastic devotion towards a book so full of extracts. But had he really ever made friends with the Dictionary, he would have told us. With his peculiar personal idiosyncrasy, his individual irresponsible taste, he would, likely enough,

have felt some prudish scruple at the idea of getting any knowledge of his craft at second-hand; and he could never have stomached the pedantry of some of Johnson's authorities. Of Robert Browning it is recorded that when he determined to devote himself to poetry, he read the whole of Johnson's Dictionary through, just as Gibbon, to qualify himself for his great historical task, studied the itineraries of the Roman Empire; and the Doctor's two original folios with their uncurtailed quotations are no bad reading; they are a
 10 magnificent failure to accomplish an impossible feat—that is, to compile a dictionary such as a literary artist would love to possess.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

From An Address to the Swindon Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, October 26, 1916

PHILOSOPHERS have from time to time drawn up ideal schemes of government based on the aim of greatest happiness, Utopias, as they are called; but the word Utopia has come to mean a state of society presumably desirable, but only feasible if men were different from what they really are. What is usually depicted is a small State working harmoniously on a democratic or social basis; and in small States
 20 the social basis can be worked, where home-life is simple, and external complications generally absent. Small village communities in a sort of patriarchal simplicity meet together to confer, the members are all personally known to one another, and they elect for their head and representative a man whom they have known personally all their lives. These representatives are gathered into wider councils, and in this way the common interests are easily and honestly concentrated. But in larger States these essential simplicities do not exist—and the small numbers are essential; for, as
 30 the numbers increase the separate members necessarily lose

their mutual personal relationship; and, as they cannot know their representative personally, they elect some plausible fellow, the man who flatters them most, or promises them the most immediate advantages. Such leaders are typically men of some oratorical power, who profess politics for the love of self-importance, or for private gain; and when such men meet in a national parliament there is neither honesty nor wisdom in their counsels.

Let me remind you that Athens—that famous example of successful democracy—was not a real democracy. It was 10 served by a slave population: and that, you know, avoids the main difficulty of allowing the vote of the majority to rule—because the slave-workers had no vote. We have modern examples. The United States is an example of an honest and well-considered attempt at democracy on a large scale. Its isolation from the Old World and the wide territories that were at its disposal allowed it an exceptional term of prosperity; but its present condition is not such as to convert me. And we can look nearer home: our own democracy: our Parliament in those years before the war broke 20 out: it was a spectacle to justify all the patriotic fear that reasonable people felt. I will spare you the picture. Enough to say that the Prussian statesmen, who were observing us with jealous attention, thought that it was impossible that we could pull ourselves together; so they set off on the war-path. And they are still exhibiting to us the very superior organization of an autocracy.

But the unexpected happened. The British democracy slowly, slowly, slowly awoke to the situation. I confess that I did not expect this; much as I hoped for it. I did not think 30 that the working-men of England would perceive that the strife was between democracy and militarism; that, if Prussia won, then the hope of democracy was crushed for ever. Ever is hardly too big a word. The situation now is that you have gone in determined to win; and it lies with

you to be faithful to the end, and to see perhaps more clearly than you yet do, that you must sacrifice all else, all present considerations, to the one purpose of a victory that shall deliver the earth from terrorism, tyranny, and slavery.

Now you who are met here today not only know all this, but you have also come to be convinced that an uneducated democracy can never be stable. Education is necessary for strength and stability, and some of you at least have a
 10 wholesome appetite for the requisite food. And since you cannot get your education without leisure, and cannot have leisure without some easement of the conditions of labour, and this reform involves legislation, you claim such legislation. If our democracy is to be stable, such legislation is imperative. Here I am with you all along: and it is of this education that I shall speak—not of politics nor of war. . . .

What then is education ?

To educate means to draw out, and if we are to seek to draw out the human mind we must first have some clear
 20 notion as to what the mind is like, of what sort those faculties are which are both the object and means of education.

Suppose some one should tell us that education is the development and exercise of human Reason.

Now Reason is the intellectual faculty, which distinguishes man from the brutes, and, so far as we know, man is the only form of life in which conscious Reason exists—for the rudiments of it which we find in some animals are negligible. It is the intellectual quality which has conquered material
 30 obstacles and raised man from a state of savagery to his present condition. It judges itself to be the unique agent of all his knowledge and attainment, and being not only his highest mental power but the consciousness of it, he is perhaps almost incapable of imagining anything higher. Thus Aristotle, in his definition of God as the eternal mind and

first cause of all, supposes the Mind of God, though incomparably more perfect, to be of the same nature as the Reason of man. I could not myself assent to this assumption. But let that pass. We may readily admit that Reason is man's highest intellectual faculty. Let us ask Reason to tell us something about the other faculties of the mind.

We must remember that Reason is the only tool that we have to work with, and that a tool cannot work on itself. Temper and sharpen it as you may, your chisel cannot cut itself. We should therefore not expect too much. 10

Now, first of all, our Reason is distinguished by being a conscious process: for example, I know at this moment what I am driving at, and you consciously take cognizance of my statements; and we are agreed that animals cannot do this sort of thing. But though they lack our logical Reason, we see that they have some other kind of mental activity whereby they are able to act rightly, with an ingenuity that often baffles our conscious skill, and a method which escapes our Reason to unravel. One or two examples will suffice. In the insect world it is not uncommon to find 20 that an insect which has but a few weeks of life will lay hundreds of eggs—of the nature and purpose of which it can have absolutely no reasonable knowledge—yet it will spend the chief part of its short life in the careful disposal of these eggs in the manner best calculated to ensure their survival, and thereby the continuation of the species—concerning all which again it can know nothing; nor could all our Reason inform it. Again, I have read of the horse, that on the wide American prairies a horse-dealer will often make a circuit of a hundred miles or more, visiting the farms and 30 settlements, and buying at each what beasts he may. If, in any part of his round, a horse escapes from his drove, it will return in a straight line to its native homestead. It does not retrace its steps, but takes a bee-line, as it is called, from the spot where it escapes to the spot whence it was taken.

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It does not matter which you may choose: they are all alike in principle. They are often called 'the marvels of Instinct', by which is implied that we wonder at them, because we cannot understand them. But if they are the rule, and they are the rule in animal behaviour, there must be something wrong in our way of thinking if we find ourselves wondering at them as strange. I do not forbid myself to marvel: I mean that a theory of mind is self-condemned if it has to treat as
10 an exception what it finds to be a rule.

It is plain that there is a sort of mind which is not our logical Reason, but which performs purposive actions without conscience of their purpose; or if it have conscience of a purpose (as we may suppose the homing horse to have), yet it accomplishes that purpose without knowing how.

Whether mankind when in a savage state ever possessed very much of this sort of instinctive faculty we cannot tell. It is certain that we now perform by the aid of logical Reason and deliberation most of those purposive acts which
20 animals perform without reasoning; but we have too much in common with the lower animals to suppose that we can be lacking in the whole sphere of that unconscious faculty so universally possessed by them. And it has never been questioned that we share with them the great fundamental Instincts (self-preservation, and so on)—these are present in children and adults. What I wish to make clear is that beside these universal primal Instincts (which are the motive power of all animal life) we have a vast unconscious Mind that is always active, and a much vaster personal experience
30 than our conscious Reason can pretend to.

A simple consideration will explain what I mean. If I walk down the street with my mind busily engaged and absorbed in some remote train of thought, I observe nothing (though automatically I guide my steps none the worse for that); but afterwards, when I am aroused from my abstrac-

tion, I may remember to have seen certain persons or things on my way. The longer my abstraction continues, the less I recall: but that I consciously remember anything which I did not consciously observe at the time, shows that experience was unconsciously recorded; and much that I never remember, and never shall remember, was likewise recorded. It is even probable, with some of us at least, that when we peruse a column of the newspaper, our eyes may receive impressions from the neighbouring columns, and convey to the mind, through the brain, information concerning wholly 10 unrelated matters; although the Conscience (I mean the conscious Reason) takes no note of them. They enter the mind unperceived; and this sort of unconscious experience is always going on.

We have no conscious memory of this unconscious experience. Any experience which we observed and were conscious of at the time, we are able, more or less, to recall at will and reason upon. But our will has no power of recalling those other items of personal knowledge that have been unconsciously absorbed. But they are not for that dead or 20 inactive. They are absorbed and organized. So that a man holds, hidden away from his memory, a vaster wealth of knowledge than he is aware of, or can draw on at pleasure.

One might map out the strata of the mind in a sort of spatial diagram of three layers, the deepest being the inherited animal Instincts; the uppermost the conscious Intellect or Reason; and between these two would lie the region of unconscious personal knowledge acquired during life; the greater part of which is entirely unconscious, while the upper part of it would be mixed up with the memories 30 of conscious]experience. This dim middle place is the magazine of our common sense; it is the garden where our ideals grow, and its spontaneous fruiting is genius.

We must not be deceived by the simplicity of such a diagram. Its use is to give definition to the vague terms that

we are driven to use in talking of the functions of the Mind. And I think it is of no use to talk of the Mind and of its education unless we recognize how large and trustworthy a portion of it lies in this intermediate state between the animal Instincts and the conscious Reason.

Orthodox philosophy dislikes, and even repudiates, the term subconscious Mind, or unconscious Mind. It urges that the word Mind presupposes self-consciousness. But think what really happens, and how it is unconsciously and not
10 consciously that each man's Mind grows to be what it is. A man is born with certain feelings and likings—and it is in this respect that men most differ—and as they grow up in what is called their environment, their bias and special predispositions unconsciously select and organize their experiences to feed and develop their special liking; each man differently, as we may see in our children, how one child with a musical turn will observe sounds, another with a mechanical turn will be delighted by taking a clock to
20 pieces, while a born painter will be unhappy without a box of colours. These inborn feelings and likings are—together with the great primal Instincts and Passions—the motive power of all our conduct, and they lie like an engine-room hidden away in the basement. And moral philosophers explain that the Reason is set over them to regulate them: its chief function in this respect being to observe and govern. All will agree: for example, Love and Hatred are motive inborn forces; Reason approves Love but disapproves of Hatred as a working principle, and keeps it under.

Art and Morals were not invented by Reason. They come
30 to life and are nourished in this middle section. Every man is born with a 'desire of Beauty' or of 'Good' in some degree and in some kind, and he instinctively feeds that desire or liking on what is agreeable to it. He selects. Consider any object presented to the senses, how various and almost infinite its qualities are, and how impossible it is for any

man, even the most trained observer, to perceive them all. Each will first perceive those qualities that are most nearly related to him and that appeal to his liking. And in this way he feeds his own strength, and develops his native faculty. And this unconsciously growing self gradually comes to observe itself, becomes conscious, and takes Reason for its guide.

The purpose of education is to draw out or educate this inborn love of Beauty. And if any of you doubt whether there is such a thing, I do not think that it matters what you 10 call it, if you admit (what you cannot deny) that you have a desire, and that that desire is for something 'better' or 'good'. That desire—whatever you may call it—the Greeks called the Desire of Beauty or the Desire of Good; and you will find it difficult to get behind that, or to substitute anything for it. It is what has brought you here this afternoon; it is what is making me talk to you. And it is the basis of our Religion. . . .

Vulgarity—that is our national blemish and sin. And if I had begun my talk with it I should not have got very far 20 yet. It is blindness to Values; it is spiritual death. It pervades all classes: but the middle classes are the most deeply infected, and they stand as a dense barrier between you and the higher education. It is seen outwardly in their manner of life, their petty class distinctions, and uneasy pretensions to be just a little better off than they are; the waste of their money in aping art and luxury, by which they only make themselves ridiculous and more uncomfortable; their incapacity to see that simplicity, honesty, and thrift are fair and good, while their pitiful ambitions and restless affecta- 30 tions are contemptible. I hope that *all pretension* is as shocking to you as it must be familiar. May God grant that our present sorrows and trials and the searching of our hearts may force on us a spiritual distinction of the true Values of life, and that the stubborn necessities of thrift may compel

us to see the sin of self-indulgence and the graces of simplicity. Remember how it is because we have set our Rights so much above our Duties that we are now harrowed by this awful excess of Duty; and that it is at the feet of the idol of our old self-seeking that our dearest are devotedly sacrificing their young lives.

POETIC DICTION

From *The Forum*, May 1923

POETIC Diction is a wide subject, and this paper will deal with only one little corner of it; it will examine the dislike which poets of today exhibit towards the traditional forms: 10 and since even this, to be thorough, would involve a completer description of the traditional forms than a short discourse allows of, we must be contented to outline the situation with a few typical illustrations.

The revolt against the old diction is a reaction which in its general attitude is rational: and it is in line with the reaction of 'The Lake School' of Poetry, familiar to all students in Wordsworth's statement, and Coleridge's criticism and correction of that statement in his 'Biographia Literaria'. Both movements alike protest against all 20 archaisms of vocabulary and grammar and what are called literary forms, and plead for the simple terms and direct forms of common speech.

As my method is to be by illustration, I will begin with an extreme example, Milton's *Lycidas*, a poem which, though Dr. Johnson's common-sense condemned it without reserve, has in spite of the extravagance of its conventions grown in favour, and firmly holds its claim to be one of the most beautiful of the great masterpieces of English verse.

Only a few days ago I received a new German translation 30 of it, in the preface whereto it is stated to be 'Ein Gipfel,

vielleicht der Gipfel aller schäferlichen, aller Renaissance-lyrik, unerreicht die Schönheit u. s. w.¹

The undisguised conventionality of *Lycidas* is sufficiently obvious in its properties. Muses, Fauns, Satyrs and Nymphs, with Druids and River-gods associate with St. Peter and the Pope, and in their company a new River-god, Camus, invented on a bogus etymology: but the remoteness from common-sense which offended Dr. Johnson can be fully exposed by quoting a single line: the poet bewailing the death of a college friend by shipwreck in the Irish Channel, 10 concludes the section of his lament over the unburied body in these words:

And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

We have to face the fact that this strange and meaningless invocation does not sound frigid or foolish in the poem. Rather it is evident that it was the very strength of the poet's feeling that has forced the transmutation of his memories and of the practical aspects of life into a dreamy passionate flux, where all is so heightened and inspired that we do not wonder to find embedded therein the clear 20 prophecy of a conspicuous historical event: though the whole of literature can scarcely show any comparable example.

This is poetic magic. Certainly it was not to common-sense that Milton turned for consolation; and a work of sheer beauty was the only worthy offering that Poetry could make.

After reading *Lycidas* let us see how it is with Shelley's *Adonais*. Though as a whole this poem cannot compete with Milton, yet it contains lines and passages of unsurpassable beauty, both of diction and verse, and it is worthy to 30 be compared; and since (especially towards the end) it is in closer contact with our natural expression of feeling, it appeals more strongly to some tastes. Well, the properties are as literary as in Milton. We have the Muses and Urania:

Milton's 'where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep ?' becomes 'where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay ?' and in company with Urania we have Albion and Cain and Apollo and the Wandering Jew and living persons, all magisterially blended by Shelley's usual phantasmagoria. And in one respect he is even more conventional or pedantic than Milton, because he borrows more directly from his Greek models, and with marvellous Englishing makes Hellenic beauties his own. Moreover he works Bion's
 10 machinery: Aphrodite bewailing Adonis becomes Urania bewailing Keats—the difference in the circumstances needing all the resources of his free symbolism to adapt it. We must not, however, be led away from the question of mere diction, and I mentioned this point merely to show that Shelley's diction is more conventional than Milton's and sometimes when it least appears to be so, because many of its beauties are more directly borrowed. He has, indeed, no one line to match Milton's call to the dolphins, but many which common-sense would rate as equally extravagant.

20 Thirdly, let us look at Arnold's *Thyrsis*, a Victorian poem in direct line with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, consciously affiliated with them and plainly inspired by Milton. I remember many years ago how Ingram By water, when we were both young, contended against me that *Thyrsis* was as good a poem as *Lycidas*: I do not know how far he was in earnest.

Now in Arnold's poem he and his friend are Corydon and Thyrsis, they have their shepherd's pipes, and the Hellenic properties are practically the same as Milton's and Shelley's; but they are frankly set in a modern English landscape and
 30 introduced naturally as actual figures of the mental world wherein the two friends had lived and loved. Their mutual sympathy in this symbolism makes it possible almost to confound Enna with Cumnor, and that is skilfully accomplished, but amid the strong details of native colour and homely affections we have an Ionian folk-tale of obscure

antiquity, the relevancy of which is hardly cleared up by a long note. Since there is no trace of Christian symbolism in the poem, the Properties are simpler than Milton's or Shelley's, and the Diction may be styled Wordsworthian; it would hardly have offended Dr. Johnson: it is plainly not intended to be in what Arnold has called 'the grand style', and he was never in danger of attempting Shelley's heavenward flights, which he thought ineffectual. Thus we may say that, compared with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, Arnold's *Thyrsis* is in simplified diction.

10

What then is the effect of such a diction? In judging this we must remember that Arnold is not Milton, and I am probably myself too much biased in favour of the greater poet: but if a 'rational' diction is any decided poetic advantage, then that advantage should appear, whereas the impression that *Thyrsis* makes on me when I compare it with *Lycidas* is that it lacks in passion, as if it were a handling of emotions rather than the compelling utterance of them, and so far as that must have the effect of insincerity it is the last thing that we should expect from the exclusion of con- 20
ventions. It does not carry the same conviction of distress that *Lycidas* does; neither the friendship nor the sorrow seems so profound, and the whole poem, though it is agreeable reading, leaves one cold at the end. This might in great part be accounted for by its fanciful argument and by the poet's mentality, nor can I pretend to decide how much is due to the diction: the example must remain a negative one; but in illustration, I will quote a passage from *Thyrsis* where Arnold follows Milton in moralizing on the 'vanity' of the sincerest human effort in the search for ideal Truth; 30
he has

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
Tis not in the world's market bought and sold!
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Milton has

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of Noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;
 But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 10 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind *Fury* with th' abhorred shears,
 And slits the thinspun life, 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears. . . .

and so on, and this in spite of old *Phoebus* and the bad grammatical inversion in the first line.

It is difficult to dissociate the quality of Diction from two other matters, namely, Properties and Keeping. Properties is a term borrowed from the stage. The mixture of Greek and Christian types in *Lycidas* and *Adonais* is a good
 20 example of Properties. The term Keeping is taken from Painting and has no convenient synonym, but it may be explained as the harmonizing of the artistic medium, and since Diction is the chief means in the harmonizing of Properties, it would seem that any restriction or limitation of the Diction must tend to limit the Properties, since without artistic keeping their absurdities would be exposed.

Dr. Johnson's common-sense might contend that all Properties were absurd if their absurdity were merely disguised by Keeping. But in aesthetic no Property is absurd if it is
 30 in Keeping. This does not decide what Properties should be used. Different Properties are indispensable for different imaginative effects. Good Keeping is a first essential in all good writing, and especially in poetry. Perhaps it is evident here that the poorer the Properties are, the less call will they make on diction for their keeping, although the simplest

Properties are on their own plane no less exigent: and again' the higher the poet's command of diction, the wider may be the field of his Properties. Also, and this is a very practical point, if a writer with no command of imaginative diction should use such Properties as are difficult of harmonization, he will discredit both the Properties and the Diction.

This is as it should be. In all fields of Art the imitators are far more numerous than the artists, and they will copy the externals, in poetry the Versification and the Diction, which in their hands become futile. Criticism does not assist art 10 by exposing such incompetencies: nor can it be praised for philanthropic intention, because dabbling in the arts is one of the most harmless pleasures of life: there may be more to be said for it than for dabbling in criticism as I am doing here.

THE ART OF POETRY

From *The Necessity of Poetry, An Address given to the Tredegar and District Co-operative Society, Nov. 22, 1917*

I AM here to talk about Poetry, and you little think how surprised you ought to be. I have refused many invitations to lecture on Poetry: but most of us nowadays are doing what we most dislike, and it has come about that I have myself chosen the subject.

Let me explain why an artist is unwilling to discourse on 20 his own art. The fact is that in every art it is only the formal side which can be formulated; and that is not what people congregate to hear about, when they call for Art-lectures. The grammar of any art is dry and unintelligible to the layman: it seems unrelated to the magic of its delight. In Poetry it is even deemed beneath the dignity of a poet to betray any consciousness of such detail. But, if you bid the artist leave this dull and solid ground to expatiate on Beauty, you invite him on to a field where speculations

appear to him fanciful and unsound: and the venture cannot rashly be indulged in.

However here I am; and I hope to give such a theoretic view of the fundamental basis of Poetry as may interest us both, and justify the claim of Poetry to that high place which is and always has been granted to it by almost universal consent in all countries and languages.

In a little house which I rented for a month of last summer a volume of Macaulay's *Essays* stood on the shelves—
 10 an inscription in it recorded how it had been won by its owner in a whist-drive—and I took it up, and read the greater part of it. I fear that I risk losing either your esteem or your complete confidence, when I say that this classical work was almost new to me. But, if I had never read much in it before, I now made up for past indolence or prejudice; and I was taken aback when I found Macaulay praising Shelley in these terms:

'We doubt (he says) whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree some of the highest qualities of the greatest
 20 ancient masters. The words Bard and Inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art but an inspiration.'

It is this magic of language, which won the wide-ranging but somewhat uncongenial mind of Macaulay, that I intend to explore; and I shall avoid philosophical terms and questionable assumptions.

Words the medium of Poetry

30 Poetry is an Art,—that is, it is one of the Fine Arts,—and, using the word in this recognized sense, all Art is the expression of Ideas in some sensuous material or medium. And the Ideas, in taking material forms of beauty, make a direct appeal to the emotions through the senses.

Thus the material or medium, as it is called, of Sculpture is stone^or marble, and so on; the medium of Painting is colours; the medium of Music is sound; and the medium of Poetry is words.

NOW While it" would be manifestly preposterous to begin the study of Sculpture by an examination of stones, you will admit that in Painting a knowledge of Colours is less remote, and is even a necessary equipment of the artist: and you will further grant that in Music the study of the Sounds—i.e. the notes of the scale and their mutual rela- 10 tions—is an indispensable preliminary. So that in these three Arts, if they are taken in this order, Sculpture, Painting, Music, we see the medium in its relation to the Art rising step by step in significance: and I think it is evident that in Poetry the importance of the material is even greater than it is in Music; and the reason is very plain.

All Art, we said, was the expression of Ideas in a sensuous medium. Now Words, the medium of Poetry, actually are Ideas; whereas neither Stone nor Colour nor mere Sound can be called Ideas, though they seem in this order to make 20 a gradual approach towards them.

I hope this may reconcile you to the method of inquiring into Poetry by the examination of Words. I propose to consider Words, first as Ideas, secondly as Vocal Sounds.

Words as Ideas

Whether or no the first step of human language was to recognize certain vocal sounds as signs or symbols of objects perceived by the senses, we must now in our perfected speech admit the nouns or names of objects to be the simplest elements. 30

But the name of an object must have a different meaning to different persons, according as they know more or less about it; and it must convey a different emotion as they are differently affected towards it. And since knowledge

concerning any one thing is really of an infinite character,—for complete knowledge of any one thing would include its relations to everything else, which is more knowledge than any man may possess—these words, which appear so simple as mere names of objects, are, each one of them, of wide capacity of signification; and pass from being names of definite objects to being names of various and indefinite ideas or conceptions of things.

It is impossible to prevent a name from being the name
10 of an idea; and (unless we make the doubtful exception of certain abstract ideas) it is impossible to keep the idea always similar and definite.

It is really a matter for wonder how rational intercourse through the medium of language can be so complete and easy as it is, when the ideas conveyed by the words are so different in each person. And yet in common talk and the ordinary business of life we find little inconvenience from the discrepancy of our ideas, and usually disregard it. A man who wants to go from London to Manchester, and is
20 informed that his train will leave Euston at 10 a.m., and arrive at Manchester about 3 p.m., has no occasion to trouble himself because his informant's idea of Manchester is totally dissimilar to his own. We need not labour this point. All our practical life is carried on in this way, and whether a man speak or write, we say that he speaks or writes well, according as his meaning is plain, his ideas clear, and his language unambiguous. And this current speech, which is a most elaborate instrument,—for it has symbols not only for all the objects of the senses, but for actions and emotions, and
30 the subtlest notions of our intellect, and no less for their relations to each other—is accommodated by delicate self-adjustment to the practical needs of life, and has been further elaborated by Reason to become the sufficient apparatus for all our business, politics, science, history, and law, and whatever else is concerned with human affairs;

and through printing it has become the indestructible store-house of human knowledge. So that one may well inquire what more could be desired or expected of it; and it is common to find that practical folk call Poetry' tosh', and maintain that if you have anything to say, it is best to say it as simply as possible.

Sir Isaac Newton, of blessed memory, wrote a book on the Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms: and the first words of his introduction are these:

'The Greek Antiquities are full of Poetical fictions, because 10
the Greeks wrote nothing in prose before the conquest of Asia by Cyrus the Persian. Then Pherecydes Scyrius and Cadmus Milesius introduced the writing in prose,'

Now whatever appreciation or respect Newton may have had for the *Iliad*, he is complaining that it was of no use to him as a scientific historian, and I imagine him asking why those old poets could not tell us plainly what they really knew, instead of inventing 'irrelevant false fancies' about the Gods, and things that never were?

The opposition which he implies between Poetry and 20
Prose cannot be absolutely insisted on: but we may take him to witness that Poetry has a field of its own, which is repudiated by Science as well as by Common-sense. The distinction is very real. The claim of prose is obviously high, and I could say more to exalt it: what I have to say will come later.

Insufficiency of Philosophy and Science

And here I would remind you of something which amid the routine and practical concerns of life we are apt to lose sight of,—and that is the incomplete and insufficient charac- 30
ter of our best knowledge. I do not mean those individual differences that I have spoken of, nor that limitation which each one of us must feel if we compare ourselves with the

wisest: but,—take the wisest man on earth, or all the wisest that have ever lived, the one thing that they agree about is that the human intellect is incapable of solving the profounder problems of life, with which we are faced when we begin to think.

I am saying nothing derogatory of science and philosophy, nor need one be in any sense a sceptic in affirming that our highest efforts of intellect do not inform us even on that primary interest of all, namely for what purpose
10 mankind exists on the earth, nor whether there be any such purpose. The so-called Laws of Nature, which we imagine to rule us, are but the latest improvements of our own most satisfactory guesses concerning the physical order of the universe: and when we ask how it is that our material bodies are able to be conscious of themselves, and to think, not only have we no answer, but we cannot imagine any *kind* of possible explanation.

Man does not know, and maybe never will know what he is. Let me quote the utterance of the good-hearted atheist
20 in Anatole France's recent novel. He speaks frankly and typically as a convinced scientist, thus:

'Nature, my only mistress and my sole teacher, has never given me any sign that she would have me think the life of a man to be of any value: on the contrary she informs me by all manner of indications that it is of no account whatever. The one final cause of all living creatures seems to be that they should be the food of other living creatures, who are themselves destined to the same end. Murder has her sanction. . . . And yet I must confess that there is something rebellious in my
30 instinct; for I do not like to see blood flow: and that is a weakness from which all my philosophy has never been able to wean me.'

He cannot reconcile his better human feelings with his Epicurean science.

How does the brag of scientific learning, the vaunt of its

scrupulous well-informed prose look now ? Does it not seem that in trying to make our ideas definite we are confining ourselves to a method which refuses to deal with the mysteries of life ? and is driven to that refusal not because it can deny the mysteries, but only because it can make nothing of them ? Are we not building up our language into something of a prison house ? And is it not just because they have never done this, that untaught men are often more contented and at home in the world, far more like the ideal 'wise man' than the best instructed men of science ?

10

THE ORDER OF WORDS

From The Necessity of Poetry

HOWEVER spontaneously the perfect poem may spring up in the poet's mind, like a melody in the mind of Mozart, the conditions to be fulfilled—over and above the elaboration of the metre—are

First, the right words: secondly, those words in the right order: thirdly, the agreeable sound of them in sequence.

And these three Tightnesses are the factors of style, that supreme gift which immortalizes the utterance of such different minds as Blaise Pascal and Robert Burns: for the laws are very similar in prose and in poetry. I shall pass 20 them over, because such a brief account of them as we should have time for would be dull.¹

¹ If any one should be curious to see how dull, he may read to the end of this note, which I append for the sake of completeness.

First as to the choice of words. What words are the right words in poetic diction ? Plainly their sound must be one ruling consideration—as may be proved by the ill effect of extreme dissonance, yet their chief power lies either in their absolute correctness, or in what is called their suggestiveness, and this, which is the greater poetic beauty, lurks commonly in the fringes of the concepts, as was explained when we spoke of words as ideas. When correctness and

On order of words

But I think I may venture a short account of order. What is meant by a right *ORDER of words* ? The principle is important

suggestiveness coincide their power can be so great that quality of sound is sometimes outclassed; and harshness is unheeded. This we willingly concede to the imperfection of language, which is not so constituted as to combine all excellencies, whence the lesser must give way. Our English words especially have been shamefully and shabbily degraded, and are daily worsening, so as to be often very ill-adapted for poetic use. And the swarming homophones need special treatment.

As to the sound of words in sequence. Pure Euphony, i.e. the agreeable sound of a sequence of syllables, is as difficult a subject as rhythm: and it is like rhythm in this, that the ultimate judge is the expert ear, which depends on a natural gift: and again, as in rhythm, there are certain conditions which almost all men would agree to call pleasant, and others which they would deem unpleasant, but there is no universal principle that can be adduced to check the vagaries of taste or false fancy, since what theories have been proposed are themselves examples of false fancy. Either, for instance, that the vowels correspond respectively to the primary colours, and should be grouped as those colours should be. or that euphony is actually a musical melody made by the inherent pitch of the vowels, the sequences of which must be determined exactly as if we were composing a musical air of those inherent notes. The great indefinable complication is that this euphony, especially in poetry, is fused with the meaning, and this fusion of sound and sense is the magic of the greatest poetry. But even where the poet's success is most conspicuous and convincing, we are often quite unable to determine on what it actually depends it is known only by its effects.

In English we find, strangely enough, that the eye comes meddling in with the business of the ear, and causes delusion. Our words are so commonly spelt so differently from their pronunciation that few writers know what sounds they are dictating; the word is a visible thing, 'pleasant to the eye and desirable to make one wise', it is perhaps of ancient and high descent, with a heroic history, it comes 'trailing clouds of glory': but that it has been phonetically degraded into an unworthy or ugly sound is overlooked.

I might give as an example the word *Dcedal* in the [passage already quoted] from Shelley The original Greek word had a pleasant sound and a rich familiar signification: in English it has no meaning for most men, and is pronounced *deedle* (like *needle*), and if it were so spelt I

and very simple, but in application so subtle that it is seldom recognized. You may easily come at it by imagining the talk of savages in a language that has no grammar. In such a language a speaker could not make himself understood except by putting his words in a certain order. If, for instance, he wished to tell you that he went from one place to another, from *A* to *B*, and had no prepositions like our *to* and *'row*, he would have to put *A* first and *B* second; that is, he would have to set his nouns in the order in which he wished the idea of his movement to enter your mind. And 10 this principle remains the primary law of order in good speech, whether prose or poetry: the words should be in the order of the ideas; and poetry differs from prose only in its more aesthetic and subtler conception of the proper sequence, and in the greater artifices that it is able to employ, and the greater difficulties that it has to overcome.

There are all manner of exceptions to this rule; but the most apparent inconsistencies are manifestly dependent on the primary value of the rule: for instance, an idea in an unexpected position in the sentence is often most effective: 20 but the surprise is due to its being either grammatically or conceptually out of order.

The commonest cause of ineffective expression in bad writers of verse is that they choose their grammar so as to set the words that they wish to use in the order most convenient to the metre. The born writer or speaker is the man whose ideas flow spontaneously in a simple grammar which

doubt if any poet would use it. Shakespeare might have made fun of it in Peter Quince's play, and have set *diddle* alongside of *Phibbus* and *Ninny* for the use of that immortal actor, bully Bottom.

Euphony must also include the purely musical effects of a metre, when this is in delicate agreement with the mood of the poem: it so enhances the emotional effect of a harmonious sequence of words as to overrule common proprieties of order, and the melody will require that the sonorous words shall respect its intention and fall into the positions that it prescribes.

preserves the right order of ideas. A fixed poetic metre must of course increase the difficulty of right order, and thus heighten the beauty and triumph and rarity of full success.

RELATION OF POETRY TO MORALS AND RELIGION

From The Necessity of Poetry

THE view of Poetry which I have presented to you suggests two enormous questions, namely, the relation of Poetry to Morals and to Religion: for it is evident that the basis of all three must be the same, that is, they all spring from those universal primary emotions of Man's Spirit, which lead us naturally towards Beauty and Truth. Indeed the difficulty
10 here is not in relating Poetry with Morals and Religion, but in discriminating between them: for we might almost contend that Morals is that part of Poetry which deals with conduct, and Religion that part of it which deals with the idea of God.

Morals

As for Morals. If you read the moral philosophers much you will find a very dry corpus of irreconcilable doctrines, which bear no comparison with what the poets can give you. The Sermon on the Mount you will recognize to be an
20 inspired moral poem, which is rejected by the philosophers.

On this vast subject I shall offer only one practical remark, which is this:

You will often hear it asserted, as an enlightened doctrine, that Art has nothing to do with Morality: Art, you will be assured, is non-moral.

Now this is true only in so far as we take Morals to mean the conventional code of conduct recognized by the society to which we happen to belong. Art, it is true, has little to

do with that. But pure Ethics is man's moral beauty, and can no more be dissociated from Art than any other kind of beauty, and, being man's highest beauty, it has the very first claim to recognition.

Morals can be excluded from Art only by the school which maintains that Art is nothing but competent *Expression*, and that, since what I call ugly can be as competently expressed as what I call beautiful, Art can make no distinction. It must be admitted that no strict line of distinction can be drawn, and that the average man's conception of 10 beauty is absurdly limited and conventional; also that as much admirable skill may be used in the expression of crime as of virtue and so on: the portrait of a man suffering from confluent small-pox might thus be a masterpiece; but if theorists assert that all these things are equally beautiful because equally capable of competent expression, and that such expression (which expression after all produces different impressions on different minds) makes all things equally beautiful,—to this I reply that we live in a free country where every one may think and say what he pleases. 20

The championship of ugliness seems to be but a part of the general denial of the ordinary distinctions between good and bad of all kinds. The argument is this. It is pointed out that the distinction which is commonly drawn between beautiful and ugly or good and bad is merely due to mankind seeing all things from a human point of view. But this is the only possible point of view for mankind to take: his pretended universal standpoint is really only one particular attitude of his mind: for it is inconceivable that the 'universality' which he imagines can be a complete universality, 30 or anything like it: and if it was so, then the object of introducing it into art could only be to make art inhuman; which is absurd.

At least that is how the case appears to me; but this summary way of disposing of it neglects many side issues,

on which agreement is not to be expected nor wholly to be desired.

Religion

As to the relation of Poetry to Religion. True Religion, the conviction and habit of a personal communion between the soul and God, is of too unique and jealous a temper to allow of any artistic predominance: and yet we find the best expression of it in Poetry: indeed the poetic expression of the spiritual life is of such force that its beauty may hold
10 the mind in slavery to false ideals.

I believe it to be greatly due to this that the English people are still mentally enslaved to a conception of God altogether unworthy and incompatible with our better notions: and, if it is the old Hebrew poetry which is greatly responsible for this delusion, then it seems reasonable to look to our own poets for our release.

On this general question of religion I shall take only that one point. We have spiritually outgrown the theology of the Reformation, and our churches, in endeavouring to make
20 their obsolete ideals work, find their most effective agent in the beauty of our English translation of the Old Testament which, while secular art was in decay, captured the artistic susceptibility of the people.

Art was discouraged by the Reformers, it was uncongenial to their furious and somewhat gross minds; and it was at the cost of the destruction of a priceless heritage of medieval art that they got rid of their mental servitude to Papistry, which its beauty embellished and sanctified. That alliance of art with the monstrous ecclesiastical system which Rome
30 had built on the Gospels drove art into disrepute: but since man cannot live in the absence of all ideals of beauty, the people satisfied their craving for it by the beauty of the religious literature, when the Bible was put into every man's hands. Art was thus diverted, and its place appropriated by

the religious ideals of the Reformation; but these being archaic and harsh, and in some respects a real defection from Christian law to the Mosaic, and from one point of view a political compromise, the substitute daily grew less convincing and satisfying, and now, when its ideal, if ever it had one, is practically dead, our people have neither one thing nor the other. Religion and art have equally suffered.

The Christian churches will not leave the old ruts. The Pope still hankers after temporal power, and to get it would crown Tiglath-Pileser in St. Peter's, while our Protestant 10 church still begins its morning devotions by singing of 'God swearing in his wrath that his people should not enter into his rest'.

Now in the religion of Christ, which, whether we will it or not, whether we know it or not, is deeply ingrained in our heart's reverence and the life of our souls, and is ever rebuking and overruling our conduct—in this world-conquering Christianity the essentials are love and unity and brotherhood. But look at the Protestant sects, all quarrelling about crude absurdities and ridiculous un- 20 essentials. And ask yourselves how the Church shall be purified and edified when those who should compose it remain outside of it.

NOTES

PAGE 2. 'Her eye saw'. This piece stands first in *Poems* 1873. Bridges never reprinted it, but it was included by Professor Gordon in his Rede Lecture, *Robert Bridges*, delivered in 1931 and published by the Cambridge University Press in 1946.

PAGE 4. PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER. First printed 'at the private press of H. Daniel, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford', 1883. The extract here given is reprinted from the text given in *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges excluding the Eight Dramas*, Oxford University Press, 1936 (hereinafter referred to as *Poetical Works*), pp. 27-28.

There is little else (save the Fire Chorus, ll. 1285-1361) that the anthologist is tempted to preserve from this, or from *Demeter A Mask* (1904), or from the Poetic Dramas, though in all of them the blank verse is interspersed with decorative lyrics, some of which are beautiful.

PAGE 5. THE GROWTH OF LOVE. This series of sonnets was many times printed and underwent many revisions (e.g. XXIV *Sonnets*, Bumpus, 1876; LXXIX *Sonnets*, Daniel Press, 1889; LXIX *Sonnets*, in Vol. i of *Poetical Works*, Smith Elder, 1898). The text and numbering here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

The sonnets are so full of excellences that selection is difficult—and none the less difficult because the excellences are often set off by lines that seem like echoes from Shakespeare, or parts of a Shakespearian exercise.

No 33. As in a number of Bridges's sonnets the octave is weak. But the sestet rises to a climax, and the last two lines are irresistible.

No. 40. This sonnet on his mother's portrait won especial praise from Hopkins, see. p. lxxi.

No. 43. Hopkins's comments are as follows: 'Beautiful in thought and expression, but the beauty gathers to the end, is least in the first quatrain, and the first two lines are commonplace. Also *he may hear* is not good. It is ambiguous: if it means *It is granted him to hear*, then it has no fault except the being easily mistaken for the other meaning, but if it means *He perhaps hears* it is feeble and downright padding. I shd. like something such as (it is d——d impertinence of me to say this)—

All drawn with thirst, all lost on sultry sand,
 The traveller fainting finds into his ear
 Fantastic music steal that lets him hear
 Some liquid fountain of his native land.

O cruel jest! he cries, as someone flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire.
 O shameless! O contempt of holy things!
 They of their wanton pastime never tire
 That, not athirst, are sitting by the springs,
 While he must quench in death his last desire—

(or "And he must", &c). For though the sequence of thought of "But of their wanton play" is beautiful, yet the dropping the connection is more austere and pathetic. . . ' *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935, P- 70 (Letter LIV: 22 Feb. 1879).

No. 59. As elsewhere, the last line ('a really magical stroke', G. M. H.) eclipses what goes before it.

No. 69. The Our Father Sonnet is very beautiful', G. M. H.

PAGE n. SHORTER POEMS. *Shorter Poems* (Books I-IV) appeared first in 1890; the poems contained in Books I-III had been previously printed at various times. Many underwent revision before their reappearance in 1890, and some before their inclusion in Vol. II of *Poetical Works* in 1899. Book V was added in 1894. The text here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

Book I is dedicated to 'H. E. W.' (the poet's friend Harry Ellis Wooldridge). All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems*, 1873.

No. 2. This *Elegy* recalls, by its subject and by its cadences, the *Souvenir* of Alfred de Musset: e.g.:

Les voila, ces buissons ou toute ma jeunesse
 Comme un essaim d'oiseaux, chante au bruit de mes pas;
 Lieux charmants, beau d6sert ou passait ma maltresse,
 Ne m'attendiez-vous pas ?
 . . . Je ne viens point jeter un regret inutile
 Dans recho de ces bois te"moins de mon bonheur:
 Fi6re est cette foret dans sa beaute tranquille,
 Et fier aussi mon cceur.

No. 16. Of this poem Desmond MacCarthy wrote (*Sunday Times*, 25 July 1948) 'For me the most perfect of all English Triolets . . . Many suppose the Triolet form to be essentially trivial; that specimen alone refutes them. Certainly it must be composed in the key of conversation; it must, with its repeti-

tions, sound like someone talking; nevertheless its content can be, as here, charged with emotion. How ingeniously that question mark breaks the repetition of the first couplet, thus turning what had at first been a quiet statement into a cry of dismay!

PAGE 21. *Book II* is dedicated 'To the memory of G. M. H.' All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love'*, 1879.

No. i. The following are Hopkins's comments on the text printed in 1879 (where the first stanza is not divided between the speakers): 'I must tell you that the first verse appears to me to be faulty. It wd. seem to be divided between the two speakers, as the rest of the piece. If so the first two lines shd. be in italics. And if so, then *lay* should be *lies*. Also *Silence!* shd. be *Hush, hush* or *O hush!* If however it is really the inmate who speaks, then the question will be an ironical, not an earnest one, and mean. How can love awake that has lain asleep so long? and if so this shd. be brought out, as by: Should love again awake. . . ? But the other sense is smoother, besides that otherwise the question seems absurd, for the longer the sleep has been the nearer must the waking be; if it is sleep and not death. And in the last verse I should prefer "And love will > wake". Now as for the meaning, of that you keep the key. Is it the lady of the Growth or another? In verse 2 you seem to say it is the same. On the other hand I thought she had gone to heaven. And indeed she seems to have been actually at the telephone, so to speak, when there was the ring of the night bell. (This is profane.) As at present advised, I think it is another (and "whom once he deigned to praise" is said by way of fresh information), but so that all the women a man falls in love with are one woman, being sort of incarnations, or successive avatars of Beauty, Wisdom, and so on, personified in the feminine. Is this so? . . .' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 67-68 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

No. 10. Hopkins's comment is as follows: 'Unequal, because, as I told you and I now maintain my past judgment, there are two lines in it echoing Gray's: *they do it, they will do it to every ear, it is a great fault to do it, and they do it*. They are not at all the best lines and they can be easily changed and yet they echo lines which are held to be of faultless and canonical beauty. The subject and measure shd. of themselves have put you on your guard. Gray's poem may be outdone but, if you understand, it cannot be equalled. Otherwise the piece is beautiful and full of music.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, p. 69 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

With regard to the lines 'which echo Gray's' Mr. Abbott's note is as follows: 'These lines do not choose themselves. Perhaps they are:

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
Their pompous legends will no smile awake.

G. M. H. might, with more justice, have urged that the poem calls back to the mind Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse".

PAGE 31. *Book III* is dedicated to 'R. W. D.' (Canon Richard Watson Dixon, see p. 108). Most of the poems here included from this Book were contained in *Poems*, Third Series (1880) and *Poems*, Fourth Series (1882).

No. I. Printed as an Ode (ll. 1465-1480) in *Prometheus the Firegiver*. Of Hopkins's comments (on the earliest MS. version of the poem), which are in part technical, in part moral, Bridges appears hardly to have availed himself. They are as follows: 'The poem "O my vague desires" is a very noble piece, as fine, I think, as anything you have yet done. It is "all road" very remarkable. The rhythm too is correct and strong. I make a few suggestions, (i) The rhythm of line 4 wd. be a little improved by something like "arising" instead of "rising". (2) Would it not be a better stroke to have instead of "For ever soaring . . . dying? O the joy of flight!" something like "You ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying Flames of joyous flight"? (3) I would have "Ah! they burn my soul, My fires, devour my soul that once was whole". (4) The word you were in search of instead of "phantoms" must be "gledes"—and then you would continue "day after day". (5) Why should not the last short line have three feet like the others, as "Could I but control"? "Could I control" has only two. (6) The next line is the only rhythmically bad one: both rhythm and feeling are bettered by "My vague desires, my leaping flames of soul". So too in the next line I would have "my fires". (7) The last line might perhaps, but I am not sure, be improved by "still flying alas!"

The poem is autobiographical, as you would say; it tells of what you really feel in yourself. What then is the meaning of those yearnings or aspirations in the mind? You bear witness against yourself that you have them. And, as you suggest in one of your sonnets, if they are powerfully felt even now, when the mind is drawn off them and engrossed by so many things, it is likely they will be at some other time its whole life and being, whether they are gratified or not gratified. This poem as well as that sonnet express your belief that the mind is immortal.

But there are other minds that act on you now, as for instance you now follow my meaning, acting through sensible channels; hereafter there will be other spiritual powers, it is natural to suspect, which may act on the mind more directly and not by sensible channels; they may surround it and affect it as much as the body is surrounded and affected by other bodies. You cannot wisely neglect this world of being to which you imply that you will come. In it or above it is the sovereign spirit God, to whom you should now at once make your approach with the humblest and most earnest prayers.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 117-18 (Letter LXXI: 26 January 1881).

No. 2. *London Snow*. For Hopkins's comments on this and the two following poems (as they appeared in *Poems*, Third Series, 1880) see pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

No. 7. *Indolence*. 1. i. 'the city'—Oxford.

No. 19. 'A pretty close translation of a poem by Th6ophile Gautier, which is itself a translation from the English by Thomas Moore in *The Epicurean*' (R. B.'s note).

PAGE 41. *Book IV* is dedicated to 'L. B. C. L. M.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Lionel Muirhead). All the poems in this Book were printed for the first time in 1890.

PAGE 48. *Book V* is dedicated to 'M. G. K.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Montagu George Knight).

No. 2. *The Affliction of Richard*. I do not know what is the explanation of this title, or whether it owes anything to Wordsworth's *The Affliction of Margaret*.

No. ii. 'I never shall love the snow again.' 'Maurice' was the poet's brother-in-law, Maurice Waterhouse, who died on Christmas Eve, 1890.

No. 14. *Founder's Day*. 1. 56. 'The victory that made ring the meads.' Col. C. H. Wilkinson of Worcester College tells me that he has the authority of Lionel Muirhead for saying that Bridges originally wrote 'The light-blue victory of the meads', but altered it in deference to Andrew Lang, who told him that the reference to Eton would not be understood. When the poem was first printed (Daniel Press, 1893) it was dated June 1891.

PAGE 60. NEW POEMS. Collected for the first time in 1899 hi Vol II of the Smith Elder edition of the *Poetical Works* in six volumes. Nos. 14 and 15 were first printed in Elkin Mathews's *Shilling Garland*, No. II, 1896; the rest of the poems appeared for the first time in Vol II. of the *Poetical Works*, 1899.

No. 4. *The Summer-house on the Mound*. The poem (which shows vividly how far back the poet's memories of his childhood could take him) describes the house of his parents at Walmer.

No. 20. *EPQ2*, 1. 15. 'unchristen'd'. Yeats uses this word with similar effect in *Vacillation* (1932): 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.'

PAGE 70. LATER POEMS.

No. 5. First printed in *The Sheaf*, June 1902.

No. 13. *Portrait of a Grandfather*. First printed (with the date 1880) in *Wayfarer's Love*, 1904.

No. 15. The extracts are from *Ode to Music Written for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell* (music by Sir Hubert Parry), written and published in 1895. The first eight lines of Section VIII ('Rejoice, ye dead . . .') form the octave of Sonnet 19 in *The Growth of Love*.

No. 16. Extract from *A Hymn of Nature An Ode written for Music*, the music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at the Gloucester Festival in 1898.

PAGE 75. POEMS IN CLASSICAL PROSODY. Bridges's views about the applicability of the principles of classical prosody in the writing of English verse, and his explanation of the principles of 'syllabic' verse, which he discovered in Milton and adopted for his own use, will be found in the volume published by the Oxford Press in 1901 in which his essay on *Milton's Prosody* is accompanied by an essay on *Classical Metres in English Verse* by W. J. Stone, with whose views Bridges professed himself to be in agreement.

PAGE 75. 'And what if all Nature . . .'. The extract is from a 400-line Epistle 'To a Socialist in London', published in the *Monthly Review* for July 1903, together with an abstract of Stone's principles of quantitative verse, of which the Epistle is an exemplification.

PAGE 77. OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS. The collection bearing this name was published in 1920, but nearly half the poems in it (including the first three reprinted here) had already appeared in a volume *Poems written in 1913* printed at the Ashendene Press in 1914.

No. 3. *Noel: Christmas Eve*, 1913. His first poem as Laureate. He 'offered his homage to the King in some Christmas verses, which his Majesty ordered to be published' (R. B.). They were printed in *The Times*, 24 December 1913. In a note prefixed to

the *October* collection, Bridges explained that it (and three other poems in the collection) 'are strictly syllabic verse on the model left by Milton in "Samson Agonistes"', adding, 'It is probably agreed that there are possibilities in that long six-foot line which English poetry has not fully explored.' He himself explored them further in *New Verse* and *The Testament of Beauty*.

PAGE 82. NEW VERSE. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926. All the poems here selected were written in 1921. The first three are taken from Part One of the collection ('Neo-Miltonic Syllabics'); No. 8 (*To Francis Jammes*) and No. 9 (*Melancholy*) from Part Two ('Accentual Measures'); No. 12 (*The Tramps*) and No. 16 (*Low Barometer*) from Part Three ('Old Styles'). Nos. 6, 7, and 8 had previously been published, in the 'Elizabethan' number of *The Queen*, July 1923, *The London Mercury*, November 1924, and *The London Mercury*, July 1923, respectively.

No. 5. The garden of Merton College. While Chilswell House was being repaired after the fire in 1917, Bridges resided for some months in Postmasters' Hall at Merton College. The 'pensive philosopher' was F. H. Bradley.

No. 7. 'Mrs. Bridges, reading over the poem in draft remarked that there were too many *come se quando*'s. Bridges thought this might serve as a title. But he substituted the Latin *si* for the Italian *se* and it so appeared in print. When he discovered the slip, he decided to let it remain, perhaps remembering that Milton's '*Penseroso* is said to be grammatically incorrect.' Edward Thompson, *Robert Bridges*, Oxford, 1944, p.¹⁰¹ - 'Come se quando' is a stock phrase for introducing a simile in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The 'slip' has been corrected in recent editions of the *Poetical Works*. The passage quoted on p. 85 is the opening simile of a long poem.

No. 8. *Francis Jammes*. French poet (1868-1938) in whose works the road-mender and the Colonial ancestor are familiar figures.

No. 16. *Low Barometer*. 'One of the three or four greatest poems he ever wrote.' Edward Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

PAGE 91. THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY.

II, 1. 840. 'What is Beauty?' The quotation is from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part I, Act V, Sc. 2.

II, 1. 965. 'her showy Invincibles'. The Flanders poppy: 'The

"showy" flowers are so much more truly "Invincibles" than any "invincible soldiers" of Napoleon or another.' Nowell Smith, *Notes on The Testament of Beauty*, Oxford, 1931.

III, 1. 657. Bridges has been describing life at the Court of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse.

1. 667. Nowell Smith (op. cit.) explains that the 'twin day' is the day which the westward-going traveller has to divide into two in order to keep his calendar correct.

I. 669. 'thatt dreariest November'. 'The year was 1927' (Nowell Smith).

IV, 1. 317 'he who dug': Sir (then Dr.) Leonard Woolley.

II. 1279-80. 'The "mortal distress" was the death of the poet's daughter, Margaret, the wife of H. W. B. Joseph, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford' (Nowell Smith).

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COVENTRY PATMORE

LIONEL JOHNSON

LAURENCE BINYON

and others

With an Introduction and Notes by

JOHN SPARROW

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INTRODUCTION

ROBERT BRIDGES was never a popular poet. At the end of his long life, it is true, a brief burst of celebrity followed the publication of his *Testament of Beauty*, but the general interest awakened by that remarkable poem did not long survive its author, and little of his poetry, apart from his shorter lyrics, has ever appealed to any but a small circle of admirers. Most of those who care for poetry today look down other vistas, away from the trim garden that Bridges chose to cultivate and beyond the horizon that bounds his pleasant pastoral landscape, towards other fields of poetical experience and technique.

Bridges was a remarkable link between two literary ages: his first book appeared within six years of Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, his last at a time when Eliot's *Waste Land* had already come to be widely accepted as a classic. It was difficult for those who saw him in his vigorous old age, or heard him broadcast on Poetry as Poet Laureate, to realize how distant was the past to which his earliest memories belonged. When he was born, Wordsworth was still living; among the familiar figures of his childhood were the Prince Consort and the Duke of Wellington; at Eton he came under the influence of the Tractarian Movement while it was still a living force; and he went up to Oxford in

Those changeful days that pass'd between,
Say, Verdant Green and T. H. Green.

Judged by these dates, Bridges was a Victorian—even a mid-Victorian. But the epithet does not truly describe him, for he was almost unmoved by the 'movements' and un-influenced by the 'influences' of the age. This integrity was the result of a deliberate self-seclusion. It was not change or innovation that Bridges shunned; he was always eager to

make himself master of the latest experiments and discoveries in diverse fields of philosophical and scientific speculation, of artistic and literary technique. His desire for shelter was not due to timidity or softness of body, mind, or character; for he was a strong and sinewy person; he had been an athlete in his youth and he remained in old age leonine not only in physical appearance but also in attitude of mind. His withdrawal from the world was an effort not of escape but of concentration; his aim was to shut out the ugly and the irrelevant, and so to secure the leisure and tranquillity that he needed if he was to give himself up to the writing of poetry.

He achieved his aim—but at a price. For poetry which is the fruit of such self-seclusion is not the kind of poetry that most commends itself to those readers or critics who demand that literature should be 'co-extensive with life'. Such readers expect the poet to show himself a political animal, drawing his inspiration and his material from the society of which he is himself a member, and if they are looking for a master or a model they will turn, not to Bridges, the recluse, but rather to such figures as W. B. Yeats or T. S. Eliot. Yeats, it is true, devoted himself in youth and age to the study of the art of words—'Words alone are certain good'—but he was always (and he so described himself) a 'public man', dedicating both the passion of rebel and the wisdom of a senator to the service of political ideals; and Mr. Eliot, though his own emotions may seem rarefied and his idols very different from those of the market-place, has become, for a whole generation of readers, the accepted exponent of what they call 'the contemporary consciousness'.

It is not surprising, then, that Bridges unlike yeats and Mr. Eliot, should have been without influence and without disciples, and that today his admirers should be comparatively few. Bridges himself was not in the least troubled by lack of appreciation; he had no desire for popular applause,

and in his seclusion he was perfectly content. The Laureateship, when it came to him, came unsought; he never wrote to order; and public murmurs at his appointment and at his subsequent taciturnity left him undisturbed. (His nature was evidently made for happiness, and fortune did little or nothing to thwart that natural disposition. True, he was acquainted with the melancholy mood; he could feel the pressure of a 'Low Barometer'; he had faced 'a wall of terror in a night of cold', and had experienced—not only as a physician in the Casualty Ward at St. Bartholomew's—

life's common plod: still to repair
The body and the thing which perisheth:
The soil, the smutch, the toil and ache and wear,
The grinding enginry of blood and breath—

but those moods were not congenial to him; he was the poet of what he himself calls 'the happy moment':

not a stir
In any tree, no portent in the sky;
The morn doth neither hasten nor defer,
The morrow hath no name to call it by,
But life and joy are one,—we know not why . . .

and 'the best of his art is gay'—the gay expression of such moments of exaltation and delight. *Fortunatus nimium* was the title he gave to a poem in which he looked back on his long and happy life, and perhaps it is true that he was, in a sense, too happy. For a poet whose chief inspiration is the blessedness of his own lot will not find favour with a perplexed, preoccupied, and disillusioned generation, at a time when both lark and nightingale sing 'to dirty ears'; and those who wander in the Waste Land are not likely to take as their guiding beacon a fire lit at the altar of beauty on the summit of Boar's Hill.

Whether or not Bridges's life was 'too happy in its happiness'¹, it was to the worship of beauty that he devoted

it. To use his own words, he 'sought and adored' beautiful things, and felt it to be his task as a poet lovingly to create *tferri*. This impulse had its being in the depths of his nature ; it was something as different from sensuality as it was from mere good taste — alove of beauty in the ideal aswell asin the visible world, the natural beauty of flowers and faces, the spiritual beauty of "tender or exalted emotions, of noble thoughts and deeds.

Poetry, we know, "lias other fields than this : evil has its flowers, and ugliness a fascination of its own. From these ignoble' themes Bridges turned impatiently away. He had no desire to absorb and digest such materials ; rather, he thought it a poet's duty to reject them:

as Beauty is all with Spirit twined,
so all obscenity is akin to the ugliness
which Art would outlaw —

and to the question 'What is Beauty ? ' he gave the answer :

Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind Of man.

Whatever may be thought of the philosophy of this, it was a doctrine in which Bridges believed instinctively; he expounded it at length in *The Testament of Beauty* and he devoted his life to the expression of it. indeed, he might have echoed Shelley's apostrophe to Inteltec'tual Beauty :

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine : have I not kept the vow ?

Beauty may be worshipped in various ways; and where Shelley, with a 'beating heart and streaming eyes', 'shrieked and clasped [his] hands in ecstasy', Bridges was content to sun himself among the Cheddar pinks in his rock-garden, intent on devising a new unsimplified spelling or a new pointing for the Psalms, cherished, to the end of his long life

of artistic creation and experiment, by her who had inspired the tenderest lyrics of his youth.

Chilswell, with its happy domestic scene, certainly called up an image of Farringford, and there were other likenesses between the patterns of the two poets' lives. Both were deeply and enduringly influenced by an undergraduate friendship, and after early years in London went to live in the country. Both became Laureates almost on the eve of a war, and exercised poetic gifts with undiminished vigour and increased virtuosity into a ripe old age. But Bridges also resembled Tennyson in his attitude towards his art, in his conception of what a poet's life should be and of the language in which he should write. He believed that poets—'quique pii vates et Phoebæ digna locuti'—were not as other men are; in voice, in appearance, in bearing, he was naturally an aristocrat; he looked, and lived, the part of the great poet. He was not one of those who think that the poet should look at life through the eyes of the man in the street and describe it in the language of every day: he called things 'beauteous' and 'jocund' and 'mighty'; he introduced into his verse such personified abstractions as Love and Duty and Delight; he invoked the Muse, and addressed his 'mistress' in the second person singular.

This consciously poetic manner may seem id justify those who dismiss his work as something literally 'cultured' and therefore devoid of deep or spontaneous feeling; and Bridges has made the charge of artificiality the more plausible by his preoccupation with the technique of poetry, with metres, spellings, alphabets; with questions of vocabulary and 'purity' of language and pronunciation. He was a founder of The Society for Pure English, and he devised an ingenious and elaborate phonetic typography. But it would be wrong to infer from his intense interest in *minutiae* that the feelings he put into his poetry were either shallow or artificial; that interest was due to his belief that in speech the least

inflexion may count for incalculably much, both for the ear and for the mind, and that if language is to be a fully effective instrument in the hands of the thinker or the poet its edge must not be allowed to become blunted by careless use. Even his apparently wilful archaisms were not the result of whim or affectation:

The author would explain [he says in a note to *The Testament of Beauty*] that the use of *eth* for the 3rd per. sing. of verbs is not an archaic fancy, but a practical advantage, indispensable to him, not only for its syllabic lightness, but because by distinguishing verbs from the identical substantives, it sharpens the rhetoric and often liberates the syntax.

Yet, when all is said, there is substance in the criticisms hinted at above. Those who most admire his poetry will be the first to admit that it is a pity that he spent so much of his talent and his time in elaborating traditional themes and embroidering archaic patterns. Masques in blank verse, interspersed with choric odes, verse dramas (of which he wrote eight) on the model of Greek tragedy or of Terence, formal odes—these are difficult to read unless they are relieved by passages of exceptional beauty or splendour—and such passages are no more frequent in Bridges than they are in Spenser or in Shelley.

His true gift was lyrical: in his *Sonnets* and his *Shorter Poems* (as Hopkins long ago pointed out) the level of excellence is so high that to choose from among them is hardly possible, and Housman did not overpraise Books I-IV of *Shorter Poems* when he said that 'probably no single volume of English verse had ever maintained such perfection'. However much Bridges may at times remind us of those who have gone before him (and one cannot mistake his debt to Shakespeare's sonnets and to the lyrics of Wyatt and Campion and the Elizabethan song-writers generally) it is always a living voice that we hear, never an echo. Sometimes he speaks almost with the tongue of Blake:

My delight and thy delight
Walking, like two angels white,
In the gardens of the night . . .

or again:

Open for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire . . .

Such lyrical cries are wrung from him most often by the ecstasies of love or by the contemplation of Nature, and these are the themes that inspire the greater part of the *Shorter Poems* ; but his range is not confined to them : some of his most, beautiful poems — *On a Dead Child*, for instance, *The Tramps*, and *The College Garden* — are poems of reflection ; he had a remarkable power of infusing into a landscape the feelings peculiar to the several seasons ; and he could invest with a strange beauty the plainest of descriptions :

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound :
Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea,
As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
Glided in line upon the windless deep . . .

Of the fifth of these lines one can only ask: Can poetry go further?

Few things are easier to write than a beautiful line of poetry ; minor poets abound in them ; but every such line of Bridges is integral with its context, its beauty is somehow one with the beauty of the stanza or the poem as a whole. To write a perfect lyric is a rare achievement, and Bridges repeated the miracle perhaps more often than any other English poet.

Bridges himself would no doubt have wished to be remembered not so much for his youthful lyrics as for the didactic poem of his old age. What is to be said of *The Testament of Beauty*? It was, in a sense, the crowning achievement of its author's long life; he sustained, through

its four books of almost unremitted argument, the intensity of the passion that inspired it; it is embellished with a profusion of images and similes which are the harvest of an unsleeping eye and a rich imagination; and the lasting impression that it leaves upon the mind of the reader, for all its peculiarity of diction and colloquiality of metre, is an impression of nobility. Like all philosophical poems that have ever been written, it will be read for its poetry, not for its philosophy: for its beauty, not for its wisdom; it is starred with lovely passages which grow naturally out of their context in the poem, but lose little by being detached from it. But the loose syllabic metre, if it made for easy writing, does not make for easy reading; the most effective lines are those which the accent marks as normal or almost normal Alexandrines, and too often the reader, deprived of any accentual aid, may find that he is counting syllables.

As a writer of prose and as a critic Bridges is easier to describe than to classify: both his manner and his matter were always very much his own. He had strong preferences which he was not concerned to justify and he did not waste his time writing—or talking—about what he did not like.

A personal reminiscence may not here be out of place. I remember paying a visit to Chilswell as an undergraduate, overflowing with admiration for John Donne and eager to hear what the great man had to say about him. The mention of Donne's name, hopefully uttered as I paced the lawn by the side of my host, was enough: Bridges was so revolted (he declared) by Donne's sensuality and by the cacophony of his verse that he simply could not understand what people saw in him. I was glad to take refuge in a change of subject. A mention of Tennyson seemed to give me my opportunity, and I asked whether he knew Churton Collins's *Illustrations* of his poems, a book which had delighted me with its discussion of Tennyson's Virgilian reminiscences. Here, it seemed, was a more fruitful opening—and, indeed, the

poet's reaction was immediate: 'Yes! yes!', he exclaimed, with a sort of melodious growl, 'Yes! yes! *terrible* stuff!'—and I perceived that this, too, was a topic that had better be abandoned.

That was altogether characteristic. Bridges was no respecter of reputations; to 'assess' a writer with whom he was out of sympathy seemed to him neither a pleasurable nor a profitable occupation; and discourse about 'Literature', however learned, did not interest him. It is not surprising that he resisted the strong pressure put upon him, in 1895, to stand for the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford. He thought about poetry simply as a poet; criticism meant to him either an exposition of its function or an analysis, severely technical, of how its effects might be obtained, or had actually been obtained by writers he admired. On these topics he enlarged with fearless originality, never blinded by greatness in the work he was examining to any flaws that there might be in it, striving always for truth and for exactness.

His prose falls on the ear like the spoken word, yet it is far removed from common speech, for he chose his words like instruments, with the effect sometimes of making them a little too choice; he is at the same time, one might say, colloquial and mannered. The manner is his own; it never degenerates into mannerism, but reflects exactly the quality of his mind, so that his writing is always fine in the good sense, not the bad. How moving it could be when he himself was moved may be judged by the extracts from his tributes to two of his greatest friends, Dolben and Dixon, that have been chosen for this book.

To an even closer friend, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Bridges paid a tribute of a different kind. Their intimacy, which began in their Oxford days, ended only with the death of Hopkins in 1889; their mutual affection recalls the friendship of Tennyson and Arthur Hallam; and their sympathy was marred only by difference about religion: Hopkins

regretted the 'paganism' of his 'dearest Bridges'; Bridges deplored any sacrifice of his friend's poetic talent on the altar of his faith.

For nearly a quarter of a century they wrote copiously to each other, but only the letters of Hopkins survive to show how close was their communion, how free and frank and sympathetic their criticism of each other's work. Bridges shared his friend's enthusiasms and encouraged his experiments in language and metre, though protesting often against the obscurity of his allusions and his syntax.

When Hopkins died, Bridges regarded himself as the trustee of the 'lov'd legacy', his friend's verse; he gradually introduced it to the public in the nineties, and gave it a wider audience by including seven of the poems in his own war-time anthology, *The Spirit of Man*. Little notice was taken of these efforts either by critics or by the common reader; but Bridges judged that by 1918 a 'genuinely poetic interest' had grown up 'both in England and America', strong enough to justify his publishing an elaborate edition of the poems. This was not an easy undertaking. From a large and confusing mass of manuscripts the editor had to decide which poems to preserve, and in which versions to print them; he had to explain not only Hopkins's metrical theories and notations but also his obscurities of syntax and expression. The task demanded sympathy as well as scholarship. For Bridges it was a labour of love—'When I came to edit the poems' (he later wrote) 'my whole intention was to make the book as he would have wished it to be. I felt completely in touch with him'—and he performed it perfectly. Even so, the poems were slow to win popularity, and ten years elapsed before the edition of 750 copies was sold out. But Bridges lived long enough to see his aim entirely realized, for when he died in 1930 the reputation of Hopkins was already being raised up to the pinnacle upon which the succeeding generation placed it, and from which it has cast

an undeserved shadow on the reputation of Bridges himself.¹ In time, no doubt, a more sober estimate of Hopkins's splendid successes and his splendid failures will prevail, and belated justice will be done to Bridges as a poet, a critic, and a friend.

What, then, will that 'justice' be—for surely it is the business of the critic to anticipate if he can the verdict of posterity? Bridges, I think, will 'live'; not simply in the anthologies, like Herrick, say, or Darley, the almost disembodied author of a number of lovely lyrics; nor as a figure in the history of letters whose name, like Southey's, is remembered better than his writings: posterity will be on equally familiar terms with the poet and with his *Collected Works*. For he impressed a distinct personality upon a body of poetry large enough to take, and to give back, the image of the whole man, so that both the writer and his work remain alive together. He spoke with a clear and individual voice, always beautiful and often passionate, though never loud or wild. Unmistakably, it was the voice of a noble human being and a true poet, and such voices do not die.

¹ There has even been an attempt, on the part of critics who ought to have known better, to suggest that Bridges failed to recognize Hopkins's poetic genius or culpably delayed its recognition by others—a false legend that persists even to this day. In 1884 Patmore communicated to Hopkins (*Further Letters* of G. M. H., Oxford, 1938, p. 208) Bridges's opinion of his poems 'He spoke with the sincerest admiration and love of your poetry.' These feelings were deep and constant, and they shine through the sonnet which R. B. prefixed to his edition of Hopkins's poems more than thirty years later.

LIFE

1844. Robert Seymour Bridges born at Walmer, Kent, 23 October: eighth Of the nine children of J. T. Bridges of Roselands, Walmer.
1853. Death of his father.
1854. His mother marries the Rev. J. E. N. Molesworth and the family moves to Rochdale, Lancashire.
- 1854—63. At Eton; among his friends are V. S. S. Coles and D. M. Dolben; comes under Tractarian influence.
- 1863-7. At Corpus Christi College, Oxford; makes friends with Gerard Manley Hopkins; Pre-Raphaelite supersedes Tractarian influence.
1866. Death of his younger brother Edward; it 'plunged me into deep sorrow . . . and considerably altered the hopes and prospects of my life'.
1867. Second Class in Literae Humaniores; strokes his college boat in Eights and in a regatta in Paris.
- 1867-74. Makes several long tours abroad.
1869. Enters St. Bartholomew's Hospital; M.B., 1874.
1873. *Poems* (favourably reviewed by Andrew Lang in *The Academy*, 17 January, 1874).
1876. *The Growth of Love*, a collection of twenty-four sonnets afterwards revised and greatly increased.
1877. Appointed casualty physician at St. Bartholomew's Hospital; moves on the death of his step-father from 50 Maddox Street, which he shared with H. E. Wooldridge, to 52 Bedford Square, where he made a home for his mother.
1878. Appointed assistant physician to the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street; later to the Great Northern Hospital, Holloway.
1879. Makes friends with the Rev. R. W. Dixon.
- 1879-84. Publishes several series of poems in limited editions, later included in *Shorter Poems*.
1881. After a serious illness spends the winter in Italy; retires from medical practice.
1882. Goes to live, with his mother, at the Manor House, Yattendon, Berkshire.
1883. *Prometheus the Firegiver*.
1884. Marries Monica Mary, eldest daughter of the architect, Alfred Waterhouse, R.A.
- 1884-1904. Lives at Yattendon; in touch with H. C. Beeching, W. J. Stone, and others interested in poetry, music, and prosody.

1885. *Eros and Psyche*.
 'Eight Plays'—*Nero* (1885), *Pahcio* (1890), *The Return of Ulysses* (1890), *The Christian Captives* (1890), *Achilles in Scyros* (1890), *The Humours of the Court* (1893), *The Feast of Bacchus* (1894), *Nero Second Part* (1894).
1890. *Shorter Poems* (Bks. I-IV; Bk. V, 1894).
1893. *Milton's Prosody* (final edition 1921).
1895. *The Yattendon Hymnal* Part I (Part II, 1897; Part III, 1898; Part IV, 1899).
John Keats, A Critical Essay (published also as introduction to the Keats volume in 'The Muses Library').
 Declines to stand for the Chair of Poetry at Oxford.
1898. Revises poems for six-volume edition (1898-1905).
1903. *Now in wintry delights* (his first poem in classical prosody).
1905. *Demeter, A Mask* (performed 1904).
- 1905—6. Long visit to Switzerland.
1907. Builds, and moves to, Chilswell House, Boar's Hill, Oxford.
1909. Edits *Selected Poems of R. W. Dixon*, with a Memoir.
1911. Edits *The Poems of Digby Mackworth Dolben*, with a Memoir.
1913. Founds the Society of Pure English, with Sir Walter Raleigh, Henry Bradley, and Logan Pearsall Smith.
 Appointed Poet Laureate.
1916. *The Spirit of Man*, an anthology.
1917. Fire at Chilswell House; during part of the next two years lived in Oxford.
1918. Edits *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*.
1920. *October and other Poems*.
1924. Visits the United States of America.
1925. *New Verse* (containing 'Neo-Miltonic Syllabics').
1926. *Henry Bradley, a Memoir*.
1929. *The Testament of Beauty* (published on his eighth-fifth birthday): receives the order of Merit.
1930. Dies at Chilswell House, 21 April

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES

From *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*,
ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935.

THE sonnets are truly beautiful, breathing a grave and feeling genius, and make me proud of you (which by the by is not the same as for you to be proud of yourself: I say it because you always were and I see you still are given to conceit...). I have scarcely read them all yet.... In general I do not think you have reached finality in point of execution, words might be chosen with more point and propriety, images might be more brilliant etc. . . .

General remarks—In spite of the Miltonic rhythms and some other points your sonnets remind one more of Shak- 10
spere's. Milton's sonnets are not tender as Shakspeare's are. Yours are not at all like Wordsworth's, and a good thing too, for beautiful as those are they have an odious goodness and neckcloth about them which half throttles their beauty. The ones I like least are those that have a Tennysonian touch about them, . . . not for want of admiring Tennyson to be sure but because it gives them a degree of neckcloth too. I have not yet *studied* them: at a first and second reading the drift and connection is very hard to find; you seem to mean it to be so. The Our Father sonnet [No. 69, p. 10] is very 20
beautiful, so is the one on your mother's picture [No. 40, p. 6], so is XXII [p. 5], so are they all and full of manly tenderness and a flowing and never-failing music. The more I read them the more I am delighted with them.

(Letter XXX: 3 April 1877.)

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Your precious little volume [*Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love' . . . 1879*] is to hand—also to head and heart, breathing genius everywhere, like sweet-herbs. I shd. like to criticise it in detail throughout, but that may not be.

Something however I must say. . . . The jewel of all, judice me, is no. 2 [p. 21], That is a lovely poem. . . .

The pieces in sprung rhythm—do not quite satisfy me. They do read tentative, experimental; I cannot well say where the thought is distorted by the measure, but that it is distorted I feel by turning from these to the other pieces, where the mastery is so complete. *The Downs* [p. 26] is the best. (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879.)

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Style seems your great excellence, it is really classical. 10 What fun if you were a classic! So few people have style, except individual style or manner—not Tennyson nor Swinburne nor Morris, not to name the scarecrow misbegotten Browning crew. Just think the blank verse these people have exuded, such as *Paracelsus*, *Aurora Leigh*, Baillie's or Bayley's *Festus*, and so on. The Brownings are very fine too in their ghastly way. . . .

London Snow [p. 32] is a most beautiful and successful piece. It is charmingly fresh, I do not know what is like it. The rhythm, as I told you, is not quite perfect. That of the 20 child-piece [p. 34] is worse and that piece is worse, indeed it is Browningsese, if you like; as for instance 'To a world, do we think, that heals the disaster of this?' or something like that. You are certainly less at your ease in sprung rhythm. In the snow-piece this has not been a hindrance however, but perhaps has helped it, by making it more original in diction. Truth compels, and modesty does not forbid, me here to say that this volume has at least three real echos (or echoes) of me: I do not wish them away, but they are there. The 'snow-mossed wonder' line recalls 'For though he is under' in the 30 *Deutschland*, 'O look at the trees' the first line of the *Starlight sonnet*, and 'throned behind' again comes from the *Deutschland*. I fancy there is another I cannot now recall. O yes, it is in the *Voice of Nature* [p. 33]—'Precipitate all o'er-rides and swerves nor abides'¹ (is it?): this is in the

GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS ON BRIDGES xxiii

Deutschland too, I cannot quote it but it ends with 'abides'. It is easy to see why this is: that is the longest piece extant in sprung rhythm and could not help haunting your memory. I do not want them altered, and 'throned behind' having found its way into the midst of a lovely image would not like to be parted from its company. The Voice of Nature is very fine, but the touch in rhythm as well as diction is not quite sure. . . . The lyric 'Thou didst delight' [p. 38] is, like the others before it, a gem. (Letter LXX: 26 October 1880.)

COVENTRY PATMORE ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The St. James's Gazette*, 9 March 1885, reprinted in *Courage and Politics and Other Essays*, 1921.

'THE crowd, incapable of perfectness', is not likely ever to 10
be much attracted by such verses as those of Mr. Robert
Bridges, of which the chief merit is a quiet unpretentious
perfectness, which has the air of coming not from laboured
finish, but from finished habits of thought, feeling, and life,
combined with and aided by a scholar's attainments. Though
differing from Mr. William Barnes in almost every other
quality, Mr. Bridges resembles the Dorsetshire poet more
than any other modern writer in this character of perfectness
which bears little or no sign of work: a character the opposite
to that of the best poems of Tennyson, in which the mani- 20
festation of finish and fully accomplished labour constitutes
of itself no small grace. Another probable obstacle in the way
of Mr. Bridges's acceptance by the public is his singular
though entirely unostentatious independence of any other
poet or school. He seems to have read and felt with fulness,
but with such impartiality that people will never begin by
admiring his verses because they are like those of some one
else they may happen to admire; nor is the absence of this
great and almost universal first cause of popular favour
balanced by anything that most readers would think 30

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'striking' or 'original'¹. We feel quite sure that Mr. Bridges would be absolutely distressed if any reader whom he respected should be detained by any line or passage of his to say or think 'That's fine!' He aims at and attains a style so equabje, and the eminently beautiful lines or passages are so proportioned to and arise so naturally out of eminent occasions, that nothing is 'striking' until it is made to stand alone, and then most of the beauty vanishes because it is relative. In what he writes Mr. Bridges is thoroughly
10 'masterly', because he knows exactly the powers he is master of, and never attempts to strain them. In this, too, he resembles Mr. Barnes, who never fancies that, because he is a writer of matchless idylls and eclogues, he ought to try his hand at epics or odes. No extracts could give any idea of that equable and steady poetic flight, of which the main charm consists, not in its attitude, but its sweet and unlaboured evenness.

LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

From an essay in *The Century Guild Hobby Horse*, October 1891,
'reprinted as a preface to *The Growth of Love*, 1894.

THE poems of Mr. Bridges are of the lyrical kind, of the narrative, and of the dramatic: and before examining each
20 kind apart, let me say something applicable to the whole of them, in greater or less degree. These poems, then, represent, with much else that is admirable, the scholarship of poetry; a certain erudite air of mastery over the secrets of rhythm and of metre; a trained skill in music, and in those delicate devices, which give so excellent a distinction to the older English poets. To whatever Mr. Bridges sets his hand, he preserves discretion and propriety: the scholar's instinct, no less than the poet's, making it impossible for him to outrage
fine taste, by the fantastic freaks of some great men amongst
30 us.' At the present time', so he tells us with lamentable truth,

'men seem to affect to have outgrown the rules of art': but he, at least, reverencing the great masters, makes an 'attempt to work in their manner'. Not that he is a slavish follower of the great masters, their captive rather than their votarist: at times, he may have fallen somewhat into that attitude, but not for long, it is not characteristic of him. It is his characteristic virtue, that he moulds his thought, guides his imagination, into fresh and living forms, with a scholarly knowledge of what has been done before him, in like manner, though not in the same: thus, some among his poems are 10 noticeable for their boldness of metrical experiment and invention; but we can trust him, who wrote those two good treatises *On the Prosody of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes*, and *On the Elements of Milton's Blank Verse in Paradise Lost*. The invention may displease us, the experiment prove unhappy: yet we recognize a justifiable enterprise, a scholar's venture; not the frantic impertinence of one writing, in despair of nature, and in contempt of art. And this learned competence, so abundant in his form, is naturally abundant in his matter: for matter and form, to 20 repeat a simple and neglected truth, are inseparable. Mr. Bridges is not enamoured of a new thing, for its novelty: his thoughts are his own thoughts, but his expression of them is in harmony with the matured wisdom of many ages, meditating the common, human things, with gravity or in gladness. That is Horace, we say, or Catullus; there is Theognis or Meleager; and here is Marvell, here Vaughan, here Herrick; and this brings Landor to mind, Landor, or Collins, or Wordsworth; and now Shakespeare, now Terence, now Fletcher comes across us, with elder Athenian spirits: 30 yet the final outcome is no mere freshened memory of old greatness and delights, but a recognition of the true and living poet in Mr. Bridges, who thus delicately preserves for modern use an antique charm. . . .

A thorough consideration of Mr. Bridges' poetry would

ponder long his skill in music and in metre: for in these he has something of the master's touch, and beyond the dexterity of a novice. But so full of minute and of technical scholarship is he, that a treatise were required for the exhibition of his theoretic science and actual practice. But I will say, that, if he err at all, it is in a certain concision and compactness, coming of many strong monosyllables, too little tempered and relieved by words of a more prolonged melody: it is an effect, something between briskness and loisprihtliness, common in the less deft and versatile of 'Elizabethan lyrists, and unequal to occasions of great and moving beauty. Such verses are, indeed, of a pleasant tone and of a just economy; their structure is neat and clean, they are without waste and profusion of words: but coming from Mr. Bridges, they come rather as 'copies of verses', done in the scholar's humour, for the leisurely exercise' sake, than as the best products of his imagination. When he chooses to sing or to chaunt, with more of various melody and concerted music, we regret, not without some ingrati-
 20 tude, his less delicate or lofty strain. In certain measures, devised with a great subtilty of accents, equal in number upon each line, but in each line prevailing over various reaches, or disposed at various intervals, Mr. Bridges has not yet attained a perfect ease: but he contrives many pleasurable effects: witness some of the lines on *a Dead Child*

Perfect little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair! . . .

Besides the *Shorter Poems*, the volume of seventy-nine
 30 sonnets, entitled *The Growth of Love*, is of noticeable beauty: it may be thought, in point of mental and imaginative strength, his finest work. Unlike most sonnets of our time, these sonnets are weighty with close thought, and rich with images, in the Shakespearian, and in Milton's ways; yet not

obscure, nor luxuriant, in the less happy manner of Rossetti. And their substance is congruous with the form: each grave or exulting thought finds within the limits of the fourteen lines, an exact place for it to fill: so Petrarch conceived the sonnet, and so Sidney. . . .

Briefly, and generally, I have touched upon the characteristic virtues, as I see them, of this excellent poet: rather indicating, than attempting to expound, his peculiar charm. It is a limited charm: not that it is one liable to decay with time, or to pass with the reader's passing moods. But it is 10 limited, in the sense that this poetry in all its simplicity, in all its skill, is too dainty a thing for common use. Unlike the poems of Arnold or of Wordsworth, of Virgil or of Keats, of Milton or of Goethe, they cannot be read daily and in all places. That is a test of great poetry: its abiding and unfailing power upon us, because of its indifference to time and place. A line of Virgil, written by the Bay of Naples, in some most private hour of meditation, all those long years ago! comes home to us, as though it were our own thought: upon each repetition, experience has made it more true and touch- 20 ing. Or take some verse of Arnold, written at Oxford or in London, some few years past: it comes home to us, as though a thousand years had pondered it, and found it true. And in beauty, in power of music and of phrase, the great poets are all contemporaries: an eternal beauty is upon the great works of art, as though they were from everlasting. Poets of exquisite charm, true to their art, true to its traditions, full of its inner spirit, may still miss that final grace and grandeur: and of these, Mr. Bridges is, in my poor judgment, the most admirable in recent times. Had a friend been 30 reading Herrick to me, or Catullus; were I lying in the gardens of New College in Oxford, or in Winchester Meads; did some one play to me a fugue of Bach: I might, at this hour, rate the *Shorter Poems of Robert Bridges* far higher than my conscience, unperturbed by delights, will suffer me.

xxviii LIONEL JOHNSON ON BRIDGES

For they are poems, unaffected and simple, yet with an air of dainty luxury, about them: free from all trivial show and glitter/ yet not commanding and compelling us by their intrinsic greatness.

EDWARD DOWDEN ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Fortnightly Review*, reprinted in
New Studies in Literature, 1895.

THERE is a lyric which is the direct outcry of passion transformed to art—such are some of the songs of Burns; a lyric which is the expression of profound and ardent contemplation—such are some of Wordsworth's poems; a lyric, which is architectonic in character, the product of an elaborate evolution—such are some of the odes of Gray. Mr. Bridges' poems are seldom mere outcries of passion; they do not often explore the heights and depths of thought; they are in general of admirable evolution, but their design is rarely (save in the choral odes of his dramas) complex and of large dimensions. Elements of many and various kinds enter into his volume of 'Shorter Poems'—delicate observation, delight in external nature, delight in art, delight in love, gladness and grief, ethical seriousness, pensive meditation, graceful play of fancy. But all are subdued to balance, measure, harmony; and sometimes our infirmity craves for some dominant note, some fine extravagance, even some splendid sins. Mr. Bridges' audacities are to be found in occasional phrases—often felicitous and of true descriptive or interpretative power, sometimes not felicitous—and in his metrical experiments. But in his metrical experiments there is nothing revolutionary; they are extensions of a true tradition in English verse; they amount to little more than nicely calculated variations of stress. No writer of verse understands his business better than Mr. Bridges; and if finer and subtler harmonies are attained unconsciously or

half-consciously by greater poets, our ear soon adapts itself to the delicate surprises and delicate satisfactions, which he has thought out and felt out as a skilled craftsman. . . .

Mr. Bridges¹ poems have been censured for a lack of warm humanity, and, with the exception of certain poems of joy and love, his lyrics are not direct and simple utterances of passion. But many of his lyrics are charged with fine and tender human sentiment, and he can express moods of dejection and meditative sorrow as well as the happiness of lovers. There is poignant grief, purged of all that is violent, 10 in the beautiful stanzas *On a Dead Child*. Even into his interpretation of nature an element of humanity enters. It was a bold enterprise, for any poet to attempt a new rendering of the nightingales¹ voices when Keats had been his predecessor; but there is magic in Mr. Bridges' poem, *Nightingales*, and half the magic is won, not from the birds' songs, but from the heart of man.

LAURENCE BINYON ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Dome*, 1899.

THAT Mr. Bridges should be neglected has seemed strange and deplorable to many of his admirers; but, however deplorable, it is not really strange. Let us not be angry with 20 the reviewers; let us rather sympathise with their misfortunes, which no one, who has not tried reviewing, can truly gauge. Compelled by cruel editors to read, digest, and pronounce on books almost before they are published, forced to proclaim their judgment before thousands and tens of thousands of readers, who will not listen if they do not shout, with what cause may they not lament, with Matthew Arnold—

What shelter to grow ripe is ours,
What leisure to grow wise ?

30

They are condemned, against their will, to a hurried stripping

from the pages before them of the ornaments that glitter most, and to hang their plain columns with these brilliant trophies. There are some authors whom this treatment flatters; Mr. Bridges is one of those whom it most injures. It was quite easy by this method to prove that Alexander Smith (the classic instance) was of the rank of Keats. Read in quotations, at the breakfast-table, or on the top of an omnibus, doubtless he seemed a Shakespeare. Unfortunately for him, the world was led to read his work. He would have
10 been wiser, had he bought up the edition and placed it in safe flames, and survived as Sappho has survived. For he shone in fragments. The most extravagantly praised poet of this reign, he has now subsided into darkness. Mr. Bridges is a poet of a very different type. His beauties are not easily detachable, but inhere in the substance of his work; he cannot be known in quotations. More than this, his poetry does not reveal itself all at once. On a second reading it seems finer than on the first; on each successive reading its fine qualities grow and deepen. And this, which is the stumbling-
20 block of the reviews, is indeed its greatest merit. For poetry is made to be known, loved, enjoyed; and the poetry which wins us with tranquil and sure power is victorious in the end over that which thrills at the first reading, and chills on the third or fourth. There is too much said in our modern emotional criticism about 'thrills'; the test is too dangerously personal.... That some oracular Anonym has been thrilled tells us nothing. If, then, we are silent about our thrills, and apply other forgotten tests to Mr. Bridges' poetry, we shall find, I think, that it has virtues of a high and rare order,
30 virtues which some accepted masterpieces might envy. For the best of Mr. Bridges' poems have that structural beauty, that 'wholeness of good tissue,' which is the pith of all enduring art. Some may find them not sufficiently exciting, may complain that their hues are too sober; just as people will complain of the low tone of a Velasquez landscape. But

the main thing is achieved, without which splendours are of little avail....

This underlying beauty and organic strength are matched by similar qualities in imagery and rhythm. Mr. Bridges' images are scarcely ever 'striking'; you may search him in vain for stanzas so obviously spirited and picturesque as that admired stanza of Mr. Davidson's (perhaps the stanza most praised by the critics in all recent poetry)—

The adventurous sun took heaven by storm:
Clouds scattered largesses of rain;
The sounding cities, rich and warm,
Smouldered and glittered in the plain.

10

This is as successful in its way as a vigorous water-colour by David Cox; it has merits which everyone grasps in a moment; and it is perhaps only when we examine it a little, that we find that it has no imaginative, no finely poetic qualities at all. And the false note of the first line can only be excused by the excited temper in which the whole ballad is written. This example happened to be at hand; but it is not quite fair to single out Mr. Davidson, since one might mention one or two popular favourites even among our poetical classics, which will not really bear a strict analysis. Mr. Bridges is singularly free, I think, from hidden flaws in the texture of his work. He approaches his subject in a spirit so scrupulous and sincere, that his beauties are always truths, and lie deep; such touches, I mean, as that comparison in *The South Wind*:

As Love on buried ecstasy buildeth his tower—
Like as the stem that beareth the flower
By trembling is knit to power.

30

And this is the reason why his observation is so subtle, delicate, and new, excelling, as I think, Tennyson, in one of Tennyson's main excellences.

Again, of Mr. Bridges' rhythm I would say that it has the

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finest virtue of all good rhythm, namely, a perfect expressiveness. It is organic, it flowers spontaneously from the subject, and it obeys the changing thought with an exquisitely true vibration. Mr. Bridges in this carries on the tradition which Shelley handed down to us in his divine lyric art; the tradition which has degenerated rather than developed (let us take courage to say the truth) in the too mechanical devices and the too facile melodies of Mr. Swinburne. Mr. Swinburne's stanzas always dazzle and astonish; but his
10 rhythm has almost nothing of those magic responses to the turns of emotion, those lovely natural falterings, and those victorious bursts, in which Shelley's art surpasses that of all other lyric writers.

Taken thus in every view, Mr. Bridges appears the sure master of all that he attempts; and if one is to quarrel with his poetry, it must be on the ground that he attempts too little, that he abstains from too much.

ARTHUR SYMONS ON BRIDGES

From an article in *The Monthly Review*, July 1901, reprinted in
Studies in Prose and Verse, 1904.

MR. BRIDGES appears to me, in his 'Shorter Poems', to be alone in our time as a writer of purely lyric poetry, poetry
20 which aims at being an 'embodied joy', a calm rapture. Others have concerned themselves with passions more vehement, with thoughts more profound, with a wilder music, a more variable colour; others have been romantic, realistic, classical, and tumultuous; have brought a remote magic into verse, and have made verse out of sorrowful things close at hand. But while all these men have been singing themselves, and what they have counted most individual in themselves, this man has put into his verse only what remains over when all the others have finished. It is a kind
30 of essence; it is what is imperishable in perfume; it is what

is nearest in words to silence. Of the writer of 'Will love again awake', or 'I love all beauteous things', you know no more than you know of the writer of 'Kind are her answers', or of 'O Love, they wrong thee much', in the Elizabethan song-books. You know only that joy has come harmoniously into a soul, which, for the moment at least, has been purged of everything less absolute than the sheer responsiveness of song. And so, better than the subtlest dramatist, the lyric poet, in his fine, self-sacrificing simplicity, can speak for all the world, scarcely even knowing that he is speaking for 10 himself at all. And in this poetry, it should be noted, nothing is allowed for its own sake, not even the most seductive virtue, as pathos, the ecstasy of love or of religion; but everything for the sake of poetry. Here is an artist so scrupulous that beauty itself must come only in sober apparel, joy only walking temperately, sorrow without the private disfiguring of tears. Made, as it is, out of what might be the commonplace, if it were not the most select thing in the world; written, as it is, with a deliberateness which might be cold if it were not at that quiet heat in which rapture is 20 no longer astonished at itself; realising, as it does, Coleridge's requirement that 'poetry in its higher and purer sense' should demand 'continuous admiration, not regular recurrence of conscious surprise'; this poetry, more than almost any in English, is art for art's sake; and it shows, better certainly than any other, how that formula saves from excess, rather than induces to it. So evenly are form and substance set over against one another that it might be said, with as much or as little justice, that everything exists for form, or that nothing is sacrificed to it. ... 30

Mr. Bridges' style in verse has been said to lack originality, and it is true that his finest lyrics might have found their place among the lyrics in an Elizabethan song-book. And yet they are not archaic, a going back to the external qualities of style, but a thinking back, as of one who really, in

thought, lives in another age, to which his temper of mind is more akin. They are very personal, but personal in a way so abstract, so little dependent on accidents of what we call personality, that it seems the most natural thing in the world for him to turn to a style which comes to him with a great, anonymous tradition. He has never had that somewhat prosaic desire to paint himself 'with all the warts', and he is quite indifferent to the self-consciousness which goes by the name of originality. Just as, in his plays, he borrows
 10 frankly from any one who deals in his own merchandise, so in his lyrics he tries to write only what might have been written in any time or in any country. . . . He seems almost impersonal in his work, indifferent whose it is, his own or another's, as if only its excellence interested him. And this work, when it is most narrowly personal, does not so much render moods of a temperament as aspects of a character. Nobility of character, a moral largeness, which becomes one with an intellectual breadth, a certain gravity, simplicity, sincerity: these count for so much in his work, which indeed
 20 they seem to make. . . .

Made, as it is, on so firm a basis of character, his art is concerned with results rather than (as with most lyric poets) with processes. How many of his poems seem to lead from meditation straight to action; to be expressing something more definite, more formed and settled, than a feeling divorced from consequences! When, as so often, he finds words for an almost inarticulate delight, it is, for the most part, no accidental but rather an organic delight to which he gives utterance! the response of nature to his nature, of his
 30 nature to nature.

Mr. Bridges' art is made for simple thoughts, and direct, though delicate, emotions; these it renders with a kind of luminous transparency; when the thought or emotion becomes complex the form becomes complicated, and all the subtlety of its simplicity goes out of it, as a new kind of

subtlety endeavours to come in. Mr. Bridges' poetic heat is intermittent, and thus his felicity; for all charm in verse, however 'frail and careful', is born of some energy at white heat. At rare times, even in the short poems, and not only in so long a poem as, for instance, 'Prometheus the Fire-giver', one feels that the wave of thought or emotion does not flow broadly and strongly to the end, but breaks on the way. . . .

To Mr. Bridges, undoubtedly, there is something of an actual 'joy' in making poetry, in the mere writing of verse. 10
No one in our time has written verse more consciously and more learnedly, with a more thorough realisation of all those effects which are commonly supposed to come to poets by some divine accident. . . .

If the quality of Mr. Bridges' poetry, apart from its many qualities as an art, were to be summed up in a word, there is but one word, I think, which we could use, and that word is wisdom; and for the quality of his wisdom there is again but one word, the word temperance. This poet, collectedly living apart, to whom the common rewards of 20 life are not so much a temptation, has meditated deeply on the conduct of life, in the freest, most universal sense; and he has attained a philosophy of austere, not unsmiling content, in which something of the cheerfulness of the Stoic unites with the more melancholy resignation of the Christian, and, limiting himself so resolutely to this sober outlook upon life, though with a sense of the whole wisdom of the ages:

Then oft I turn the page
In which our country's name,
Spoiling the Greek of fame,
Shall sound in every age:
Or some Terentian play
Renew, whose excellent
Adjusted folds betray
How once Menander went:

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limiting himself, as in his verse, to a moderation which is an infinite series of rejections, he becomes the wisest of living poets, as he is artistically the most faultless. He has left by the way all the fine and coloured and fantastic and splendid things which others have done their utmost to attain, and he has put into his poetry the peace and not the energies of life, the wisdom and not the fever of love, the silences rather than the voices of nature. . . .

SIR WALTER RALEIGH ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

ROBERT BRIDGES has just been in on the way down the 10 hill. He is delightfully grumpy. He mentions thing after thing which is commonly believed and says that of course it's not so. He's always right. His intellect has been so completely self-indulged that it now can't understand rubbish. He has never obeyed anyone or adapted himself to anyone, so he's as clear as crystal, and can't do with fogs. (30 October 1912.)

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R. B. says he can't bear Donne, because Donne was a sensualist. R. B. is a pernickety, dainty, wilful, self-indulgent chaste old bird. Just a shade too little of a blackguard. (10 20 November 1916.)

W. B. YEATS ON BRIDGES

From private letters.

I had a short illness six months ago and the first sign of returning health was the excitement of finding that I could read poetry again and the poem that brought on this excitement was your poem on the dead child. In my weak state it produced an almost unendurable emotion.

(To Robert Bridges, 20 April 1913.)

I have always so greatly admired [his] work. It has an emotional purity and rhythmical delicacy no living man can equal. (To Siegfried Sassoon, 7 October 1924.)

I think I remember your husband most clearly as I saw him at some great house near you where there were some Servian delegates. He came through the undistinguished crowd, an image of mental and physical perfection, and one of the Servians turned to me in obvious excitement to ask his name. He has always seemed the only poet, whose influence has always heightened and purified the art of others, 10 and all who write with deliberation are his debtors.

(To Mrs. Bridges, 7 May 1930.)

From *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, 1936.

ROBERT BRIDGES seemed for a time, through his influence on Laurence Binyon and others less known, the patron saint of the movement. His influence—practice, not theory—was never deadening; he gave to lyric poetry a new cadence, a distinction as deliberate as that of Whistler's painting, an impulse moulded and checked like that in certain poems of Landor, but different, more in the nerves, less in the blood, more birdlike, less human; words often commonplace made unforgettable by some trick of speeding and slowing, 20

A glitter of pleasure
And a dark tomb,

or by some trick of simplicity, not the impulsive simplicity of youth but that of age, much impulse examined and rejected.

WALTER DE LA MARE ON BRIDGES

From *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*, 30 August 1913,
reprinted in *Private View*, 1953.

TO Mr. Bridges this patience (the patience of the conscious artist) is not merely the outcome of wisdom acquired

from experience; it is an innate quality of mind. A deliberate reticence, a sedulous restraint, a hatred of revelations, are its constant marks. It is never in danger of a loose insincerity, bombast, mere prettiness. Its tendency is rather towards the impersonal and academic. It may become austere almost to the point of aridity. A trace of Augustan formality edges at times into the verse; 'rival amorous vows Amaze the scented air'; an acrostic on the revered name of Purcell diversifies the exquisitely told tale of *Eros and Psyche*. But

10 though inspiration occasionally flags or fails it, the tinder, as it were, is always there; it is the spark that is wanting. This is only another way of saying that Mr. Bridges is that too-rare combination of excellences—a scholar as well as a poet. Whatever his interest centres on, whether music, or hymnody, English speech, prosody, or technical criticism, his method and treatment are always close and thorough, and his conclusions are never extravagant. In an age of crazes and caprice, of curiosity, ostentation, and publicity, he has consistently stood aloof—but not as a mere spectator. He is

20 beyond any of his contemporaries—and forerunners, too—the poet of discipline, of a serene assurance, of an unfretful though by no means passive endurance of what a divine destiny may send and life commit to. ... A tranquil ease and mastery invariably characterize his work, an assured play of mind, a slightly astringent irony. No smoke, no fire, says the proverb; but this close artist kept even his chimney out of sight. His consistent example is a counsel of excellence.... In such poems as *The Affliction of Richard*, *Pater Filio*, *I never shall love the snow again*, a heart desperately charged

3° with grief and perplexity may still express itself in words that reveal more clearly even than these its faith and trust and courage. But though the initial spontaneity of Mr. Bridges's lyrics is never entirely hidden, it much more clearly shows itself to be a kind of distillation of reflection and reverie. And this is true although—beyond perhaps that of

any other English poet—his verse is free from regret or melancholy or sadness or reproach. And there falls across his page no Shadow of Despair.

H. W. GARROD ON BRIDGES

From a lecture (Harvard, 1929) printed in *Poetry and the Criticism of Life*, 1931.

IT becomes us, reading it [*The Testament of Beauty*], to remember that the book is, what its title proclaims it, a testament. It is the final deliverance, the last will and monition, upon the subject of beauty, of a lifelong student of the beautiful. The writer of it, making his last dispositions, is in the nature of things uninfluenced by the ordinary literary motives, vanity and love of glory. But he wishes before he 10 takes leave of the sensible world to put upon record his experience of the beautiful, what it has meant in his life, what he conceives to be its relation to truth, what promise he finds in it of immortality for man's spirit.

It is not easy, I have said, to dodge the argument of the poem. The main lines of it are easy enough to follow.

How the mind of man from inconscient existence
cometh thru' the animal by growth of reasoning
toward spiritual conscience,

20

that is Mr. Bridges' theme. In the treatment of it, the first book is introductory, and nearly all of it is pure poetry—perhaps of any immersion in philosophy the most delightful part is trying the water with one's toe. Beginning from the origin and growth of intellectual Wonder, the book explains the spiritual as, in all its departments, a differentiation of the natural, as the flower is a differentiation of the leaf; the four sections into which the introduction is divided furnish together a brief outline of the natural history of what Mr. Bridges calls Wisdom. The two books which 30

follow deal with the two fundamental human instincts; the self-assertive instinct, which Mr. Bridges calls 'Selfhood', and the instinct of sex, which he mostly prefers to speak of as 'Breed'. Book II traces the evolution of Selfhood into altruism, the passion of benevolence, an evolution conditioned naturally by the fact of 'Motherhood'. Book III instructs us how Breed is by like natural process converted into spiritual love. The fourth book is concerned with Ethick—the origin of the idea of duty, the place of pleasure
 10 in the good life, disposition and education, the relation of Reason to the idea of Beauty and to the material of the senses generally,

If it is not easy to dodge the argument, neither is it easy for Mr. Bridges to dodge the question whether there ought to be one. But he does—it suffices for him to have written, against all odds, the only readable philosophical poem since Lucretius. I fancy that he thinks his argument better, abstractly, than it is, i.e., better than I think it; and newer than it is, i.e., not as old as the hills and the human heart.¹
 20 But I am sure, in any case, that the best comment upon the whole of it is to be given in his own words:

and the secret of a poem
 lieth in the intimate echo of the poet's life:

The power of the argument, I mean, consists in the manner in which it reflects an experience. The same is in some degree true, no doubt, of the *De Rerum Natura*—though the power of Lucretius derives mainly, perhaps, from his proselytising ardour (Mr. Bridges is not much concerned to proselytise). But argument is reason, and poetry is beauty;
 30 and when I have read these four books—and four times have I read them with close attention, reasoning as best I could, and submitting (not always with the best grace in the world) to be reasoned with—after all this reading and

¹ What is new is Mr. Bridges' audacious eclecticism.

re-reading I have to confess that I still do not know how Mr. Bridges relates Reason to Beauty. By Beauty he says,

by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM,
but not by Reason at Beauty.

Yet Reason, or reasoning, has a front place in this *Testament of Beauty*; and when I hope that Mr. Bridges is at length going to tell me why, he breaks off:

here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me,
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

Of the things that cannot be told Mr. Bridges has 10 managed, none the less, to tell some in a manner of which the deep and original power cannot, I persuade myself, be matched outside the very greatest poetry.

G. S. GORDON ON BRIDGES

From *Robert Bridges* (The Rede Lecture 1931), 1946.

DOLBEN'S assumption that emotional urgency will find or make its own form is the romantic, and also the amateur, view in all the arts, and can only be disproved by failure. Neither on this nor on one other point to which he draws attention did Bridges change. I mean his inability to suppose that the emotions of the poets he read were any better than his own, or his own than another's. Many years later, in his 20 famous essay on Keats he reaffirms this:

'There must be thousands and thousands of persons alive at this moment in England, who, if they could only give poetic expression to those mysterious feelings with which they are moved in the presence of natural beauty, would be one and all of them greater poets than have ever yet been.¹ This is easily said, but Bridges meant it. What these thousands of people want, of course, is art; an art equal to that mystery. But their souls are right. No less than his respect

for art is his faith in the human spirit, at whatever stage of articulation, and this was a tenet of his creed to the end. It is so declared in his last poem, and indeed is a necessity of its reasoning. I speak of it now because the thorough-paced artist, as Bridges was, has so seldom held this view. It is of a piece with his devout humanity. . . .

He came to have some half a dozen languages at his command, and was a wide and intent but increasingly selective and capricious reader. There had so seldom been
10 any reason why he should persevere with what he did not like, or open, indeed, at all, what failed to invite him. It was his one complaint against Mr. W. P. Ker that he was so catholic, that not content with the appalling self-sacrifice of reading everything, he actually tried (could it be believed?) to *like* everything also—for something. When Mr. Bridges had decided that Dryden, for example, had nothing that he wanted, it was no good speaking to him of Dryden's other abilities; he was done with Dryden. It is the difference between the reading of the scholar and the artist, even when
20 the artist is a scholar: the mature artist, at any rate, reads not so much to enlarge his taste as to confirm or refine it....

The loose and roomy metre of the *Testament* is, in fact, the last fruit of prosodic investigation, of a series of experiments carried on by the poet with perfect frankness for many years, and to that, and that alone, we owe that the poem was ever written. This is not the usual order in the genesis of poetry, but it was Bridges' order. Had he failed to discover the metre of the *Testament*, I will not say that he would never have written his philosophy. He spoke often of doing
30 so, sometimes, in despair, of doing it in prose. I have noticed, indeed, that his Broadcast Lecture on Poetry, given in 1929, is an advance statement of the principles of his poem. But he would not have written the *Testament of Beauty*....

No man was more steadily true to himself. His physical

and mental beauty matched each other, and equipped him superbly for the life he chose. He was of noble and even heroic presence, and his careless outdoor strength and grace, growing more picturesque with age, expressed the colour and delicacy as well as the masculine humour and outspoken freedom of his mind. He was poet, scientist, philosopher, naturalist, musician, philologist, typographer, and country gentleman—a mixture of qualities that would have been surprising in another man, and probably ineffectual, but that in him achieved their harmony.—He grew up, through 10 the kindness of fortune, unwarped by the struggle of living, with none of the inevitable vices of a profession. He used the gifts of fortune responsibly, setting an example of high-minded devotion to all the arts of Beauty and to the spiritual advancement of mankind. Before he died he delivered in the *Testament of Beauty* his message of belief in the goodness of the human heart, and of faith in the religious foundation of human life.

CYRIL CONNOLLY ON BRIDGES

From a review in *The Sunday Times*, 11 January 1953.

IT is interesting to reconsider this late Victorian bard of Boar's Hill, scholar and muscular metrical Christian, from 20 our disadvantage point in 1953, surrounded by

the scanty dwarf'd intelligence
of a new race of beings, the unhallow'd offspring
of them who shall have quite dismember'd and destroy'd
our temple of Christian faith and fair Hellenic art.

The defect is obvious: lack of inspiration. No poet seems so consistently without it; and yet, unblessed by any heavenly visitation, he worked bravely on, steeping himself in the true and beautiful—Plato, Dante, Wordsworth, and, above all, Milton—studiously observing the minutiae of the country- 30

side, dryly doing his best as our official poet during a momentous war, sitting on Hopkins's manuscript and pondering problems of prosody: until suddenly, in his eighties, the Muse took pity on him and changed his Martha into Mary. Grace flowed, inspiration descended, and the long and difficult but also intelligent and beautiful 'Testament of Beauty'¹ appeared, dedicated to the King and running into fourteen editions, a modern miracle, a swansong of Victorian integrity, Edwardian learning and Georgian
10 questioning, where Christian platonism

passionat soul and sense
blend in a rich reverie with the dying year.

The five volumes of shorter poems which appeared between 1873 and 1893 contain, however, some lovely things in which nicety of observation and felicity of rhythm compensate for a certain monotony of diction and feeling: a gardener-poet, a walker and a boatman quietly develops, growing familiar with the moods of the countryside and constituting himself the poet of winterspring, the season
20 when January bequeaths to February and March its faltering authority:

Hale Winter, half resigning ere he go,
Doth to his heiress shew
His kingdom fair.
In patient russet is his forest spread,
All bright with bramble red,
With beechen moss
And holly sheen: the oak silver and stark
Sunneth his aged bark
And wrinkled boss.

30

'January,' 'November,' 'The Palm Willow,' 'London Snow,' 'A Robin,' 'The Upper Skies,' 'Screaming Tarn'—these and many other slight but haunting and graceful poems end by producing a quiet intoxication in the reader, an aquatinted calendar of the English scene.

Selections from
ROBERT BRIDGES

From POEMS, 1873

HER eye saw, her eye stumbled:
 Her fingers spread and touched it:
 It was so ripe it tumbled
 Off in her hand, that clutched it.

She raised it up to smell it: 5
 Her jealous tongue ran o'er it:
 Ere the thought rose to quell it,
 Her keen teeth closed and tore it.

There as she stood in wonder,
 And smacked the flavour fruity, 10
 She scanned it o'er and under,
 And marvelled at its beauty.

'It's fair,' she said, 'and fairest
 Just where the sun's rays strike it;
 The tastes's the strangest, rarest; 15
 It's bitter, but I like it,'

To man she brought it, bitten,
 She brought it, she the woman,
 The fruit, of which 'tis written
 The eating should undo man. 20

'Taste, taste!' she cried, 'thou starvest;
 Eat as I ate, nor fear it,
 For of all the garden's harvest
 There's nothing like or near it.

' Fair to the eyes, and fairest 25
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
But oh! the taste's the rarest,
It's bitter, but thou'lt like it.

He took the fruit she gave him,
Took it for pain or pleasure: 3°
There was no help could save him,
Her measure was his measure.

Through her teeth's print, the door of it,
He sent his own in after;
He ate rind, flesh, and core of it, 35
And burst out into laughter.

'Tis fair,' he cried, 'and fairest
Just where the sun's rays strike it:
The taste's the strangest, rarest,
It's bitter, and I like it.¹ 40

From PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER

ODE

A COY inquisitive spirit, the spirit of wonder,
 Possesses the child in his cradle, when mortal things
 Are new, yet a varied surface and nothing under. 815
 It busies the mind on trifles and toys and brings
 Her grasp from nearer to further, from smaller to greater,
 And slowly teaches flight to her fledgeling wings.

Where'er she flutters and falls surprises await her:
 She soars, and beauty's miracles open in sight, 820
 The flowers and trees and beasts of the earth; and later
 The skies of day, the moon and the stars of night;
 'Neath which she scarcely venturing goes demurely,
 With mystery clad, in the awe of depth and height.

O happy for still unconscious, for ah! how surely, 825
 How soon and surely will disenchantment come,
 When first to herself she boasts to walk securely,
 And drives the master spirit away from his home;

Seeing the marvellous things that make the morning
 Are marvels of every-day, familiar, and some 830
 Have lost with use, like earthly robes, their adorning,
 As earthly joys the charm of a first delight,
 And some are fallen from awe to neglect and scorning;
 Until—

O tarry not long, dear needed sprite!

Till thou, though uninvited, with fancy returnest 835
 To hallow beauty and make the dull heart bright:
 To inhabit again thy gladdened kingdom in earnest;
 Wherein—

from the smile of beauty afar forecasting

The pleasure of god, thou livest at peace and yearnest
 With wonder everlasting. 840

From THE GROWTH OF LOVE

22

I WOULD be a bird, and straight on wings I arise,
 And carry purpose up to the ends of the air:
 In calm and storm my sails I feather, and where
 By freezing cliffs the unransom'd wreckage lies:
 Or, strutting on hot meridian banks, surprise 5
 The silence: over plains in the moonlight bare
 I chase my shadow, and perch where no bird dare
 In treetops torn by fiercest winds of the skies.

Poor simple birds, foolish birds! then I cry,
 Ye pretty pictures of delight, unstir'd 10
 By the only joy of knowing that ye fly;
 Ye are not what ye are, but rather, sum'd in a word,
 The alphabet of a god's idea, and I
 Who master it, I am the only bird.

23

O WEARY pilgrims, chanting of your woe,
 That turn your eyes to all the peaks that shine,
 Hailing in each the citadel divine
 The which ye thought to have enter'd long ago;
 Until at length your feeble steps and slow 5
 Falter upon the threshold of the shrine,
 And your hearts overburden'd doubt in fine
 Whether it be Jerusalem or no:

Dishearten'd pilgrims, I am one of you;
 For, having worshipped many a barren face, 10
 I scarce now greet the goal I journey'd to:
 I stand a pagan in the holy place;
 Beneath the lamp of truth I am found untrue,
 And question with the God that I embrace.

33

I CARE not if I live, tho¹ life and breath
 Have never been to me so dear and sweet.
 I care not if I die, for I could meet—
 Being so happy—happily my death.
 I care not if I love; to-day she saith 5
 She loveth, and love's history is complete.
 Nor care I if she love me; at her feet
 My spirit bows entranced and worshippeth.

I have no care for what was most my care,
 But all around me see fresh beauty born, 10
 And common sights grown lovelier than they were:
 I dream of love, and in the light of morn
 Tremble, beholding all things very fair
 And strong with strength that puts my strength to scorn.

40

TEARS of love, tears of joy and tears of care,
 Comforting tears that fell uncomforted,
 Tears o'er the new-born, tears beside the dead,
 Tears of hope, pride and pity, trust and prayer,
 Tears of contrition; all tears whatsoever 5
 Of tenderness or kindness had she shed
 Who here is pictured, ere upon her head
 The fine gold might be turn'd to silver there.

The smile that charm'd the father hath given place
 Unto the furrow'd care wrought by the son; 10
 But virtue hath transform'd all change to grace:
 So that I praise the artist, who hath done
 A portrait, for my worship, of the face
 Won by the heart my father's heart that won.

WHEN I see childhood on the threshold seize
 The prize of life from age and likelihood,
 I mourn time's change that will not be withstood,
 Thinking how Christ said *Be like one of these*.
 For in the forest among many trees 5
 Scarce one in all is found that hath made good
 The virgin pattern of its slender wood,
 That courtesied in joy to every breeze;

But scath'd, but knotted trunks that raise on high
 Their arms in stiff contortion, strain'd and bare; 10
 Whose patriarchal crowns in sorrow sigh.
 So, little children, ye—nay nay, ye ne'er
 From me shall learn how sure the change and nigh,
 When ye shall share our strength and mourn to share.

WHEN parch'd with thirst, astray on sultry sand
 The traveller faints, upon his closing ear
 Steals a fantastic music: he may hear
 The babbling fountain of his native land.
 Before his eyes the vision seems to stand, 5
 Where at its terraced brink the maids appear,
 Who fill their deep urns at its waters clear,
 And not refuse the help of lover's hand.

O cruel jest—he cries, as some one flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire— 10
 O shameless, O contempt of holy things.
 But never of their wanton play they tire,
 As not athirst they sit beside the springs,
 While he must quench in death his lost desire.

IN this neglected, ruin'd edifice
 Of works unperfected and broken schemes,
 Where is the promise of my early dreams,
 The smile of beauty and the pearl of price?
 No charm is left now that could once entice 5
 Wind-wavering fortune from her golden streams,
 And full in flight decrepit purpose seems,
 Trailing the banner of his old device.

Within the house a froze and numbing air
 Has chill'd endeavour: sickly memories reign 10
 In every room, and ghosts are on the stair:
 And hope behind the dusty window-pane
 Watches the days go by, and bow'd with care
 Forecasts her last reproach and mortal stain.

51

0 MY uncared-for songs, what are ye worth,
 That in my secret book with so much care
 I write you, this one here and that one there,
 Marking the time and order of your birth?
 How, with a fancy so unkind to mirth, 5
 A sense so hard, a style so worn and bare,
 Look ye for any welcome anywhere
 From any shelf or heart-home on the earth?

Should others ask you this, say then I yearn'd
 To write you such as once, when I was young, 10
 Finding I should have loved and thereto turn'd.
 Twere something yet to live again among
 The gentle youth beloved, and where I learn'd
 My art, be there remember'd for my song.

SINCE not the enamour'd sun with glance more fond
 Kisses the foliage of his sacred tree,
 Than doth my waking thought arise on thee,
 Loving none near thee, like thee nor beyond;
 Nay, since I am sworn thy slave, and in the bond 5
 Is writ my promise of eternity;
 Since to such high hope thou'st encouraged me,
 That if thou look but from me I despond;

Since thou'rt my all in all, O think of this:
 Think of the dedication of my youth: 10
 Think of my loyalty, my joy, my bliss:
 Think of my sorrow, my despair and ruth,
 My sheer annihilation if I miss:
 Think—if thou shouldst be false—think of thy truth.

TWAS on the very day winter took leave
 Of those fair fields I love, when to the skies
 The fragrant Earth was smiling in surprise
 At that her heaven-descended, quick reprieve,
 I wander'd forth my sorrow to relieve; 5
 Yet walk'd amid sweet pleasure in such wise
 As Adam went alone in Paradise,
 Before God of His pity fashion'd Eve.

And out of tune with all the joy around
 I laid me down beneath a flowering tree, 10
 And o'er my senses crept a sleep profound;
 In which it seem'd that thou wert given to me,
 Rending my body, where with hurried sound
 I feel my heart beat, when I think of thee.

THE dark and serious angel, who so long
 Vex'd his immortal strength in charge of me,
 Hath smiled for joy and fled in liberty
 To take his pastime with the peerless throng.
 Oft had I done his noble keeping wrong, 5
 Wounding his heart to wonder what might be
 God's purpose in a soul of such degree;
 And there he had left me but for mandate strong.

But seeing thee with me now, his task at close
 He knoweth, and wherefore he was bid to stay, 10
 And work confusion of so many foes:
 The thanks that he doth look for, here I pay,
 Yet fear some heavenly envy, as he goes
 Unto what great reward I cannot say.

ETERNAL Father, who didst all create,
 In whom we live, and to whose bosom move,
 To all men be Thy name known, which is Love,
 Till its loud praises sound at heaven's high gate.
 Perfect Thy kingdom in our passing state, 5
 That here on earth Thou may'st as well approve
 Our service, as Thou ownest theirs above,
 Whose joy we echo and in pain await.

Grant body and soul each day their daily bread:
 And should in spite of grace fresh woe begin, 10
 Even as our anger soon is past and dead
 Be Thy remembrance mortal of our sin:
 By Thee in paths of peace Thy sheep be led,
 And in the vale of terror comforted.

(II)

From SHORTER POEMS

Book I

I

ELEGY

CLEAR and gentle stream!
Known and loved so long,
That hast heard the song
And the idle dream
Of my boyish day; 5
While I once again
Down thy margin stray,
In the selfsame strain
Still my voice is spent,
With my old lament 10
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream!

Where my old seat was
Here again I sit,
Where the long boughs knit 15
Over stream and grass
A translucent eaves:
Where back eddies play
Shipwreck with the leaves,
And the proud swans stray, 20
Sailing one by one
Out of stream and sun,
And the fish lie cool
In their chosen pool.

(12)

Many an afternoon 25
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
First the deep bell hums 30
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade,
With her lengthening shade,
And the tardy boon 35
Of her brightening moon.

Clear and gentle stream!
Ere again I go
Where thou dost not flow,
Well does it beseem 40
Thee to hear again
Once my youthful song,
That familiar strain
Silent now so long:
Be as I content 45
With my old lament
And my idle dream,
Clear and gentle stream.

2

ELEGY

THE wood is bare: a river-mist is steeping
The trees that winter's chill of life bereaves:
Only their stiffened boughs break silence, weeping
Over their fallen leaves;

(13)

That lie upon the dank earth brown and rotten, 5
Miry and matted in the soaking wet:
Forgotten with the spring, that is forgotten
By them that can forget.

Yet it was here we walked when ferns were springing,
And through the mossy bank shot bud and blade:— 10
Here found in summer, when the birds were singing,
A green and pleasant shade.

Twas here we loved in sunnier days and greener;
And now, in this disconsolate decay,
I come to see her where I most have seen her, 15
And touch the happier day.

For on this path, at every turn and corner,
The fancy of her figure on me falls:
Yet walks she with the slow step of a mourner,
Nor hears my voice that calls. 20

So through my heart there winds a track of feeling,
A path of memory, that is all her own:
Whereto her phantom beauty ever stealing
Haunts the sad spot alone.

About her steps the trunks are bare, the branches 25
Drip heavy tears upon her downcast head;
And bleed from unseen wounds that no sun stanches,
For the year's sun is dead.

And dead leaves wrap the fruits that summer planted:
And birds that love the South have taken wing. 30
The wanderer, loitering o'er the scene enchanted,
Weeps, and despairs of spring.

5

I HEARD a linnet courting
 His lady in the spring:
 His mates were idly sporting,
 Nor stayed to hear him sing
 His song of love.— 5
 I fear my speech distorting
 His tender love.

The phrases of his pleading
 Were full of young delight;
 And she that gave him heeding 10
 Interpreted aright
 His gay, sweet notes,—
 So sadly marred in the reading,—
 His tender notes.

And when he ceased, the hearer 15
 Awaited the refrain,
 Till swiftly perching nearer
 He sang his song again,
 His pretty song:—
 Would that my verse spake clearer 20
 His tender song!

Ye happy, airy creatures!
 That in the merry spring
 Think not of what misfeatures
 Or cares the year may bring; 25
 But unto love
 Resign your simple natures,
 To tender love.

7

I WILL not let thee go.
 Ends all our month-long love in this?
 Can it be summed up so,
 Quit in a single kiss?
 I will not let thee go. 5

I will not let thee go.
 If thy words¹ breath could scare thy deeds,
 As the soft south can blow
 And toss the feathered seeds,
 Then might I let thee go. 10

I will not let thee go.
 Had not the great sun seen, I might;
 Or were he reckoned slow
 To bring the false to light,
 Then might I let thee go. 15

I will not let thee go.
 The stars that crowd the summer skies
 Have watched us so below
 With all their million eyes,
 I dare not let thee go. 20

I will not let thee go.
 Have we not chid the changeful moon,
 Now rising late, and now
 Because she set too soon,
 And shall I let thee go? 25

(16)

I will not let thee go.
Have not the young flowers been content,
Plucked ere their buds could blow,
To seal our sacrament?
I cannot let thee go. 30

I will not let thee go.
I hold thee by too many bands:
Thou sayest farewell, and lo!
I have thee by the hands,
And will not let thee go. 35

9

A POPPY grows upon the shore,
Bursts her twin cup in summer late:
Her leaves are glaucous-green and hoar,
Her petals yellow, delicate.

Oft to her cousins turns her thought, 5
In wonder if they care that she
Is fed with spray for dew, and caught
By every gale that sweeps the sea.

She has no lovers like the red,
That dances with the noble corn: 10
Her blossoms on the waves are shed,
Where she stands shivering and forlorn.

ii

LONG are the hours the sun is above,
But when evening comes I go home to my love.

I'm away the daylight hours and more,
Yet she comes not down to open the door.

(17)

She does not meet me upon the stair,—
She sits in my chamber and waits for me there.

As I enter the room she does not move :
I always walk straight up to my love;

And she lets me take my wonted place
At her side, and gaze in her dear dear face. 10

There as I sit, from her head thrown back
Her hair falls straight in a shadow black.

Aching and hot as my tired eyes be,
She is all that I wish to see.

And in my wearied and toil-dinned ear, 15
She says all things that I wish to hear.

Dusky and duskier grows the room,
Yet I see her best in the darker gloom.

When the winter eves are early and cold,
The firelight hours are a dream of gold. 20

And so I sit here night by night,
In rest and enjoyment of love's delight.

But a knock at the door, a step on the stair,
Will startle, alas, my love from her chair.

If a stranger comes she will not stay: 25
At the first alarm she is off and away.

And he wonders, my guest, usurping her throne,
That I sit so much by myself alone.

ELEGY

ON A LADY WHOM GRIEF FOR THE DEATH OF HER
BETROTHED KILLED

ASSEMBLE, all ye maidens, at the door,
And all ye loves, assemble; far and wide
Proclaim the bridal, that proclaimed before
Has been deferred to this late eventide :

For on this night the bride, 5
The days of her betrothal over,
Leaves the parental hearth for evermore;
To-night the bride goes forth to meet her lover.

Reach down the wedding vesture, that has lain
Yet all unvisited, the silken gown: 10
Bring out the bracelets, and the golden chain
Her dearer friends provided: sere and brown

Bring out the festal crown,
And set it on her forehead lightly:
Though it be withered, twine no wreath again; 15
This only is the crown she can wear rightly.

Cloke her in ermine, for the night is cold,
And wrap her warmly, for the night is long,
In pious hands the flaming torches hold,
While her attendants, chosen from among 20

Her faithful virgin throng,
May lay her in her cedar litter,
Decking her coverlet with sprigs of gold,
Roses, and lilies white that best befit her.

(19)

Sound flute and tabor, that the bridal be 25
Not without music, nor with these alone;
But let the viol lead the melody,
With lesser intervals, and plaintive moan
Of sinking semitone;
And, all in choir, the virgin voices 30
Rest not from singing in skilled harmony
The song that aye the bridegroom's ear rejoices.

Let the priests go before, arrayed in white,
And let the dark-stoled minstrels follow slow,
Next they that bear her, honoured on this night, 35
And then the maidens, in a double row,
Each singing soft and low,
And each on high a torch upstaying:
Unto her lover lead her forth with light,
With music, and with singing, and with praying. 40

'Twas at this sheltering hour he nightly came,
And found her trusty window open wide,
And knew the signal of the timorous flame,
That long the restless curtain would not hide
Her form that stood beside; 45
As scarce she dared to be delighted,
Listening to that sweet tale, that is no shame
To faithful lovers, that their hearts have plighted.

But now for many days the dewy grass
Has shown no markings of his feet at morn: 50
And watching she has seen no shadow pass
The moonlit walk, and heard no music borne
Upon her ear forlorn.
In vain has she looked out to greet him;
He has not come, he will not come, alas! 55
So let us bear her out where she must meet him.

Now to the river bank the priests are come:
 The bark is ready to receive its freight:
 Let some prepare her place therein, and some
 Embark the litter with its slender weight: 60

The rest stand by in state,
 And sing her a safe passage over;
 While she is oared across to her new home,
 Into the arms of her expectant lover.

And thott, O lover, that art on the watch, 65
 Where, on the banks of the forgetful streams,
 The pale indifferent ghosts wander, and snatch
 The sweeter moments of their broken dreams,—

Thou, when the torchlight gleams,
 When thou shalt see the slow procession, 70
 And when thine ears the fitful music catch,
 Rejoice, for thou art near to thy possession.

16

TRIOLET

WHEN first we met we did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master;
 Of more than common friendliness
 When first we met we did not guess.
 Who could foretell this sore distress, 5
 This irretrievable disaster
 When first we met?—We did not guess
 That Love would prove so hard a master.

Book II

I

MUSE

WILL Love again awake,
That lies asleep so long?

POET

O hush! ye tongues that shake
The drowsy night with song.

MUSE

It is a lady fair 5
Whom once he deigned to praise,
That at the door doth dare
Her sad complaint to raise.

POET

She must be fair of face, 10
As bold of heart she seems,
If she would match her grace
With the delight of dreams.

MUSE

Her beauty would surprise
Gazers on Autumn eves,
Who watched the broad moon rise 15
Upon the scattered sheaves.

(22)

POET

O sweet must be the voice
He shall descend to hear,
Who doth in Heaven rejoice
His most enchanted ear. 20

MUSE

The smile, that rests to play
Upon her lip, foretells
What musical array
Tricks her sweet syllables.

POET

And yet her smiles have danced 25
In vain, if her discourse
Win not the soul entranced
In divine intercourse.

MUSE

She will encounter all
This trial without shame, 30
Her eyes men Beauty call,
And Wisdom is her name.

POET

Throw back the portals then,
Ye guards, your watch that keep,
Love will awake again 35
That lay so long asleep.

A PASSER-BY

WHITHER, O splendid ship, thy white sails crowding,
 Leaning across the bosom of the urgent West,
 That fearest nor sea rising, nor sky clouding,
 Whither away, fair rover, and what thy quest ?
 Ah! soon, when Winter has all our vales opprest, 5
 When skies are cold and misty, and hail is hurling,
 Wilt thou glide on the blue Pacific, or rest
 In a summer haven asleep, thy white sails furling.

I there before thee, in the country that well thou knowest,
 Already arrived am inhaling the odorous air: 10
 I watch thee enter unerringly where thou goest,
 And anchor queen of the strange shipping there,
 Thy sails for awnings spread, thy masts bare;
 Nor is aught from the foaming reef to the snow-capped,
 grandest
 Peak, that is over the feathery palms more fair 15
 Than thou, so upright, so stately, and still thou standest.

And yet, O splendid ship, unhailed and nameless,
 I know not if, aiming a fancy, I rightly divine
 That thou hast a purpose joyful, a courage blameless,
 Thy port assured in a happier land than mine. 20
 But for all I have given thee, beauty enough is thine,
 As thou, aslant with trim tackle and shrouding,
 From the proud nostril curve of a prow's line
 In the offing scatterest foam, thy white sails crowding.

THERE is a hill beside the silver Thames,
 Shady with birch and beech and odorous pine:
 And brilliant underfoot with thousand gems
 Steeply the thickets to his floods decline.

Straight trees in every place 5
 Their thick tops interlace,
 And pendant branches trail their foliage fine
 Upon his watery face.

Swift from the sweltering pasturage he flows:
 His stream, alert to seek the pleasant shade, 10
 Pictures his gentle purpose, as he goes
 Straight to the caverned pool his toil has made.

His winter floods lay bare
 The stout roots in the air:
 His summer streams are cool, when they have played 15
 Among their fibrous hair.

A rushy island guards the sacred bower,
 And hides it from the meadow, where in peace
 The lazy cows wrench many a scented flower,
 Robbing the golden market of the bees: 20

And laden barges float
 By banks of myosote;
 And scented flag and golden flower-de-lys
 Delay the loitering boat.

And on this side the island, where the pool 25
 Eddies away, are tangled mass on mass
 The water-weeds, that net the fishes cool,
 And scarce allow a narrow stream to pass;

Where spreading crowfoot mars
 The drowning nenuphars, 30
 Waving the tassels of her silken grass
 Below her silver stars.

But in the purple pool there nothing grows,
 Not the white water-lily spoked with gold;
 Though best she loves the hollows, and well knows 35
 On quiet streams her broad shields to unfold:

 Yet should her roots but try
 Within these deeps to lie,
 Not her long reaching stalk could ever hold
 Her waxen head so high. 40

Sometimes an angler comes, and drops his hook
 Within its hidden depths, and 'gainst a tree
 Leaning his rod, reads in some pleasant book,
 Forgetting soon his pride of fishery;
 And dreams, or falls asleep, 45
 While curious fishes peep
 About his nibbled bait, or scornfully
 Dart off and rise and leap.

And sometimes a slow figure 'neath the trees,
 In ancient-fashioned smock, with tottering care 50
 Upon a staff propping his weary knees,
 May by the pathway of the forest fare:
 As from a buried day
 Across the mind will stray
 Some perishing mute shadow,—and unaware 55
 He passeth on his way.

Else, he that wishes solitude is safe,
 Whether he bathe at morning in the stream:
 Or lead his love there when the hot hours chafe
 The meadows, busy with a blurring steam; 60
 Or watch, as fades the light,
 The gibbous moon grow bright,
 Until her magic rays dance in a dream,
 And glorify the night.

(26)

Where is this bower beside the silver Thames? 65
O pool and flowery thickets, hear my vow!
O trees of freshest foliage and straight stems,
No sharer of my secret I allow:
 Lest ere I come the while
 Strange feet your shades defile; 70
Or lest the burly oarsman turn his prow
 Within your guardian isle.

7

THE DOWNS

O BOLD majestic downs, smooth, fair and lonely;
O still solitude, only matched in the skies:
 Perilous in steep places,
 Soft in the level races,
Where sweeping in phantom silence the cloudland flies; 5
With lovely undulation of fall and rise;
 Entrenched with thickets thorned,
By delicate miniature dainty flowers adorned!

1 climb your crown, and lo! a sight surprising
Of sea in front uprising, steep and wide: 10
 And scattered ships ascending
 To heaven, lost in the blending
Of distant blues, where water and sky divide,
Urging their engines against wind and tide,
 And all so small and slow 15
They seem to be wearily pointing the way they would go.

(27)

The accumulated murmur of soft plashing,
Of waves on rocks dashing and searching the sands,
 Takes my ear, in the veering
 Baffled wind, as rearing
Upright at the cliff, to the gullies and rifts he stands;
And his conquering surges scour out over the lands;
 While again at the foot of the downs
He masses his strength to recover the topmost crowns.

20

10

ELEGY

AMONG THE TOMBS

SAD, sombre place, beneath whose antique yews
I come, unquiet sorrows to control;
Amid thy silent mossgrown graves to muse
With my neglected solitary soul;
And to poetic sadness care confide,
Trusting sweet Melancholy for my guide:

5

They will not ask why in thy shades I stray,
Among the tombs finding my rare delight,
Beneath the sun at indolent noonday,
Or in the windy moon-enchanted night,
Who have once reined in their steeds at any shrine,
And given them water from the well divine.—

10

The orchards are all ripened, and the sun
 Spots the deserted gleanings with decay;
 The seeds are perfected: his work is done, 15
 And Autumn lingers but to outsmile the May;
 Bidding his tinted leaves glide, bidding clear
 Unto clear skies the birds applaud the year.

Lo, here I sit, and to the world I call,
 The world my solemn fancy leaves behind, 20
 Come! pass within the inviolable wall,
 Come pride, come pleasure, come distracted mind;
 Within the fated refuge, hither, turn,
 And learn your wisdom ere 'tis late to learn.

Come with me now, and taste the fount of tears; 25
 For many eyes have sanctified this spot,
 Where grief's unbroken lineage endears
 The charm untimely Folly injures not,
 And slays the intruding thoughts, that overleap
 The simple fence its holiness doth keep. 30

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
 Their pompous legends will no smile awake;
 Even the vainglorious title o'er the head
 Wins its pride pardon for its sorrow's sake;
 And carven Loves scorn not their dusty prize, 35
 Though fallen so far from tender sympathies.

Here where a mother laid her only son,
 Here where a lover left his bride, below
 The treasured names their own are added on
 To those whom they have followed long ago: 40
 Sealing the record of the tears they shed,
 That 'where their treasure there their hearts are fled.'

(29)

Grandfather, father, son, and then again
Child, grandchild, and great-grandchild laid beneath
Numbered in turn among the sons of men, 45
And gathered each one in his turn to death:
While he that occupies their house and name
To-day,—to-morrow too their grave shall claim.

And where are all their spirits? Ah! could we tell
The manner of our being when we die, 50
And see beyond the scene we know so well
The country that so much obscured doth lie!
With brightest visions our fond hopes repair,
Or crown our melancholy with despair;

From death, still death, still would a comfort come: 55
Since of this world the essential joy must fall
In all distributed, in each thing some,
In nothing all, and all complete in all;
Till pleasure, ageing to her full increase,
Puts on perfection, and is throned in peace. 60

Yea, sweetest peace, unsought-for, undesired,
Loathed and misnamed, 'tis thee I worship here:
Though in most black habiliments attired,
Thou art sweet peace, and thee I cannot fear.
Nay, were my last hope quenched, I here would sit 65
And praise the annihilation of the pit.

Nor quickly disenchanted will my feet
Back to the busy town return, but yet
Linger, ere I my loving friends would greet,
Or touch their hands, or share without regret 70
The warmth of that kind hearth, whose sacred ties
Only shall dim with tears my dying eyes.

I HAVE loved flowers that fade,
 Within whose magic tents
 Rich hues have marriage made
 With sweet unmemoried scents:
 A honeymoon delight,— 5
 A joy of love at sight,
 That ages in an hour:—
 My song be like a flower!

I have loved airs, that die
 Before their charm is writ 10
 Along a liquid sky
 Trembling to welcome it.
 Notes, that with pulse of fire
 Proclaim the spirit's desire,
 Then die, and are nowhere:— 15
 My song be like an air!

Die, song, die like a breath,
 And wither as a bloom:
 Fear not a flowery death,
 Dread not an airy tomb! 20
 Fly with delight, fly hence!
 Twas thine love's tender sense
 To feast; now on thy bier
 Beauty shall shed a tear.

Book III

I

OMY vague desires!
Ye lambent flames of the soul, her offspring fires:
That are my soul herself in pangs sublime
Rising and flying to heaven before her time:

What doth tempt you forth 5
To drown in the south or shiver in the frosty north?
What seek ye or find ye in your random flying,
Ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying?

Joy, the joy of flight!
They hide in the sun, they flare and dance in the night; 10
Gone up, gone out of sight: and ever again
Follow fresh tongues of fire, fresh pangs of pain.

Ah! they burn my soul,
The fires, devour my soul that once was whole:
She is scattered in fiery phantoms day by day, 15
But whither, whither? ay whither? away, away!

Could I but control
These vague desires, these leaping flames of the soul:
Could I but quench the fire: ah! could I stay
My soul that flieth, alas, and dieth away! 20

2

LONDON SNOW

WHEN men were all asleep the snow came flying,
In large white flakes falling on the city brown,
Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,

Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;
Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing; 5
Lazily and incessantly floating down and down:

Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;
Hiding difference, making unevenness even,
Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing.

All night it fell, and when full inches seven 10
It lay in the depth of its uncompacted lightness,
The clouds blew off from a high and frosty heaven;

And all woke earlier for the unaccustomed brightness
Of the winter dawning, the strange unheavenly glare:
The eye marvelled—marvelled at the dazzling whiteness; 15

The ear hearkened to the stillness of the solemn air;
No sound of wheel rumbling nor of foot falling,
And the busy morning cries came thin and spare.

Then boys I heard, as they went to school, calling,
They gathered up the crystal manna to freeze 20
Their tongues with tasting, their hands with snowballing;

Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to the knees;
Or peering up from under the white-mossed wonder,
'O look at the trees!' they cried, 'O look at the trees!'

With lessened load a few carts creak and blunder, 25
Following along the white deserted way,
A country company long dispersed asunder:

When now already the sun, in pale display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the stir of the day. 30

For now doors open, and war is waged with the snow;
 And trams of sombre men, past tale of number,
 Tread long brown paths, as toward their toil they go:

But even for them awhile no cares encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word is unspoken, 35
 The daily thoughts of labour and sorrow slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets them, for the charm
 they have broken.

3

THE VOICE OF NATURE

I STAND on the cliff and watch the veiled sun paling
 A silver field afar in the mournful sea,
 The scourge of the surf, and plaintive gulls sailing
 At ease on the gale that smites the shuddering lea:
 Whose smile severe and chaste 5
 June never hath stirred to vanity, nor age defaced.
 In lofty thought strive, O spirit, for ever:
 In courage and strength pursue thine own endeavour.

Ah! if it were only for thee, thou restless ocean
 Of waves that follow and roar, the sweep of the tides; 10
 Wer't only for thee, impetuous wind, whose motion
 Precipitate all overrides, and turns, nor abides:
 For you sad birds and fair,
 Or only for thee, bleak cliff, erect in the air;
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature, 15
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

But far away, I think, in the Thames Valley,
 The silent river glides by flowery banks:
 And birds sing sweetly in branches that arch an alley
 Of cloistered trees, moss-grown in their ancient ranks: 20
 Where if a light air stray,
 Tis laden with hum of bees and scent of may.

Love and peace be thine, O spirit, for ever:
 Serve thy sweet desire: despise endeavour.

And if it were only for thee, entranced river, 25
 That scarce dost rock the lily on her airy stem,
 Or stir a wave to murmur, or a rush to quiver;
 Wer't but for the woods, and summer asleep in them:
 For you my bowers green,
 My hedges of rose and woodbine, with walks between, 30
 Then well could I read wisdom in every feature,
 O well should I understand the voice of Nature.

4

ON A DEAD CHILD

PERFECT little body, without fault or stain on thee,
 With promise of strength and manhood full and fair!
 Though cold and stark and bare,
 A he bloom and the charm of life doth awhile remain on thee.
 Thy mother's treasure wert thou;—alas! no longer 5
 To visit her heart with wondrous joy; to be
 Thy father's pride;—ah, he
 Must gather his faith together, and his strength make
 stronger.
 To me, as I move thee now in the last duty,
 Dost thou with a turn or gesture anon respond; 10
 Startling my fancy fond
 With a chance attitude of the head, a freak of beauty.
 Thy hand clasps, as 'twas wont, my finger, and holds it:
 But the grasp is the clasp of Death, heartbreaking and stiff;
 Yet feels to my hand as if 15
 Twas still thy will, thy pleasure and trust that enfolds it.

(35)

So lay thee there, thy sunken eyelids closing,—
Go lie thou there in thy coffin, thy last little bed!—
Propping thy wise, sad head,
Thy firm, pale hands across thy chest disposing. 20

So quiet! doth the change content thee?—Death, whither
hath he taken thee?

To a world, do I think, that rights the disaster of this?
The vision of which I miss,
Who weep for the body, and wish but to warm thee and
awaken thee?

Ah! little at best can all our hopes avail us 25
To lift this sorrow, or cheer us, when in the dark,
Unwilling, alone we embark,
And the things we have seen and have known and have
heard of, fail us.

7

INDOLENCE

WE left the city when the summer day
Had verged already on its hot decline,
And charmed Indolence in languor lay
In her gay gardens, 'neath her towers divine:
'Farewell,' we said, 'dear city of youth and dream!' 5
And in our boat we stepped and took the stream.

All through that idle afternoon we strayed
Upon our proposed travel well begun,
As loitering by the woodland's dreamy shade,
Past shallow islets floating in the sun, 10
Or searching down the banks for rarer flowers
We lingered out the pleasurable hours.

(36)

Till when that loveliest came, which mowers home
Turns from their longest labour, as we steered
Along a straitened channel flecked with foam, 15
We lost our landscape wide, and slowly neared
An ancient bridge, that like a blind wall lay
Low on its buried vaults to block the way.

Then soon the narrow tunnels broader showed,
Where with its arches three it sucked the mass 20
Of water, that in swirl thereunder flowed,
Or stood piled at the piers waiting to pass;
And pulling for the middle span, we drew
The tender blades aboard and floated through.

But past the bridge what change we found below! 25
The stream, that all day long had laughed and played
Betwixt the happy shires, ran dark and slow,
And with its easy flood no murmur made:
And weeds spread on its surface, and about
The stagnant margin reared their stout heads out. 30

Upon the left high elms, with giant wood
Skirting the water-meadows, interwove
Their slumbrous crowns, o'ershadowing where they stood
The floor and heavy pillars of the grove:
And in the shade, through reeds and sedges dank, 35
A footpath led along the moated bank.

Across, all down the right, an old brick wall,
Above and o'er the channel, red did lean;
Here buttressed up, and bulging there to fall,
Tufted with grass and plants and lichen green; 40
And crumbling to the flood, which at its base
Slid gently nor disturbed its mirrored face.

(37)

Sheer on the wall the houses rose, their backs
All windowless, neglected and awry,
With tottering coigns, and crooked chimney stacks; 45
And here and there an unused door, set high
Above the fragments of its mouldering stair,
With rail and broken step led out on air.

Beyond, deserted wharfs and vacant sheds,
With empty boats and barges moored along, 50
And rafts half-sunken, fringed with weedy shreds,
And sodden beams, once soaked to season strong.
No sight of man, nor sight of life, no stroke,
No voice the somnolence and silence broke.

Then I who rowed leant on my oar, whose drip 55
Fell without sparkle, and I rowed no more;
And he that steered moved neither hand nor lip,
But turned his wondering eye from shore to shore;
And our trim boat let her swift motion die,
Between the dim reflections floating by. Co

II

O THOU unfaithful, still as ever dearest
That in thy beauty to my eyes appearest
In fancy rising now to re-awaken
My love unshaken;

All thou 'st forgotten, but no change can free thee, 5
No hate unmake thee; as thou wert I see thee,
And am contented, eye from fond eye meeting
Its ample greeting.

O thou my star of stars, among things wholly
Devoted, sacred, dim and melancholy, 10
The only joy of all the joys I cherished
That hast not perished,

(38)

Why now on others squand'rest thou the treasure,
That to be jealous of is still my pleasure:
As still I dream 'tis me whom thou invitest, 15
Me thou delightest ?

But day by day my joy hath feebler being,
The fading picture tires my painful seeing,
And faery fancy leaves her habitation
To desolation. 20

Of two things open left for lovers parted
 Twas thine to scorn the past and go lighthearted:
 But I would ever dream I still possess it,
 And thus caress it.

12

THOU didst delight my eyes:
Yet who am I? nor first
Nor last nor best, that durst
Once dream of thee for prize;
Nor this the only time
Thou shalt set love to rhyme.

Thou didst delight my ear:
Ah! little praise; thy voice
Makes other hearts rejoice,
Makes all ears glad that hear; 10
And short my joy: but yet,
O song, do not forget!

For what wert thou to me?
How shall I say? The moon,
That poured her midnight noon
Upon his wrecking sea;—
A sail, that for a day
Has cheered the castaway.

AWAKE, my heart, to be loved, awake, awake!
 The darkness silvers away, the morn doth break,
 It leaps in the sky: unrisen lustres slake
 The overtaken moon. Awake, O heart, awake!

She too that loveth awaketh and hopes for thee; 5
 Her eyes already have sped the shades that flee,
 Already they watch the path thy feet shall take:
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

And if thou tarry from her,—if this could be,—
 She cometh herself, O heart, to be loved, to thee; 10
 For thee would unashamed herself forsake:
 Awake to be loved, my heart, awake, awake!

Awake, the land is scattered with light, and see,
 Uncanopied sleep is flying from field and tree:
 And blossoming boughs of April in laughter shake; 15
 Awake, O heart, to be loved, awake, awake!

Lo all things wake and tarry and look for thee:
 She looketh and saith, 'O sun, now bring him to me.
 Come more adored, O adored, for his coming's sake,
 And awake my heart to be loved: awake, awake!' 20

SINCE thou, O fondest and truest,
 Hast loved me best and longest,
 And now with trust the strongest
 The joy of my heart renewest;

Since thou art dearer and dearer 5
 While other hearts grow colder
 And ever, as love is older,
 More lovingly drawest nearer:

(40)

Since now I see in the measure
Of all my giving and taking, 10
Thou wert my hand in the making,
The sense and soul of my pleasure;

The good I have ne'er repaid thee
In heaven I pray be recorded,
And all thy love rewarded 15
By God, thy master that made thee.

19

O YOUTH whose hope is high,
Who dost to Truth aspire,
Whether thou live or die,
O look not back nor tire.

Thou that art bold to fly 5
Through tempest, flood and fire,
Nor dost not shrink to try
Thy heart in torments dire:

If thou canst Death defy,
If thy Faith is entire, 10
Press onward, for thine eye
Shall see thy heart's desire.

Beauty and love are nigh,
And with their deathless quire
Soon shall thine eager cry 15
Be numbered and expire.

Book IV

I

I LOVE all beauteous things,
I seek and adore them;
God hath no better praise,
And man in his hasty days
Is honoured for them. **5**

I too will something make
And joy in the making;
Altho' to-morrow it seem
Like the empty words of a dream
Remembered on waking. **10**

4

THE clouds have left the sky,
The wind hath left the sea,
The half-moon up on high
Shrinketh her face of dree.

She lightens on the comb **5**
Of leaden waves, that roar
And thrust their hurried foam
Up on the dusky shore.

(42)

Behind the western bars
The shrouded day retreats, 10
And unperceived the stars
Steal to their sovran seats.

And whiter grows the foam,
The small moon lightens more;
And as I turn me home, 15
My shadow walks before.

6

APRIL, 1885

WANTON with long delay the gay spring leaping cometh;
The blackthorn starreth now his bough on the eve of May:
All day in the sweet box-tree the bee for pleasure hummeth:
The cuckoo sends afloat his note on the air all day.

Now dewy nights again and rain in gentle shower 5
At root of tree and flower have quenched the winter's
drouth:

On high the hot sun smiles, and banks of cloud uptower
In bulging hea^' that crowd for miles the dazzling south.

12

THE hill pines were sighing,
O'er cast and chill was the day:
A mist in the valley lying
Blotted the pleasant May.

(43)

But deep in the glen's bosom 5
Slimmer slept in the fire
Of the odorous gorse-blossom
And the hot scent of the brier.

A ribald cuckoo clamoured,
And out of the copse the stroke 10
Of the iron axe that hammered
The iron heart of the oak.

Anon a sound appalling,
As a hundred years of pride
Crashed, in the silence falling: 15
And the shadowy pine-trees sighed.

18

ANGEL spirits of sleep,
White-robed, with silver hair;
In your meadows fair,
Where the willows weep,
And the sad moonbeam 5
On the gliding stream
Writes her scattered dream:

Angel spirits of sleep,
Dancing to the weir
In the hollow roar 10
Of its waters deep;
Know ye how men say
That ye haunt no more
Isle and grassy shore
With your moonlit play; 15

THE storm is over, the land hushes to rest:
 The tyrannous wind, its strength fordone,
 Is fallen back in the west
 To couch with the sinking sun.
 The last clouds fare 5
 With fainting speed, and their thin streamers fly
 In melting drifts of the sky.
 Already the birds in the air
 Appear again; the rooks return to their haunt,
 And one by one, 10
 Proclaiming aloud their care,
 Renew their peaceful chant.

Torn and shattered the trees their branches again reset,
 They trim afresh the fair
 Few green and golden leaves withheld from the storm, 15
 And awhile will be handsome yet.
 To-morrow's sun shall caress
 Their remnant of loveliness:
 In quiet days for a time
 Sad Autumn lingering warm 20
 Shall humour their faded prime.

But ah! the leaves of summer that lie on the ground!
 What havoc! The laughing timbrels of June,
 That curtained the birds' cradles, and screened their song,
 That sheltered the cooing doves at noon, 25
 Of airy fans the delicate throng,—
 Torn and scattered around:
 Far out afield they lie,
 In the watery furrows die,
 In grassy pools of the flood they sink and drown, 30
 Green-golden, orange, vermilion, golden and brown,
 The high year's flaunting crown
 Shattered and trampled down.

(46)

The day is done: the tired land looks for night:
She prays to the night to keep 35
In peace her nerves of delight:
While silver mist upstealeth silently,
And the broad cloud-driving moon in the clear sky
Lifts o'er the firs her shining shield,
And in her tranquil light 40
Sleep falls on forest and field.
S6e! sleep hath fallen: the trees are asleep:
The night is come. The land is wrapt in sleep.

27

THE snow lies sprinkled on the beach,
And whitens all the marshy lea:
The sad gulls wail adown the gale,
The day is dark and black the sea.
Shorn of their crests the blighted waves 5
With driven foam the offing fleck:
The ebb is low and barely laves
The red rust of the giant wreck.

On such a stony, breaking beach
My childhood chanced and chose to be: 10
'Twas here I played, and musing made
My friend the melancholy sea.
He from his dim enchanted caves
With shuddering roar and onrush wild
Fell down in sacrificial waves 15
At feet of his exulting child.

Unto a spirit too light for fear
His wrath was mirth, his wail was glee:—
My heart is now too fixed to bow
Tho' all his tempests howl at me: 20

(47)

For to the gain life's summer saves,
My solemn joy's increasing store,
The tossing of his mournful waves
Makes sweetest music evermore.

28

MY spirit kisseth thine,
My spirit embraceth thee:
I feel thy being twine
Her graces over me,

In the life-kindling fold 5
Of God's breath; where on high,
In furthest space untold
Like a lost world I lie:

And o'er my dreaming plains
Lightens, most pale and fair, 10
A moon that never wanes;
Or more, if I compare,

Like what the shepherd sees
On late mid-winter dawns,
When thro' the branched trees, 15
O'er the white-frosted lawns,

The huge unclouded sun,
Surprising the world whist,
Is all uprisen thereon,
Golden with melting mist. 20

Book V

I

THE WINNOWNERS

BETWIXT two billows of the downs
The little hamlet lies,
And nothing sees but the bald crowns
Of the hills, and the blue skies.

Clustering beneath the long descent 5
And grey slopes of the wold,
The red roofs nestle, oversprent
With lichen yellow as gold.

We found it in the mid-day sun
Basking, what time of year 10
The thrush his singing has begun,
Ere the first leaves appear.

High from his load a woodman pitched
His faggots on the stack:
Knee-deep in straw the cattle twitched 15
Sweet hay from crib and rack:

And from the barn hard by was borne
A steady muffled din,
By which we knew that threshed corn
Was winnowing, and went in. 20

(49)

The sunbeams on the motey air
Streamed through the open door,
And on the brown arms moving bare,
And the grain upon the floor.

One turns the crank, one stoops to feed 25
The hopper, lest it lack,
One in the bushel scoops the seed,
One stands to hold the sack.

We watched the good grain rattle down,
And the awns fly in the draught; 30
To see us both so pensive grown
The honest labourers laughed:

Merry they were, because the wheat
Was clean and plump and good,
Pleasant to hand and eye, and meet 35
For market and for food.

It chanced we from the city were,
And had not gat us free
In spirit from the store and stir
Of its immensity: 40

But here we found ourselves again.
Where humble harvests bring
After much toil but little grain,
'Tis merry winnowing.

THE AFFLICTION OF RICHARD

LOVE not too much. But how,
When thou hast made me such,
And dost thy gifts bestow,
How can I love too much?

Though I must fear to lose, 5
And drown my joy in care,
With all its thorns I choose
The path of love and prayer.

Though thou, I know not why,
Didst kill my childish trust, 10
That breach with toil did I
Repair, because I must:

And spite of frightening schemes,
With which the fiends of Hell
BlaspHEME thee in my dreams, 15
So far I have hoped well.

But what the heavenly key,
What marvel in me wrought
Shall quite exculpate thee,
I have no shadow of thought. 20

What am I that complain?
The love, from which began
My question sad and vain,
Justifies thee to man.

THE GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Now thin mists temper the slow-ripening beams
 Of the September sun: his golden gleams
 On gaudy flowers shine, that prank the rows
 Of high-grown hollyhocks, and all tall shows
 That Autumn flaunteth in his bushy bowers; 5
 Where tomtits, hanging from the drooping heads
 Of giant sunflowers, peck the nutty seeds;
 And in the feathery aster bees on wing
 Seize and set free the honied flowers,
 Till thousand stars leap with their visiting: 10
 While ever across the path mazily flit,
 Unpiloted in the sun,
 The dreamy butterflies
 With dazzling colours powdered and soft glooms,
 White, black and crimson stripes, and peacock eyes, 15
 Or on chance flowers sit,
 With idle effort plundering one by one
 The nectaries of deepest-throated blooms.

With gentle flaws the western breeze
 Into the garden saileth, 20
 Scarce here and there stirring the single trees,
 For his sharpness he vaileth:
 So long a comrade of the bearded corn,
 Now from the stubbles whence the shocks are borne,
 O'er dewy lawns he turns to stray, 25
 As mindful of the kisses and soft play
 Wherewith he enamoured the light-hearted May,
 Ere he deserted her;
 Lover of fragrance, and too late repents;
 Nor more of heavy hyacinth now may drink, 30
 Nor spicy pink,

Nor summer's rose, nor garnered lavender,
 But the few lingering scents
 Of streaked pea, and gillyflower, and stocks
 Of courtly purple, and aromatic phlox. 35

And at all times to hear are drowsy tones
 Of dizzy flies, and humming drones,
 With sudden flap of pigeon wings in the sky,
 Or the wild cry
 Of thirsty rooks, that scour ascare 40
 The distant blue, to watering as they fare
 With creaking pinions, or—on business bent,
 If aught their ancient polity displease,—
 Come gathering to their colony, and there
 Settling in ragged parliament, 45
 Some stormy council hold in the high trees.

5

So sweet love seemed that April morn,
 When first we kissed beside the thorn,
 So strangely sweet, it was not strange
 We thought that love could never change.

But I can tell—let truth be told— 5
 That love will change in growing old;
 Though day by day is nought to see,
 So delicate his motions be.

And in the end 'twill come to pass
 Quite to forget what once he was, 10
 Nor even in fancy to recall
 The pleasure that was ah¹ in all.

His little spring, that sweet we found,
 So deep in summer floods is drowned,
 I wonder, bathed in joy complete, 15
 How love so young could be so sweet.

II

I NEVER shall love the snow again
 Since Maurice died:
 With corniced drift it blocked the lane
 And sheeted in a desolate plain
 The country side. 5

The trees with silvery rime bedight
 Their branches bare.
 By day no sun appeared; by night
 The hidden moon shed thievish light
 In the misty air. 10

We fed the birds that flew around
 In flocks to be fed:
 No shelter in holly or brake they found.
 The speckled thrush on the frozen ground
 Lay frozen and dead. 15

We skated on stream and pond; we cut
 The crinching snow
 To Doric temple or Arctic hut;
 We laughed and sang at nightfall, shut
 By the fireside glow. 20

Yet grudged we our keen delights before
 Maurice should come.
 We said, In-door or out-of-door
 We shall love life for a month or more,
 When he is home. 25

They brought him home; 'twas two days late
 For Christmas day:
 Wrapped in white, in solemn state,
 A flower in his hand, all still and straight
 Our Maurice lay. 30

(54)

And two days ere the year outgave
We laid him low.
The best of us truly were not brave,
When we laid Maurice down in his grave
Under the snow.

35

12

NIGHTINGALES

BEAUTIFUL must be the mountains whence ye come,
And bright in the fruitful valleys the streams, wherefrom
Ye learn your song:
Where are those starry woods? O might I wander there,
Among the flowers, which in that heavenly air 5
Bloom the year long!

Nay, barren are those mountains and spent the streams:
Our song is the voice of desire, that haunts our dreams,
A throe of the heart,
Whose pining visions dim, forbidden hopes profound, 10
No dying cadence nor long sigh can sound,
For all our art.

Alone, aloud in the raptured ear of men
We pour our dark nocturnal secret; and then,
As night is withdrawn 15
From these sweet-springing meads and bursting boughs of
May,
Dream, while the innumerable choir of day
Welcome the dawn.

FOUNDER'S DAY. A SECULAR ODE
ON THE NINTH JUBILEE OF
ETON COLLEGE

CHRIST and his Mother, heavenly maid,
Mary, in whose fair name was laid
Eton's corner, bless our youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth!

O ye, 'neath breezy skies of June, 5
By silver Thames's lulling tune,
In shade of willow or oak, who try
The golden gates of poesy;

Or on the tabled sward all day
Match your strength in England's play, 10
Scholars of Henry, giving grace
To toil and force in game or race;

Exceed the prayer and keep the fame
Of him, the sorrowful king, who came
Here in his realm a realm to found, 15
Where he might stand for ever crowned.

Or whether with naked bodies flashing
Ye plunge in the lashing weir; or dashing
The oars of cedar skiffs, ye strain
Round the rushes and home again;— 20

Or what pursuit soe'er it be
That makes your mingled presence free,
When by the schoolgate 'neath the limes
Ye muster waiting the lazy chimes;

May Peace, that conquereth sin and death, 25
 Temper for you her sword of faith;
 Crown with honour the loving eyes,
 And touch with mirth the mouth of the wise.

Here is eternal spring: for you
 The very stars of heaven are new; 30
 And aged Fame again is born,
 Fresh as a peeping flower of morn.

For you shall Shakespeare's scene unroll,
 Mozart shall steal your ravished soul,
 Homer his bardic hymn rehearse, 35
 Virgil recite his maiden verse.

Now learn, love, have, do, be the best;
 Each in one thing excel the rest:
 Strive; and hold fast this truth of heaven—
 To him that hath shall more be given. 40

Slow on your dial the shadows creep,
 So many hours for food and sleep,
 So many hours till study tire,
 So many hours for heart's desire.

These suns and moons shall memory save, 45
 Mirrors bright for her magic cave;
 Wherein may steadfast eyes behold
 A self that groweth never old.

O in such prime enjoy your lot,
 And when ye leave regret it not; 50
 With wishing gifts in festal state
 Pass ye the angel-sworded gate.

(57)

Then to the world let shine your light,
Children in play be lions in fight,
And match with red immortal deeds 55
The victory that made ring the meads:

Or by firm wisdom save your land
From giddy head and grasping hand:
IMPROVE THE BEST; so shall your sons
Better what ye have bettered once. 60

Send them here to the court of grace
Bearing your name to fill your place:
Ye in their time shall live again
The happy dream of Henry's reign:

And on his day your steps be bent 65
Where, saint and king, crowned with content,
He biddeth a prayer to bless his youth
With truth, and purity, mother of truth.

15

THE north wind came up yesternight
With the new year's full moon,
And rising as she gained her height,
Grew to a tempest soon.
Yet found he not on heaven's face 5
A task of cloud to clear;
There was no speck that he might chase
Off the blue hemisphere,
Nor vapour from the land to drive:
The frost-bound country held 10
Nought motionable or alive,
That 'gainst his wrath rebelled.
There scarce was hanging in the wood
A shrivelled leaf to reave;

No bud had burst its swathing hood	15
That he could rend or grieve:	
Only the tall tree-skeletons,	
Where they were shadowed all,	
Wavered a little on the stones,	
And on the white church-wall.	20
—Like as an artist in his mood,	
Who reckons all as nought,	
So he may quickly paint his nude,	
Unutterable thought:	
So Nature in a frenzied hour	25
By day or night will show	
Dim indications of the power	
That doometh man to woe.	
Ah, many have my visions been,	
And some I know full well:	30
I would that all that I have seen	
Were fit for speech to tell.—	
And by the churchyard as I came,	
It seemed my spirit passed	
Into a land that hath no name,	35
Grey, melancholy and vast;	
Where nothing comes: but Memory,	
The widowed queen of Death,	
Reigns, and with fixed, sepulchral eye	
All slumber banisheth.	40
Each grain of writhen dust, that drapes	
That sickly, staring shore,	
Its old chaotic change of shapes	
Remembers evermore.	
And ghosts of cities long decayed	45
And ruined shrines of Fate	
Gather the paths, that Time hath made	
Foolish and desolate.	

From NEW POEMS

4

ELEGY

THE SUMMER-HOUSE ON THE MOUND

How well my eyes remember the dim path!
 My homing heart no happier playground hath.
 I need not close my lids but it appears
 Through the bewilderment of forty years
 To tempt my feet, my childish feet, between 5
 Its leafy walls, beneath its arching green;
 Fairer than dreams of sleep, than Hope more' fair
 Leading to dreamless sleep her sister Care.

There grew two fellow limes, two rising trees,
 Shadowing the lawn, the summer haunt of bees, 10
 Whose stems, engraved with many a russet scar
 From the spear-hurlings of our mimic war,
 Pillar'd the portico to that wide walk,
 A mossy terrace of the native chalk
 Fashion'd, that led thro' the dark shades around 15
 Straight to the wooden temple on the mound.
 There live the memories of my early days,
 There still with childish heart my spirit plays;
 Yea, terror-stricken by the fiend despair
 When she hath fled me, I have found her there; 20
 And there 'tis ever noon, and glad suns bring
 Alternate days of summer and of spring,
 With childish thought, and childish faces bright,
 And all unknown save but the hour's delight.

High on the mound the ivied arbour stood, 25
 A dome of straw upheld on rustic wood:
 Hidden in fern the steps of the ascent,
 Whereby unto the southern front we went,
 And from the dark plantation climbing free,
 Over a valley look'd out on the sea. 30

That sea is ever bright and blue, the sky
 Serene and blue, and ever white ships lie
 High on the horizon steadfast in full sail,
 Or nearer in the roads pass within hail
 Of naked brigs and barques that windbound ride 35
 At their taut cables heading to the tide.

There many an hour I have sat to watch; nay, now
 The brazen disk is cold against my brow,
 And in my sight a circle of the sea
 Enlarged to swiftness, where the salt waves flee, 40
 And ships in stately motion pass so near
 That what I see is speaking to my ear:
 I hear the waves dash and the tackle strain,
 The canvas flap, the rattle of the chain
 That runs out thro' the hawse, the clank of the winch 45
 Winding the rusty cable inch by inch,
 Till half I wonder if they have no care,
 Those sailors, that my glass is brought to bear
 On all their doings, if I vex them not
 On every petty task of their rough lot 50
 Prying and spying, searching every craft
 From painted truck to gunnel, fore and aft,—
 Thro' idle Sundays as I have watch'd them lean
 Long hours upon the rail, or neath its screen
 Prone on the deck to lie outstretch'd at length, 55
 Sunk in renewal of their wearied strength.

But what a feast of joy to me, if some
 Fast-sailing frigate to the Channel come
 Back'd here her topsail, or brought gently up
 Let from her bow the splashing anchor drop, 60
 By faint contrary wind stay'd in her cruise,
 The *Phaethon* or dancing *Arethuse*,
 Or some immense three-decker of the line,
 Romantic as the tale of Troy divine;
 Ere yet our iron age had doom'd to fall 65
 The towering freeboard of the wooden wall,
 And for the engines of a mightier Mars
 Clipp'd their wide wings, and dock'd their soaring spars.
 The gale that in their tackle sang, the wave
 That neath their gilded galleries dasht so brave 70
 Lost then their merriment, nor look to play
 With the heavy-hearted monsters of to-day.

One noon in March upon that anchoring ground
 Came Napier's fleet unto the Baltic bound:
 Cloudless the sky and calm and blue the sea, 75
 As round Saint Margaret's cliff mysteriously
 Those murderous queens walking in Sabbath sleep
 Glided in line upon the windless deep :
 For in those days was first seen low and black
 Beside the full-rigg'd mast the strange smoke-stack, 80
 And neath their stern revolv'd the twisted fan.
 Many I knew as soon as I might scan,
 The heavy *Royal George*, the *Acre* bright,
 The *Rogue* and *Ajax*, and could name aright
 Others that I remember now no more; 85
 But chief, her blue flag flying at the fore,
 With fighting guns a hundred thirty and one,
 The Admiral ship *The Duke of Wellington*,
 Whereon saiTd George, who in her gig had flown
 The silken ensign by our sisters sewn. 90

The iron Duke himself,—whose soldier fame
 To England's proudest ship had given her name,
 And whose white hairs in this my earliest scene
 Had scarce more honoured than accustom'd been,—
 Was two years since to his last haven past: 95
 I had seen his castle-flag to fall half-mast
 One morn as I sat looking on the sea,
 When thus all England's grief came first to me,
 Who hold my childhood favoured that I knew
 So well the face that won at Waterloo. 100

But now 'tis other wars, and other men;—
 The year that Napier sail'd, my years were ten—
 Yea, and new homes and loves my heart hath found:
 A priest has there usurped the ivied mound,
 The bell that call'd to horse calls now to prayers, 105
 And silent nuns tread the familiar stairs.
 Within the peach-clad walls that old outlaw,
 The Roman wolf, scratches with privy paw.

9

MY delight and thy delight
 Walking, like two angels white,
 In the gardens of the night:

My desire and thy desire
 Twining to a tongue of fire, 5
 Leaping live, and laughing higher;
 Thro' the everlasting strife
 In the mystery of life.

Love, from whom the world begun,
 Hath the secret of the sun. 10

(64)

Love can tell, and love alone,
Whence the million stars were strewn,
Why each atom knows its own,
How, in spite of woe and death,
Gay is life. and.S3£££Li& breath: 15

This he taught us, this we knew,
Happy in his science true,
Hand in hand as we stood
Neath the shadows of the wood,
Heart to heart as we lay 20
In the dawning of the day.

II

THE sea keeps not the Sabbath day,
His waves come rolling evermore;
His noisy toil grindeth the shore,
And all the cliff is drencht with spray.

Here as we sit, my love and I, 5
Under the pine upon the hill,
The sadness of the clouded sky,
The bitter wind, the gloomy roar,
The seamew's melancholy cry
With loving fancy suit but ill. 10

We talk of moons and cooling suns,
Of geologic time and tide,
The eternal sluggards that abide
While our fair love so swiftly runs,

Of nature that doth half consent 15
That man should guess her dreary scheme
Lest he should live too well content
In his fair house of mirth and dream:

(65)

Whose labour irks his ageing heart,
His heart that wearies of desire, 20
Being so fugitive a part
Of what so slowly must expire.

She in her agelong toil and care
Persistent, wearies not nor stays,
Mocking alike hope and despair. 25

—Ah, but she too can mock our praise,
Enchanted on her brighter days,

Days, that the thought of grief refuse,
Days that are one with human art,
Worthy of the Virgilian muse, 30
Fit for the gaiety of Mozart.

12

RIDING adown the country lanes

One day in spring,
Heavy at heart with all the pains
Of man's imagining:—

The mist was not yet melted quite 5
Into the sky:

The small round sun was dazzling white,
The merry larks sang high:

The grassy northern slopes were laid
In sparkling dew, 10
Out of the slow-retreating shade
Turning from sleep anew:

Deep in the sunny vale a burn
Ran with the lane,
O'erhung with ivy, moss and fern 15
It laughed in joyful strain:

(66)

And primroses shot long and lush
 Their clustered cream;
Robin and wren and amorous thrush
 Carol'd above the stream: 20

The stillness of the lenten air
 Call'd into sound
The motions of all life that were
 In field and farm around:

So fair it was, so sweet and bright, 25
 The jocund Spring
Awoke in me the old delight
 Of man's imagining,

Riding adown the country lanes:
 The larks sang high.— 30
O heart! for all thy griefs and pains
 Thou shalt be loth to die.

14

NOVEMBER

THE lonely season in lonely lands, when fled
Are half the birds, and mists lie low, and the sun
Is rarely seen, nor strayeth far from his bed;
The short days pass unwelcomed one by one.

Out by the ricks the mantled engine stands 5
Crestfallen, deserted,—for now all hands
Are told to the plough,—and ere it is dawn appear
The teams following and crossing far and near,
As hour by hour they broaden the brown bands
Of the striped fields; and behind them firk and prance 10
The heavy rooks, and daws grey-pated dance:
As awhile, surmounting a crest, in sharp outline
(A miniature of toil, a gem's design,)

(67)

They are pictured, horses and men, or now near by
Above the lane they shout lifting the share, 15
By the trim hedgerow bloom'd with purple air;
Where, under the thorns, dead leaves in huddle lie
Packed by the gales of Autumn, and in and out
The small wrens glide
With a happy note of cheer, 20
And yellow amoretts flutter above and about,
Gay, familiar in fear.

And now, if the night shall be cold, across the sky
Linnets and twites, in small flocks helter-skelter,
All the afternoon to the gardens fly, 25
From thistle-pastures hurrying to gain the shelter
Of American rhododendron or cherry-laurel:
And here and there, near chilly setting of sun,
In an isolated tree a congregation
Of starlings chatter and chide, 30
Thickset as summer leaves, in garrulous quarrel:
Suddenly they hush as one,—
The tree top springs,—
And off, with a whirr of wings,
They fly by the score 35
To the holly-thicket, and there with myriads more
Dispute for the roosts; and from the unseen nation
A babel of tongues, like running water unceasing,
Makes live the wood, the flocking cries increasing,
Wrangling discordantly, incessantly, 40
While falls the night on them self-occupied;
The long dark night, that lengthens slow,
Deepening with Winter to starve grass and tree,
And soon to bury in snow •
The Earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole, 45
Shall dream a dream crept from the sunless pole
Of how her end shall be.

WINTER NIGHTFALL

THE day begins to droop,—

Its course is done:

But nothing tells the place

Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,

5

And up the lane

You may hear, but cannot see,

The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums

In the farm hard by:

10

Its lowering smoke is lost

In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,

And all night through

The dropping will not cease

15

In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house

Must keep his chair:

He knows he will never again

Breathe the spring air:

20

His heart is worn with work;

He is giddy and sick

If he rise to go as far

As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,

25

His hale, strong years;

And braves as he may the night

Of darkness and tears.

WHEN Death to either shall come,—

I pray it be first to me,—

(69)

Be happy as ever at home,

If so, as I wish, it be.

Possess thy heart, my own;

5

And sing to the child on thy knee,

Or read to thyself alone

The songs that I made for thee.

20

EPftl

WHY hast thou nothing in thy face?

Thou idol of the human race,

Thou tyrant of the human heart,

The flower of lovely youth that art;

Yea, and that standest in thy youth

5

An image of eternal Truth,

With thy exuberant flesh so fair,

That only Pheidias might compare,

Ere from his chaste marmoreal form

Time had decayed the colours warm;

10

Like to his gods in thy proud dress,

Thy starry sheen of nakedness.

Surely thy body is thy mind,

For in thy face is nought to find,

Only thy soft unchristen'd smile,

15

That shadows neither love nor guile,

But shameless will and power immense,

In secret sensuous innocence.

O king of joy, what is thy thought?

I dream thou knowest it is nought,

20

And wouldst in darkness come, but thou

Makest the light where'er thou go.

Ah yet no victim of thy grace,

None who e'er long'd for thy embrace,

Hath cared to look upon thy face.

25

From LATER POEMS

5

ONE grief of thine
 if truth be confest
 Was joy to me;
 for it drave to my breast
 Thee, to my heart 5
 to find thy rest.

How long it was
 I never shall know:
 I watcht the earth 10
 so stately and slow,
 And the ancient things
 that waste and grow.

But now for me
 what speed devours
 Our heavenly life, 15
 our brilliant hours!
 How fast they fly,
 the stars and flowers!

13

THE PORTRAIT OF A GRANDFATHER

WITH mild eyes agaze, and lips ready to speak,
 Whereon the yearning of love, the warning of wisdom plays,
 One portrait ever charms me and teaches me when I seek:
 It is of him whom I, remembering my young days,
 Imagine fathering my father; when he, in sonship afore, 5
 Liv'd honouring and obeying the eyes now pictured agaze,
 The lips ready to speak, that promise but speak no more.

O high parental claim, that were not but for the knowing,
 O fateful bond of duty, O more than body that bore,
 The smile that guides me to right, the gaze that follows
 my going, 10
 How had I stray'd without thee! and yet how few will seek
 The spirit-hands, that heaven, in tender-free bestowing,
 Holds to her children, to guide the wandering and aid the
 weak.

And Thee! ah what of thee, thou lover of men? if truly
 A painter had stell'd thee there, with thy lips ready to
 speak, 15
 In all-fathering passion to souls enchanted newly,
 —Tenderer call than of sire to son, or of lover to maiden,—
 Ever ready to speak to us, if we will hearken duly,
 'Come, O come unto me, ye weary and heavy-laden!'

15

ODE TO MUSIC

WRITTEN FOR THE BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION
 OF HENRY PURCELL

Performed at the Leeds Festival, 1895

V

I

LOVE to Love calleth,
 Love unto Love replieth:
 From the ends of the earth, drawn by invisible bands,
 Over the dawning and darkening lands
 Love cometh to Love. 5

To the pangs of desire;
 To the heart by courage and might
 Escaped from hell,
 From the torment of raging fire,
 From the sighs of the drowning main, 10
 From shipwreck of fear and pain,
 From the terror of night.

2

All mankind by Love shall be banded
 To combat Evil, the many-handed:
 For the spirit of man on beauty feedeth, 15
 The airy fancy he heedeth,
 He regardeth Truth in the heavenly height,
 In changeful pavilions of loveliness dight,
 The sovran sun that knows not the night;
 He loveth the beauty of earth, 20
 And the sweet birds' mirth;
 And out of his heart there falleth
 A melody-making river
 Of passion, that runneth ever
 To the ends of the earth and crieth, 25
 That yearneth and calleth;
 And Love from the heart of man
 To the heart of man replieth:
 On the wings of desire
 Love cometh to Love. 30

VIII

REJOICE, ye dead, where'er your spirits dwell,
 Rejoice that yet on earth your fame is bright,
 And that your names, remember'd day and night,
 Live on the lips of those who love you well.

(73)

Tis ye that conquer'd have the powers of Hell 5
Each with the special grace of your delight;
Ye are the world's creators, and by might
Alone of Heavenly love ye did excel.

Now ye are starry names
Behind the sun ye climb 10
To light the glooms of Time
With deathless flames.

IX

OPEN for me the gates of delight,
The gates of the garden of man's desire;
Where spirits touch'd by heavenly fire
Have planted the trees of life.—
The branches in beauty are spread, 5
Their fruit divine
To the nations is given for bread,
And crush'd into wine.

To thee, O man, the sun his truth hath given,
The moon hath whisper'd in love her silvery dreams; 10
Night hath unlockt the starry heaven,
The sea the trust of his streams:
And the rapture of woodland spring
Is stay'd in its flying;
And Death cannot sting 15
Its beauty undying.

Fear and Pity disentwine
Their aching beams in colours fine;
Pain and woe forgo their might.
After darkness thy leaping sight, 20
After dumbness thy dancing sound,

(74)

After fainting thy heavenly flight,
After sorrow thy pleasure crown'd:
O enter the garden of thy delight,
Thy solace is found.

25

16

A HYMN OF NATURE

Performed at the Gloucester Festival, 1898

VI

SWEET compassionate tears
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Tears of love, the showers wherewith
The eternal morn is bright:
Dews of the heav'nly spheres.
With tears my eyes are wet,
Tears not of vain regret,
Tears of no lost delight,
Dews of the heav'nly spheres
Have dimm'd my earthly sight,
Sweet compassionate tears.

5

10

From POEMS IN CLASSICAL
PROSODY

2

EPISTLE II

TO A SOCIALIST IN LONDON

. . . AND what if all Nature ratify this merciless outrage? 90
 If her wonder of arch-wonders, her fair animal life,
 Her generate creatures, her motion'd warmblooded offspring,
 Haunters of the forest & royal country, her antler'd
 Mild-gazers, that keep silvan sabbath idly without end;
 Her herded galopers, sleeksided stately careerers 95
 Of trembling nostril; her coy unapproachable estrays,
 Stealthy treaders, climbers; her leapers furry, lissom-limb'd;
 Her timorous burrowers, and grangers thrifty, the sandy
 Playmates of the warren; her clumsy-footed, shaggy
 roamers;
 Her soarers, the feather'd fast-fliers, loftily floating 100
 Sky-sailers, exiles of high solitudinous eyries;
 Her perching carolers, twitterers, & sweetly singing birds;
 All ocean's finny clans, mute-mouthers, watery breathers,
 Furtive arrow-darters, and fan-tail'd easy balancers, 104
 Silvery-scale, gilt-head, thorn-back, frill'd harlequinading
 Globe and slimy ribbon: Shell-builders of many-chamber'd
 Pearly dwellings, soft shapes mosslike or starry, adorning
 With rich floral fancy the gay rock-garden of ebb-tide:
 All life, from the massive-bulkt, ivory-tusht, elephantine
 Centenarian, acknowledging with crouching obeisance no
 Man's will, ev'n to the least petty whiffing ephemeral insect,
 Which in a hot sunbeam engend'ring, when summer is high,
 Vaunteth an hour his speck of tinsely gaudiness and dies:

Ah! what if all & each of Nature's favorite offspring, 114
 'Mong many distinctions, have this portentous agreement,
 MOUTH, STOMACH, INTESTINE? Question that brute appa-
 ratus,

So manifoldly devis'd, set alert with furious instinct:
 What doth it interpret but this, that LIFE LIVETH ON LIFE?
 That the select creatures, who^vinherit earth's domination,
 Whose happy existence is Nature's intelligent smile, 120
 Are bloody survivors of a mortal combat, a-tweenwhiles
 Chanting a brief paeon for victory on the battlefield?

6

JOHANNES MILTON, Senex
Scazons

SINCE I believe in God the Father Almighty,
 Man's Maker and Judge, Overruler of Fortune,
 'Twere strange should I praise anything and refuse Him
 praise,

Should love the creature forgetting the Creator,
 Nor unto Him^vin suff'ring and sorrow turn me: 5
 Nay how coud I withdraw me from^vHis embracing?

But since that I have seen not, and cannot know Him,
 Nor in my earthly temple apprehend rightly
 His wisdom and the heav'nly purpose eternal;
 Therefore will I be bound to no studied system 10
 Nor argument, nor with delusion enslave me,
 Nor seek to please Him in any foolish invention,
 Which my spirit within me, that loveth beauty
 And hateth evil, hath reprov'd as unworthy:

But I cherish my freedom in loving service, 15
 Gratefully adoring for delight beyond asking
 Or thinking, and in hours of anguish and darkness
 Confiding always on^vHis excellent greatness.

From OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS

3

NOEL: CHRISTMAS EVE, 1913

Pax hominibus bonae voluntatis

A FROSTY Christmas Eve , ' when the stars were shining
 Fared I forth alone , ' where westward falls the hill,
 And from many a village , ' in the water'd valley
 Distant music reach'd me , ' peals of bells aringing:
 The constellated sounds , ' ran sprinkling on earth's floor 5
 As the dark vault above , ' with stars was spangled o'er.

Then sped my thought to keep , ' that first Christmas of all
 When the shepherds watching , ' by their folds ere the dawn
 Heard music in the fields , ' and marveling could not tell
 Whether it were angels , ' or the bright stars singing. 10

Now blessed be the tow'rs , ' that crown England so fair
 That stand up strong in prayer , ' unto God for our souls:
 Blessed be their founders , ' (said I) an' our country folk
 Who are ringing for Christ , ' in the belfries to-night
 With arms lifted to clutch , ' the rattling ropes that race 15
 Into the dark above , ' and the mad romping din.

But to me heard afar , ' it was starry music
 Angels¹ song, comforting , ' as the comfort of Christ
 When he spake tenderly , ' to his sorrowful flock:
 The old words came to me , ' by the riches of time 20
 Mellow'd and transfigured , ' as I stood on the hill
 Hearn'ing in the aspect , ' of th' eternal silence.

AH! wild-hearted wand'rer
 far in the world away
 Restless nor knowest why
 only thou canst not stay
 And now turnest trembling
 hearing the wind to sigh:
 Twas thy lover calling
 whom thou didst leave forby.

So faint and yet so far
 so far and yet so fain— 10
 'Return below'd to me'
 but thou must onward strain:
 Thy trembling is in vain
 as thy wand'ring shall be.
 What so well thou lovest 15
 thou nevermore shalt see.

5

WE watch'd the wintry moon
Suffer her full eclipse
Riding at night's high noon
Beyond the earth's ellipse.

The conquering shadow quell'd 5
Her splendour in its robe:
And darkling we beheld
A dim and lurid globe;

Yet felt thereat no dread,
Nor waited we to see
The sullen dragon fled,
The heav'nly Queen go free.

15

So if my heart of pain
One hour o'ershadow thine,
I fear for thee no stain,
Thou wilt come forth and shine:

And far my sorrowing shade
Will slip to empty space
Invisible, but made
Happier for that embrace. 20

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

September, 1917.

FOOL that I was: my heart was sore,
Yea sick for the myriad wounded men,
The maim'd in the war: I had grief for each one:
And I came in the gay September sun
To the open smile of Trafalgar Square; 5
Where many a lad with a limb fordone
Loll'd by the lion-guarded column
That holdeth Nelson statued thereon
Upright in the air.

The Parliament towers and the Abbey towers, 10
 The white Horseguards and grey Whitehall,
 He looketh on all,
 Past Somerset House and the river's bend
 To the pillar'd dome of St. Paul,
 That slumbers confessing God's solemn blessing 15
 On England's glory, to keep it ours—
 While children true her prowess renew
 And throng from the ends of the earth to defend
 Freedom and honour—till Earth shall end.

The gentle unjealous Shakespeare, I trow, 20
 In his country tomb of peaceful fame,
 Must feel exiled from life and glow
 If he think of this man with his warrior claim,
 Who looketh o'er London as if 'twere his own,
 As he standeth in stone, aloft and alone, 25
 Sailing the sky with one arm and one eye.

26

FORTUNATUS NIMIUM

I HAVE lain in the sun
 I have toil'd as I might
 I have thought as I would
 And now it is night.

My bed full of sleep
 My heart of content
 For friends that I met
 The way that I went.

(81)

I welcome fatigue
While frenzy and care
Like thin summer clouds
Go melting in air. 10

To dream as I may
And awake when I will
With the song of the birds
And the sun on the hill. 15

Or death—were it death—
To what should I wake
Who loved in my home
All life for its sake ? 20

What good have I wrought ?
I laugh to have learned
That joy cannot come
Unless it be earned;

For a happier lot
Than God giveth me
It never hath been
Nor ever shall be. 25

From NEW VERSE

5

THE COLLEGE GARDEN

IN 1917

THE infinitude of Life is in the heart of man,
 a fount surging to fill a lake that mirrors heav'n,
 and now to himself he seemeth stream to be and now pool
 as he acteth his impulse or stayeth brooding thereon.

There is no beauty of love or peace, no joy nor mirth 5
 but by kindred artistry of contemplation enhanced
 decketh his sovranty with immortalities.

Jewels of imagination hath he, purities
 and sanctities whereby he dareth approach God
 plenishing his temples with incense of music 10
 in praise and lyric litanies that call on Christ:
 his Destiny is one with the eternal skies: he lieth
 a dream in the elemental far vistas of Truth
 inhaling life to his soul as the ambient azurous air
 that he draweth into his mortal body unconscious 15
 to fire the dutiful-desperate pulse of his blood.

And yet again there is neither any evil nor mischief
 sprung from teeming chaos to assault his mind, but he
 will harbour it—he will be goodfellow in turn with Sin.
 Hark to him how cheerily he windeth his hunting-horn 20
 whipping-in his wolf-pack to their pasture of blood!
 See his comforting mastery of Nature's forces
 how he skilleth it to his own ruin, ev'n to mimic
 cosmic catastrophe in her hideous destructions!
 He will have surfeit of passion and revel in wrong 25
 till like a shameless prodigal at death's door he find

his one nobility is but to suffer bravely
in the lazar-house of souls his self-betrayal.

Surely I know there is none that hath not taint at heart:
Yet drink I of heav'nly hope and faith in God's dealing 30
basking this summer day under the stately limes
by the immemorial beauty of this gothic college,
a place more peaceful now than even sweet peace should be
hush'd in spiritual vacancy of desolation
by sad desertion of throng'd study and gay merriment— 35
since all the gamesome boys are fled with their glory
light-hearted in far lands making fierce sport with Hell
and to save home from the spoiler have despoil'd their homes
leaving nought in their trace but empty expectancy
of their return, Alas! for how few shall return! 40
what love-names write we daily in the long roll of death!
And yet some shall return, and others with them come:
life will renew; tho' now none cometh here all day
but a pensive philosopher from his dark room
pacing the terrace, slow as his earth-burden'd thought, 45
and the aged gardener with scythe wheelbarrow and broom
loitering in expert parcimony of skill and time
while on the grassy slope of the old city-rampart
I watch his idleness and hearken to the clocks
in punctual dispute clanging the quarter-hours— 50
dull preaching calendars ticking upon their wheels
punctilious subdivisions of infinity
and reckoning now as usual all the monstrous hours
these monstrous heartless hours that pass and yet must pass
till this mischief shall pass and England's foe be o'er-
thrown— 55
and shall be o'erthrown—'tis for this thing her dear boys die
and this at each full hour the chimes from Magdalen tow'r
proclaim with dominant gay cloze hurl'd to the sky.

Thus hour draggeth on hour, and I feel every thrill
of time's eternal stream that passeth over me 60

the dream-stream of God's Will that made things as they be
 and me as I am, as reluctant in the stream
 I lie, like one who hath wander'd all his summer morn
 among the heathery hills and hath come down at noon
 in a breathless valley upon a mountain-brook 65
 and for animal recreation of hot fatigue
 hath stripp'd his body naked to lie down and taste
 the play of the cool water on all his limbs and flesh
 and lying in a pebbly shallow beneath the sky
 supine and motionless feeleth each ripple pass 70
 until his thought is merged in the flow of the stream
 as it cometh upon him and lappeth him there
 stark as a white corpse that stranded upon the stones
 blocketh and for a moment delayeth the current
 ere it can pass to pay its thin tribute of salt 75
 into the choking storage of the quenchless sea.

6

THE PSALM

WHILE Northward the hot sun was sinking o'er the trees
 as we sat pleasantly talking in the meadow,
 the swell of a rich music suddenly on our ears
 gush'd thru' the wide-flung doors, where village-folk in church
 stood to their evening psalm praising God together— 5
 and when it came to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

A great Huguenot psalm it trod forth on the air
 with full slow notes moving as a goddess stepping
 through the responsive figures of a stately dance
 conscious of beauty and of her fair-flowing array 10
 in the severe perfection of an habitual grace,
 then stooping to its cloze, paused to dance forth anew;

To unfold its bud of melody everlastingly
 fresh as in springtime when, four centuries ago,
 it wing'd the souls of martyrs on their way to heav'n 15
 chain'd at the barbarous stake, mid the burning faggots

standing with tongues cut out, all singing in the flames—
O evermore, sweet Psalm, shalt thou break forth anew.

Thou, when in France that self-idolatrous idol reign'd
that starv'd his folk to fatten his priests and concubines, 20
thou wast the unconquerable paeon of resolute men
who fell in coward massacre or with Freedom fled
from the palatial horror into far lands away,
and England learnt to voice thy deathless strain anew.

Ah! they endured beyond worst pangs of fire and steel 25
torturings invisible of tenderness and untold;
No Muse may name them, nay, no man will whisper them;
sitting alone he dare not think of them—and wail
of babes and mothers' wail flouted in ribald song. 29
Draw to thy cloze, sweet Psalm, pause and break forth anew!

Thy minstrels were no more, yet thy triumphing plaint
haunted their homes, as once in a deserted house
in Orthes, as 'twas told, the madden'd soldiery
burst in and searched but found nor living man nor maid
only the sound flow'd round them and desisted not 35
but when it wound to cloze, paused, and broke forth anew.

And oft again in some lone valley of the Cevennes
where unabsolved crime yet calleth plagues on France
thy heavenly voice would lure the bloodhounds on, astray,
hunting their fancied prey afar in the dark night 40
and with its ghostly music mock'd their oaths and knives.
O evermore great Psalm spring forth! spring forth anew!

7

COME SE QUANDO

How thickly the far fields of heaven are strewn with stars!
Tho' the open eye of day shendeth them with its glare
yet, if no cloudy wind curtain them nor low mist
of earth blindfold us, soon as Night in grey mantle
wrappeth all else, they appear in their optimacy
from under the ocean or behind the high mountains

climbing in spacious ranks upon the stark-black void:
 Ev'n so in our mind's night burn far beacons of thought
 and the infinite architecture of our darkness,
 the dim essence and being of our mortalities, 10
 is sparkled with fair fire-flecks of eternity
 whose measure we know not nor the wealth of their rays....

8

TO FRANCIS JAMMES

Tis April again in my garden, again the grey stone-wall
 Is pranked with yellow alyssum and lilac aubrey-cresses;
 Half-hidden the mavis caroleth in the tassely birchen
 tresses
 And awhile on the sunny air a cuckoo tuneth his call: 4
 Now cometh to mind a singer whom country joys enthral,
 Francis Jammes, so grippeth him Nature in her caresses
 She hath steep'd his throat in the honey'd air of her
 wildernesses
 With beauty that countervails the Lutetian therewithal.
 You are here in spirit, dear poet, and bring a motley group,
 Your friends, afore you sat stitching your heavenly trousseau— 10
 The courteous old road-mender, the queer Jean Jacques
 Rousseau,
 Columbus, Confucius, all to my English garden they troop,
 Under his goatskin umbrella the provident Robinson
 Crusoe,
 And the ancestor dead long ago in Domingo or Guadaloupe.

9

MELANCHOLY

TWAS mid of the moon but the night was dark with rain,
 Drops lashed the pane, the wind howl'd under the door;

For me, my heart heard nought but the cannon-roar
 On fields of war, where Hell was raging amain:
 My heart was sore for the slain:— 5
 As when on an Autumn plain the storm lays low the wheat,
 So fell the flower of England, her golden grain,
 Her harvesting hope trodden under the feet
 Of Moloch, Woden and Thor,
 And the lovingkindness of Christ held in disdain. 10

My heart gave way to the strain, renouncing more & more;
 Its bloodstream fainted down to the slothful weary beat
 Of the age-long moment, that swelleth where ages meet,
 Marking time 'twixt dark Hereafter and Long-before;
 Which greet awhile and awhile, again to retreat; 15
 The Never-the-same repeating again and again,
 Completing itself in monotony incomplete,
 A wash of beauty and horror in shadows that fleet,
 Always the Never-the-same still to repeat,
 The devouring glide of a dream that keepeth no store. 20

Meseem'd I stood on the flats of a waveless shore,
 Where MELANCHOLY unrobed of her earthly weeds,
 Haunteth in naked beauty without stain;
 In reconcilment of Death, and Vanity of all needs;
 A melting of life in oblivion of all deeds; 25
 No other beauty nor passion nor love nor lore;
 No other goddess abideth for man to adore;
 All things remaining nowhere with nought to remain;
 The consummation of thought in nought to attain.

I had come myself to that ultimate Ocean-shore, 30
 Like Labourer Love when his life-day is o'er,
 Who home returning fatigued is fain to regain
 The house where he was unconsciously born of yore;
 Stumbling on the threshold he sinketh down on the floor;
 Half-hearteth a prayer as he lieth, and nothing heeds, 35
 If only he sleep and sleep and have rest for evermore.

THE TRAMPS

A SCHOOLBOY lay one night a-bed
 Under his window wide,
 When dusk is lovelier than day
 In the high summertime;

The jasmin neath the casement throng'd 5
 Its ivory stars abloom;
 With freaking peas and mignonette
 Their perfume fill'd the room:

Across the garden and beyond
 He look'd out on the skies, 10
 And through black elmen boughs afar
 Watch'd where the moon should rise:

A warm rain fed the thirsty earth,
 Drops patter'd from the eaves
 And from the tall trees as the shower 15
 Fell lisping on their leaves:

His heart was full, and pleasant thoughts
 Made music in his mind,
 Like separate songs of birds, that are
 By general joy combined. 20

It seem'd the hour had gathered up
 For every sense a bliss
 To crown the faith of all desire
 With one assuaging kiss ;

So that he fought with sleep to hold 25
 The rapture while he might,
 Lest it should sink and drowning die
 Into the blank of night;

Nor kenn'd it was no passing thing
 Nor ever should be pass'd 30
 But with him bide a joy to be
 As long as Life should last.

For though young thoughts be quite forgone,
 The pleasure of their dream
 Can mesh them in its living mood 35
 And draw them in the stream:

So I can fancy when I will
 That there I lie intent
 To hear the gentle whispering rain
 And drink the jasmin scent: 40

And then there sounds a distant tread
 Of men, that night who strode
 Along the highway step by step
 Approaching down the road,

A company of three or four 45
 That hastening home again
 After a Sabbath holiday
 Came talking in the rain:

Aloof from all my world and me
 They pass aneath the wall, 50
 Till voice and footstep die away
 And into silence fall:

Into the maze of my delight
 Those blind intruders walk;
 And ever I wonder who they be 55
 And of what things they talk.

LOW BAROMETER

THE south-wind strengthens to a gale,
 Across the moon the clouds fly fast,
 The house is smitten as with a flail,
 The chimney shudders to the blast.

On such a night, when Air has loosed 5
 Its guardian grasp on blood and brain,
 Old terrors then of god or ghost
 Creep from their caves to life again;

And Reason kens he herits in
 A haunted house. Tenants unknown 10
 Assert their squalid lease of sin
 With earlier title than his own.

Unbodied presences, the pack'd
 Pollution and remorse of Time,
 Slipp'd from oblivion reenact 15
 The horrors of unhouheld crime.

Some men would quell the thing with prayer
 Whose sightless footsteps pad the floor,
 Whose fearful trespass mounts the stair
 Or bursts the lock'd forbidden door. 20

Some have seen corpses long interr'd
 Escape from hallowing control,
 Pale chanel forms—nay ev'n have heard
 The shrilling of a troubled soul,

That wanders till the dawn hath cross'd 25
 The dolorous dark, or Earth hath wound
 Closer her storm-spredd cloke, and thrust
 The baleful phantoms underground.

From THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY*Book I*

INTRODUCTION

TWAS late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
 the path was narrowing and the company few,
 a glow of childlike wonder enthal'd me, as if my sense 10
 had come to a new birth purified, my mind enrapt
 re-awakening to a fresh initiation of life;
 with like surprise of joy as any man may know
 who rambling wide hath turn'd, resting on some hill-top
 to view the plain he has left, and see'th it now out-spredd 15
 mapp'd at his feet, a landscape so by beauty estranged
 he scarce wil ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
 maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought.

Or as I well remember one highday in June
 bright on the seaward South-downs, where I had come
 afar 20

on a wild garden planted years ago, and fenced
 thickly within live-beechen walls: the season it was
 of prodigal gay blossom, and man's skill had made
 a fair-order'd husbandry of thatt nativ pleasaunce:
 But had ther been no more than earth's wild loveliness, 25
 the blue sky and soft air and the unmown flowersprent
 lawns,

I would have lain me down and long'd, as then I did,
 to lie there ever indolently undisturb'd, and watch
 the common flowers that starr'd the fine grass of the wold,
 waving in a gay display their gold-heads to the sun, 30
 each telling of its own incontinent happiness,
 each *type* a faultless essence of God's will, such gems

as magic master-minds in painting or music
threw aside once for man's regard or disregard;
things supreme in themselves, eternal, unnumber'd 35
in the unexplored necessities of Life and Love.

The sky's unresting cloudland, that with varying play
sifteth the sunlight thru' its figured shades, that now
stand in massiv range, cumulated stupendous
mountainous snowbillyow up-piled in dazzling sheen, 280
Now like sailing ships on a calm ocean drifting,
Now scattered wispy waifs, that neath the eager blaze
disperse in air; Or now parcelling the icy inane
highspredd in fine diaper of silver and mother-of-pearl
freaking the intense azure; Now scurrying close overhead,
wild ink-hued random racers that fling sheeted rain 286
gustily, and with garish bows laughing o'erarch the land:
Or, if the spirit of storm be abroad, huge molten glooms
mount on the horizon stealthily, and gathering as they climb
deep-freighted with live lightning, thunder and drenching
flood 290

rebuff the winds, and with black-purpling terror impend
 til they be driven away, when grave Night peacefully
 clearing her heav'nly rondure of its turbid veils
 layeth bare the playthings of Creation's babyhood;
 and the immortal fireballs of her uttermost space 295
 twinkle like friendly rushlights on the countryside.

Long had the homing bees plunder'd the thymy flanks
of famed Hymettus harvesting their sweet honey:
agelong the dancing waves had lapp'd the Ægean isles 655
and promontories of the blue Ionian shore
—where in her Mediterranean mirror gazing
old Asia's dreamy face wrinkleth to a westward smile—
and the wild olive, cleft-rooted in Attica,
wreath'd but the rocks, afore the wandering Aryan tribes, 660

whose Goddess was ATHENA, met, and in her right
 knew themselves lords of Hellas and the Achean land
 whereto they had come fighting, for their children to win
 heritage of Earth's empire. 'Twas their youthful tongue
 that Wisdom sought when her Egyptian kingdom fail'd, 665
 and choosing to be call'd Athena daughter of Zeus
 motion'd the marble to her living grace, and took
 her dwelling in the high-templed Acropolis
 of the fair city that still hath her name.

As some perfected flower, Iris or Lily, is born 670
 patterning heavily beauty, a pictured idea
 that hath no other expression for us, nor could hav:
 for thatt which Lily or Iris tell cannot be told
 by poetry or by music in their secret tongues,
 nor is discernible in logic, but is itself 675
 an absolute piece of Being, and we know not,
 nay, nor search not by what creativ miracle
 the soul's language is writ in perishable forms—
 yet are we aware of such existences crowding,
 mysterious beauties unexpanded, unreveal'd, 680
 phantasies intangible investing us closely,
 hid only from our eyes by skies that will not clear:
 activ presences, striving to force an entrance,
 like bodiless exiled souls in dumb urgency pleading
 to be brought to birth in our conscient existence, 685
 as if our troubled lot wer the life they long'd for;
 even as poor mortals thirst for immortality:—
 And every divination of Natur or reach of Art
 is nearer attainment to the divine plenitude
 of understanding, and in moments of Vision 690
 their unseen company is the breath of Life:—

By such happy influence of their chosen goddess
 the mind of Hellas blossom'd with a wondrous flow'r,

flaming in summer season, and in its autumn fall
 ripening an everlasting fruit, that in dying 695
 scattered its pregnant seeds into all the winds of heav'n:
 nor ever again hath like bloom appeared among men.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

So it was when Jesus came in his gentleness
 with his divine compassion and great Gospel of Peace,
 men hail'd him WORD OF GOD, and in the title of Christ
 crown'd him with love beyond all earth-names of renown.

For He, wandering unarm'd save by the Spirit's flame, 775
 in few years with few friends founded a world-empire
 wider than Alexander's and more enduring;
 since from his death it took its everlasting life.

HIS kingdom is God's kingdom, and his holy temple
 not in Athens or Rome but in the heart of man. ^780

They who understand not cannot forget, and they
 who keep not his commandment call him Master and Lord.

He preach'd once to the herd, but now calleth the wise,
 and shall in his second Advent, that tarried long,
 be glorified by the Greeks that come to the feast: 785

But the great Light shineth in great darkness, the seed
 that fell by the wayside hath been trodden under foot,
 thatt which fell on the Rock is nigh wither'd away;

While loud and louder thro' the dazed head of the SPHINX
 the old lion's voice roareth o'er all the lands. 790

Book II

SELFHOOD

NAY, some I hav seen wil choose a beehive for their sign
 and gloss their soul-delusion with a muddled thought, 201
 picturing a skep of straw, the beekeeper's device,

a millowner's workshop, for totem of their tribe;
 Not knowing the high goal of our great endeavour
 is spiritual attainment, individual worth, 205
 at all cost to be sought and at all cost pursued,
 to be won at all cost and at all cost assured;
 not such material ease as might be attain'd for all
 by cheap production and distribution of common needs,
 wer ah¹ life level'd down to where the lowest can reach: 210
 Thus generating for ever in his crowded treadmills,
 man's life wer cheap as bees'; and we may see in them
 how he likewise might liv, if each would undertake
 the maximum of toil that is found tolerable
 upon a day-doled minimum of sustenance; 215
 and stay from procreation at thatt just number of men,
 hard-workers and small-eaters, who coud crowd on earth
 under the shadow of this skeleton of happiness.
 And since life must lose value in diminution of goods,
 life-time must also itself be in due proportion abredged; 220
 and both diminishings must at some point be stay'd,
 lest by slow loss they come dwindling in the end to nought:
 then, when to each single life the allotted span is fix'd,
 the system will be at balance, stable and perfected.

The ground-root folly of this pitous philanthropy 225
 is thinking to distribute indivisibles,
 and make equality in things incommensurable:
 forged under such delusions, all Utopias
 are castles in the air or counsels of despair.

Nay, whether it be in the gay apple-orchards of May, 345
 when the pink bunches spread their gold hearts to the sun,
 nor yet rude winds hav snow'd their petals to the ground;
 or when a dizzy bourdon haunteth the sweet cymes
 that droop at Lammas-tide the queenly foliage
 of a tall linden tree, where yearly by the wall 350

of some long-ruin'd Abbey she remembereth her
 of glad thanksgivings and the gay choral Sabbaths,
 while in her leafy tower the languorous murmur
 floateth off heav'nward in a mellow dome of shade;—
 or when, tho' *summer hath o'erbrim'd their clammy cells* 355
 the shorten'd days are shadow'd with dark fears of dearth,
 bees ply the more, issuing on sultry noons to throng
 in the ivy-blooms—what time October's flaming hues
 surcharge the brooding hours, till passionat soul and sense
 blend in a rich reverie with the dying year;— 360
 when and wherever bees are busy, it is the flowers
 dispense their daily task and determin its field;
 the prime motiv, may-hap, of all bee-energy,
 as of bee-industry they are surely the whole stuff.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

What is Beauty P saith my sufferings then.—I answer 840
 the lover and poet in my loose alexandrines:
 Beauty is the highest of all these occult influences,
 the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
 wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man:
 And Art, as it createth new forms of beauty, 845
 awakeneth new ideas that advance the spirit
 in the life of Reason to the wisdom of God.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

But we who hav seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence
 to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death, 955
 and of massacre and mourning hav suffer'd four years—
 we hav no need to recount in vindication of peace,
 sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,
 horrors which to forget wer cowardice and wrong,
 dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul,— 960
 yet gladly might forget in the passing of pain;
 and memory is so complacent that we well may fear
 lest our children forget;—and see Natur already,
 regardless how her fractious babe had scratch'd her cheek,

hath with her showy Invincibles retaken amain 965
the trenches, and re clothed the devastated lands.

See with how placid mien Athena unhelmeted
re'entering hath possessed her desolated halls;
how her musical temples and grave schools are throng'd
with fresh youth eager as ever with the old books and
games, 970

their live abounding mirth reechoing from the walls,
where among antique monuments their brothers' names
in long death-roll await the mellowing touch of time.

And why not we forget? How is't that we dare not
wish to forget and cut this canker of memory 975
from us, as men diseased in one part of their flesh
find health in mutilation: as if our agony
wer a boon to keep, when in its own happy riddance
'twould die off in the natural oblivion of things,
and with our follies fade: so, each one for himself 980
disbanding his self-share, Reason would dissipate
its own delusion, and lay that spectre of our dismay,
the accumulation of griefs; to which War hath no right
prior or prerogative: miseries lay as thick
and horrors worse when Plague invaded the cities, 985
Athens or London, raging with polluted flood
in every house, and with revolting torture rack'd
the folk to loathsom deaths; nor men kenn'd as they fell,
desperatly unrepentant to the 'scourge of God',
how 'twas the crowded foulness of their own bodies 990
punish'd them so:—alas then in what plight are we,
knowing 'twas mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul
that brought our plague! which yet we could not cure nor
stay;

for Reason had lost control of his hot-temper'd steed
and taken himself infection of the wild brute's madness; 995
so when its fire slacken'd and the fierce fight wore out,
our fever'd pulse show'd no sober return of health.

Amid the flimsy joy of the uproarious city
 my spirit on those first jubilant days of armistice
 was heavier within me, and felt a profounder fear 1000
 than ever it knew in all the War's darkest dismay.

Book III

BREED

How was November's melancholy endear'd to me
 in the effigy of plowteams following and recrossing 355
 patiently the desolat landscape from dawn to dusk,
 as the slow-creeping ripple of their single furrow
 submerged the sodden litter of summer's festival!
 They are fled, those gracious teams; high on the headland now
 squatted, a roaring engin toweth to itself 360
 a beam of bolted shares, that glideth to and fro
 combing the stubbled glebe: and agriculture here,
 blotting out with such daub so rich a pictur of grace,
 hath lost as much of beauty as it hath saved in toil.

Again where reapers, bending to the ripen'd corn, 365
 were wont to scythe in rank and step with measured stroke,
 a shark-tooth'd chariot rampeth biting a broad way,
 and, jerking its high swindging arms around in the air,
 swoopeth the swath. Yet this queer Pterodactyl is well,
 that in the sinister torpor of the blazing day 370
 clicketeth in heartless mockery of swoon and sweat,
 as 'twere the salamandrine voice of all parch'd things:
 and the dry grasshopper wondering knoweth his God.

Or what man feeleth not a new poetry of toil,
 whenas on frosty evenings neath its clouding smoke 375
 the engin hath huddled-up its clumsy threshing-coach
 against the ricks, wherefrom laborers standing aloft
 toss the sheaves on its tongue; while the grain runneth out,

and in the whirr of its multitudinous hurry
 it hummeth like the bee, a warm industrious boom 380
 that comforteth the farm, and spreadeth far afield
 with throbbing power; as when in a cathedral awhile
 the great diapason speaketh, and the painted saints
 feel their glass canopies flutter in the heav'nward prayer.

While in such play Count Raymond's folk lived joyfully,
 Provence seem'd to mankind the one land of delight,—
 a country where a man might fairly choose to dwell;
 tho' some would rather praise the green languorous isles, 660
 Hawaii or Samoa, and some the bright Azores,
 Kashmire the garden of Ind, or Syrian Lebanon
 and flowery Carmel; or wil vaunt the unstoried names
 of African Nairobi, where by Nyanza's lakes
 Nile hid his flooding fountain, or in the New World 665
 far Pasadena's roseland, whence who saileth home
 westward wil in his kalendar find a twin day.

But I in England starving neath the unbroken glooms
 of thatt dreariest November which wrapping the sun,
 damping all life, had robb'd my poem of the rays 670
 whose wealth so far had sped it, I long'd but to be
 i' the sunshine with my history; and the names that held
 place in my heart and now shall hav place in my line
 wer Avignon, Belcaire, Montelimar, Narbonne,
 Beziers, Castelnaudary, Beam and Carcassonne, 675
 and truly I could hav shared their fancy could I have hVd
 among those glad Jongleurs, living again for me,
 and had joy'd with them in thatt liberty and good-will
 which men call toleration, a thing so stiff to learn
 that to sceptics 'tis left and cynics. 680

Book IV

ETHICK

FOR social Ethick with its legalized virtue 265
 is but in true semblance, alike for praise or blame,
 a friendly domestication of man's old wolf-foe,
 the adaptable subservient gentlemanly dog,
 beneath groom'd coat and collar in his passion unchanged.
 Thus 'tis that levelers, deeming all ethick one, 270
 and for being Socialists thinking themselves Teachers,
 can preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love;
 but should they look to find firm scientific ground,
 whereon to found their creed in the true history
 of social virtue and of its progress hitherto, 275
 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
 who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
 to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lorn grave-yard
 of Asian monarchies;—and low hummocks of dust
 betray where legendary cities lie entomb'd, 280
 Chaldaean KISH and UR; while for all life today
 poor nomads, with their sparse flotilla of swarthy tents
 and slow sand-faring camels, cruise listlessly o'erhead,
 warreners of the waste: Now this man duly unearth'd
 the walls whence Terah flitted, but beneath those walls 285
 more walls, and the elder buildings of a dynasty
 of wider rule than Abram knew, a nation extinct
 ere he was born: where-thru' sinking deeper their shafts
 the diggers came yet never on virgin soil, but stil
 wondering on earlier walls, arches and masonry, 290
 a city and folk undremt of in archaeology,
 trodden-under ere any story of man began; and there,
 happening on the king's tomb, they shovel'd from the dust

the relics of thatt old monarch's magnificence—
 Drinking vessels of beaten silver or of clean gold, 295
 vases of alabaster, obsidian chalices,
 cylinder seals of empire and delicat gems
 of personal adornment, ear-rings and finger-rings,
 craftsmen's tools copper and golden, and for music a harp;
 withal in silver miniatur his six-oar'd skiff 300
 a model in build and trim of such as ply today
 Euphrates' flowery marshes: all his earthly toys
 gathered to him in his grave, that he might nothing lack
 in the unknown life beyond, but find ready to hand
 his jewel'd dice and gaming board and chamber-lamp, 305
 his toilet-box of paints and unguents—Therefore 'twas
 the chariot of his pride whereon he still would ride
 was buried with him; there lay yet the enamel'd film
 of the inlaid perish'd wood, and all the metal gauds
 that had emboss'd the rail: animal masks in gold, 310
 wild bulls and lions, and twin-figured on the prow
 great panther-heads to glare in silver o'er the course,
 impatient of their spring: and one rare master-work
 whose grace the old warrior wist not should outliv the name
 and fame of all his mighty doings, when he set it up 315
 thatt little nativ donkey, his mascot on the pole.

'Twas he who dug told me of these things and how,
 finding himself a housebreaker in the home of men
 who sixty hundred years afore, when they left life,
 had seal'd their tombs from sacrilege and there had lain, 320
 til from the secresy of their everlasting sleep
 he had torn the coverlet—his spirit, dazed awhile
 in wonder, suddenly was strick'n with great horror;
 for either side the pole, where lay the harness'd bones
 of the yoke-mated oxen, there beside their bones 325
 lay the bones of the grooms, and slaughtered at their post
 all the king's body-guard, each liegeman spear in hand,
 in sepulchred attention; and whereby lay the harp

the arm-bones of the player, as there she had pluck'd her
 dirge,
 lay mingled with its fragments; and nearby disposed, 330
 two rows of skeletons, her sisterly audience
 whose lavish ear-pendants and gold-filleted hair,
 the uniform decoration of their young service,
 mark'd them for women of the harem, sacrificed
 to accompany their lord, the day when he set forth 335
 to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
 congregated with splendour in the mansions of death.

▼ ▼ ▼ ▼

Twas at thatt hour of beauty when the setting sun
 squandereth his cloudy bed with rosy hues, to flood
 his lov'd works as in turn he biddeth them Good-night; 1270
 and all the towers and temples and mansions of men
 face him in bright farewell, ere they creep from their pomp
 naked beneath the darkness;—while to mortal eyes
 'tis given, if so they close not of fatigue, nor strain
 at lamplit tasks—'tis given, as for a royal boon 1275
 to beggarly outcasts in homeless vigil, to watch
 where uncurtain'd behind the great windows of space
 Heav'n's jewel'd company circleth unapproachably—

'Twas at sunset that I, fleeing to hide my soul
 in refuge of beauty from a mortal distress, 1280
 walk'd alone with the Muse in her garden of thought,
 discoursing at liberty with the mazy dreams
 that came wavering pertinaciously about me; as when
 the small bats, issued from their hangings, flitter o'erhead
 thru¹ the summer twilight, with thin cries to and fro 1285
 hunting in muffled flight atween the stars and flowers.

Then fell I in strange delusion, illusion strange to tell;
 for as a man who lyeth fast asleep in his bed
 may dream he waketh, and that he walketh upright
 pursuing some endeavour in full conscience—so 'twas 1290
 with me; but contrawise; for being in truth awake

methought I slept and dreamt; and in thatt dream me-
thought

I was telling a dream; nor telling was I as one
who, truly awaked from a true sleep, thinketh to tell
his dream to a friend, but for his scant remembrances 1295
findeth no token of speech—it was not so with me;
for my tale was my dream and my dream the telling,
and I remember wondring the while I told it
how I told it so tellingly. And yet now 'twould seem
that Reason inveigled me with her old orderings; 1300
as once when she took thought to adjust theology,
peopling the inane that vex'd her between God and man
with a hierarchy of angels; like those asteroids
wherewith she later fill'd the gap 'twixt Jove and Mars.

Verily by Beauty it is that we come at WISDOM, 1305
yet not by Reason at Beauty: and now with many words
pleasing myself betimes I am fearing lest in the end
I play the tedious orator who maundereth on
for lack of heart to make an end of his nothings.
Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round 1310
handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me
the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.

DIGBY MACKWORTH DOLBEN

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dolben's *Poems*, 1911

I HAD not visited Eton for many years, when one day passing from the Fellows' Library into the Gallery I caught sight of the portrait of my school-friend Digby Dolben hanging just without the door among our most distinguished contemporaries. I was wholly arrested, and as I stood gazing on it, my companion asked me if I knew who it was. I was thinking that, beyond a few whom I could name, I must be almost the only person who would know. Far memories of my boyhood were crowding freshly upon me: he was standing again beside me in the eager promise of his youth; I could hear his voice; nothing of him was changed; while I, wrapt from him in a confused mist of time, was wondering what he would think, could he know that at this actual moment he would have been dead thirty years, and that his memory would be thus preserved and honoured in the beloved school, where his delicate spirit had been so strangely troubled.

This portrait-gallery of old Etonians is very select: pre-eminent distinction of birth or merit may win you a place there, or again official connexion with the school, which rightly loves to keep up an unbroken panorama of its teachers, and to vivify its annals with the faces and figures of the personalities who carried on its traditions. But how came Dolben there? It was because he was a poet,—that I knew;—and yet his poems were not known; they were jealously guarded by his family and a few friends: indeed such of his poems as could have come to the eyes of the authorities who sanctioned this memorial would not justify it. There was another reason; and the portrait bears it own credentials; for though you might not perhaps divine the

poet in it, you can see the saint, the soul rapt in contemplation, the habit of stainless life, of devotion, of enthusiasm for high ideals. Such a being must have stood out conspicuously among his fellows; the facts of his life would have been the ground of the faith in his genius; and when his early death endeared and sanctified his memory, loving grief would generously grant him the laurels which he had never worn. . . .

With such friends as Coles, Hankey, Lionel Muirhead, Bickersteth, and Manning, he was well off,—he could not 10 have had more congenial companions; but without them he would have been miserably isolated at Eton, for he had no common interests of any kind with the average school-boy, scarcely even the burning question of the quality of the food provided to develop our various potentialities. He seemed of a different species, among the little ruffians a saint, among sportive animals a distressful spirit. By what steps our intimacy at first grew I cannot now tell. As neither work nor play threw us together, I saw but little of him during the day: he never even in my last term accompanied me in my frequent 20 visits to St. George's Chapel, where it was my custom to go on short after-fours and sit in the north aisle or organ-loft, stealing out at the end of the anthem in time to be not very late for five o'clock school. Our meetings were therefore generally after lock-up, when, if we both had work to do, he would sometimes bring his to my room, but more often I would go uninvited to sit with him. His room looked over the Slough road, a small narrow room with the door at the end of one long side, and a window at the opposite diagonal corner. Against the wall facing the window stood his plain oaken 30 bureau, at which he would sit with his back to the window, while I occupied most of the rest of the room at right angles to him. The clearest picture that I have of him is thus seated, with his hands linked behind his head, tilting his chair backward as he deliberated his careful utterances: or

sometimes he would balance it on one leg, and steady himself by keeping the fingers of his outstretched arms in touch with the walls. There was moreover a hole in the boards of the floor, and if the chair-leg went through and precipitated him on to the carpet, that was a part of the performance and gave him a kind of satisfaction. The bureau-lid lay open before him as a desk, and in the top drawer on the right he kept his poems. His face whether grave or laughing was always full of thought: he would sometimes throw himself
10 backward as if to escape from the stress of it, or he would lean forward with meditative earnestness and appear to concentrate his attention on the tallow dip, which in its brazen saucer was the only illumination, feeding it anxiously with grease from the point of the snuffers, or snuffing it to the quick till he put it out. When he spoke it was with a gentle voice and slowly as if he pondered every word. . . .

Our instinctive attitudes towards poetry were very dissimilar, he regarded it from the emotional, and I from the
20 artistic side; and he was thus of a much intenser poetic temperament than I, for when he began to write poetry he would never have written on any subject that did not deeply move him, nor would he attend to poetry unless it expressed his own emotions; and I should say that he liked poetry on account of the power that it had of exciting his valued emotions, and he may perhaps have recognized it as the language of faith. What had led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to me in the masterly control of the
30 material: it was an art which I hoped to learn. An instinctive lightness was essential, but, given that, I did not suppose that the poet's emotions were in any way better than mine, nor mine than another's: and, though I should not at that time have put it in these words, I think that Dolben imagined poetic form to be the naive outcome of peculiar

personal emotion; just as one imagines in nature the universal mind conquering matter by the urgency of life,—as he himself describes it in his 'Core':

Poetry, the hand that wrings
(Bruised albeit at the strings)
Music from the soul of things.

There is a point in art where these two ways merge and unite, but in apprenticeship they are opposite approaches....

No one ever wrote words with more critical deliberation than Gerard Hopkins, and I am glad to have preserved the 10 letter which he then wrote, having met Dolben but once, for it must give some idea of the grief which his more intimate friends suffered at his death; some measure too of the shock to their hopes, since it records the full appreciation which his genius received from them during his life. This was, no doubt, chiefly due to the great charm of his personality, for his character was transparent; nor did the strange spontaneous beauty and significance, that invested the actions of his life, desert him in the circumstances of his death. It was beautiful and strange that, after all his unceasing mental 20 perplexity, he should die unconsciously,—for he must have fainted in the water,—without pain, in one of his rare moments of healthy bodily enjoyment: and premature as his end was, and the stroke of it unlocked for, and apparently sudden, yet his last poems show him waiting and expectant, and his last action had all the dignity and fitness of artistic preparation.

My story of the accidents of his life can give no picture of his charm; his perpetual humour and light merriment are what will least appear: though I may hope that the truthful- 30 ness of the story reveals more than I can myself perceive. As he went his way enthusiastically pursuing his imaginations, all intercourse with him was delightful, and all my remembrance of him is happy.

RICHARD WATSON DIXON

From a *Memoir* prefixed to Dixon's *Poems*, 1909

IN one of the loveliest cities of the world—for almost all that may now hinder Oxford from holding her title is the work of the last fifty years—in a university whose antiquity and slumbering pre-eminence encourage her scholars to consider themselves the *elite* of the nation, there stood apart a company of enthusiastic spirits, in the flourish and flower of their youth, united in an ideal conspiracy to reform society by means of beauty. In the frankest friendship that man can know, when its ecstasy seems eternal, and time only
 10 an unlimited opportunity for agreeable endeavour, before experience has sobered enterprise or thought has troubled faith, these young men devoted the intention and hope of their lives to the most congenial task that they could imagine. Their lightheartedness never questioned their wisdom, and to their self-confidence all appeared as easy as the prospect was pleasant. They inherited the devotion that had built their schools and temples, and regarding the beauty that had been handed down to their enjoyment as peculiarly their own, since they alone worthily loved and
 20 adored it, they aspired to enrol themselves in the same consecration and rekindle a torpid generation with the fire that burned in their souls. Almost every one of the group was intending to take Holy Orders, and looked to pursue his vocation within the Ministry of the Church. We are warned that Morris was in those days an aristocratical High Churchman, and Burne-Jones tells us of himself that he knew nothing of Painting; but it was the liberty of their ideal, the vagueness of their aspiration, the rebellion against convention, the boyish contempt for authority and discipline that animated
 30 their mutual affection and made the charm of their life....

I have already commemorated my visit in a poem which

begins, 'Man hath with man on earth no holier bond'. The sentiment there is from life, but the incidents and scene are fictitious. The facts were that, after staying with my friend Mandell Creighton at Embleton, I proposed to explore the Roman Wall on foot from Newcastle to Carlisle, and conclude my holiday under the poet's roof. The summer of that year was wet in the North, and the persistent rain delaying my start made me relinquish the western end of my ramble, so it was by train that I arrived one afternoon, and first saw Dixon awaiting me on the platform of How Mill station. 10 Emotion graven the scene on my memory: a tallish, elderly figure, its liteness lost in a slight, scholarly stoop which gave to the shoulders an appearance of heaviness, wearing unimpeachable black cloth negligently, and a low-crowned clerical hat banded with twisted silk. His attitude and gait as he walked on the platform were those of a man who, through abstraction or indifference, is but half aware of his surroundings, and his attention to the train as he gazed along the carriages to discover me had that sort of awkwardness that comes from the body not expressing the intention 20 of the mind. His face, I saw, was dark and solemn, and as he drew near I could see that the full lips gave it a tender expression, for the beard did not hide the mouth. Nothing further could be read, only the old mystery and melancholy of the earth, and that under the heavy black brows his eyes did their angelic service to the soul without distraction. His hearty welcome was in a voice that startled me with its sonority and depth; but in its convincing sincerity there was nothing expansive or avenant. He then became so silent that I half suspected him of common tactics, and was slow to 30 interpret his silence as mere courtesy, which it was; indeed, he would never speak unless he were assured that he was not preventing another, a habit which made a singularly untrue disguise of his eager, ingenuous temper. However, as we approached the village it was his call to talk, and he set me

wondering by his anxiety that I should admire the church. It was a dreary, modern stone building with round-headed windows and a wide slate roof; the shrunken degradation of a tower stuck on to one end and the after-concession of a brick chancel at the other. I have a letter from him, dated 1895, where, in narrating a visit to Carlisle from Warkworth, he writes—

I also went to Hayton, and as I walked from the station I thought of my first sight of you there. . . . The church is
10 externally the same, but it has a clock now; internally it is translated from the consistent ugliness and Presbyterian arrangement of sittings which you saw, into a sort of music-hall or sacred concert-room; nothing of the old preserved, and entirely devoid of interest.

It is as if he remembered how he had praised the church on that day. I suppose he loved it as the home of his ministry, and perhaps from the link which it made with the Wesleyanism of his family. He would, too, have preferred the simplicity and spiritual ease of making the best of
20 poor circumstances to the labour of ineffectively exploiting luxurious opportunities. There is surely not one of our meanest churches that has not been sanctified by loving service, but few can have known such poetical idealization as Dixon lavished on Hayton. . . .

Some characters give the idea of a personality that has attained to certain qualities; in others we seem to see qualities composing a character. Without assuming the validity of this distinction one may use it as a real description. Dixon was of the latter type. His imagination, since
30 that is an inborn gift beyond conscious control, would, of course, have this effect, and seem a visitation from without, and he merely the happy dispenser of it. His insight, clear judgement, and memory were gifts of a similar kind; but even in his humility he did not appear like a man who had put it on, but as an incarnation of the quality, whose essence

was distilled or reflected in him. And so with his good temper, humour, patience, tenderness, and sympathy, which made up his social aspect, all seemed to flow from the deeper perennial sources, uncontaminated and inexhaustible. This great ingenuous being went about among men almost unrecognized, though influencing nearly every one with whom he came in contact. As he respected every man, he won respect from all, and any lengthened intercourse with him awoke the best affinities of his associates, who became infected with his grace. One might see around him the 10 common Christian virtues propagating themselves in a natural state like healthy plants that, without a gardener's care, flourish and multiply from year to year. He was truly revered, and where he bestowed his affection the gift was so unmeasured that the mere flattery of it must have been injurious, were it not that spiritual love has no excess, but is always beneficent. It was more than any one could repay, and, however I have rejoiced in it, the remembrance, now that he is taken away, shames me with the thought of my unworthiness.

20

HENRY BRADLEY

From a *Memoir*, 1926

WHATEVER outward honour can be shown to the dead was paid to Henry Bradley when his mortal spoils were borne into Magdalen College Chapel for the requiem before burial. It seemed as if Alma Mater in her respect for this stranger had ordered the ceremonies with a greater care and solemnity than for her own sons. It was a gloomy day: the sky was overcast and dark; and within the choir, lined with ranks of grave academic figures, the long rows of candles brightened the noon with their ritual illumination. The music was a consummate rendering of the severe English dirge which, 30 discarding all vain sentiment in a dignity that will not relax

even before the face of death, has rivalled for two hundred years whatsoever else has been written to interpret man's emotion in that hour. All was in true keeping with Bradley's spirit, and the crowd of his assembled friends who moved out to the subdued strains of the Dead March, following his coffin to the grave, felt that they bade him a worthy farewell, and while the flowers were scattering could rejoice with him for the peaceful end of his long life of toil. . . .

He was one of those who having neither inclination nor
10 temptation to accept the world as it stands, are early driven to live to themselves, and by instinctive self-protection preserve that simplicity and purity of mind which is the foundation of all that is good whether in thought or conduct. In that contemplative detachment from conventional valuations, human sensibility is heightened both in delicacy and emotion by a profounder perception of the ideal significance of Appearance, and the feelings are transported into a spiritual world where accidents of Being are but ephemeral shows. Bradley lived in that ideal world with assured faith
20 in the promises of man's desire, and in a life after death where they would be fulfilled. Though no man could better understand the objections with which material science would forbid such hopes,—and he was presumably no better able than another to picture any sort of future existence which should be sufficiently like our present state to continue our mortal sympathies, or, if it should continue them, could continue to satisfy them—yet this Agnosticism did not destroy the faith in which Bradley lived and died.

And difficult as it is with our sorrowful experience to face
30 with any comfort the prospect of a general resurrection, yet there is none of us who would not desire to meet his old friends again, and cannot picture the joy of it. I myself would risk a good deal on the chance of meeting Henry Bradley: indeed all my memories of him are so pleasant that I can almost imagine the delight of his company enduring *in eternum*.

JOHN KEATS

From *Jahn Keats A Critical Essay*, 1895, revised 1916

IN these detached criticisms many of the main qualities of Keats¹ poetry have been incidentally brought out; there is one, as yet unmentioned, which claims the first place in a general description, and that is the very seal of his poetic birthright, the highest gift of all in poetry, that which sets poetry above the other arts; I mean the power of concentrating all the far-reaching resources of language on one point, so that a single and apparently effortless expression rejoices the aesthetic imagination at the moment when it is most expectant and exacting, and at the same time as- 10
tonishes the intellect with a new aspect of truth. This is only found in the greatest poets, and is rare in them; and it is no doubt for the possession of this power that Keats has been often likened to Shakespeare, and very justly, for Shakespeare is of all poets the greatest master of it; the difference between them here is that Keats' intellect does not supply the second factor in the proportion or degree that Shakespeare does; indeed, it is chiefly when he is dealing with material and sensuous subjects that his poems afford illustrations; but these are, as far as they go, not 20
only like Shakespeare, but often as good as Shakespeare when he happens to be confining himself to the same limited field. Examples from Shakespeare are such well-known sayings as these—

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf.—*Macbeth*.
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.—*Hamlet*.
We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.—*Tempest*.

Examples from Keats are—

The journey homeward to habitual self.
 Solitary thinkings; such as dodge
 Conception to the very bourne of heaven.
 My sleep had been embroider'd with dim dreams.

In most of Keats' phrases of this sort there is a quality which makes them unlike Shakespeare; and if we should put into one group all those which are absolutely satisfactory, and then make a second group of those which are
 10 not so simply convincing, we should find in these last that the un-Shakespearian quality was more declared, and came out as something fanciful, or rather too vaguely or venturesomely suggestive; the whole phrase displaying its poetry rather than its meaning, and being in consequence less apt and masterly. This second group would contain many of the most admired lines of Keats, and these are very characteristic of him. Such are—

Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
 Tall oaks,

20 and—

How tiptoe Night holds back her dark-grey hood.

The *Revision of Hyperion* shows that Keats himself was dissatisfied with his 'senators'; and one can see the reason without condemning the passage or approving its omission. Finally, there would be left a third group of such-like phrases which plainly miss the mark.

Closely allied to these imaginative phrases, and perhaps more characteristic of Keats and peculiar to him, are the short vivid pictures which may be called his masterpieces
 30 of word-painting, in which with a few words he contrives completely to finish a picture which is often of vast size. Good examples of this are the sestet of the *Leander* sonnet; the last four lines of the *Chapman's Homer*; the passage

beginning 'Golden his hair' in *Hyperion* ii. 371; and, to quote one from *Endymion*—

The woes of Troy, towers smothering o'er their blaze,
Stiff-holden shields, far-piercing spears, keen blades,
Struggling, and blood, and shrieks.

For its wealth in such rare strokes of descriptive imagination Keats' poetry must always take the very first rank; and it is his imaginative quality of phrase which sets him more than any other poet of his time in creative antagonism to the eighteenth-century writers; for it was not only foreign 10 to their style, but incomprehensible and repugnant to their pseudo-classic taste, which preferred a 'reasonable propriety of thought', such as Hume found to be lacking in Shakespeare, to the shadowy powers of imagination, however sublime.

The limitation that we found of Keats' faculty when compared with Shakespeare—which, if it may be ascribed wholly to his youth, amply justifies the sentiment of the opening lines of this essay—leads us on naturally to another of his chief characteristics, and that is his close relationship 20 with common Nature: he is for ever drawing his imagery from common things, which are for the first time represented as beautiful: and again in this we see his opposition to the eighteenth-century writers, who mainly contented themselves with conventional commonplaces for their natural imagery; whereas Keats discovers in the most usual objects either beauty or sources of delight or comfort, or sometimes even of imaginative horror, which are all new; and here his originality seems inexhaustible, and his wide poetic sympathies the strongest. Nor does he confine himself to matters 3° of which he could have had much experience; he makes Nature the object of his imaginative faculty—Nature apart from man, or related to man as an enchantress to a dreamer. This is, I suppose, what he means when, comparing himself with Byron, he says, 'There is this great difference

between us: he describes what he sees,—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task: now see the immense difference,' Here he shows a vast wealth which makes his poems a mine of pleasure. *Endymion* is crowded to excess with a variety of these images, and as they came up in his mind in an endless stream to illustrate his ideas, the ideas sometimes fare rather badly; for though they were no doubt generally held firm in his own mind, they are yet drowned by the images of their objective presentation; until these
 10 themselves at last lose even their own virtue, and fatigue the reader, who feels like a sight-seer in a gallery overcrowded with pictures, which by degrees he ceases to regard with attention.

And in this devotion to natural beauty lies, I believe, one true reason of Keats' failure in the delineation of human passion. The only passion delineated by Keats is the imaginative love of Nature, and human love is regarded by him as a part of this, and his lover is happy merely because admitted into communion with new forms of natural beauty.
 20 This, which appeared in theory in the explanation of the allegory of *Endymion*, is practically exposed in the second stanza of the *Ode to Melancholy*, where, among the objects on which a sensitive mind is recommended to indulge its melancholy fit, the anger of his mistress is enumerated with roses, peonies, and rainbows, as a beautiful phenomenon, plainly without respect to its cause, meaning, or effect. And so in *Lamia*—

He took delight
 Luxurious in her sorrows, soft and new,

30 and

Fine was the mitigated fury.

How different is the parallel passage of Shakespeare, which at once occurs to one—

O, what a deal of scorn looks beautiful
In the contempt and anger of his lip!

This is not artistic admiration, but a lover's entire devotion.

In the criticism of *Endymion* we found a want of taste in Keats' idea of woman; we have now to add a charge of lack of true insight into human passion. If this was wholly due to the absence of awakening experience, it is at least unfortunate that in *Lamia*, in which from its date we might have expected something mature, he should have chosen so low a type. Though perhaps suggested by the original of his story, it was not necessary to it; and even if he preferred to have his snake-woman bad, there was every reason why Lycius¹ passion should have been of a higher type. How unworthy it is is shown in the description of their meeting and in the following sentiment—

But too short was their bliss
To breed distrust and hate, that make the soft voice hiss.

This love is an association for mutual pleasure, the end of which is satiety and revulsion, and it is, I repeat, at least unfortunate that Keats, after he had known love, should, in his first attempt to delineate it, have been satisfied with so vulgar a type. The ideal passion in *Isabella* is insipid, and even in *The Eve of St. Agnes* the passion, as expressed in stanzas xxxv-xxxix, is at best of a conventional type, and has to have a good deal read into it by the light of the story.

But Keats¹ doctrine of beauty, which might be defended if it was spiritualized, which it never is by him, may often be reconciled with true feeling by the allowance which is due to his objective method; concerning this, as illustrations have been given, I shall say no more here except to repeat that Keats' imagery probably always followed, if it did not always clearly picture, some train of ideas; and when he says in the Ode *To Fanny*

My muse had wings,
 And ever ready was to take her course
 Whither I bent her force,
Unintellectual. yet divine to me;—
 Divine, I say! What sea-bird o'er the sea
 Is a philosopher the while he goes
 Winging along where the great water throes ?

these words should not be taken as a disavowal of meaning in 'those abstractions which were his only life', but as an
 10 apology for immaturity, and they must be interpreted in the light of his high idea of philosophy. Keats was conscious, like Virgil, of a double inclination. He said of himself, April 1818: 'I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy. Were I calculated for the former, I should be glad; but as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter,' This would be a strange variant of

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musae

if we need suppose it to be anything more than an utterance
 20 of that contrarious mood so common to introspection; it is nevertheless evidence that Keats was unlikely to have depreciated the intellectual element of his art: but the intellectual element is always in league with emotion, and would have been, I imagine, considered by him as worthless in poetry without such mixture. In the *Epistle to Reynolds* even the unpleasantness of the consideration of what we call the struggle for existence would, simply presented, have been flat and commonplace; but he shows it as a 'horrid mood'¹, by which he is haunted, and uses great
 30 skill and a wealth of contrasted beauty in introducing it under this enhanced aspect, 'wreathing a flowery band spite of the unhealthy ways made for his searching'; and in calling his Muse unintellectual, he was no doubt uttering his reiterated impatience for more knowledge, the expression of which recurs so often in his poems and letters,

that it is needless to quote any one, and which rises to a sort of consummation in the *Revision of Hyperion*, where it seems as if he had imagined himself to have at length attained to an insight of the mystery.

There is less opposition, it seems to me, between Keats' true instinct for ideal philosophy and his luxurious poetry (which seems rather its young expression), than between these on the one hand and his practical human qualities, as revealed by his letters, on the other. The bond of all was an unbroken and unflagging earnestness, which is so utterly unconscious and unobservant of itself as to be almost unmatched. It is always present in his poetry both for good and ill, in the spontaneous and felt quality of his epithets, and the absence of any barrier even, it would sometimes seem, of consideration or judgement between his mind and his pen. Whether this earnestness is the account of his failure in his purely comic freaks I do not know, but it may certainly account for his want of humour, for which, in spite of some traces in his letters, it does not appear to have left any room. The best of the letters are serious and full of good matter, a few are quite foolish, and a great number are written in a high-spirited jocular vein, which seems to be carelessly assumed for the double purpose of amusing his correspondent and relaxing his own mind. The chief charm in all of them is their unalloyed sincerity: there is nothing between the pen and the mind, not always even an effort or desire to write what should be worth reading: it is enough that it is he that writes, and his brother or friend that will read.

In spite of this earnestness and philosophy, it is certainly true that Keats' mind was of a luxurious habit; and it must have been partly due to this temperament that he showed so little severity towards himself in the castigation of his poems, though that was, as I said before, chiefly caused by the prolific activity of his imagination, which was always

providing him with fresh material to work on. In this respect he is above all poets an example of what is meant by inspiration: the mood which all artists require, covet, and find most rare was the common mood with him; and I should say that, being amply supplied with this, what as an artist he most lacked was self-restraint and self-castigation,—which was indeed foreign to his luxurious temperament, unselfish and devoted to his art as he was,—the presence of which was most needful to watch, choose, and reject the 10 images which crowded on him as he thought or wrote.

EMILY BRONTE

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 12 January 1911

THE transcendent genius of Emily Bronte is now well recognized; *Wuthering Heights* has taken its place among the unique creations of literature. But what of the poetess? There is no question of her poetic faculties. The wide intellectual grasp, the unsurpassed power of vivid representation, the almost isolated originality, the concentrated fire of native passion are all undisputed; and yet, with one or two exceptions, her poems—which are her most personal revelation—have made no impression at all. The editor of this 20 collection almost apologizes for them. 'No one today', he says, 'will deny them a certain bibliographical interest'; while Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in his introductory essay writes, 'It is not claimed for a moment that the intrinsic merits of the verses are of a special kind,' Emily herself wrote:—

Dreams have encircled me.

.

But now when I had hoped to sing,
My fingers strike a tuneless string;
And still the burden of the strain—
I strive no more, 'tis all in vain.

And the casual reader of this book will, likely enough, look into a few pages and then close it with indifference or disappointment. What is the impediment? Why, when such a genius brought her supreme gifts to bear on the task, and loved it, why did she produce something which is at first sight cold and worthless? We do not forget that Matthew Arnold said of one of her poems that it 'shook my soul', nor that she herself never wrote anything so unlike poetry as the poem in which he praised her; and we know that stanzas chosen from her poems might exhibit her as a poet of the 10 first order—still, the general effect is what it is, and the reasons may be perceived and stated.

First of all, Emily Bronte is very direct, and eschews ornament. Indeed, it seems probable that what artistic defect her instinct had was indifference to artistic beauty, and that therefore the beauty in her work is that which comes of bare truth and insight rather than of aesthetic handling and ornament. Secondly, she never mastered the technique of poetry, and took what she had chiefly from poets like Cowper. Her biographers, it is true, assert that 20 she was musical; but proficiency in her day, and at a girls' boarding school, implies little; and it would be difficult to find in her writings any evidence of the true musical faculty. In her poems she is certainly not delicately conscious of the music either of her rhythm or of her rhyme; she is rather indifferent, for she will consent to break the rhythm at any obstacle, without respect to its effect; and in her treatment of rhyme she is sometimes quite childish; where the rhymes are not common they are often awkward or bad, and are allowed to nullify themselves by unconsidered assonances. 30 It is pitiful to see her working with 'anguish' and 'languish' and such-like commonplaces, not knowing how tarnished the ornaments are, or else revolting from them to do something worse. And for this reason many of her poems would show to greater advantage in a translation. Incompetence

in technique is a ready source of obscurity or awkwardness of grammar; and indifference to aesthetic beauty allows the diction to fall; nor is Emily incapable of stumbling into the mannerisms of the school with which she was most familiar. The reader may remember the poem beginning—

On a sunny brae alone I lay
 One summer afternoon :
 It was the marriage-time of May
 With her young lover June.

10 and how after the characteristic lines—

But her father smiled on the fairest child
 He ever held in his arms.

she continues—

In sooth, I did not know
 Why , ' had brought a clouded eye
 To greet the general glow.

And in the following quotation see how a profound thought, poetically illuminated by a masterly image, is damaged by prosaic diction, while the grammar leaves the application
 20 of the image ambiguous; for 'all' and 'each one' may suggest persons, not the thoughts as intended:—

And yet there is—or seems at least to be—
 A general scheme of thought that colours all;
 So though each one be different, all agree
 In the same melancholy shade-like pall;
 Even as the shadows look the same to me,
 Though cast, I know, from many a varying wall
 In this vast city—hut and temple sharing
 In the same light, and the same darkness wearing.

30 Emily has not, therefore, a perfected style. We must not expect either full artistic technique or sustained height of diction; she works without them: and this plainness may deceive; for it is a genius that is speaking, and in her speech

the common words have regained their essential and primal significance, and, being the simplest, are therefore for her the best means of direct verbal touch with felt realities. As a French critic, whose book on the Brontës is just published—M. Dimnet—says of the poems with true perspicacity:—'Avec des mots simples, Emily atteint a chaque instant l'effet rare . . . cette Me extraordinaire a garde la puissance de regarder face a face la realite pres de laquelle nous passons sans la voir.' It is just because we are so familiarized by language with ideas that the simple presentation of reality 10 in that language does not stir our emotion, nor carry us beyond the mere recognition of the accustomed idea. And thus Arthur Symonds wrote of her, using the same word 'rare', 'A rare and strong beauty comes into the bare outlines, quickening them with splendour'. Indeed, a near acquaintance with her poems—which with few exceptions are the plainest revelation that she can make of herself—brings one to give the same value to her commonest expressions that one gives to the most consummate artistic diction. Never was there a poet who so much requires to be kept 20 apart from others, away from conventional contagion; and when one has got accustomed to her voice it is wonderful what a range it covers, and how various are her successes.

WORDSWORTH AND KIPLING

From The Times Literary Supplement, 29 February 1912

IT is true in all art that when a great master appears he so exhausts the material at his disposal as to make it impossible for any succeeding artist to be original, unless he can either find new material or invent some new method of handling the old. In painting and music this is almost demonstrable to the uninitiated; in poetry the law may not be so strict, but it still holds; and anyone may see that serious rhyme 30

is now exhausted in English verse, or that Milton's blank verse practically ended as an original form with Milton. There are abundant signs that English syllabic verse has long been in the stage of artistic exhaustion of form which follows great artistic achievement. Now as far as regards the verse-form Wordsworth was apparently unconscious of this predicament. It never occurred to him that he was working with blunted tools. His idea was to purify the diction and revivify English poetry by putting a new content into the
10 old verse-forms; and two reasons may be given for this conservatism. First, that in his time an artificial school of poetry had separated itself *oft* from the older tradition, so that any return to the older style appeared to be a freshness; and, secondly, he was a part of that unaccountable flood of inspiration which in Keats and Shelley and in a few of Coleridge's lyrics transcended in some vital qualities whatever had been done before, and actually wrought miracles of original beauty within the old forms; but these bond-breaking efforts, we should say, more than completed the
20 exhaustion, while the tedious quality of much of their work shows under what hampering conditions the genius of these poets attained excellence. Keats speaks very plainly; he says, for instance, that he relinquished his *Hyperion* because he could not get away from Milton. . . .

Mr. Kipling's genius is very varied, and though he has written much verse he has won his reputation chiefly by his prose tales. Now we shall concern ourselves only with his verse, and only with the style and diction of that. With Mr. Kipling, then, nothing in diction is common or unclean;
30 nor can we draw any strict line to separate the diction of such poems as *The Barrack-room Ballads*, which are professedly and wholly in the low dialect of the characters, from those other poems where it is not so prominent nor so evidently in place. A good many poems, it is true, are entirely free from it; but these rather show the author's

liberty to take up with whatever manner he may choose; and their conventionalities of rhyme and diction, from which not even the obsolete is rejected, are not to be reckoned among his inventions. Now as vehicle for this kind of diction (which need not be more nearly described) he chooses the Elizabethan ballad stanza, the nursery rhyme, the popular song, and whatever other accentual lilt he may devise of a similar character, and with these material resources (of diction and metre) he will treat almost any subject. As an example to exhibit the result we will take *The Looking Glass*, 10 in *Rewards and Fairies*. In this masterly poem the motive is heroic and almost tragic. Great Queen Bess is portrayed with the vain woman's vanity and the tyrant's bad conscience, and with a vast pride, sufficient to drown them both; and the picture is done with such force that many readers will have the four stanzas by heart when they have read them twice. Now observe the diction; the first line runs thus:—

The Queen was in her chamber, and she was middling old.

This is of course founded on 20

The Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey,

and the key of the emotion is thus deliberately pitched at the level of the nonsensical nursery rhyme. Observe, too, the expression 'middling old'. This sets the Queen down among the homeliest of her subjects; but in so doing it may humanize and provoke common sympathy. Later on Lord Leicester's ghost comes 'scratching and singing' at the door, which degrades the ghost; and yet, in spite of those things, the whole has an irresistible force, so that our dislike of the incongruities, if we feel any, is overpowered; and this force, 30 though it may not be due to the apparent obstacles, may seem the greater for its victory over them. That 'was' (= woz) is rhymed in the refrain with 'lass' is a convention

no doubt congenial to the nursery rhyme, and we only mention it because it is not otherwise reconcilable with Mr. Kipling's method, which at its best refuses the foolish inversions and bad rhymes that lower the standard of so many of Wordsworth's scholastic stanzas, because they are conventions of another school, retained for obvious convenience—mere resources of imperfect execution. (Criticism of this poem cannot omit notice of the phrase 'her sins were on her head', which must be reckoned as a slip in artistic accomplishment, because, since the Queen is looking at herself in the mirror, one is too conscious of her actual head to escape visualizing at once some sort of bundle on the top of it. This by the way.)

Now suppose that we had never heard the rhyme of the Queen and her bread and honey, and did not know English well enough to understand the true values of 'middling' and 'scratching', would the poem affect us less or more powerfully than it does with this knowledge? What would it be without the queer quality that it actually has? Or again, is our pleasure attendant on our admiration rather than our admiration on our pleasure? It is easier to ask such questions than to answer them; we may be content with the surer ground that Kipling is Kipling, and that without Kipling we should never have had the poem; and we are glad to have got it. But this almost implies that the writer must have an idiosyncrasy allied to his style. Here is another example. In the very beautiful story of *The Brushwood Boy* every one will remember that the discovery is made by the device of the girl being overheard singing the song in which she narrates her lifelong dream. It is essential to the story that the song should be pathetic and worthy. She was a musician, and had composed both the music and the words. Now one line in her refrain (or did her creator write it for her?) is this:—

We must go back with Policeman Day

As an apparition in the dream we did not quarrel with Policeman Day, for the dream is irresponsible; but in the song he is out of place, because the song is conscious art and responsible, and he is comic. An artist composing an emotional song would never have allowed the 'common country policeman' to imperil its ideality. Lack of humour is not among Mr. Kipling's faults; and since he can make fun of the policeman motif when he chooses, he must have a callosity somewhere on his artistic feelers, for else he would never have admitted the policeman into his song. We are 10 disposed to think that he may have infected himself, and that—to return to our comparison—he is in this respect just like Wordsworth, first, in deliberately choosing a particular kind of direct diction, and, secondly, in pushing it too far. If we should examine more closely into this matter we should be exceeding our limitations, and find ourselves asking, for instance, whether in the magnificent *Soldier and Sailor too* the quality of the swagger is wholly due to the poetic method with which it is so entirely agreeable.

Mr. Kipling has written some blank verse, and in *The 20 Sacrifice of Er-Heb* we find him adopting a form of it which was specialized some fifty years ago. Though this may not indicate a considered artistic preference, it is noteworthy that the form is simple and direct, and in so far congenial to him; but its constraints are artificial and monotonous, and its rhythms poor and short; in which respects it is unlike what we might have expected of him; and we have noticed no trace of originality in his treatment of it, although he can take pains with nothing without in some way distinguishing it. He has so true a feeling for the value 30 of words, and for the right cadences of idiomatic speech, and so vast a vocabulary, that his example is generally useful to a generation whose cultured speech-rhythms are so slovenly and uncertain. This is especially true of his more accentual verse, and it is on this account to be regretted

that out of his abundance he is sometimes tempted to overload his lines with the weight either of sound or of meaning, or of both at once; for this is bad example. In this respect he is to be contrasted with Wordsworth, for Wordsworth offends notoriously by the other extreme, though when his copious and throttling neck-cloth is loosened a fine diction flows fully, as in his description of Trinity College Chapel:—

Where the statue stood
Of Newton with his prism and silent face,
10 The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

Mr. Kipling's method seems to shut him out from such heights. We do not remember anything of this quality in his poems.

WORD-BOOKS

From *The Times Literary Supplement*, 4 August 1910

IT would seem as if in pure literature the classics of a dead language must have some advantage over those of a living language. First, because it must be an advantage to have the meaning of the words fixed, which is in some measure accomplished by shutting them out of currency; and
20 secondly, because any idealization of speech must be easier where the common terms are not familiarized by daily use and vulgarized by ordinary associations. It is for this latter reason that the *Arabian Nights*, for instance, is much better reading to us in an Italian translation than in our own English; and the completer enchantment which children find is greatly due to the comparative freshness of all language to them. For the same reason is it that any romantic tale will appear more romantic in an antique or foreign tongue than in our everyday speech. But as our
30 common speech has some associations which art is glad to be rid of, there are others the absence of which is as surely

a loss. For whether or not there be any greater nobility in our main conceptions, when we compare ourselves with the ancients, yet none would deny that the immense stores of our historic vocabulary gain in recognition and significance by being a still living tradition in unbroken continuity of actual growth. Shades of meaning more delicate than could ever be invented, intricate poetic allusion, with consequent command of emotion and adaptability to the most subtle varieties of feeling, glints of colour from all climes and times—these are qualities which give distinction to much 10 of the best of our modern literature. There is truly no kind of beauty more liable to mishandling, no artistic effect more uncertain and fugitive, than that produced by these half-tones, as we may call them; yet today in Europe they are the legitimate and natural wealth of our inheritance, and it would be pedantry to depreciate it. And if against this plasticity and subtlety of living speech we would balance the severer advantage which a dead language may be thought to possess in the simple definition of its terms—which would seem at first view indispensable to secure a 20 broad style, we shall find that there is some delusion. For, however the dictionaries may define the meaning of a Greek word, we cannot avoid interpreting it by aid of our modern feelings and associations. No sentiment is safe from the contamination of our shifted ideas; nor is the conscious exclusion of any conception or emotion the same as the ignorance of it. Or suppose we are contented to have stripped an old term of all adventitious and later association, it is left a naked nondescript, which we are unable to reclothe in the living nuances of emotion with which its contemporary 30 thought invested it. Scientific analysis is always thus intruding to stultify our satisfaction; and the reasoning is irreproachable that since, though a man were to spend his whole life in the task, it were impossible for him to think with the same thoughts as St. Paul or Plato thought with, it is

therefore out of his power to understand a single sentence of their writings exactly as they intended it.

We have not, however, to look far for consolation; we can quickly reassure ourselves that it is just as true that man is always the same as that he is always changing. It is demonstrable, no doubt, that absolute identity of understanding is out of our reach in our interpretations of ancient thought; but for that very reason we need not worry ourselves too punctiliously, nor be ashamed to admit that there
 10 is always something of the nature of delusion in our love of old literature. And in fact it is truer that man is always the same than that he is never the same. The universal mysterious force and unfathomably deep instincts which constitute all that can properly be termed life are but superficially affected by the conscious developments of our intellect; and it is exactly those fundamental things which are the proper subject-matter of all art. For in so far as human art is instinctive (as it seems originally to be), it is preposterous to suppose that its subject-matter can lie at all
 20 among our purely intellectual developments; while in so far as in cultivated societies it has become conscious of its aims and methods, it will still seem that the intellect is better able to deal artistically with what is outside it than with itself; for in this latter case it must become self-conscious, critical, and scientific.

Admitting, then, not only that it is impossible to exclude the constant flux of our thought from affecting our literary art, but that this flux is in itself desirable and a prolific source of beauty, we may also see that in dealing with the
 30 unchangeable things the highest literature, especially the best poetry, is wonderfully free from the great obstacle that the indefiniteness of its material would seem to oppose to it.

*Nee sine te qmcquam dias in luminis oras
 ExorituY, neque fit laetum neque amabile qmcquam.*

• • • • •

O, were it but my life
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.

• • • • •
O world, O life, O time,
On whose last steps I climb,
Trembling at that where I had stood before.

Almost any examples are convincing. The appeal is from emotion to emotion; and criticism of poetry is only wrestling with itself when it attempts analysis on a merely intellectual basis. We should not expect such a method to yield anything 10 more satisfactory than the analyses of the emotions themselves, as we find them in psychological treatises. Art is thus self-contained and stable; and science not only dislikes art for this very quality of permanence, but has actually been often led to deny the natural superiority and predominance of the primal instincts over the intellectual conceptions which she is always fabricating on the top of them.

Words are the material of literary art, and words are ideas; and what those ideas are is determined by the sense in which words have been used by those whose genius has 20 ruled the language. A dictionary is a book which collects authoritative uses; and it at once reveals that every word has several uses or meanings which it needs logic to discriminate. It is a pity that Lamb, in his *Detached Thoughts on Books*, never told us what he thought of Johnson's Dictionary; whether he held it worthy to rank with his beloved Burton and Browne, or whether he would have set it between Gibbon and the backgammon-board. He was himself careful of words, and knew how tenderly they should be used; and one could believe that he might have cherished a 30 fantastic devotion towards a book so full of extracts. But had he really ever made friends with the Dictionary, he would have told us. With his peculiar personal idiosyncrasy, his individual irresponsible taste, he would, likely enough,

have felt some prudish scruple at the idea of getting any knowledge of his craft at second-hand; and he could never have stomached the pedantry of some of Johnson's authorities. Of Robert Browning it is recorded that when he determined to devote himself to poetry, he read the whole of Johnson's Dictionary through, just as Gibbon, to qualify himself for his great historical task, studied the itineraries of the Roman Empire; and the Doctor's two original folios with their uncurtailed quotations are no bad reading; they are a
 10 magnificent failure to accomplish an impossible feat—that is, to compile a dictionary such as a literary artist would love to possess.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

From An Address to the Swindon Branch of the Workers' Educational Association, October 26, 1916

PHILOSOPHERS have from time to time drawn up ideal schemes of government based on the aim of greatest happiness, Utopias, as they are called; but the word Utopia has come to mean a state of society presumably desirable, but only feasible if men were different from what they really are. What is usually depicted is a small State working harmoniously on a democratic or social basis; and in small States
 20 the social basis can be worked, where home-life is simple, and external complications generally absent. Small village communities in a sort of patriarchal simplicity meet together to confer, the members are all personally known to one another, and they elect for their head and representative a man whom they have known personally all their lives. These representatives are gathered into wider councils, and in this way the common interests are easily and honestly concentrated. But in larger States these essential simplicities do not exist—and the small numbers are essential; for, as
 30 the numbers increase the separate members necessarily lose

their mutual personal relationship; and, as they cannot know their representative personally, they elect some plausible fellow, the man who flatters them most, or promises them the most immediate advantages. Such leaders are typically men of some oratorical power, who profess politics for the love of self-importance, or for private gain; and when such men meet in a national parliament there is neither honesty nor wisdom in their counsels.

Let me remind you that Athens—that famous example of successful democracy—was not a real democracy. It was 10 served by a slave population: and that, you know, avoids the main difficulty of allowing the vote of the majority to rule—because the slave-workers had no vote. We have modern examples. The United States is an example of an honest and well-considered attempt at democracy on a large scale. Its isolation from the Old World and the wide territories that were at its disposal allowed it an exceptional term of prosperity; but its present condition is not such as to convert me. And we can look nearer home: our own democracy: our Parliament in those years before the war broke 20 out: it was a spectacle to justify all the patriotic fear that reasonable people felt. I will spare you the picture. Enough to say that the Prussian statesmen, who were observing us with jealous attention, thought that it was impossible that we could pull ourselves together; so they set off on the war-path. And they are still exhibiting to us the very superior organization of an autocracy.

But the unexpected happened. The British democracy slowly, slowly, slowly awoke to the situation. I confess that I did not expect this; much as I hoped for it. I did not think 30 that the working-men of England would perceive that the strife was between democracy and militarism; that, if Prussia won, then the hope of democracy was crushed for ever. Ever is hardly too big a word. The situation now is that you have gone in determined to win; and it lies with

you to be faithful to the end, and to see perhaps more clearly than you yet do, that you must sacrifice all else, all present considerations, to the one purpose of a victory that shall deliver the earth from terrorism, tyranny, and slavery.

Now you who are met here today not only know all this, but you have also come to be convinced that an uneducated democracy can never be stable. Education is necessary for strength and stability, and some of you at least have a
 10 wholesome appetite for the requisite food. And since you cannot get your education without leisure, and cannot have leisure without some easement of the conditions of labour, and this reform involves legislation, you claim such legislation. If our democracy is to be stable, such legislation is imperative. Here I am with you all along: and it is of this education that I shall speak—not of politics nor of war. . . .

What then is education ?

To educate means to draw out, and if we are to seek to draw out the human mind we must first have some clear
 20 notion as to what the mind is like, of what sort those faculties are which are both the object and means of education.

Suppose some one should tell us that education is the development and exercise of human Reason.

Now Reason is the intellectual faculty, which distinguishes man from the brutes, and, so far as we know, man is the only form of life in which conscious Reason exists—for the rudiments of it which we find in some animals are negligible. It is the intellectual quality which has conquered material
 30 obstacles and raised man from a state of savagery to his present condition. It judges itself to be the unique agent of all his knowledge and attainment, and being not only his highest mental power but the consciousness of it, he is perhaps almost incapable of imagining anything higher. Thus Aristotle, in his definition of God as the eternal mind and

first cause of all, supposes the Mind of God, though incomparably more perfect, to be of the same nature as the Reason of man. I could not myself assent to this assumption. But let that pass. We may readily admit that Reason is man's highest intellectual faculty. Let us ask Reason to tell us something about the other faculties of the mind.

We must remember that Reason is the only tool that we have to work with, and that a tool cannot work on itself. Temper and sharpen it as you may, your chisel cannot cut itself. We should therefore not expect too much. 10

Now, first of all, our Reason is distinguished by being a conscious process: for example, I know at this moment what I am driving at, and you consciously take cognizance of my statements; and we are agreed that animals cannot do this sort of thing. But though they lack our logical Reason, we see that they have some other kind of mental activity whereby they are able to act rightly, with an ingenuity that often baffles our conscious skill, and a method which escapes our Reason to unravel. One or two examples will suffice. In the insect world it is not uncommon to find 20 that an insect which has but a few weeks of life will lay hundreds of eggs—of the nature and purpose of which it can have absolutely no reasonable knowledge—yet it will spend the chief part of its short life in the careful disposal of these eggs in the manner best calculated to ensure their survival, and thereby the continuation of the species—concerning all which again it can know nothing; nor could all our Reason inform it. Again, I have read of the horse, that on the wide American prairies a horse-dealer will often make a circuit of a hundred miles or more, visiting the farms and 30 settlements, and buying at each what beasts he may. If, in any part of his round, a horse escapes from his drove, it will return in a straight line to its native homestead. It does not retrace its steps, but takes a bee-line, as it is called, from the spot where it escapes to the spot whence it was taken.

Such examples could be multiplied indefinitely. It does not matter which you may choose: they are all alike in principle. They are often called 'the marvels of Instinct', by which is implied that we wonder at them, because we cannot understand them. But if they are the rule, and they are the rule in animal behaviour, there must be something wrong in our way of thinking if we find ourselves wondering at them as strange. I do not forbid myself to marvel: I mean that a theory of mind is self-condemned if it has to treat as
10 an exception what it finds to be a rule.

It is plain that there is a sort of mind which is not our logical Reason, but which performs purposive actions without conscience of their purpose; or if it have conscience of a purpose (as we may suppose the homing horse to have), yet it accomplishes that purpose without knowing how.

Whether mankind when in a savage state ever possessed very much of this sort of instinctive faculty we cannot tell. It is certain that we now perform by the aid of logical Reason and deliberation most of those purposive acts which
20 animals perform without reasoning; but we have too much in common with the lower animals to suppose that we can be lacking in the whole sphere of that unconscious faculty so universally possessed by them. And it has never been questioned that we share with them the great fundamental Instincts (self-preservation, and so on)—these are present in children and adults. What I wish to make clear is that beside these universal primal Instincts (which are the motive power of all animal life) we have a vast unconscious Mind that is always active, and a much vaster personal experience
30 than our conscious Reason can pretend to.

A simple consideration will explain what I mean. If I walk down the street with my mind busily engaged and absorbed in some remote train of thought, I observe nothing (though automatically I guide my steps none the worse for that); but afterwards, when I am aroused from my abstrac-

tion, I may remember to have seen certain persons or things on my way. The longer my abstraction continues, the less I recall: but that I consciously remember anything which I did not consciously observe at the time, shows that experience was unconsciously recorded; and much that I never remember, and never shall remember, was likewise recorded. It is even probable, with some of us at least, that when we peruse a column of the newspaper, our eyes may receive impressions from the neighbouring columns, and convey to the mind, through the brain, information concerning wholly 10 unrelated matters; although the Conscience (I mean the conscious Reason) takes no note of them. They enter the mind unperceived; and this sort of unconscious experience is always going on.

We have no conscious memory of this unconscious experience. Any experience which we observed and were conscious of at the time, we are able, more or less, to recall at will and reason upon. But our will has no power of recalling those other items of personal knowledge that have been unconsciously absorbed. But they are not for that dead or 20 inactive. They are absorbed and organized. So that a man holds, hidden away from his memory, a vaster wealth of knowledge than he is aware of, or can draw on at pleasure.

One might map out the strata of the mind in a sort of spatial diagram of three layers, the deepest being the inherited animal Instincts; the uppermost the conscious Intellect or Reason; and between these two would lie the region of unconscious personal knowledge acquired during life; the greater part of which is entirely unconscious, while the upper part of it would be mixed up with the memories 30 of conscious]experience. This dim middle place is the magazine of our common sense; it is the garden where our ideals grow, and its spontaneous fruiting is genius.

We must not be deceived by the simplicity of such a diagram. Its use is to give definition to the vague terms that

we are driven to use in talking of the functions of the Mind. And I think it is of no use to talk of the Mind and of its education unless we recognize how large and trustworthy a portion of it lies in this intermediate state between the animal Instincts and the conscious Reason.

Orthodox philosophy dislikes, and even repudiates, the term subconscious Mind, or unconscious Mind. It urges that the word Mind presupposes self-consciousness. But think what really happens, and how it is unconsciously and not
10 consciously that each man's Mind grows to be what it is. A man is born with certain feelings and likings—and it is in this respect that men most differ—and as they grow up in what is called their environment, their bias and special predispositions unconsciously select and organize their experiences to feed and develop their special liking; each man differently, as we may see in our children, how one child with a musical turn will observe sounds, another with a mechanical turn will be delighted by taking a clock to
20 pieces, while a born painter will be unhappy without a box of colours. These inborn feelings and likings are—together with the great primal Instincts and Passions—the motive power of all our conduct, and they lie like an engine-room hidden away in the basement. And moral philosophers explain that the Reason is set over them to regulate them: its chief function in this respect being to observe and govern. All will agree: for example, Love and Hatred are motive inborn forces; Reason approves Love but disapproves of Hatred as a working principle, and keeps it under.

Art and Morals were not invented by Reason. They come
30 to life and are nourished in this middle section. Every man is born with a 'desire of Beauty' or of 'Good' in some degree and in some kind, and he instinctively feeds that desire or liking on what is agreeable to it. He selects. Consider any object presented to the senses, how various and almost infinite its qualities are, and how impossible it is for any

man, even the most trained observer, to perceive them all. Each will first perceive those qualities that are most nearly related to him and that appeal to his liking. And in this way he feeds his own strength, and develops his native faculty. And this unconsciously growing self gradually comes to observe itself, becomes conscious, and takes Reason for its guide.

The purpose of education is to draw out or educate this inborn love of Beauty. And if any of you doubt whether there is such a thing, I do not think that it matters what you 10 call it, if you admit (what you cannot deny) that you have a desire, and that that desire is for something 'better' or 'good'. That desire—whatever you may call it—the Greeks called the Desire of Beauty or the Desire of Good; and you will find it difficult to get behind that, or to substitute anything for it. It is what has brought you here this afternoon; it is what is making me talk to you. And it is the basis of our Religion. . . .

Vulgarity—that is our national blemish and sin. And if I had begun my talk with it I should not have got very far 20 yet. It is blindness to Values; it is spiritual death. It pervades all classes: but the middle classes are the most deeply infected, and they stand as a dense barrier between you and the higher education. It is seen outwardly in their manner of life, their petty class distinctions, and uneasy pretensions to be just a little better off than they are; the waste of their money in aping art and luxury, by which they only make themselves ridiculous and more uncomfortable; their incapacity to see that simplicity, honesty, and thrift are fair and good, while their pitiful ambitions and restless affecta- 30 tions are contemptible. I hope that *all pretension* is as shocking to you as it must be familiar. May God grant that our present sorrows and trials and the searching of our hearts may force on us a spiritual distinction of the true Values of life, and that the stubborn necessities of thrift may compel

us to see the sin of self-indulgence and the graces of simplicity. Remember how it is because we have set our Rights so much above our Duties that we are now harrowed by this awful excess of Duty; and that it is at the feet of the idol of our old self-seeking that our dearest are devotedly sacrificing their young lives.

POETIC DICTION

From *The Forum*, May 1923

POETIC Diction is a wide subject, and this paper will deal with only one little corner of it; it will examine the dislike which poets of today exhibit towards the traditional forms: 10 and since even this, to be thorough, would involve a completer description of the traditional forms than a short discourse allows of, we must be contented to outline the situation with a few typical illustrations.

The revolt against the old diction is a reaction which in its general attitude is rational: and it is in line with the reaction of 'The Lake School' of Poetry, familiar to all students in Wordsworth's statement, and Coleridge's criticism and correction of that statement in his 'Biographia Literaria'. Both movements alike protest against all 20 archaisms of vocabulary and grammar and what are called literary forms, and plead for the simple terms and direct forms of common speech.

As my method is to be by illustration, I will begin with an extreme example, Milton's *Lycidas*, a poem which, though Dr. Johnson's common-sense condemned it without reserve, has in spite of the extravagance of its conventions grown in favour, and firmly holds its claim to be one of the most beautiful of the great masterpieces of English verse.

Only a few days ago I received a new German translation 30 of it, in the preface whereto it is stated to be 'Ein Gipfel,

vielleicht der Gipfel aller schäferlichen, aller Renaissance-lyrik, unerreicht die Schönheit u. s. w.¹

The undisguised conventionality of *Lycidas* is sufficiently obvious in its properties. Muses, Fauns, Satyrs and Nymphs, with Druids and River-gods associate with St. Peter and the Pope, and in their company a new River-god, Camus, invented on a bogus etymology: but the remoteness from common-sense which offended Dr. Johnson can be fully exposed by quoting a single line: the poet bewailing the death of a college friend by shipwreck in the Irish Channel, 10 concludes the section of his lament over the unburied body in these words:

And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth!

We have to face the fact that this strange and meaningless invocation does not sound frigid or foolish in the poem. Rather it is evident that it was the very strength of the poet's feeling that has forced the transmutation of his memories and of the practical aspects of life into a dreamy passionate flux, where all is so heightened and inspired that we do not wonder to find embedded therein the clear 20 prophecy of a conspicuous historical event: though the whole of literature can scarcely show any comparable example.

This is poetic magic. Certainly it was not to common-sense that Milton turned for consolation; and a work of sheer beauty was the only worthy offering that Poetry could make.

After reading *Lycidas* let us see how it is with Shelley's *Adonais*. Though as a whole this poem cannot compete with Milton, yet it contains lines and passages of unsurpassable beauty, both of diction and verse, and it is worthy to 30 be compared; and since (especially towards the end) it is in closer contact with our natural expression of feeling, it appeals more strongly to some tastes. Well, the properties are as literary as in Milton. We have the Muses and Urania:

Milton's 'where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep ?' becomes 'where wert thou mighty Mother, when he lay ?' and in company with Urania we have Albion and Cain and Apollo and the Wandering Jew and living persons, all magisterially blended by Shelley's usual phantasmagoria. And in one respect he is even more conventional or pedantic than Milton, because he borrows more directly from his Greek models, and with marvellous Englishing makes Hellenic beauties his own. Moreover he works Bion's
 10 machinery: Aphrodite bewailing Adonis becomes Urania bewailing Keats—the difference in the circumstances needing all the resources of his free symbolism to adapt it. We must not, however, be led away from the question of mere diction, and I mentioned this point merely to show that Shelley's diction is more conventional than Milton's and sometimes when it least appears to be so, because many of its beauties are more directly borrowed. He has, indeed, no one line to match Milton's call to the dolphins, but many which common-sense would rate as equally extravagant.

20 Thirdly, let us look at Arnold's *Thyrsis*, a Victorian poem in direct line with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, consciously affiliated with them and plainly inspired by Milton. I remember many years ago how Ingram By water, when we were both young, contended against me that *Thyrsis* was as good a poem as *Lycidas*: I do not know how far he was in earnest.

Now in Arnold's poem he and his friend are Corydon and Thyrsis, they have their shepherd's pipes, and the Hellenic properties are practically the same as Milton's and Shelley's; but they are frankly set in a modern English landscape and
 30 introduced naturally as actual figures of the mental world wherein the two friends had lived and loved. Their mutual sympathy in this symbolism makes it possible almost to confound Enna with Cumnor, and that is skilfully accomplished, but amid the strong details of native colour and homely affections we have an Ionian folk-tale of obscure

antiquity, the relevancy of which is hardly cleared up by a long note. Since there is no trace of Christian symbolism in the poem, the Properties are simpler than Milton's or Shelley's, and the Diction may be styled Wordsworthian; it would hardly have offended Dr. Johnson: it is plainly not intended to be in what Arnold has called 'the grand style', and he was never in danger of attempting Shelley's heavenward flights, which he thought ineffectual. Thus we may say that, compared with *Lycidas* and *Adonais*, Arnold's *Thyrsis* is in simplified diction.

10

What then is the effect of such a diction? In judging this we must remember that Arnold is not Milton, and I am probably myself too much biased in favour of the greater poet: but if a 'rational' diction is any decided poetic advantage, then that advantage should appear, whereas the impression that *Thyrsis* makes on me when I compare it with *Lycidas* is that it lacks in passion, as if it were a handling of emotions rather than the compelling utterance of them, and so far as that must have the effect of insincerity it is the last thing that we should expect from the exclusion of con- 20
ventions. It does not carry the same conviction of distress that *Lycidas* does; neither the friendship nor the sorrow seems so profound, and the whole poem, though it is agreeable reading, leaves one cold at the end. This might in great part be accounted for by its fanciful argument and by the poet's mentality, nor can I pretend to decide how much is due to the diction: the example must remain a negative one; but in illustration, I will quote a passage from *Thyrsis* where Arnold follows Milton in moralizing on the 'vanity' of the sincerest human effort in the search for ideal Truth; 30
he has

This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
Tis not in the world's market bought and sold!
But the smooth-slipping weeks

Drop by, and leave its seeker still untired;
 Out of the heed of mortals he is gone,
 He wends unfollow'd, he must house alone;
 Yet on he fares, by his own heart inspired.

Milton has

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
 (That last infirmity of Noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious dayes;
 But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
 10 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind *Fury* with th' abhorred shears,
 And slits the thinspun life, 'But not the praise,'
Phoebus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears. . . .

and so on, and this in spite of old *Phoebus* and the bad grammatical inversion in the first line.

It is difficult to dissociate the quality of Diction from two other matters, namely, Properties and Keeping. Properties is a term borrowed from the stage. The mixture of Greek and Christian types in *Lycidas* and *Adonais* is a good
 20 example of Properties. The term Keeping is taken from Painting and has no convenient synonym, but it may be explained as the harmonizing of the artistic medium, and since Diction is the chief means in the harmonizing of Properties, it would seem that any restriction or limitation of the Diction must tend to limit the Properties, since without artistic keeping their absurdities would be exposed.

Dr. Johnson's common-sense might contend that all Properties were absurd if their absurdity were merely disguised by Keeping. But in aesthetic no Property is absurd if it is
 30 in Keeping. This does not decide what Properties should be used. Different Properties are indispensable for different imaginative effects. Good Keeping is a first essential in all good writing, and especially in poetry. Perhaps it is evident here that the poorer the Properties are, the less call will they make on diction for their keeping, although the simplest

Properties are on their own plane no less exigent: and again' the higher the poet's command of diction, the wider may be the field of his Properties. Also, and this is a very practical point, if a writer with no command of imaginative diction should use such Properties as are difficult of harmonization, he will discredit both the Properties and the Diction.

This is as it should be. In all fields of Art the imitators are far more numerous than the artists, and they will copy the externals, in poetry the Versification and the Diction, which in their hands become futile. Criticism does not assist art 10 by exposing such incompetencies: nor can it be praised for philanthropic intention, because dabbling in the arts is one of the most harmless pleasures of life: there may be more to be said for it than for dabbling in criticism as I am doing here.

THE ART OF POETRY

From *The Necessity of Poetry, An Address given to the Tredegar and District Co-operative Society, Nov. 22, 1917*

I AM here to talk about Poetry, and you little think how surprised you ought to be. I have refused many invitations to lecture on Poetry: but most of us nowadays are doing what we most dislike, and it has come about that I have myself chosen the subject.

Let me explain why an artist is unwilling to discourse on 20 his own art. The fact is that in every art it is only the formal side which can be formulated; and that is not what people congregate to hear about, when they call for Art-lectures. The grammar of any art is dry and unintelligible to the layman: it seems unrelated to the magic of its delight. In Poetry it is even deemed beneath the dignity of a poet to betray any consciousness of such detail. But, if you bid the artist leave this dull and solid ground to expatiate on Beauty, you invite him on to a field where speculations

appear to him fanciful and unsound: and the venture cannot rashly be indulged in.

However here I am; and I hope to give such a theoretic view of the fundamental basis of Poetry as may interest us both, and justify the claim of Poetry to that high place which is and always has been granted to it by almost universal consent in all countries and languages.

In a little house which I rented for a month of last summer a volume of Macaulay's *Essays* stood on the shelves—
 10 an inscription in it recorded how it had been won by its owner in a whist-drive—and I took it up, and read the greater part of it. I fear that I risk losing either your esteem or your complete confidence, when I say that this classical work was almost new to me. But, if I had never read much in it before, I now made up for past indolence or prejudice; and I was taken aback when I found Macaulay praising Shelley in these terms:

'We doubt (he says) whether any modern poet has possessed in an equal degree some of the highest qualities of the greatest
 20 ancient masters. The words Bard and Inspiration, which seem so cold and affected when applied to other modern writers, have a perfect propriety when applied to him. He was not an author but a bard. His poetry seems not to have been an art but an inspiration.'

It is this magic of language, which won the wide-ranging but somewhat uncongenial mind of Macaulay, that I intend to explore; and I shall avoid philosophical terms and questionable assumptions.

Words the medium of Poetry

30 Poetry is an Art,—that is, it is one of the Fine Arts,—and, using the word in this recognized sense, all Art is the expression of Ideas in some sensuous material or medium. And the Ideas, in taking material forms of beauty, make a direct appeal to the emotions through the senses.

Thus the material or medium, as it is called, of Sculpture is stone^or marble, and so on; the medium of Painting is colours; the medium of Music is sound; and the medium of Poetry is words.

NOW While it" would be manifestly preposterous to begin the study of Sculpture by an examination of stones, you will admit that in Painting a knowledge of Colours is less remote, and is even a necessary equipment of the artist: and you will further grant that in Music the study of the Sounds—i.e. the notes of the scale and their mutual rela- 10 tions—is an indispensable preliminary. So that in these three Arts, if they are taken in this order, Sculpture, Painting, Music, we see the medium in its relation to the Art rising step by step in significance: and I think it is evident that in Poetry the importance of the material is even greater than it is in Music; and the reason is very plain.

All Art, we said, was the expression of Ideas in a sensuous medium. Now Words, the medium of Poetry, actually are Ideas; whereas neither Stone nor Colour nor mere Sound can be called Ideas, though they seem in this order to make 20 a gradual approach towards them.

I hope this may reconcile you to the method of inquiring into Poetry by the examination of Words. I propose to consider Words, first as Ideas, secondly as Vocal Sounds.

Words as Ideas

Whether or no the first step of human language was to recognize certain vocal sounds as signs or symbols of objects perceived by the senses, we must now in our perfected speech admit the nouns or names of objects to be the simplest elements. 30

But the name of an object must have a different meaning to different persons, according as they know more or less about it; and it must convey a different emotion as they are differently affected towards it. And since knowledge

concerning any one thing is really of an infinite character,—for complete knowledge of any one thing would include its relations to everything else, which is more knowledge than any man may possess—these words, which appear so simple as mere names of objects, are, each one of them, of wide capacity of signification; and pass from being names of definite objects to being names of various and indefinite ideas or conceptions of things.

It is impossible to prevent a name from being the name
10 of an idea; and (unless we make the doubtful exception of certain abstract ideas) it is impossible to keep the idea always similar and definite.

It is really a matter for wonder how rational intercourse through the medium of language can be so complete and easy as it is, when the ideas conveyed by the words are so different in each person. And yet in common talk and the ordinary business of life we find little inconvenience from the discrepancy of our ideas, and usually disregard it. A man who wants to go from London to Manchester, and is
20 informed that his train will leave Euston at 10 a.m., and arrive at Manchester about 3 p.m., has no occasion to trouble himself because his informant's idea of Manchester is totally dissimilar to his own. We need not labour this point. All our practical life is carried on in this way, and whether a man speak or write, we say that he speaks or writes well, according as his meaning is plain, his ideas clear, and his language unambiguous. And this current speech, which is a most elaborate instrument,—for it has symbols not only for all the objects of the senses, but for actions and emotions, and
30 the subtlest notions of our intellect, and no less for their relations to each other—is accommodated by delicate self-adjustment to the practical needs of life, and has been further elaborated by Reason to become the sufficient apparatus for all our business, politics, science, history, and law, and whatever else is concerned with human affairs;

and through printing it has become the indestructible storehouse of human knowledge. So that one may well inquire what more could be desired or expected of it; and it is common to find that practical folk call Poetry' tosh', and maintain that if you have anything to say, it is best to say it as simply as possible.

Sir Isaac Newton, of blessed memory, wrote a book on the Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms: and the first words of his introduction are these:

'The Greek Antiquities are full of Poetical fictions, because 10
the Greeks wrote nothing in prose before the conquest of Asia by Cyrus the Persian. Then Pherecydes Scyrius and Cadmus Milesius introduced the writing in prose,'

Now whatever appreciation or respect Newton may have had for the *Iliad*, he is complaining that it was of no use to him as a scientific historian, and I imagine him asking why those old poets could not tell us plainly what they really knew, instead of inventing 'irrelevant false fancies' about the Gods, and things that never were?

The opposition which he implies between Poetry and 20
Prose cannot be absolutely insisted on: but we may take him to witness that Poetry has a field of its own, which is repudiated by Science as well as by Common-sense. The distinction is very real. The claim of prose is obviously high, and I could say more to exalt it: what I have to say will come later.

Insufficiency of Philosophy and Science

And here I would remind you of something which amid the routine and practical concerns of life we are apt to lose sight of,—and that is the incomplete and insufficient charac- 30
ter of our best knowledge. I do not mean those individual differences that I have spoken of, nor that limitation which each one of us must feel if we compare ourselves with the

wisest: but,—take the wisest man on earth, or all the wisest that have ever lived, the one thing that they agree about is that the human intellect is incapable of solving the profounder problems of life, with which we are faced when we begin to think.

I am saying nothing derogatory of science and philosophy, nor need one be in any sense a sceptic in affirming that our highest efforts of intellect do not inform us even on that primary interest of all, namely for what purpose
10 mankind exists on the earth, nor whether there be any such purpose. The so-called Laws of Nature, which we imagine to rule us, are but the latest improvements of our own most satisfactory guesses concerning the physical order of the universe: and when we ask how it is that our material bodies are able to be conscious of themselves, and to think, not only have we no answer, but we cannot imagine any *kind* of possible explanation.

Man does not know, and maybe never will know what he is. Let me quote the utterance of the good-hearted atheist
20 in Anatole France's recent novel. He speaks frankly and typically as a convinced scientist, thus:

'Nature, my only mistress and my sole teacher, has never given me any sign that she would have me think the life of a man to be of any value: on the contrary she informs me by all manner of indications that it is of no account whatever. The one final cause of all living creatures seems to be that they should be the food of other living creatures, who are themselves destined to the same end. Murder has her sanction. . . . And yet I must confess that there is something rebellious in my
30 instinct; for I do not like to see blood flow: and that is a weakness from which all my philosophy has never been able to wean me.'

He cannot reconcile his better human feelings with his Epicurean science.

How does the brag of scientific learning, the vaunt of its

scrupulous well-informed prose look now ? Does it not seem that in trying to make our ideas definite we are confining ourselves to a method which refuses to deal with the mysteries of life ? and is driven to that refusal not because it can deny the mysteries, but only because it can make nothing of them ? Are we not building up our language into something of a prison house ? And is it not just because they have never done this, that untaught men are often more contented and at home in the world, far more like the ideal 'wise man' than the best instructed men of science ?

10

THE ORDER OF WORDS

From The Necessity of Poetry

HOWEVER spontaneously the perfect poem may spring up in the poet's mind, like a melody in the mind of Mozart, the conditions to be fulfilled—over and above the elaboration of the metre—are

First, the right words: secondly, those words in the right order: thirdly, the agreeable sound of them in sequence.

And these three Tightnesses are the factors of style, that supreme gift which immortalizes the utterance of such different minds as Blaise Pascal and Robert Burns: for the laws are very similar in prose and in poetry. I shall pass 20 them over, because such a brief account of them as we should have time for would be dull.¹

¹ If any one should be curious to see how dull, he may read to the end of this note, which I append for the sake of completeness.

First as to the choice of words. What words are the right words in poetic diction ? Plainly their sound must be one ruling consideration—as may be proved by the ill effect of extreme dissonance, yet their chief power lies either in their absolute correctness, or in what is called their suggestiveness, and this, which is the greater poetic beauty, lurks commonly in the fringes of the concepts, as was explained when we spoke of words as ideas. When correctness and

On order of words

But I think I may venture a short account of order. What is meant by a right *ORDER of words* ? The principle is important

suggestiveness coincide their power can be so great that quality of sound is sometimes outclassed; and harshness is unheeded. This we willingly concede to the imperfection of language, which is not so constituted as to combine all excellencies, whence the lesser must give way. Our English words especially have been shamefully and shabbily degraded, and are daily worsening, so as to be often very ill-adapted for poetic use. And the swarming homophones need special treatment.

As to the sound of words in sequence. Pure Euphony, i.e. the agreeable sound of a sequence of syllables, is as difficult a subject as rhythm: and it is like rhythm in this, that the ultimate judge is the expert ear, which depends on a natural gift: and again, as in rhythm, there are certain conditions which almost all men would agree to call pleasant, and others which they would deem unpleasant, but there is no universal principle that can be adduced to check the vagaries of taste or false fancy, since what theories have been proposed are themselves examples of false fancy. Either, for instance, that the vowels correspond respectively to the primary colours, and should be grouped as those colours should be. or that euphony is actually a musical melody made by the inherent pitch of the vowels, the sequences of which must be determined exactly as if we were composing a musical air of those inherent notes. The great indefinable complication is that this euphony, especially in poetry, is fused with the meaning, and this fusion of sound and sense is the magic of the greatest poetry. But even where the poet's success is most conspicuous and convincing, we are often quite unable to determine on what it actually depends it is known only by its effects.

In English we find, strangely enough, that the eye comes meddling in with the business of the ear, and causes delusion. Our words are so commonly spelt so differently from their pronunciation that few writers know what sounds they are dictating; the word is a visible thing, 'pleasant to the eye and desirable to make one wise', it is perhaps of ancient and high descent, with a heroic history, it comes 'trailing clouds of glory': but that it has been phonetically degraded into an unworthy or ugly sound is overlooked.

I might give as an example the word *Dcedal* in the [passage already quoted] from Shelley The original Greek word had a pleasant sound and a rich familiar signification: in English it has no meaning for most men, and is pronounced *deedle* (like *needle*), and if it were so spelt I

and very simple, but in application so subtle that it is seldom recognized. You may easily come at it by imagining the talk of savages in a language that has no grammar. In such a language a speaker could not make himself understood except by putting his words in a certain order. If, for instance, he wished to tell you that he went from one place to another, from *A* to *B*, and had no prepositions like our *to* and *'row*, he would have to put *A* first and *B* second; that is, he would have to set his nouns in the order in which he wished the idea of his movement to enter your mind. And 10 this principle remains the primary law of order in good speech, whether prose or poetry: the words should be in the order of the ideas; and poetry differs from prose only in its more aesthetic and subtler conception of the proper sequence, and in the greater artifices that it is able to employ, and the greater difficulties that it has to overcome.

There are all manner of exceptions to this rule; but the most apparent inconsistencies are manifestly dependent on the primary value of the rule: for instance, an idea in an unexpected position in the sentence is often most effective: 20 but the surprise is due to its being either grammatically or conceptually out of order.

The commonest cause of ineffective expression in bad writers of verse is that they choose their grammar so as to set the words that they wish to use in the order most convenient to the metre. The born writer or speaker is the man whose ideas flow spontaneously in a simple grammar which

doubt if any poet would use it. Shakespeare might have made fun of it in Peter Quince's play, and have set *diddle* alongside of *Phibbus* and *Ninny* for the use of that immortal actor, bully Bottom.

Euphony must also include the purely musical effects of a metre, when this is in delicate agreement with the mood of the poem: it so enhances the emotional effect of a harmonious sequence of words as to overrule common proprieties of order, and the melody will require that the sonorous words shall respect its intention and fall into the positions that it prescribes.

preserves the right order of ideas. A fixed poetic metre must of course increase the difficulty of right order, and thus heighten the beauty and triumph and rarity of full success.

RELATION OF POETRY TO MORALS AND RELIGION

From The Necessity of Poetry

THE view of Poetry which I have presented to you suggests two enormous questions, namely, the relation of Poetry to Morals and to Religion: for it is evident that the basis of all three must be the same, that is, they all spring from those universal primary emotions of Man's Spirit, which lead us naturally towards Beauty and Truth. Indeed the difficulty
10 here is not in relating Poetry with Morals and Religion, but in discriminating between them: for we might almost contend that Morals is that part of Poetry which deals with conduct, and Religion that part of it which deals with the idea of God.

Morals

As for Morals. If you read the moral philosophers much you will find a very dry corpus of irreconcilable doctrines, which bear no comparison with what the poets can give you. The Sermon on the Mount you will recognize to be an
20 inspired moral poem, which is rejected by the philosophers.

On this vast subject I shall offer only one practical remark, which is this:

You will often hear it asserted, as an enlightened doctrine, that Art has nothing to do with Morality: Art, you will be assured, is non-moral.

Now this is true only in so far as we take Morals to mean the conventional code of conduct recognized by the society to which we happen to belong. Art, it is true, has little to

do with that. But pure Ethics is man's moral beauty, and can no more be dissociated from Art than any other kind of beauty, and, being man's highest beauty, it has the very first claim to recognition.

Morals can be excluded from Art only by the school which maintains that Art is nothing but competent *Expression*, and that, since what I call ugly can be as competently expressed as what I call beautiful, Art can make no distinction. It must be admitted that no strict line of distinction can be drawn, and that the average man's conception of 10 beauty is absurdly limited and conventional; also that as much admirable skill may be used in the expression of crime as of virtue and so on: the portrait of a man suffering from confluent small-pox might thus be a masterpiece; but if theorists assert that all these things are equally beautiful because equally capable of competent expression, and that such expression (which expression after all produces different impressions on different minds) makes all things equally beautiful,—to this I reply that we live in a free country where every one may think and say what he pleases. 20

The championship of ugliness seems to be but a part of the general denial of the ordinary distinctions between good and bad of all kinds. The argument is this. It is pointed out that the distinction which is commonly drawn between beautiful and ugly or good and bad is merely due to mankind seeing all things from a human point of view. But this is the only possible point of view for mankind to take: his pretended universal standpoint is really only one particular attitude of his mind: for it is inconceivable that the 'universality' which he imagines can be a complete universality, 30 or anything like it: and if it was so, then the object of introducing it into art could only be to make art inhuman; which is absurd.

At least that is how the case appears to me; but this summary way of disposing of it neglects many side issues,

on which agreement is not to be expected nor wholly to be desired.

Religion

As to the relation of Poetry to Religion. True Religion, the conviction and habit of a personal communion between the soul and God, is of too unique and jealous a temper to allow of any artistic predominance: and yet we find the best expression of it in Poetry: indeed the poetic expression of the spiritual life is of such force that its beauty may hold
10 the mind in slavery to false ideals.

I believe it to be greatly due to this that the English people are still mentally enslaved to a conception of God altogether unworthy and incompatible with our better notions: and, if it is the old Hebrew poetry which is greatly responsible for this delusion, then it seems reasonable to look to our own poets for our release.

On this general question of religion I shall take only that one point. We have spiritually outgrown the theology of the Reformation, and our churches, in endeavouring to make
20 their obsolete ideals work, find their most effective agent in the beauty of our English translation of the Old Testament which, while secular art was in decay, captured the artistic susceptibility of the people.

Art was discouraged by the Reformers, it was uncongenial to their furious and somewhat gross minds; and it was at the cost of the destruction of a priceless heritage of medieval art that they got rid of their mental servitude to Papistry, which its beauty embellished and sanctified. That alliance of art with the monstrous ecclesiastical system which Rome
30 had built on the Gospels drove art into disrepute: but since man cannot live in the absence of all ideals of beauty, the people satisfied their craving for it by the beauty of the religious literature, when the Bible was put into every man's hands. Art was thus diverted, and its place appropriated by

the religious ideals of the Reformation; but these being archaic and harsh, and in some respects a real defection from Christian law to the Mosaic, and from one point of view a political compromise, the substitute daily grew less convincing and satisfying, and now, when its ideal, if ever it had one, is practically dead, our people have neither one thing nor the other. Religion and art have equally suffered.

The Christian churches will not leave the old ruts. The Pope still hankers after temporal power, and to get it would crown Tiglath-Pileser in St. Peter's, while our Protestant 10 church still begins its morning devotions by singing of 'God swearing in his wrath that his people should not enter into his rest'.

Now in the religion of Christ, which, whether we will it or not, whether we know it or not, is deeply ingrained in our heart's reverence and the life of our souls, and is ever rebuking and overruling our conduct—in this world-conquering Christianity the essentials are love and unity and brotherhood. But look at the Protestant sects, all quarrelling about crude absurdities and ridiculous un- 20 essentials. And ask yourselves how the Church shall be purified and edified when those who should compose it remain outside of it.

NOTES

PAGE 2. 'Her eye saw'. This piece stands first in *Poems* 1873. Bridges never reprinted it, but it was included by Professor Gordon in his Rede Lecture, *Robert Bridges*, delivered in 1931 and published by the Cambridge University Press in 1946.

PAGE 4. PROMETHEUS THE FIREGIVER. First printed 'at the private press of H. Daniel, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford', 1883. The extract here given is reprinted from the text given in *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges excluding the Eight Dramas*, Oxford University Press, 1936 (hereinafter referred to as *Poetical Works*), pp. 27-28.

There is little else (save the Fire Chorus, ll. 1285-1361) that the anthologist is tempted to preserve from this, or from *Demeter A Mask* (1904), or from the Poetic Dramas, though in all of them the blank verse is interspersed with decorative lyrics, some of which are beautiful.

PAGE 5. THE GROWTH OF LOVE. This series of sonnets was many times printed and underwent many revisions (e.g. XXIV *Sonnets*, Bumpus, 1876; LXXIX *Sonnets*, Daniel Press, 1889; LXIX *Sonnets*, in Vol. i of *Poetical Works*, Smith Elder, 1898). The text and numbering here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

The sonnets are so full of excellences that selection is difficult—and none the less difficult because the excellences are often set off by lines that seem like echoes from Shakespeare, or parts of a Shakespearian exercise.

No 33. As in a number of Bridges's sonnets the octave is weak. But the sestet rises to a climax, and the last two lines are irresistible.

No. 40. This sonnet on his mother's portrait won especial praise from Hopkins, see. p. lxxi.

No. 43. Hopkins's comments are as follows: 'Beautiful in thought and expression, but the beauty gathers to the end, is least in the first quatrain, and the first two lines are commonplace. Also *he may hear* is not good. It is ambiguous: if it means *It is granted him to hear*, then it has no fault except the being easily mistaken for the other meaning, but if it means *He perhaps hears* it is feeble and downright padding. I shd. like something such as (it is d——d impertinence of me to say this)—

All drawn with thirst, all lost on sultry sand,
 The traveller fainting finds into his ear
 Fantastic music steal that lets him hear
 Some liquid fountain of his native land.

O cruel jest! he cries, as someone flings
 The sparkling drops in sport or shew of ire.
 O shameless! O contempt of holy things!
 They of their wanton pastime never tire
 That, not athirst, are sitting by the springs,
 While he must quench in death his last desire—

(or "And he must", &c). For though the sequence of thought of "But of their wanton play" is beautiful, yet the dropping the connection is more austere and pathetic. . . ' *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. C. C. Abbott, 1935, P- 70 (Letter LIV: 22 Feb. 1879).

No. 59. As elsewhere, the last line ('a really magical stroke', G. M. H.) eclipses what goes before it.

No. 69. The Our Father Sonnet is very beautiful', G. M. H.

PAGE n. SHORTER POEMS. *Shorter Poems* (Books I-IV) appeared first in 1890; the poems contained in Books I-III had been previously printed at various times. Many underwent revision before their reappearance in 1890, and some before their inclusion in Vol. II of *Poetical Works* in 1899. Book V was added in 1894. The text here given is that of *Poetical Works*.

Book I is dedicated to 'H. E. W.' (the poet's friend Harry Ellis Wooldridge). All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems*, 1873.

No. 2. This *Elegy* recalls, by its subject and by its cadences, the *Souvenir* of Alfred de Musset: e.g.:

Les voila, ces buissons ou toute ma jeunesse
 Comme un essaim d'oiseaux, chante au bruit de mes pas;
 Lieux charmants, beau d6sert ou passait ma maltresse,
 Ne m'attendiez-vous pas ?
 . . . Je ne viens point jeter un regret inutile
 Dans recho de ces bois te"moins de mon bonheur:
 Fi6re est cette foret dans sa beaute tranquille,
 Et fier aussi mon cceur.

No. 16. Of this poem Desmond MacCarthy wrote (*Sunday Times*, 25 July 1948) 'For me the most perfect of all English Triolets . . . Many suppose the Triolet form to be essentially trivial; that specimen alone refutes them. Certainly it must be composed in the key of conversation; it must, with its repeti-

tions, sound like someone talking; nevertheless its content can be, as here, charged with emotion. How ingeniously that question mark breaks the repetition of the first couplet, thus turning what had at first been a quiet statement into a cry of dismay!

PAGE 21. *Book II* is dedicated 'To the memory of G. M. H.' All the poems in this book had appeared in *Poems By the Author of 'The Growth of Love'*, 1879.

No. i. The following are Hopkins's comments on the text printed in 1879 (where the first stanza is not divided between the speakers): 'I must tell you that the first verse appears to me to be faulty. It wd. seem to be divided between the two speakers, as the rest of the piece. If so the first two lines shd. be in italics. And if so, then *lay* should be *lies*. Also *Silence!* shd. be *Hush, hush* or *O hush!* If however it is really the inmate who speaks, then the question will be an ironical, not an earnest one, and mean. How can love awake that has lain asleep so long? and if so this shd. be brought out, as by: Should love again awake. . . ? But the other sense is smoother, besides that otherwise the question seems absurd, for the longer the sleep has been the nearer must the waking be; if it is sleep and not death. And in the last verse I should prefer "And love will > wake". Now as for the meaning, of that you keep the key. Is it the lady of the Growth or another? In verse 2 you seem to say it is the same. On the other hand I thought she had gone to heaven. And indeed she seems to have been actually at the telephone, so to speak, when there was the ring of the night bell. (This is profane.) As at present advised, I think it is another (and "whom once he deigned to praise" is said by way of fresh information), but so that all the women a man falls in love with are one woman, being sort of incarnations, or successive avatars of Beauty, Wisdom, and so on, personified in the feminine. Is this so? . . .' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 67-68 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

No. 10. Hopkins's comment is as follows: 'Unequal, because, as I told you and I now maintain my past judgment, there are two lines in it echoing Gray's: *they do it, they will do it to every ear, it is a great fault to do it, and they do it*. They are not at all the best lines and they can be easily changed and yet they echo lines which are held to be of faultless and canonical beauty. The subject and measure shd. of themselves have put you on your guard. Gray's poem may be outdone but, if you understand, it cannot be equalled. Otherwise the piece is beautiful and full of music.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, p. 69 (Letter LIV: 22 February 1879).

With regard to the lines 'which echo Gray's' Mr. Abbott's note is as follows: 'These lines do not choose themselves. Perhaps they are:

Read the worn names of the forgotten dead,
Their pompous legends will no smile awake.

G. M. H. might, with more justice, have urged that the poem calls back to the mind Arnold's "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse".

PAGE 31. *Book III* is dedicated to 'R. W. D.' (Canon Richard Watson Dixon, see p. 108). Most of the poems here included from this Book were contained in *Poems*, Third Series (1880) and *Poems*, Fourth Series (1882).

No. I. Printed as an Ode (11. 1465-1480) in *Prometheus the Firegiver*. Of Hopkins's comments (on the earliest MS. version of the poem), which are in part technical, in part moral, Bridges appears hardly to have availed himself. They are as follows: 'The poem "O my vague desires" is a very noble piece, as fine, I think, as anything you have yet done. It is "all road" very remarkable. The rhythm too is correct and strong. I make a few suggestions, (i) The rhythm of line 4 wd. be a little improved by something like "arising" instead of "rising". (2) Would it not be a better stroke to have instead of "For ever soaring . . . dying? O the joy of flight!" something like "You ever soaring aloft, soaring and dying Flames of joyous flight"? (3) I would have "Ah! they burn my soul, My fires, devour my soul that once was whole". (4) The word you were in search of instead of "phantoms" must be "gledes"—and then you would continue "day after day". (5) Why should not the last short line have three feet like the others, as "Could I but control"? "Could I control" has only two. (6) The next line is the only rhythmically bad one: both rhythm and feeling are bettered by "My vague desires, my leaping flames of soul". So too in the next line I would have "my fires". (7) The last line might perhaps, but I am not sure, be improved by "still flying alas!"

The poem is autobiographical, as you would say; it tells of what you really feel in yourself. What then is the meaning of those yearnings or aspirations in the mind? You bear witness against yourself that you have them. And, as you suggest in one of your sonnets, if they are powerfully felt even now, when the mind is drawn off them and engrossed by so many things, it is likely they will be at some other time its whole life and being, whether they are gratified or not gratified. This poem as well as that sonnet express your belief that the mind is immortal.

But there are other minds that act on you now, as for instance you now follow my meaning, acting through sensible channels; hereafter there will be other spiritual powers, it is natural to suspect, which may act on the mind more directly and not by sensible channels; they may surround it and affect it as much as the body is surrounded and affected by other bodies. You cannot wisely neglect this world of being to which you imply that you will come. In it or above it is the sovereign spirit God, to whom you should now at once make your approach with the humblest and most earnest prayers.' *Letters of G. M. H. to R. B.*, pp. 117-18 (Letter LXXI: 26 January 1881).

No. 2. *London Snow*. For Hopkins's comments on this and the two following poems (as they appeared in *Poems*, Third Series, 1880) see pp. xxxii-xxxiii.

No. 7. *Indolence*. 1. i. 'the city'—Oxford.

No. 19. 'A pretty close translation of a poem by Th6ophile Gautier, which is itself a translation from the English by Thomas Moore in *The Epicurean*' (R. B.'s note).

PAGE 41. *Book IV* is dedicated to 'L. B. C. L. M.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Lionel Muirhead). All the poems in this Book were printed for the first time in 1890.

PAGE 48. *Book V* is dedicated to 'M. G. K.' (the poet's friend and Eton contemporary, Montagu George Knight).

No. 2. *The Affliction of Richard*. I do not know what is the explanation of this title, or whether it owes anything to Wordsworth's *The Affliction of Margaret*.

No. ii. 'I never shall love the snow again.' 'Maurice' was the poet's brother-in-law, Maurice Waterhouse, who died on Christmas Eve, 1890.

No. 14. *Founder's Day*. 1. 56. 'The victory that made ring the meads.' Col. C. H. Wilkinson of Worcester College tells me that he has the authority of Lionel Muirhead for saying that Bridges originally wrote 'The light-blue victory of the meads', but altered it in deference to Andrew Lang, who told him that the reference to Eton would not be understood. When the poem was first printed (Daniel Press, 1893) it was dated June 1891.

PAGE 60. NEW POEMS. Collected for the first time in 1899 hi Vol II of the Smith Elder edition of the *Poetical Works* in six volumes. Nos. 14 and 15 were first printed in Elkin Mathews's *Shilling Garland*, No. II, 1896; the rest of the poems appeared for the first time in Vol II. of the *Poetical Works*, 1899.

No. 4. *The Summer-house on the Mound*. The poem (which shows vividly how far back the poet's memories of his childhood could take him) describes the house of his parents at Walmer.

No. 20. *EPQ2*, 1. 15. 'unchristen'd'. Yeats uses this word with similar effect in *Vacillation* (1932): 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart.'

PAGE 70. LATER POEMS.

No. 5. First printed in *The Sheaf*, June 1902.

No. 13. *Portrait of a Grandfather*. First printed (with the date 1880) in *Wayfarer's Love*, 1904.

No. 15. The extracts are from *Ode to Music Written for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell* (music by Sir Hubert Parry), written and published in 1895. The first eight lines of Section VIII ('Rejoice, ye dead . . .') form the octave of Sonnet 19 in *The Growth of Love*.

No. 16. Extract from *A Hymn of Nature An Ode written for Music*, the music composed by Sir Hubert Parry, performed at the Gloucester Festival in 1898.

PAGE 75. POEMS IN CLASSICAL PROSODY. Bridges's views about the applicability of the principles of classical prosody in the writing of English verse, and his explanation of the principles of 'syllabic' verse, which he discovered in Milton and adopted for his own use, will be found in the volume published by the Oxford Press in 1901 in which his essay on *Milton's Prosody* is accompanied by an essay on *Classical Metres in English Verse* by W. J. Stone, with whose views Bridges professed himself to be in agreement.

PAGE 75. 'And what if all Nature . . .'. The extract is from a 400-line Epistle 'To a Socialist in London', published in the *Monthly Review* for July 1903, together with an abstract of Stone's principles of quantitative verse, of which the Epistle is an exemplification.

PAGE 77. OCTOBER AND OTHER POEMS. The collection bearing this name was published in 1920, but nearly half the poems in it (including the first three reprinted here) had already appeared in a volume *Poems written in 1913* printed at the Ashendene Press in 1914.

No. 3. *Noel: Christmas Eve*, 1913. His first poem as Laureate. He 'offered his homage to the King in some Christmas verses, which his Majesty ordered to be published' (R. B.). They were printed in *The Times*, 24 December 1913. In a note prefixed to

the *October* collection, Bridges explained that it (and three other poems in the collection) 'are strictly syllabic verse on the model left by Milton in "Samson Agonistes"', adding, 'It is probably agreed that there are possibilities in that long six-foot line which English poetry has not fully explored.' He himself explored them further in *New Verse* and *The Testament of Beauty*.

PAGE 82. NEW VERSE. Published by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1926. All the poems here selected were written in 1921. The first three are taken from Part One of the collection ('Neo-Miltonic Syllabics'); No. 8 (*To Francis Jammes*) and No. 9 (*Melancholy*) from Part Two ('Accentual Measures'); No. 12 (*The Tramps*) and No. 16 (*Low Barometer*) from Part Three ('Old Styles'). Nos. 6, 7, and 8 had previously been published, in the 'Elizabethan' number of *The Queen*, July 1923, *The London Mercury*, November 1924, and *The London Mercury*, July 1923, respectively.

No. 5. The garden of Merton College. While Chilswell House was being repaired after the fire in 1917, Bridges resided for some months in Postmasters' Hall at Merton College. The 'pensive philosopher' was F. H. Bradley.

No. 7. 'Mrs. Bridges, reading over the poem in draft remarked that there were too many *come se quando*'s. Bridges thought this might serve as a title. But he substituted the Latin *si* for the Italian *se* and it so appeared in print. When he discovered the slip, he decided to let it remain, perhaps remembering that Milton's '*Penseroso* is said to be grammatically incorrect.' Edward Thompson, *Robert Bridges*, Oxford, 1944, p.¹⁰¹ - 'Come se quando' is a stock phrase for introducing a simile in Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The 'slip' has been corrected in recent editions of the *Poetical Works*. The passage quoted on p. 85 is the opening simile of a long poem.

No. 8. *Francis Jammes*. French poet (1868-1938) in whose works the road-mender and the Colonial ancestor are familiar figures.

No. 16. *Low Barometer*. 'One of the three or four greatest poems he ever wrote.' Edward Thompson, op. cit., p. 99.

PAGE 91. THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY.

II, 1. 840. 'What is Beauty?' The quotation is from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great*, Part I, Act V, Sc. 2.

II, 1. 965. 'her showy Invincibles'. The Flanders poppy: 'The

"showy" flowers are so much more truly "Invincibles" than any "invincible soldiers" of Napoleon or another.' Nowell Smith, *Notes on The Testament of Beauty*, Oxford, 1931.

III, 1. 657. Bridges has been describing life at the Court of Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse.

1. 667. Nowell Smith (op. cit.) explains that the 'twin day' is the day which the westward-going traveller has to divide into two in order to keep his calendar correct.

I. 669. 'thatt dreariest November'. 'The year was 1927' (Nowell Smith).

IV, 1. 317 'he who dug': Sir (then Dr.) Leonard Woolley.

II. 1279-80. 'The "mortal distress" was the death of the poet's daughter, Margaret, the wife of H. W. B. Joseph, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford' (Nowell Smith).

