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BUST OF APOLLO

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CRITICISM AND CREATION: THEIR INTERACTIONS

*Being the Deneke Lecture, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford,
14 February 1941, with some modifications.*

WHAT is the relation of the critic to the work of the creative artist? What is he trying to do when he comments on a play by Shakespeare or a poem by Wordsworth? The general answer to-day would be that he is the interpreter to less appreciative readers, a valuator indicating what the poet has set himself to do; how far he has succeeded or fallen short, and what is the final worth of the work, if the author has succeeded in his aim or, it may be, achieved something else by the way. 'It is a very good office', says Hazlitt, 'one man does another when he tells him the manner of his being pleased.' But the critic has not always been content with such a limited view of his function. He has often, very definitely at certain periods, and still at times, been tempted to think that he may be an instructor not only to other readers but to the poet, that his judgements are based on principles, irrefragable principles, the neglect of which it is his duty to point out, judged by which principles it became a duty to condemn, for example, the *Cid* of Corneille notwithstanding the approval which it had gained from the distinguished audiences that crowded Mondory's theatre. Such a condemnation might, of course, represent the reaction of a more understanding and cultivated taste correcting the too facile response of a mixed audience to a somewhat cheap appeal. But that was not the claim made by the Academy when it acted at the instance of Richelieu. It was that they were the defenders of certain laws which Corneille had violated, laws of the drama as definite and authoritative in their sphere as the laws which govern our conduct or the, perhaps still more rigid, laws of social etiquette. And this was the claim of Renaissance criticism as it took its rise in Italy and pervaded the critical writings of Western Europe. It spoke as a lawgiver, though it is worth noting at the outset of what I have to discuss that in just those countries where the creative spirit was strongest, notably in the drama in Spain and England, this authoritative

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criticism had least practical effect, even when it received a polite acquiescence in any critical discussion.

The source of this authoritative criticism was, I fear, the *Poetics* of Aristotle rightly or wrongly understood. Is the *Poetics* a valuable, though too fragmentary, treatise on aesthetics or, as I think Professor A. E. Taylor declares, a practical handbook for the composition of melodramas? It is not for me to say. It contains three interesting words, *mimesis*, *catharsis*, *hamartia*, about the exact import of which the critics are still much divided. Our admiration of the philosophic, scientific theorizing of the Greeks has a little obscured our perception of their strongly practical bent. Bacon was not, as Macaulay thought, the first philosopher who theorized with a view to action, to conduct. Plato did not regard himself as a speculative dreamer in the sphere of morals and politics. It was his ambition to influence, to guide rulers who would lend an ear. I doubt if Aristotle regarded his *Ethics* as purely speculative. At any rate the *Poetics* was composed in close connexion with the most practical, and the most complete in the achievement of its end, among all his treatises. In the *Rhetoric*, it has been said with justice, the art of persuasion, as based on a thorough knowledge of human nature, was set forth so fully that nothing of importance has ever been added. When indeed with the disappearance of liberty eloquence grew, as Milton says, 'mute'—it is only in a free country that political discussion is permitted—then rhetoric became what the late Professor Saintsbury would apparently have wished it to be, a study of the refinements and elaborations of prose style. For Saintsbury in the *History of Criticism* looks at the *Rhetoric* from an angle which disguises its real purpose. He seems to think, or speaks as if, Aristotle had intended to compose a *Prosaics* corresponding to the *Poetics* but had been diverted and limited by the unfortunate preoccupation of the Greeks with the spoken word, with oratory. This is to put the cart before the horse. Aristotle had no thought of a *Prosaics*. His definition of Rhetoric was 'a faculty of discovering all the means of persuasion in any subject'. But the various means of persuasion, intellectual, moral, emotional, which he analyses and illustrates, are just as applicable in poetry as in prose, are made use of by the dramatists, as he points out in the *Poetics*, for you will remember that when he comes there to speak *dianoia*, thought, he refers us at once to the *Rhetoric*: 'Under

thought is included every effect which has to be produced by speech: in particular proof and refutation, the exciting of the feelings such as pity, fear, anger and the like.' Indeed there is hardly anything he says in the masterly second book of the *Rhetoric* about the exciting and allaying of feeling which may not be illustrated from the drama, Greek and Shakespearian.

Now the practical spirit which inspired the *Rhetoric* seems to me to have been that in which was composed or outlined what we know as the *Poetics*. Having analysed, with all the long experience behind him of argument, in oratory and discussion and drama in the Greek world, the factors which make for persuasion in matters about which scientific truth is unattainable, he would now, with the work of Homer and the tragedians in view, consider what are the factors which go to make a good poem, a good tragedy. Only the part concerning tragedy has survived and that probably only in part. But what he does thus elicit from a study of Sophocles, Euripides, and Homer is presented as rules, at least as hints for those who would be epic or tragic poets, especially the latter. 'A well-constructed plot *should* be single in its issue rather than double as some maintain.' 'They are in error who censure Euripides just because he follows this principle in his plays, many of which end unhappily. *It is*, as we have said, *the right ending*.' 'In respect of character there are four things to be aimed at. First and most important it *must be good*. Even a woman may be good and also a slave, though the woman may be said to be an inferior being and the slave quite worthless.' Much of what Aristotle said has stood the test of time and an extended experience, a knowledge of other forms of drama. Moreover many of his statements were only of a tentative kind. 'Tragedy *endeavours* as far as possible to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun, or but slightly to exceed this limit.'

It was the error of his followers, especially the Italian critics of the Renaissance, which converted Aristotle's suggestions, based on Greek Drama, into hard and fast rules any violation of which was in itself an aesthetic fault or crime. The general principles of that criticism have been well summarized by Saintsbury in the second volume of the *History of Criticism*—poetry as an imitation of Nature, the fixed kinds each with its own rules, those of tragedy well described by Aristotle, to whose rules must be added the Unities of Place and Time, the theory of the epic or heroic poem ;

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and finally the all-embracing rule 'imitate the ancients'. Pope has condensed them in his *Essay on Criticism*:

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,
One clear, unchang'd, and universal light,
Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source, and end, and test of Art.

But the critics have discovered the rules to be obeyed by whoever would follow Nature:

Those rules of old discovered, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodised;
Nature, like Liberty, is but restrained
By the same laws which first herself ordained.

And the Ancients are our great exemplars of poets who understood and followed Nature:

When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work to outlast immortal Rome designed,
Perhaps he seemed above the critics' law,
And but from Nature's fountains scorned to draw:
But when to examine every part he came,
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.
Convinced, amazed, he checks the bold design:
And rules as strict his laboured work confine,
As if the Stagirite o'erlooked each line.
Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem;
To copy Nature is to copy them.

I have no intention of elaborating or discussing this criticism as such. What I wish to do is something different. It is to consider how the rules worked, what influence for good or evil they effected, when they were accepted more or less in their entirety by poets of genius, creative poets or dramatists. If my time allows, I may endeavour to consider occasional later suggestions that the critic may undertake to prescribe for the artist.

The first sharp collision of this law-giving criticism with poetry of undeniable merit and achieved popularity occurred in Italy over the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. Here was a poem which every reader enjoyed but lo! and behold! it violated all the rules of Heroic poetry. The subject was not historical, and it lacked unity of plot. What was one to think? Trissino undertook to show what a Heroic poem should be like and composed an *Italia*

Liberata, which may obey the rules but unfortunately is unreadable. Giralaldi took up the defence of the *Romanzi* on the good ground which unfortunately the critics would not adhere to, viz. that 'the romance is a poetic kind of which Aristotle did not know, and to which his rules do not apply. Italian literature need not follow the rules of Greek poetry.' But the blessed doctrine of the kinds had to be respected and new rules elaborated for this new kind. The final result of the controversy was the *Gerusalemme Liberata* of Tasso whose endeavour was to combine the charms of romance, i.e. love and magic, with the historical theme and unity of the epic, the classical epic. Much ink was spilled over the relative merits of Ariosto and Tasso, but what survives is just their poems, and you are free to enjoy either or both. Both had a shaping influence on Spenser, for he too knew about the rules, as Professor Renwick has demonstrated, but the rules have nothing to do with the interest of his *Faerie Queene*.

But it was about the drama that critical controversy chiefly centred and it was on the stage that observance of the rules could be enforced or experimented with; and what I wish to study briefly is their effect on the drama, confining myself mainly to tragedy, to the tragedies of the dioscursi of the French stage, Corneille and Racine, to compare what happened in France with the attempt in our more individualistic country to 'correct' English drama and poetry, an attempt made single-handed on the Elizabethan stage by 'rare Ben Jonson' and later in epic and drama by a greater than Jonson, John Milton. The history of the evolution of French tragedy is very interesting. French men of letters have always been more concerned about the theory of their art than our poets or dramatists or artists generally. They love a 'definite banner and a clear programme'. Indeed Renaissance, which ultimately became Classical, French poetry and drama opened with a programme, the *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française* of du Bellay, in which French poets are enjoined to discard the confectionery (épicerie) of medieval poetry and create for France a new poetry in the natural forms, discovered and sanctioned by the Ancients—Epic, Ode, Satire, Epigram, Pastoral, and drama, tragedy and comedy distinguished not blended. To these was added one form, not classical in origin but Italian and perfected by Petrarch, the sonnet. This became the programme of the Pleiad whose chief poet was Ronsard and dramatist

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Robert Garnier. Garnier's Senecan, declamatory, and lyrical tragedies had a considerable effect without as well as within France. There is an echo of a phrase of Garnier in *Hamlet*, which lends some small support to the view that Kyd had a hand in the original *Hamlet*, for Kyd translated the *Cornélie* of Garnier. But the fault of all these Senecan tragedies, as of our own *Gorboduc* and *Misfortunes of Arthur*, is that they have no dramatic life, no interest of plot developed through character.

Classical French tragedy as it finally took shape in the plays of Corneille and Racine had a complex origin, three different roots. First there is the demand of the audience for a play which interests them by the appeal of story and suspense, which in the drama, as Hardy, the ancestor of later drama, found it when he came to Paris, was represented by story plays not unlike our own but influenced by the Spanish tragi-comedy with its heightened element of suspense and surprise. In its final development the French was to be an extreme representative of a drama in which, even more than in the Greek, every scene, every soliloquy, every line was a step in the psychological development of the surprising catastrophe. The second was this literary theory, the rules, supported, as the critics believed, by the example of the tragedies of Seneca and, behind these, of Greek tragedy. What the rules required was (1) an historical base for tragedy, not an invented, romantic story; (2) propriety, what Voltaire calls 'bienséance'—the hero must be heroic, a soldier always soldierly, no one of lower rank may strike one above him, &c; and (3) a rigid adherence to the Unities of Place and Time. To Voltaire these last are the 'fundamental rules of the theatre . . . it implies feebleness and sterility to extend an action beyond the proper space of time and place of action'. According to the same authority they are more essential than the rule of propriety, decorum, which Milton pronounces to be 'the grand master to observe'. As a fact the rules derive partly from Aristotle, partly from a mistake taken over from Castelvetro regarding the nature of dramatic representation, which Dr. Johnson was the first to expose when he pointed out that no one in his right mind believed the actors on the stage to be real characters in a real action. They are playing a part, and there is no more reason that one should not go off the stage in London and reappear on the other side in Rome or Pekin than that one chapter of a story should end in one place and the next

begin in another. There may of course be another, an aesthetic justification of the Unities, and that comes into consideration when I pass to my third factor, the emergence of writers of real dramatic power.

Hardy was a great admirer of the poetry of the Pleiad but his own efforts at style were not happy. Nor did he himself attach importance to the Unities. He tightened up the story, but with little or no real dramatic interest. For a dramatic poet or dramatic novelist the interest of plot, of suspense, will depend, not on what happens, the *Deus ex Machina*, whatever shape that may take from the intervention of a God or King to the death of a wealthy uncle. The interest for him is what certain people are and feel and think and do. Critics have spoken of Christopher Marlowe as though the sole merit of *Tamburlaine* was the new grandeur, or bombast, of style and the verse. That is not the whole truth, nor the most important truth, which is that in *Tamburlaine*, however crudely, the centre of interest is found neither in the 'sentences' of the Senecan drama nor the crude happenings of the popular plays, e.g. *Cambyses* or *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamysdas*, but in the soul of a man 'like his desire lift upward and divine'. Just so was it with the first great French tragedy, *Le Cid* of Corneille. When in that play Rodrigue, the Cid, who has killed the father of Chimène to whom he is betrothed, killed him in defence of his own father's honour, meets her on the stage, 'a shudder', it was said, 'ran through the audience assembled in Mondory's theatre indicating a marvellous curiosity, a redoubling of attention as to what they could have to say to one another in so pitiable a situation'. That is the dramatic interest proper. In the final solution the war and the King do play somewhat the part of an intervening providence. But it is on such problems of conduct, resolutions in a crisis, that the interest of Corneille's tragedies depends, notably in *Cinna*, a play of the interaction of character of singular nobility. The dialogue in a French tragedy never is, as not infrequently in Shakespeare, a poetic digression, at least a pause in the main action, talk about the drinking customs of the Danes, &c. All is there to promote the conflict of motives from which the catastrophe issues.

The success of the *Cid* evoked a storm of jealousy among Corneille's fellow dramatists. Scudéry appealed to the recently founded Academy, and Chapelain drew up a report almost at the

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dictation of Richelieu, himself a disappointed dramatist, in which the *Cid* was condemned as wanting in that art which Jonson found Shakespeare defective in, and which Milton calls 'that sublime art which in Aristotle's *Poetics*, in Horace and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzini and others teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem, what of a dramatic, what of a lyric, what decorum is which is the grand master to observe'.

Thus in its final form French tragedy was the outcome of a conflict between the creative art of Corneille and Racine and the so-called rules enforced by a pedantic but in France powerful authority. It was not, however, the observance of the rules which justified the two dramatists. It was they who justified, so far as that could be done, the rules, by developing a type of tragedy to which the observance, or an approximation to the observance of them, was used to lend a heightened interest, raise the mood of suspense to its intensest level, and that is a drama in which everything is subordinated to the relentless, dramatic logic by which a single critical action is worked to a surprising solution, the surprise depending in Corneille's plays on a sudden moral elevation, an *élan*; in Racine on the subtle evolution of feeling, the eddying, flowing, and sudden turns of feeling in a woman's heart. 'Qui te l'a dit?'

Let me take one example of a tragedy in which a critical action is developed naturally and easily in the space of a day or less. But before doing so I will recall a Greek tragedy which Aristotle seems to have thought the best example of a tragic plot, the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the action of which is also comprehended within the compass of a day. I have said that a dramatic plot is one in which the interest centres, not in what happens, but in what the characters feel and think and in consequence do. Now there is character in the *Oedipus*, the hot temper of Oedipus, the slow anger of Teiresias, the hard virtue of Creon, the passionate Jocasta. But the action of the play is mainly determined by what *happens*—the plague, the oracle, the almost accidental revelation of what has happened in the past. But what happens in a Greek tragedy is distinguished from the mere accident of tragi-comedy by the fact that it is the work of the Gods. They are always a factor in Greek tragedy—Apollo, the Furies, Artemis, Heracles, &c. There is nothing of the kind in French tragedy except the background, grasped by faith, felt not seen, in Racine's two

later tragedies, *Athalie* and *Esther*. But returning to the question of time, the play I wish to look at is the *Bérénice* of Racine. Berenice, Queen of Palestine, has been living in Rome loving and loved by Titus. Thither has come an earlier lover, Antiochus, King of Comagena. Vespasian the Emperor has died and Berenice is confident, and the Court shares her confidence, that now set free Titus will marry her despite the jealousy with which such a marriage is regarded by the Romans:

Rome hait tous les rois, et Bérénice est reine.

Nevertheless she is confident:

Titus m'aime, il peut tout, il n'a plus qu'à parler.

Meantime Titus has gone into retreat for eight days. It is not till the second scene of the second act that we hear him in conference with his confidant Paulin, consulting him as to the sentiment of the Roman people. He is told what her own confidante has already whispered to Berenice:

Elle a mille vertus, mais, seigneur, elle est reine.

The feeling of the people is inexorable: 'So do the Romans regard your love, and I cannot answer but that the senate, charged with the prayers of the whole empire, will repeat here what I have just said, and that Rome falling on her knees will demand a choice worthy of her and of you.' But Titus has already made up his mind: 'Despite my passion, Paulin, despite her charms, now that I could set the crown on so many attractions, now that I love her more than ever, when a happy marriage might pay in one day for the desires of five years, I am going, Paulin, O heavens, how can I say it?'

'What, my Lord?'

'To leave her for ever. Berenice has for long outweighed victory, and if at last I lean to the side of glory, believe me, O believe me, it has cost me, to conquer such a love, combats from which my heart will bleed for many a day. . . . The moment that heaven had recalled my father, that my hand had closed his eyes, I was disabused of my fond dream. I felt the burden imposed upon me. . . . What a disgrace for me if my first step had been to overthrow all the rights of Rome, to found my happiness on the ruin of her laws.' The conflict of feelings follows in Titus, in Berenice, in Antiochus portrayed as Racine loved to elaborate it, and ever moving forward to the catastrophe. But even when

Titus learns from a letter he has snatched from her hand that it is Berenice's intention to kill herself, and his reply is that if she does so he will follow, even then he does not weaken in his resolve: 'Do not dream that wearied with so many fears I will dry your eyes by a happy marriage. To whatever extremity you have reduced me my glory pursues me inexorably. Unceasingly it presents to my astonished mind the empire as incompatible with my marriage to you, tells me that after the fame I have achieved less than ever ought I to marry you. Yes, Madam, and still less ought I to say to you that I am ready for your sake to abandon the empire, to follow you and, content with fetters, to sigh with you at the other end of the world. You yourself would blush for my cowardly conduct, would grieve to see marching in your suite an unworthy emperor deprived alike of empire and court.' Antiochus is ready too to make the decisive step, but standing between the two Berenice rises to the situation and dismissing the royal suitor, Antiochus, herself abandons Rome for ever. Line by line the tragedy has led you on expectant and wondering what the lovers will do, what, to recall the *Cid*, they will find to say in so pitiable a situation. There are no digressions, no speeches which delight us simply by their poetry, like the description of Ophelia's death, and no humours. I mean that we see Racine's characters only in relation to the single action. There are no such suggestions of manners and humours as we get even in the tragedies of Shakespeare, Hamlet's absent-mindedness and melancholy and careless dress of which we have almost a better knowledge than of the reasons for his delay, Macbeth's hallucinations, Othello's nobility of speech and carriage, &c.

The French did then develop a quite special type of tragedy which justified, even required, an acceptance of the Unity of time or a close approximation. The Unity of place was more of a stumbling-block, as Corneille distinctly stated, and of less importance: French tragedy is *not* Greek, and it is *not* Elizabethan.

For to pass to England is to pass from a people that loves logical theory, programmes, rules, to a people among whom the individual dominates. Speaking of the recent 'imagist' movement in France an American critic writes: 'The medley of images; the deliberately mixed metaphors; the combination of passion and wit; the bold amalgamation of material with spiritual—all these may seem to the Englishman quite proper and familiar.

He has always known them in the English poetry of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans did all these things without theorizing about them. Is this not the natural language of poetry? Is it not the norm against which the eighteenth-century diction was a heresy and to which the Romantics did their best to return? Verlaine's claim, again, for music as the predominant in lyric was just Blake's and Shelley's. But to return to the sixteenth century, the rules found their way to England as to other countries, notably in Sidney's *Defence of Poesy*, where they are used to measure the defects of English drama in its early stages: 'Our tragedies and comedies not without cause cried out against, observing rules neither of honest civilities nor of skilful Poetry. Excepting *Gorboduc*—which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of poetry, yet in truth it is very defective in the circumstances. . . . For it is faulty both in Place and Time, the two necessary companions of all corporal actions.' Sidney's admonitions had no effect in the evolution of the Elizabethan drama. That was directed by Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Lyly, Kyd, Shakespeare, and their work was to give dramatic interest and poetic beauty to the story play with a main plot but variety of incident and at times a subordinate plot. The form of a Shakespearian tragedy was determined by no critical rules enforced from without but shaped by what seemed to Shakespeare the nature and requirements of the story itself—the rush, pause, and final rush of *Macbeth*, the slow opening and gathering speed of *Othello*, the succession of impressive scenes with no real forward movement of *Hamlet*, the rapid shifting stormy scenes of *Lear*. Shakespeare knew, or cared, nothing for rules.

But one Elizabethan did. When Dr. Johnson was challenged for attempting single-handed in, as he hoped, three years such a work as had taken the French Academy of forty members forty years to perform, he replied that 'as three to 1600 so was the proportion of an Englishman to a Frenchman'. His namesake of the sixteenth century might have made a similar boast. What the French Academy, backed by the authority of Richelieu, had achieved in France he undertook to do single-handed in England.

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Pressure there was none as in Corneille's case, but opportunity was, I think, offered him by the performances of the Children's companies before more select audiences. Discarding his earlier work of which we know only some names, perhaps some scenes in the *Spanish Tragedy*, and one comedy based on Plautus which he did not include in his collected 'Works' (as he was chaffed for calling his 'Plays'), he undertook with *Everyman in his Humour* the reform of English comedy and, when the personal and satiric turn he gave to his comedies raised a storm and he was compelled to turn for a while to tragedy, there too it was his boast that his were 'legitimate poems'. It is of these alone that I will speak shortly.

To the rigours of the Unities of Place and Time Jonson did not tie himself. Unity of place was satisfied if a play which began in London or Rome remained there throughout; Unity of time meant the inclusion of the action within a limited but indefinite period. In printing the *Sejanus* and *Catiline* indeed he gave no indication of definite localities. These have been added by modern editors; but the fact is that in both Jonson's and Shakespeare's dramas one could get on quite well without any such specification of the exact room or street. The play is the thing, not the decoration. It is the other rules of classical tragedy as laid down by Castelvetro, Scaliger and Co. that he is concerned to follow, and he indicates clearly what these are: 'truth of argument', the play must be based on history not pure fiction: Jonson carries this so far that he gives chapter and verse for every scene, from Tacitus, Dio, Suetonius, Sallust, Cicero; 'dignity of persons': tragedy, the critics agreed, dealt only with persons of rank and authority, leaving to comedy ordinary persons, you and me; 'gravity and height of elocution'; and lastly, 'fulness and frequency of sentence', i.e. grave moral instructions and exhortation, for so the critics seem to have understood Aristotle's *dianoia*.

The *Sejanus* and the *Catiline* do not much resemble a tragedy by Corneille or Racine. There is no such close psychological working out of a critical situation. Each is still a story play, episodic, a series of incidents leading to the death of Sejanus and his children, the failure and death of Catiline and his fellow conspirators, much as in a Shakespearian play. Jonson differs from Shakespeare mainly by the sustained dignity of the scenes—no intrusion of comic incidents like the grave-digger in *Hamlet*, or that of the porter in *Macbeth*, nor the realistic, everydaylike scenes in *Corio-*

lanus suggestive more of London than of Rome. Nor does Shakespeare deal in political maxims and moralizing. Politics as such did not interest him, as it did Jonson. But just as in French classical tragedy one can trace the influence of the older tragi-comedy in the dominance of the love motive and the sustained element of surprise, so in Jonson's tragedies there are touches which recall the satirical comedy of the dramatist who portrayed with minute care manners and humours. Cethegus in the *Catiline* is always the headstrong, impetuous 'die-hard'. The scenes between Sempronia, Fulvia, and other woman characters in the same play are quite in the manner of similar scenes in Jonson's comedies. Racine gives us no such side-lights on the character and manners of Titus or Berenice or Nero. We see them only in their relation to the main action.

Jonson's tragedies stand by themselves. They were well received except perhaps the choruses in the *Catiline*. They might, I suppose, be chanted as Miss Penelope Wheeler's young women do those in Murray's translations, though this never seemed to me quite to come off. But neither Jonson's tragedy nor his comedy left any impress of importance on Elizabethan drama. But there was another and a greater poet than Jonson who swore allegiance to the rules, always with liberties of his own. I do not mean the translator of Homer. I cannot find in Chapman's Marlowesque, bombastic tragedies any influence of theory and classical drama except it be in the lofty moral and political sentiments and the historical subject. It is otherwise with John Milton. I have cited already his confession of adherence to the critical faith as derived from Aristotle, Horace, Castelvetro; and when he came, in the *Reasons of Church Government*, to expound the various forms which a great poem, doctrinal to a nation, might take, he accepted the recognized division into Epic, Drama, and Lyric, with their chief representatives Greek and Latin. But, and here Milton stands alone, he will not allow Greek or Latin to displace Hebrew literature even in respect of form. Alongside Homer and Virgil he places the author of the Book of Job as the creator of a more condensed type of epic, which he was himself to follow in the *Paradise Regained*. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are certainly the 'three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write tragedy', but in the Bible we have the *Song of Solomon* and the magnificent drama of the

Apocalypse. And when it comes to lyric neither Pindar nor Callimachus is comparable to the great Hebrew Psalmists. Still, as regards form, the classical remains dominant. Even in his earliest published poems *Comus* and *Lycidas* Milton follows, if not a rule yet a classical tradition, that a poet who is meditating a great poem should try out his hand in pastoral. So had Virgil done, so Spenser, and Pope was later to follow their example. But it is in *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* that he is the disciple of Homer, Virgil, and the tragedians, not excepting Seneca. I wish to consider whether in strict truth he did well to adopt the epic of Homer and Virgil as a model for a poem on so different a theme and with so different a 'machinery' in the old critical sense of that word.

But before venturing on some criticism of *Paradise Lost* I would say a word on *Samson Agonistes*, for in it he was, I think, nearly or entirely successful. If not the greatest, it is with *Lycidas* the most perfect of Milton's poems, and will bear comparison with both Greek and French tragedy, if one grasps correctly the peculiar character of its action. Dr. Johnson complained that while the poem has a beginning and an end which Aristotle himself could not complain of it must be allowed to want a middle, since nothing passes between the first act and the last that either hastens or delays the death of Samson. Well, it certainly has not a middle, an action like that of, say, the *Bérénice* or the *Britannicus* of Racine in which you follow from speech to speech the interplay of motives leading to the catastrophe. For Milton's tragedy does not deal with an action of the same kind. Milton accepted, partly for personal reasons, the Church's, ultimately St. Augustine's, finding that the suicide of Samson, as they reckoned it, was justifiable only because it was directly inspired, inwardly commanded by God. What he has therefore to suggest is the gradual awakening of Samson's mind to the conviction that he has still something to do for his people and for God. We see him passing from the condition of utter despondence in which the play opens, a consciousness of his own folly and sin, his fatal weakness:

to be weak is miserable

Doing or suffering.

His plight is not unlike that of Ajax in Sophocles' play when he awakens to the realization of what in his madness he has done. But Samson has not lost his faith in God, and when his father

reproaches him with the honour he has done, or is to do, to Dagon his reply is that now the matter is in God's hand and He will vindicate Himself:

Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfort as shall quite despoil him
Of all those boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers,

words which his father accepts as prophetic. In each of the incidents which follow, the encounter with his wife, the challenge to the boastful Harapha, we see him growing more and more his old self till the summons to appear before the Philistine lords arrives. He refuses, and then suddenly it is borne in on him that he is being guided to some great end:

Be of good courage, I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.

It is difficult to convey such an action in such a way as to interest a normal audience. But, if one recognize it as the poet's intention, then Milton's drama is not only Greek in spirit and construction but it has something of the French movement along one line to the catastrophe.

But to return to *Paradise Lost*; when Milton finally chose the theme of the Fall, and the epic as the better form, for he had planned a drama on the subject, he accepted the critical theory of the epic—an historical subject, great persons, lofty sentiments, a lesson to the English people who, he believed, had passed through the fire to perish in the smoke. Virgil should be his model and, as that poet had done and Horace recommended, he would plunge *in medias res* and resume the earlier happenings later by way of narrative. Was it altogether a wise choice to adopt a form taken from without, at the dictation of critical theory and classical models, or might Milton have, as I have argued that Shakespeare did, let the form in which the story was to be told be determined by the character of the story itself? Certainly the classical epic form involved the poet in some serious difficulties. The central theme of the great classical epics, the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, is war, but the war is over when *Paradise Lost* opens and when later it is described the knowledge of that fact, and the circumstances which make any doubt as to the issue impossible, render the whole a somewhat laboured unreality relieved only by the splendid

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principles which might be used not only as a standard by which to judge but, as the older criticism had done, as a monitor and guide, fixed laws—a breach of which constitutes an aesthetic flaw.

There was no discussion in this country, as in Germany, of the relative merits of classicism and romanticism. Our so-called romantic revival was largely a return to an older tradition in our poetry for which there had been going on a long preparation from the advent of Thomson, Dyer, and Gray and the Wartons. Two questions were, however, raised in close connexion with one another, Wordsworth's challenge to the poetic diction of the century, and Coleridge's and Wordsworth's discussions of the true character and operations of the Imagination, which they were much concerned to distinguish from what they called Fancy. I do not know that there is anything in this latter distinction, on which Mr. Richards has written at length, that is not fairly obvious. The difference between fancy and imagination in the sphere of poetry is the difference in the sphere of natural science between a classification which places whales among fish because they swim in the sea and the biology which, on many and deeper grounds, classes them with warm-blooded mammals. The great thing was the recognition of the imagination as the function in the creation of a work of art, a poem, and that it has laws of its own but too deep and subtle to be formulated in readily applied rules. The unity of a poem or drama is not to be measured by rules of time and place. It is a harmony of all the elements, sensuous, intellectual, imaginative, none of which would be what it is apart from the others—diction, thought, imagery, rhythm, all are interdependent. Imagination, as Coleridge and Wordsworth and Lamb defined it, is the power which 'draws all things to one, makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories take one colour and serve to one effect'. Unity of interest, says Coleridge, 'is not properly a rule but in itself the great end not only of the drama but of the epic poem, the lyric ode, of all poetry down to the candle-flame of an epigram—nay of poesy in general as the proper, generic term inclusive of all the fine arts as its species'. A poem is, as Paul Valéry states, an indissoluble union of sound and sense. Under sound I would include what are sensations of the mouth as well as of the ear. That was pointed out to me by a poet and was confirmed by a soldier who had suffered from shell shock which

deprived him of the power of speech. As he recovered, he told me, he could read a poem with ease, but broke down if he attempted a paragraph in the newspaper. A good poem is sweet in the mouth and pleasant to the ear. The same harmony determines the question of unity of plot, the intermingling of comic and serious scenes, of diction, and of metre. Spingarn, e.g., declares the question of the unity of Ariosto's *Orlando* is still an open one. He seems to be thinking of unity of plot. But the plot is only one element, and not always an important one, in many poems and novels. For an inferior artist is often a better deviser of plots than a greater one. Neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare cared for the invention of plot. Their attitude was, 'Give me the plot, and I will give it dramatic interest and poetic beauty.' Coleridge adjudged the *Oedipus* and *Tom Jones* to be the two most perfect plots. Well, the *Oedipus* represents one type of plot which, with some difference, was brought to perfection in the drama of Racine, and one may pass it. But does one's enjoyment of *Tom Jones* gain much from perceiving how the various threads are brought together and the difficulties cleared up in a happy ending? I do not think so. The harmony is in the broad picture of English life seen through a certain temperament. What is the unity of *War and Peace*? Just the unity of human life. So do people feel and act when young and full of spirit and of hope. So does experience involve them in the unforeseen intricacies and responsibilities of life. So do they in the end, if they have come through, look back, 'all passion spent', on the agitated currents of their life and barely recognize themselves.

And so with diction. Wordsworth was not wrong in stating that there is no essential difference between the diction of prose and poetry, unless we confine prose to the prose of mere information, the prose of a railway guide. His error was only in implying that there is only one kind of poetic diction. The whole history of poetic diction in the century shows how many different varieties poets may find appropriate to the effects they desire to produce, archaic, sensuous, imagist, and if the whole effect is harmonious then every single one of them is right. 'I write in verse', says Coleridge, 'because I intend to use a diction other than that of prose.' That is a very partial truth, as Coleridge himself admits in the later *Anima Poetae*. Poets writing in metre have used every kind of diction from the archaic

diction of Spenser, the dignified Latinized syntax of Milton, the imagist style ('pestered with metaphor' as Dryden would say) of Shakespeare, the conversational language of the 'metaphysicals', the richly sensuous diction of Keats, to the colloquial slang of Kipling. There is no essential difference between the language of poetry and prose because, as Wordsworth boldly stated (to the horror of Professor Saintsbury) metre is an accident of poetry dating from its close connexion in origin with music and dancing. If there is any distinct trend in imaginative literature just now it is towards the supersession of metre, a prescribed pattern of verse, towards prose or what may be called prose, for it follows no prescribed metrical scheme. Though even when we speak of metre we must remember we are speaking abstractly. The metre of a good poem is the metre of *that* poem and of no other, even if we can call the metre of two different poems by some common name. Coventry Patmore somewhere declared that a certain metre could be used only for a certain kind of poetry, of tone. Tennyson had no difficulty in showing him that it might, used in another way, produce quite a different effect. What is there really in common between the verse of *Hudibras*:

And like a lobster boiled the morn
From black to red began to turn

and that of the *Eve of St. Mark*:

Upon a Sabbath-day it fell;
Twice holy was the Sabbath-bell,
That called the folk to evening prayer;
The city streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of April rains?

But returning to what may justly be called prose because it makes not even an affectation of metre by being printed in separate lines, that distinguished American critic Edmund Wilson in a discriminating criticism of *Ulysses* writes: 'The poet is still present in *Ulysses*', and he quotes some sentences. 'But the conventions of the romantic lyric, of aesthetic *fin-de-siècle* prose, even of the æsthetic naturalism of Flaubert, can no longer be made to accommodate the reality of experience. The diverse elements of experience are perceived in different relations and they must be differently represented. Joyce has found for this new vision a new language, but a language which, instead of diluting or doing

violence to his poetic genius, enables it to assimilate more materials, to readjust itself more completely and successfully than that of perhaps any other poet to the new self-consciousness of the modern world. But in achieving this Joyce has ceased to write verse. I have suggested, in connexion with Valéry and T. S. Eliot, that verse itself as a literary medium is coming to be used for fewer and fewer and for more and more special purposes, and that it may be destined to fall into disuse. And it seems to me that Joyce's literary development is a striking corroboration of this view. His prose works have an artistic intensity, a beauty of surface and of form which makes him comparable to the great poets rather than to most of the great novelists.' To discuss all this would need another or more than another lecture. It may be that, as criticism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries centred round the drama, so it may be now round the novel, the greater novels that is, that criticism will mainly gather to-day.

But my theme is the critic. What is his function if he can no longer presume to instruct, to arraign the breaker of rules fixed by Aristotle and the Ancients? If the golden rule for poet and critic is that there is no rule? Even the simplest rules, Purity, Propriety, Correctness, are all relative, subordinate to the broader rule laid down by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, that a speech or any other composition is the product of three factors, the speaker, the subject, and the audience. His function is to interpret the wayward work of genius, for human nature and life are too complex for anyone to foretell in what way a genius may or may not succeed in achieving and communicating a new and complex harmony. It is his function, if he can achieve it, to show that a harmony has been achieved, or has not, that all the beauty of the *Idylls of the King* may yet leave one with an uneasy feeling that this is not the way in which these particular stories cried out to be told. And if a harmony has been achieved it remains for him to reveal the complexity and the value of the elements of which it is composed. The perfection of the poem is in its harmony, the unity of effect; its greatness in the number and value of the elements thus harmonized. The *Ancient Mariner* seems to me a quite perfect poem, as Lamb at once perceived when Southey could see nothing in it but a Dutch attempt at sublimity, and even Wordsworth was doubtful. But the *Divine Comedy*

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is a greater poem because it has harmonized so much more in its picture of despair in Hell, of ever-growing hope in the Purgatory, of all the radiance of love and joy in the Paradise. It is a difficult task, the critic's, and the history of criticism is strown with mistaken judgements; difficult whether he has to try to form a just estimate of the past, to tell why such and such a poet has been over- or underestimated in his day or, on the other hand, is brought face to face with something new, a Wordsworth, a Keats, a Tennyson. Lamb laid his finger at once on what was best in the *Lyrical Ballads*—the *Ancient Mariner* and the *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*. Lockhart was in the observatory when two stars of the first magnitude arose in the sky and he missed them both—Keats and Tennyson. To Crabbe the *Ancient Mariner* (which he attributed to Lamb) seemed an interesting attempt 'to portray madness not by its effects but by an imitation, as if a painter to give a picture of lunacy should make his canvas crazy and fill it with wild unconnected limbs and distortion of features—yet one or two of the limbs are pretty'. It was not quite otherwise that a poem such as *The Waste Land* appeared to some of us older people.

Two tendencies the critic should fight against, though they are invincible, prejudice and dogmatism, the wish to pontificate. The first is that to which we older readers are disposed: our taste is formed and a new phenomenon makes us not only uncomfortable but too often angry. The latter is that to which the young lean, as when Mr. Eliot and Mr. Leavis and Mr. Herbert Read undertake the complete revaluation of our literature without condescending to reasons for their dogmatic findings. If a poet has appealed in the past to judges whose worth is not to be set aside it may be less useful to tell us that you personally do not like the poet than to discover what it was that made such appeal and why his work has lost interest, for doing so one may recover a juster appreciation of some temporarily neglected poet, a Donne or a Crabbe. Mr. T. S. Eliot tells us that none can appreciate Shelley who has outgrown adolescence, that he turns to Shelley now only to check a reference. The late Professor Saintsbury was not a young man when he died. He was, like Mr. Eliot, an ardent Christian and Anglican. He hated all Shelley's political and religious sentiments, yet he pronounced Shelley the quintessential poet. How is one to explain such a divergence? The

immediate inference would seem to be that Saintsbury was still young when over seventy; Mr. Eliot already old before fully seventeen, which would probably not be quite a fair inference. On the other hand youth has claims to respect. I always declined to speak *ex cathedra* on quite modern poets though willing to talk about them in Societies where student and professor could meet on equal terms, for the young know best what appeals to them. Our tastes are to some extent formed. If a poem makes immediate and strong appeal to a large number of young and able readers, as did *The Waste Land*, it behoves an older critic to give it careful thought. He may find in the end what it is that has attracted, if to him it still appears a highly sophisticated work of the imagination reacting to many influences. Mr. Richards indeed seems to hope that criticism will in the end, by the aid of psychology, become scientific, that we shall discover something corresponding to a piece of litmus paper which, applied to a poem, will reveal by a change of colour whether it is a product of Fancy or Imagination. I doubt it. Criticism will always represent the reaction of this or that individual mind or the mind of a period, Jacobean, Victorian, to a work of the imagination, and it will be, as with the mean in the sphere of morals, 'as the wise man would pronounce'. From that circle it is impossible to escape. The wise man defines the mean. The man who correctly defines the mean is wise. Good wine is what the man with a good palate prefers. The good palate is that which recognizes good wine. So with the critics. They are the satellites which move around the poet, illuminating, transfiguring, distorting. But both poet and critic draw their light from the sun of beauty and truth, and we may be glad of both. Personally I do not share the objection often expressed just now to the critic who is in part a poet himself and describes poetically his reactions to a poem. Indeed I prefer it to much that affects to be scientific, dry, and magisterial. Why object to having two good things—*Hamlet* and Goethe or Coleridge on *Hamlet*, Johnson on Dryden and Pope and Gray, Dryden on Chaucer, Lamb on Milton, Arnold on Wordsworth and Byron, Swinburne on Coleridge and Shelley? One cannot have too much of what is good.

H. J. C. GRIERSON

ON RE-READING SPENSER'S *SHEPHEARDES CALENDER*

THE following thoughts and notes are the *disiecta membra* which I have somewhat haphazardly set down from the results of a more serious study of *The Shepheardes Calender* which war-time paper restrictions do not permit of my attempting to publish *in extenso*.

They deal first with three passages which have appealed to me for their literary art, and then offer some fruits of a reconsideration of the language and diction of the poem.

The passages which I have found, on re-reading the poem, to retain a strong attraction or interest for me are the flower-passage in the April Eclogue, the fable of the Fox and the Kid of May, and the closing lines of the whole *Calender*.

I

The flower-passage of the April Eclogue is probably everybody's favourite, and Milton's famous passage in *Lycidas*—though it has remembered much too from Shakespeare's symbolic flowers of *Hamlet* and *The Winter's Tale*—is a kind of memorial of it which points the way of appreciation. But more than anyone else I have read, Miss Spens, in her remarks on Spenser's passage,¹ has suggested its most significant less tangible poetic qualities. After comparing the analogy of the modern artist's suggestion of physical objects by geometrical and rhythmic lines, she continues:

Linked with this is the deliberate grouping together of flowers that do not all bloom at one season— . . . they are brought together out of time and space to produce an effect that would elude more direct expression. The names of the flowers are a sort of charm by which particular complex groups of memories may be evoked.

The kind of impression I get from this flower-passage is something like that which Shelley has sought to convey in the lines

Some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and feeling
Are one.

¹ *Spenser's Faerie Queene, an Interpretation*, London, 1943, pp. 74-5.

It is a subtle and quite inexpressible blend of metrical verbal music, suggested symbolic significances, and romantic sound-associations recalling the middle ages. These qualities are found to some extent too in Shakespeare's flower passages; but Spenser's is by far the more medieval as well as being the more individually poetic.

The flowers in a medieval garden—and indeed well into later times—were primarily thought of for two main qualities: medicinal powers and fragrance. Of the appeal of colour there was, of course, consciousness; but this was far less emphasized alike by gardeners and poets than has been the custom of more recent times. A good example of this difference of attitude between the medieval and the modern mind may be seen in Chaucer's many references to flowers. But in a contemporary of Chaucer's, the poet of *Pearl*, there is, I conjecture, an attitude to flowers in the poet's dream-garden which is far closer in one respect of importance to that of Spenser. For to the *Pearl*-poet, the flowers of differing seasons and places which all bloom together in August on Our Lady's feast-day, are symbols of powers of spiritual healing. The garden of *Pearl* is of fragrant medicinal herbs; but it is made clear that these flowers also symbolize qualities or states of mind that will medicine the spirit of the bereaved poet. It will be worth while, I think, to set down the two passages for comparison in this regard. Spenser wrote:

Bring hether the Pincke and purple Cullambine,
 With Gelliflowres:
 Bring Coronations, and Sops in wine,
 Worne of Paramoures.
 Strowe me the ground with Daffadownillies,
 And Cowslips, and Kingcups, and loued Lillies:
 The pretie Pawnce,
 And the Cheuisaunce,
 Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice.

But some two hundred years earlier, the *Pearl*-poet saw in his vision, as he dreamed on the grave of his dead child, how his spirit could be purified, and reconciled so to the divine will; and the garden where the healing vision came to him is thus described:

To pat spot pat I in speche expoun
 I entred, in pat erber grene,
 In Augoste in a hy3 seysoun,
 Quen corne is coruen wyth croke3 kene.

On huyle per perle hit trendeled doun
 Schadowed pis worteȝ ful schyre & schene—
 Gilofre, gyngure, & gromlyoun,
 & pyonys powdered ay bytwene.
 ȝyf hit watȝ semly on to sene,
 A fayr refflayr ȝet fro hit flot,
 Per wonys þat worpyly, I wot & wene,
 My precious perle wythouten spot.

Now each of the herbs of the passage from *Pearl* (stanza 4) was accepted as having medicinal qualities of various sorts, as a glance at an old *Herbarium* will show; though one of them, the gromwell, is now scarcely known except to specialist herb-lovers. But the herbs are not only a mixture of native and imported foreign plants, but also, like Spenser's, are brought together in a way which is independent of time and space: and it is made clear that they are not intended otherwise than as symbols by their being made all to bloom together in one place in a manner quite removed from their known natural habits. Pearl is, among other things, a symbol of the 'pearl of great price', the *pretiosa margarita* of the Vulgate (Matt. xiii. 46): and the qualities symbolized by the flowers belong to her in somewhat the same sense and fashion as Spenser's flowers are fitting to his conception of Elisa. Somehow all the splendours and aspirations of a patriotic poet's Elizabethan age seem curiously mirrored in Spenser's lines. The intellectual and the aesthetic qualities are vaguely suggested in '*the pretie Pawnce*' and in '*the fayre flowre Delice*' with its spelling made to point to the fleur-de-lis as the *flos deliciarum*. But the most surprisingly beautiful result of Spenser's experimenting in poetic language is in the use here of the word *chevisaunce*, which may be described as having acquired for special purpose what I would call a nonce-meaning. With its suggestion of some splendid undiscoverable flower there goes a strange evocation by sound-association of a whole world of medieval romantic chivalry—of *chevauchee* and *chevalrye*. How far removed 'E. K.' often is from the poet's own way of thought is shown by his note on line 120, *Ladyes of the lake*, in which he speaks of 'certain fine fablers and lowd lyers, such as were the Authors of King Arthure the great and suchlike, who tell many an vnlawfull leasing of the Ladyes of the Lake, that is, the Nymphes'. In his use of *Chevisaunce* alone does Spenser seem to be quite original: I imagine he had

seen the *Delice* form in Dunbar, whom he certainly read, as evidence from *The Faerie Queene* shows. This *Cheuisaunce*, in its Middle English sense of 'business undertaking' (usually the lending or raising of money in secret) Spenser knew well and employed in his May Eclogue (line 92). But that he had in mind the sound-association of the word with 'chivalry' seems also certain from his making Britomart say that it would be shameful to abandon 'the noble Cheuisaunce' of rescuing Amoret in *The Faerie Queene*, III, canto xi, st. 24. But to suggest poetically the world of romantic medieval chivalry by means of the beauty of a mysterious unknown flower was Spenser's peculiar bold and triumphant achievement.

The attraction of the fable of the fox and the kid in the May Eclogue lies in its vividness, its homely touches of humour, and its suggestion of Chaucer's manner (though without here direct imitation otherwise than in vocabulary). There is, too, the possibility noted by some critics that parts of the fable where the metre seems very 'rugged' may represent Spenser's vague idea of the metre of Chaucer as seen in the sixteenth-century editions. The general flavour of the narrative reminds me of Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale* distantly, and Spenser probably owed a good deal to his having assimilated something of Chaucer's manner. This reminiscence of Chaucer's manner is of interest too because—except for *Mother Hubblebuds Tale*—the appeal of Chaucer to Spenser seems definitely to have been of a primarily romantic kind. A glance through Spenser's work suggests that the Chaucer that he delighted in was the author of *The Knight's Tale* and that of the *Squire*, of *Troilus and Criseyde*, of *The Parlement of Foules*, and of *The Hous of Fame*.¹ To Chaucer Spenser went for attractive old-world forms, words, and phrases, for poetic diction, or for what the later middle ages called *rhetoric*. For him he was the source of a romantic element in language or of romantic themes; he was the 'well of English vndefyled' or 'the pure well head of Poesie'. In this tale of the fox and the kid Spenser, with some distant help from Chaucer, manages to tell his fable with a raciness and suitable-

¹ Cf. *Calender*, Feb., lines 35-6 with *H.F.* lines 1225-6; *Daphnaïda* and *The Book of the Duchesse*; *Muiopotmos* in its romantic mock-heroic aspects with *Sir Thopas*; *F.Q.* I. v. st. iii. 4 and *Prol. to C.T.* 9; *F.Q.* IV. II, sts. xxxii and xxxiv, and the opening of *The Knight's Tale*; *F.Q.*, *Mutabilitie*, VII, st. ix and *The Parlement of Foules*.

ness of homely language and metre that is very rare in the *Calender*.

That Spenser—whatever edition or manuscript of Chaucer he used—was not unfamiliar with the metrical value of the final *e* in that poet, is attested by a number of examples, such as line 73 of *May*:

Ah Palinodie, thou art a worldes childe,

with which one may compare *F.Q.*, I. v. xvii. 4,

In wine and oyle they wash his woundes wide.

The amount of irregularity in the black-letter Chaucers, such as those of Thynne, 'Stowe', and Speght (the last two are merely *litteratim* reproductions of the text of Thynne, though they differ in their choice of material to some extent) differs from one text to another; but here is a specimen which represents about the most usual degree of ametricality, taken from Thynne's text of *The None's Priest's Tale*, lines 395-407:

A col foxe (ful of sleight and iniquite)
That in the groue had wonned yeres thre
By hygh ymagynacion a forne caste
The same nyght through the hedge braste
In to the yerde there Chaunteclere the fayre
Was wonte and eke his wyues to repayre
And in a bedde of wortes styll he lay
Tyl it was passed Undren of the day
Waytyng his tyme on Chaunteclere to fall
As gladly done these homycides all
That in a wayte lye to murdre men
O false murdrer ruckyng in thy den
O newe Scariot and newe Genylion.

Besides the description of the kid, which owes something to Chaucer's Chaunteclere, the dialogue between the fox and his victim may be compared with that between Chaucer's fox and cock. The spirit and manner are similar; but there is little in the jiggish popular metre of Spenser to suggest Chaucerian influence—whether we think of Chaucer as in a modern edition based on the Ellesmere MS. or of a version likely to have been familiar to Spenser such as that quoted above. Lines 262-81 would be my choice for Spenser in his happiest vein in the style of light humorous fable. The metre is based on stress more than on syllable and is one which looks back to earlier times; but it is also preserved

to some extent in still-remembered nursery rhymes. The effect of the Chaucer passage is quite other. It is the familiar text, with only here and there examples of sheer bad metre through ignorance, change of pronunciation, or miscopying.

Earlier in this Eclogue we find Spenser handling another popular metre with charming delicacy and a tone suggesting by the very sound almost the thought of May-day revels:

Sicker this morrowe, ne lenger agoe,
 I sawe a schole of shepehardes outgoe,
 With singing, and shouting, and iolly chere;
 Before them yode a lusty Tabrere,
 That to the many a Horne pype playd,
 Where to they dauncen eche one with his mayd.
 To see those folkes make such iouysaunce,
 Made my heart after the pype to daunce. (19-26)

Spenser's comic use of the exalted term of address *beastlyhead* by the flattering fox produces just the right mock-heroic effect in the lines

Sicke, sicke, alas, and little lack of dead,
 But I be relieued by your beastlyhead.

Line 284,

After his chere the Pedler can chat,

reminds us, as do several other features of the language of this piece, that Spenser's is a wide use of older literary forms, by no means in any way restricted to Chaucer. For this use of *can* as an auxiliary to form a periphrastic preterite is common in Scottish texts such as Barbour's *Bruce* as well as in North-West Midland English works of the language of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (in its western form *con*, corresponding to *Lazamon's gon*, which is historically from the verb *ginnen* 'to begin').

Lastly, in my literary exploration of the *Calender*, I come to its closing lines. Here, imitating the farewell to his book at the close of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, Spenser seems to acknowledge two great masters:

Goe lyttle Calender, thou hast a free passeporte,
 Goe but a lowly gate emongste the meaner sorte,
 Dare not to match thy pype with *Tityrus* hys style,
 Nor with the Pilgrim that the Ploughman playde a while:
 But followe them farre off, and their high steppes adore,
 The better please, the worse despise, I aske nomore.

Strictly, I suppose, the interest of this passage is more historical than literary? yet it does form an effective conclusion to the *Calender*. But it is especially arresting in the queries it raises concerning the masters of Spenser here offered homage. Is Tityrus Virgil, Chaucer, or both? Is the Ploughman Langland or the author of *The Plowmans Tale*? Of these queries the last is the more intriguing, I think, since Spenser's debts to Virgil and Chaucer are, in any event, sufficiently clear in outline (though there may be room for doubt as to their exact nature). Something of the 'Ecclesiastical' allegory of *The Shepheardes Calender* as well as some features of Spenser's occasional attempts at rustical effects of language, may owe something to *Piers Plowman*: and one would naturally like to think of Spenser as being influenced by the great medieval poet rather than by the pamphleteering doggerel of *The Plowmans Tale*. Yet, as Tyrwhitt was the first to point out, there is evidence that Spenser was influenced by this piece; and there is clearly a verbal echo in the phrase *forswonck and forswatt* in line 99 of the April Eclogue. The controversial tone of the anti-Catholic arguments throughout is very much that of *The Plowman's Tale*: and one may compare also the opening lines of *The Plowmans Tale* with the description of the *ragged routes* of February. The Lollard verse-pamphlet debate first saw the light in Thynne's second edition of Chaucer in 1542, though no one had hitherto pretended that it had anything of Chaucerian origin about it. Spenser could hardly have supposed it to be the work of Chaucer, and his distinction between 'Tityrus' and 'the Pilgrim that the Ploughman playde a while' might seem to confirm this. Moreover, some of Spenser's fairly frequent dialect-words are regular in *The Plowmans Tale*, such as *glitterand* and *ligge*. Skeat thought that Spenser had inadvertently transposed the words *Pilgrim* and *Ploughman* in his epilogue: but even this transposition would not get rid of the seeming ambiguity. For did not Langland's ploughman also 'play the pilgrim' for a while? Spenser's shepherds handle their religious controversies, however, in a manner far more like the debates between the *Grifon* and the *Pellican* of *The Plowmans Tale* than anything in Langland's *Visions*. One may speculate too on a possible relationship between Spenser's lost piece *The Dying Pelican* and the virtuous protagonist of *The Plowmans Tale*. Perhaps the Lollard zeal of the *Pellican* appealed too to Spenser's semi-Puritan sympathies.

Still, quite apart from the above somewhat academic inquiry, there is a simple dignity in these last lines of *The Shepheardes Calender* that is not altogether unworthy of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*: and here, for once, Spenser was almost truly following 'the footing' of his master's 'feet'.

II

Sir Herbert Grierson has somewhere playfully asked concerning the treatment of Spenser by academic critics:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philology?

It may be, then, after all, that my relative failure to enjoy the *Calender* as poetry is due to the fact that I have very much enjoyed prying into the quality and origin of many of its words. Yet I am far from admitting myself to be in the state of mind of a great English philologist of the last generation, who, when detected to have the works of John Lyly on his shelves, offered as the sole explanation for this possession the simple statement that 'there are some good words in Lyly'! What then is the impression left on me at this re-reading by the language—and especially by the linguistic experiments? I had, of course, greatly benefited by Professor Renwick's masterly conjuring up of the background (especially the debt to the aims of *La Pléiade*) of Spenser's language¹; and I had probably read most of the periodical literature on the subject.

The difficulty in identifying the masters to whom Spenser pays tribute in the epilogue to the *Calender* is in line with the general fact that Spenser's sources of linguistic inspiration are vague and widely diffused rather than individual or clearly definable. The influence of Virgil goes deeper than that of Chaucer; yet Tityrus is made sometimes to suggest Chaucer almost as if he were to Spenser a sort of English Virgil. The influence of Langland is fairly widely evident on *The Faerie Queene* in its allegory; but one can see scarcely any clear sign of it in the *Calender*. It would indeed seem very odd that Spenser should couple the author of the relatively unimpressive *Plowmans Tale* with Tityrus as a

¹ *Modern Language Review*, xvii (1922), 'The Critical Origins of Spenser's Diction' and 'Mulcaster's Influence on Spenser's Diction'.

model whose style the poet 'dare not to match': yet, as shown above, it is difficult to find any other explanation. From later Middle English literature Spenser has remembered many words and phrases without conscious effort, and his reading had been wide and included almost all dialects. He inherited the medieval habit, perhaps, of referring to high authority as a poetic artist, and hence his formal tribute to Chaucer in the fourth book of *The Faerie Queene*. It may be too that, when he came to the end of the *Calender*, he just set down beside Tityrus (Chaucer and Virgil both, I think), the highest authority he found coming to mind to set beside Chaucer: so that the reference may well be to Langland even though there is good evidence that it was *The Plowmans Tale* rather than Langland's *Visions* that had been the real influence on Spenser at this stage.

Spenser too would doubtless inherit the fifteenth-century attitude towards Chaucer as 'the Fyrst fynder of our faire langage' and the model for 'Rhetoric': and that this was so is made probable by the attitude shown in Elizabethan works of criticism like Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique* and Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie*.

The Elizabethan practice of speaking of Chaucer and other older writers as examples of 'pure' English (an adjective which they also applied to dialects, especially the more conservative northern and western forms) is to be connected with the natural association of 'purity' with antiquity (real or supposed) and archaism. To Spenser, then, Chaucer was—as I have suggested earlier—the source of romantic language and themes; and it is to be remembered that his main tribute of homage is given as an apology for completing Chaucer's *Squire's Tale*. Spenser's expressions 'well of English vndefyled' and 'the pure well head of Poesie' are probably to be taken as his tribute to a genuinely felt debt couched in forms which the critical outlook of the day demanded. Not in fact for his linguistic 'purity' did Spenser value Chaucer, but (though he need not himself have been conscious of this) as the inspirer of a kind of romantic medievalism.

The letter of Francis Beaumont included in Speght's second edition of Chaucer's collected works in 1602 well suggests what seems likely to have been the attitude of Spenser himself to Chaucer and that which he inspired perhaps in a group of enthusiastic young men at Cambridge.

‘And here I cannot forget to remember vnto you those ancient learned men of our time in Cambridge; whose diligence in reading of his (Chaucer’s) workes themselves and commending them to others of the younger sort, did first bring you and me in loue with him; and one of them, at that time and all his life after, was (as you know) one of the rarest men for learning in the whole world (Spenser).’

Earlier in the same letter we read:

‘But so pure were Chaucers words in his daies, . . . and so good they are in our daies, as Maister Spenser (following the Counsaile of *Tullie*, in his third booke, *De Oratore*, for reuiuing of auncient wordes,) hath adorned his Stile with that beautie and grauitie that *Tullie* there speakes of; and his much frequenting of Chaucers auncient wordes, with his excellent imitation of diuerse places in him, is not the leaste helpe that hath made him reach so hie, as many learned men doe thinke, that no Poet either French or Italian, deserues a second place vnder him.’

Anyone approaching an attempt at an appraisal of the language of *The Shepheardes Calender* will find himself beset with preliminary difficulties, of which the following have, I think, especially to be borne in mind: the nature of the Elizabethan Chaucer canon; the contemporary use of the term ‘northern’ as covering something far wider and vaguer than it now does; the disparity between the facts of modern dialect-distribution of forms as ascertainable from works like Wright’s *Dialect Dictionary* and that of earlier times; the absence of anything like an Elizabethan *Thesaurus* (for which the *O.E.D.* was never meant to be a substitute); and our ignorance of the exact relationship of the work of ‘E. K.’ to Spenser’s own aims.

It is, of course, well known that the sixteenth-century collected editions of Chaucer included various fifteenth-century matter, and that therefore Spenser’s conception of Chaucer must have been a good deal wider than ours; and some of the ‘Chaucerian’ influences upon Spenser are more accurately to be described as emanating from the fifteenth century. Here I would notice a curiosity which has continued to baffle me. Twice in *The Faerie Queene* (never in the *Calender*) we find the word *yond* used in the sense of ‘savage’, and apparently a false archaism. In Book II (VIII. xl. 9) Sir Guyon is compared to a lion who ‘then wexeth wood and yond’, and in the third book (VII. xxvi. 5) we find

As *Florimell* fled from the Monster yond.

In both passages, as so often with Spenser, the strange form may be associated with the needs of rhyme. Now the commentators have easily treated this *yond* as a false archaism based on a misunderstanding of Chaucer's line in the *Envoy* of *The Clerkes Tale* (1143), which, in the Ellesmere MS. followed by modern editors, runs

Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde.

This seems natural and reasonable enough, till we turn to the sixteenth-century black-letter editions, where we find that none has the word *yond*. They all, in fact, as is usual, agree. The so-called Stowe edition of 1561, which would seem to be the most likely to have been used by Spenser, has the line thus:

Beth eygre as any Tigre is in Inde.

Unless Spenser saw a manuscript version such as Ellesmere, his false meaning of *yond* must have come, not from Chaucer (who did not have the form in the text available), but from some imitator of Chaucer in the fifteenth century, who used the word in a manner that lent itself to such a misunderstanding as Spenser shows. Indeed the explanation of *yond* may well be parallel to that of *derring-do* (in the *Calender* as well as in *The Faerie Queene*). Here Lydgate imitated a passage in Chaucer's *Troilus* in a manner which might easily be misunderstood by Spenser; and a misprint of *e* for *o* in *derring* in the version of Lydgate used by Spenser has afforded the clue to this other false archaism, since Spenser's spelling can only be explained from Lydgate as printed and not from the Chaucer passage direct.¹

Thomas Speght, in his preface 'to the Reader' of his 1602 edition of Chaucer, says that he thinks some of the significations he has attributed to his author's words may seem merely conjectural. 'But', he says,

such as understand the Dialects of our tongue, *especially in the North*,
... will judge otherwise.

Almost any apparent divagation from the current norm of literary London and the Universities was liable to be taken as 'northern', or, as 'E. K.' has it, 'northernly spoken'. Hence the belief that the dialect-forms in Spenser are mainly northern—an opinion

¹ For the details see the *O.E.D.*, which does not seem to have been consulted by the editors. The correct view of *yond* was first indicated by Dr. C. T. Onions in *The Times Literary Supplement* for Feb. 17, 1921.

which has constantly influenced for error commentators on Spenser's language.

In attempting to discriminate between forms adopted in *The Shepheardes Calender* from literary and from spoken dialect sources, it is natural to turn to a dialect dictionary. But a work intended to show the facts of to-day and yesterday can be of little trustworthiness for the Elizabethan spoken dialects. We think now, for instance, of the dialect-word *gradely* chiefly in connexion with Lancashire comedians; but in Middle English the corresponding forms were widely distributed over the west and north-west midlands, according to the evidence of literary texts. The only dialect-words in the *Calender* which it is safe to take as directly from the contemporary spoken language of Spenser's time are those which are known to have been always limited to spoken use and are employed by the poet to obtain deliberately rustic effects, such as *rontes* in the line (Feb., 5):

My ragged rontes all shiver and shake.

Here it seems clear that Spenser is using a word from the spoken and not the written language: for the *O.E.D.* shows us that the term has always belonged to the vulgar tongue rather than to literature, and the only instance cited before Spenser is from an agricultural section of an Act of Parliament of Edward VI. Yet it is to be noticed that the current word *runt* has various meanings in different dialects and seems always to have meant one thing in one area and one in another. So that only the context will make it clear exactly what meaning Spenser attached to it. In Shropshire and Monmouthshire, for example, the word now is generally limited to the smallest and weakest member of a litter of pigs, though half-a-dozen other meanings (not all confined to animals) could be found in its history. It is in the nature of things, moreover, that the historical knowledge of *spoken* as distinct from written dialects is very rarely to be come by, and the number of documents for the spoken dialects of early modern English is almost negligible.

Spenser's archaisms in the *Calender* are, far more than in *The Faerie Queene*, experiments in language. It is, however, extremely difficult to be sure what was, and what was not, an archaism in Spenser's time in the absence of a complete Elizabethan *Thesaurus* which could be used beside the *O.E.D.* There was in Elizabeth's

time the archaizing school of literary men just as there was that of the Latinizers; and many forms which look like archaisms in Spenser turn out on investigation to have been fairly commonly accepted Elizabethan revivals. Moreover, without a complete set of examples it will be impossible to say whether a word was common or rare, since the *O.E.D.* is not a quantitative measure and can tell us little of historical word-frequency. No doubt the archaism, like the innovation in the *Calender*, has often been exaggerated; but even Professor McElderry's results¹ cannot—with the paucity of the evidence available—be accepted as final.

I hold no strong view on the relationship between 'E. K.'s' work and Spenser, except that I agree with the now widely accepted opinion that the pompous and prosy, yet at times shrewd and discerning, editor of *The Shepheardes Calender* must have been someone other than Spenser himself. Oskar Sommer and his successors have never made out a convincing case. The quality of the commentary too suggests a mind inferior to Spenser's as well as a knowledge of earlier English definitely less than his.² There are quite needless glosses, like that of *Neighbour towne as the next towne* in January, though this use of *neighbour* as an adjective was not infrequent at the time, as also evidenced in Shakespeare. But unless we can be quite sure of the degree of authority behind the prefatory statements of 'E. K.' on Spenser's poetic aims, it will always be unsafe to think that finality has been reached on the poet's intentions in his linguistic experiments. How far, for instance, did he consciously share the kind of aspirations for poetic language which he had come to know well in the work of *La Pléiade*? Like Spenser himself, perhaps, 'E. K.' is often vague in his memories or references. I incline to conjecture, in the absence of any successful attempt to trace the reference to Lydgate of Chaucer as 'the Loadestarre of our Language' in the Dedication of the *Calender*, that 'E. K.' has confusedly remembered Occleve's famous description of Chaucer as 'the fyrst fynder of our faire langage'. 'E. K.' seems much more of a stiff Protestant controversialist than Spenser, as several of his comments far outgo the text in emphasis, or imply more anti-Catholic

¹ Cf. B. R. McElderry's 'Archaism and Innovation in Spenser's Diction' in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, March 1932.

² Cf. *The Shepheardes Calender . . . the original edition of 1579 in photographic Facsimile with an Introduction*, by H. Oskar Sommer, London, 1890.

feeling than the text seems to warrant. With these preliminary caveats, what was my impression of the diction of the *Calender*?

Besides the oft-quoted passages of 'E. K.'s' Dedication, one other especially impressed me as showing the unknown editor as discerning and apt in expression. He has been speaking of the delightfulness of Spenser's deliberately rustical effects, and continues:

Euen so doe those rough and harsh termes enlumine and make more clearly to appeare the brightnesse of braue and glorious words.

Are not there 'braue and glorious words' like *cheuisaunce* and *flowre Delice*? And are not they enhanced in these qualities by the 'rustical rudeness' of names like *sops in wine*? Or is not the 'delectable controuersie made in imitation of that in Theocritus' of the August Eclogue delightfully followed by one of Spenser's rare bits of true 'rustical rudeness' in the opening of the September Eclogue? I never tire of reading aloud this dialogue between Hobbinol and Diggon Davie, who for the nonce appear here as real country folk from the south-west of England, whose racy spoken dialect (though of course Spenser does not keep it up) is marked not by its vocabulary as rustic, but by its very texture, its accidence and syntax. Says Hobbinol:

Diggon Dauie, I bidde her god day:
Or Diggon her is, or I missaye.

To which Davie replies:

Her was her, while it was daye light,
But now her is a most wretched wight.

This, read aloud in a resonant south-western accent, seems to me delightfully effective, and I rather think I ought to have placed the passage among those which I found had moved me by their literary qualities. There is really no separating the linguistic from the literary appreciation here.

In the *Calender* we can discern to some extent the three kinds of language which we might expect to find: experiments of every sort (many of which seem to produce a blurred feeling of frustration in the reader); then occasionally a triumphant experiment like the April flower-passage, where language and thought are perfectly harmonized and fused—experiments that were preparing the way for the *Lond of Faerie*; and lastly there is a good deal of the usual Elizabethan poetical language which

Spenser could already handle well and was to employ supremely in his *Epithalamion*. But throughout, except for occasional bits of deliberate rusticity wherein the spoken language has been laid under contribution, all the words and phrases from dialects are of literary sources, the result of remembered reading in late Middle English or of the early sixteenth century. Attempts to localize these dialect-words as a whole have failed because they are not only heterogeneous in region but also in date: and those few which are from spoken contemporary dialects are again from different areas. Advocates of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire, &c., can easily overthrow one another: for the attempt is doomed to disappointment by the nature of the case.¹ Such efforts are often based on an unconsciously static view of language and an insufficient acquaintance with the linguistic material of Spenser's reading in our earlier poets.

The following words remain in my mind after my re-reading of the *Calender* as probably directly taken from rustic *spoken* language by Spenser: *Heydeguyes* (June, 27), *Queene apples vnrype* (June, 43), *rontes* (Feb., 5), *trickle* (July, 14), *vndersongs* (Aug., 128), *weanell* (Sept., 198), 'so *wimble*, and so *wight*' (March, 91).

Of these, *rontes* has already been touched upon, and *heydeguyes* and *weanell* are easily recognizable rural words in rural contexts. *Queene apple* has been disputed and doubted, but I am convinced that it is a true rustic form of the old word for 'quince'. For *quince* is historically a plural form of *quin* or *quine*, which is itself a form of earlier *coyn* (Fr. *coing*). In Spenser's time our word *queen* was often written *quin(e)*, and hence the confusion between *queen* and *quine* (quince), and then by folk-etymology *quine-apple* becomes *queen-apple*. The *O.E.D.* quotes the *Art of Planting* (1575): 'to graff the Quyne Apple'; and it is evident that Spenser's *Queen apple* is the same word. Students of English pronunciation will be familiar with this identity in the sixteenth century of *queen* and *quyne*. *Trickle* means something like 'tricky', and is a good rustic word in a rustic situation. But the fifth Quarto and the Folio have replaced it by the familiar Elizabethan *tickle*, best known now from its use by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. Now while

¹ Cf. J. W. Draper in *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* for 1919 and 1922; and in *Modern Philology* for 1920. Also P. Long in *Anglia*, xxxi; F. Covington in *Studies in Philology* for 1922. The only work in periodicals which really has proved of permanent helpfulness is that of Renwick and of McElderry, op. cit.

it is true that *tickle* makes excellent sense in the passage, I can see no justification for accepting an emendation to a more familiar and less rustical word on the sole authority of the last Quarto and the Folio as against the first four editions. The lines stand in the 1579 quarto thus:

In humble dales is footing fast,
The trode is not so trickle:
And though one fall through heedlesse hast,
Yet is his misse not mickle.

The *O.E.D.* quotes from Henry Willobie's *Avisa*; or, *the true picture of a modest maid*: 'Such trickle trades procure a suddaine fall.' Spenser is the first recorded to have used the word *trickle* as an adjective: but if the word was mainly of the spoken rather than the written language, this would be what we should expect. Willobie's use of *trickle* belongs to 1594, but its context makes it quite unlikely that he was merely echoing Spenser. *Vndersongs* are mentioned by Spenser for the first time, in the amoebaeen shepherds' contest in singing; and as there is no record of any earlier use, it seems probable that Spenser took it for his special purpose (it is a technical term, it seems) from the spoken language of some rural place. In Thomalin's description of his disastrous contest with Cupid Spenser appears to have introduced the word *wimble* from a rural dialect for the first time into the written language. We do not know the origin of *wimble* as an adjective, and it may be, on the other hand, that the poet found the alliterating phrase in his reading of earlier poetry which we cannot trace. Certainly in its context it has a rural air:

He was so wimble, and so wight,
From bough to bough he lepped light,
And oft the pumies latched.

I have only noted a very few phrases that seem to smack of true rustic spoken idiom, as distinct from vocabulary. In the May Eclogue Palinode asks Piers whether his teeth are not on edge at the thought of the May sports of the faeries and nymphs:

Ah *Piers*, bene not thy teeth on edge, to thinke,
How great sport they gaynen with little swink. (35-36)

The context makes it clear that Palinode's teeth are on edge for reasons almost directly the opposite of those which we should now speak of as having that effect: it is longing, not revulsion, which

is intended. The *O.E.D.* does not appear to notice this example of what may well be an otherwise unrecorded idiom from the rustic speech of the sixteenth century. I have already referred to what is perhaps Spenser's best rustic effort, the opening dialogue of the September Eclogue. Here the use of *her* as a nominative and the general effect are clearly from south-western speech. To these examples I can only add, though without any effective comment, the line (April, 156)

Great pittie is, he be in such a taking,

line 17 from April:

What is he for a Ladde, you so lament?

and the *hiddre and shidder* of Sept., 211.

While the use of certain familiar Chaucerian grammatical forms is fairly general in the *Calender*, the other literary dialects are all likely to be represented. Northern or north-midland are the following, which struck me as I read, though I have not tried to make anything like an exhaustive list: *crag* (neck), *gar* (make), *gang*, *kerk*, *ligge*, *lere* (as noun), *sike* (such), *sperre* (shut), *war* (worse), and *wae*. Of northern inflexions only the following were noted: *glitterand* (but the *-and* of present participles might occur in Middle-English in other strongly Scandinavian areas such as East Anglia or the area of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*), *thous* (thou art) and *thou was*. Northern in pronunciation would seem to be the following: *gate* (goat), *heme* (home), *mickle*, *shipheards*, and *warke* (Nov., 64) to rhyme with *carke*. Of these *heme* (specially noticed by 'E. K.') occurs at line 98 of November, with the curious change of spelling in the last Quarto and the Folio from *heme* to *heame*. 'E. K.' also seems to have used the spelling *heame*, which he notes as being 'after the northerne pronouncing'; and one wonders whether it is possible that some kind of diphthongal pronunciation was intended comparable with the Danish *hjem*.

Some words usually set down as definitely northern seem to be very doubtful. Such are *fon* (fool) and *tottie* (shaky). Both occur in Chaucer's representation of the talk of the northern clerks in his *Reeves Tale*, and perhaps for this reason have been too easily accepted as northern. But *tottie* had been fairly widely used (including examples from Lydgate and Thomas More) before Spenser, and *fon*, though the early examples seem to be northern, occurs in the phrase *play the fon* in Skelton's *Magnyfycence*. *Whott*

(the form occurs several times with varying spelling of its end) may perhaps be regarded as a northern spelling without any probable relationship to pronunciation in Spenser's consciousness.

Like many Elizabethans Spenser could coin a word for the nonce, such as *embraue* in the *Calender*, and *dreeriment* (already employed in *The Rvines of Time*) in the same poem. But two of these coinages are, I think, especially interesting, and both are found in the September Eclogue, which is probably the richest of all in variety of language. They are *stanck* of line 47 and *Crumenall* of line 119; and both, like the other coinages just noted, occur at ends of lines in a way which suggests that the exigencies of rhyme have played some part in their creation. *Stanck* (tired) is evidently made straight from the Italian *stanco*. It has a rustic sound, and the difficulty of finding a rhyme with *cranck* would be considerable. *Crumenall* (rhyming with *stal*) is presumably made direct from the Latin *crumena*, 'money-bag': but is there not a certain musical attraction in the sound of it, despite its prosaic meaning? A coinage of a rather different kind is *vndersaye* at line 91 of the same September Eclogue, rhyming with *way*. Here it appears that *vndersaye* means nothing more than 'say', but that the *vnder* is added to it simply for the sake of the metrical syllables thus obtained. *Glenne* seems to have been introduced into English by Spenser in the *Calender* from the Scots, and 'E. K.' has evidently had to make a guess at its meaning, which he does clumsily with his 'a country Hamlet or borough'.

Spenser's curiosity in finding out suitable words may be suggested by *gelt* (Feb., 65) and *chamfred* (Feb., 43). Though he cannot be said to have coined them, each had occurred only once before him as far as our records go; and the one was a false archaism and the other one recorded in a lexicon. *Gelt*, apparently substituted by Bale for *gold* to get a rhyme, seems to have caught Spenser's eye and memory; and *chamfred* he would only have found in Thomas Cooper's *Thesaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* as the equivalent of the Latin (post-Classical) *striatus*. These last, however, can be but slender speculations, since the *O.E.D.* does not pretend to be a complete record of what may once have existed, but only in so far as documents have survived. The phrase (Feb., 47) *corage accoied* looks as if it had been made straight from the French; but as we do not know the date of Peele's third Eclogue, in which it also occurs, we must remain in uncertainty as to

whether Spenser or Peele was likely to have been the introducer of the expression.

Of false archaisms in the *Calender*, such as *yede* (as an infin.), the most are of no particular interest. But in *derring doe* (Oct., 65 and Dec., 43) Spenser has—partly by accident and partly perhaps by design—made a gift of some romantic value. For Scott's revival of the word in *Ivanhoe* ensured it a life not without value in the prose of the nineteenth century. But the April *Chevisaunce*—which in a sense is a false archaism but so many other things too—could not by the very nature of its being repeated as Spenser had used it: and this, the real linguistic triumph of *The Shepheardes Calender*, must ever remain its creator's incommunicable gift.

In reading again the October Eclogue, which is all about Spenser's ideas on poetry which were, says 'E. K.', discoursed at large 'in his booke called the English Poete', I have become convinced that the meaning of the mysterious *bydding base* in the line (5)

In rymes, in riddles, and in bydding base

must have something to do with a contest in singing or poetry rather than a game requiring physical prowess like prisoners' base. I think Mr. Stephen Larrabee is clearly working along the right lines when he stresses this point in his article on the phrase,¹ in which he compares *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I. ii. 94:

Indeed I bid the base for Proteus.

Even more apposite, perhaps, is Nashe's reference to 'sportiue base-bidding Roundelayes' quoted by the *O.E.D.*, because of the connexion with such pastoral pastimes as rhymes and riddles which Spenser's passage evidently requires.

Another possible illustrative comparison that came into my mind at the re-reading, is that of the phrase *madding mynd* in the line (April, 25)

But now from me hys madding mynd is starte,

with *Pearl*, 1154:

My mannez mynde to maddyng malte.

For this is not the only reason for thinking that Spenser may have known something of the work of the *Gawain*-poet.

¹ *Modern Language Notes*, Dec., 1936.

Like so many sets of experiments, the *Calender*, as far as its language is concerned, remains chiefly in one's mind as an interesting collection historically, in which occasionally there may be passages wherein that mysterious fusing of form and matter which constitutes one kind of poetic beauty, takes place. There are, too, some moments of lively rustic realism, as I have tried to show. This deliberate evocation of the rural by means of a rustic word or usage, may possibly have been Milton's 'original' for his own far rarer and more disciplined practice of the same art. And after some experimenting in his earlier poems, he was enabled to use the word *charm* in its dialectal sense of 'the chirping of birds' while retaining some suggestion of that other *charm* of Romance origin when picturing Eve awaking amid rustic beauty with the dawn-songs of the birds in Eden (*Paradise Lost*, iv. 641, et seqq.):

Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest Birds.

I wonder if it is too fanciful to compare line 118 of the October Eclogue:

Here we our slender pipes may safely charme.

Milton's use of *scrannel*, too, in the famous passage of *Lycidas*, was possibly a following up of a method suggested by Spenser's experiments in *The Shepheardes Calender*, though of course the word itself was not recorded in writing before Milton.

C. L. WRENN

SHAKESPEARE AND RHETORIC

THE background of Elizabethan rhetoric has been increasingly studied in recent years and, with it, the contribution of scheme and trope to the texture of Shakespearian expression. In so far as this has led to a clearer reading of the text and richer appreciation of the links between the dramatist and a word- and figure-loving generation it has been all to the good. Yet, to English people perhaps especially, the word 'rhetoric' has scarcely been rehabilitated, and some effort is still necessary not to let slip whatever sense has been won of the full significance of the subject for our understanding of the Elizabethan creating and responding mind.

Euphues serves, of course, as a perpetual advertisement of the rhetorical cult, but, just because it is so extreme and so perfect in its extremity, it may mask for us the normal, everyday, ubiquitous functions discharged by rhetoric in the Elizabethan world. It is well to remind ourselves how large a part of the cultural background was covered by this subject.

In the tradition of Sir Thomas Wilson rhetoric was not Euphuism. It represented a sound humanist tradition and provided a constant incentive to the reading of the Ancients. The reputation of 'Tully' was itself a shield over rhetoric and the genuine or putative Ciceronian treatises were among the most thumbed classical manuals of the art. But Elizabethans of smaller calibre were adepts at appearing more classical than they were and rhetoric was also a part of their medieval heritage. Their conscious attitude towards the Middle Ages tended to be superior and was generally ignorant, but, as is increasingly recognized, they were far more the heirs of the despised medieval past than they knew. The equation of 'rhetorike' with 'coverte termes', with the 'facound', the 'aureate', blended too easily with the growing baroque love of ornament to be readily disciplined by austerer humanist tastes. Moreover, in medieval and renaissance universities alike, rhetoric, as co-partner with logic and grammar in the *trivium*, had a guaranteed position. The realistic interpretation of university regulations always has its hazards and it is not easy to gauge the discrepancies between theory and practice at Oxford and Cambridge in the sixteenth century, but it appears

that rhetoric moved up and logic moved down. Rhetoric (superimposed upon grammar) offered the only academic framework within which humane letters, 'literature' in our sense, could be studied. Ascham makes it clear that it was *via* the categories of rhetoric that Sir John Cheke offered his readings, not only of classical history and oratory but also of Greek tragedy.

Rhetoric, indeed, became a burning academic topic since it was bound up with the 'reforms' of Peter Ramus, which acquired considerable *réclame* in Protestant countries from their author's conversion to the Huguenots. Ramus withdrew from rhetoric all that, in the older, fuller sense of the word, had qualified it to claim some common ground with logic—*memoria*, *inventio*, *dispositio*—leaving only *elocutio* and *pronuntiatio*. Thus the medieval equation with style received a new backing and the renaissance love of ornament a new fillip. Ramus's colleague, Talaeus, supplied one of the most pilfered-from rhetorical works of reference.

All this only brings us within hailing-distance of a proper appreciation of the role of rhetoric in the Elizabethan expansion. It is only too easy to exaggerate the influence of school and university. Rhetoric provided, also, one of the most popular and effective channels of voluntary self-education and was an incentive to the gathering of information outside itself. Most adolescents of intelligent interests as they grew older were for everything except their small Latin and less Greek dependent on 'extra mural' sources—for modern languages, history, cosmography, &c. The numerous rhetorical manuals which poured from the presses up to the mid-nineties make it clear, in preface or dedication, that their purpose was to reach the general world of English readers anxious for self-improvement. Further, the art of rhetoric kept in circulation a great deal of what general information was current. It was for rhetoric that it was sought or known—to point a moral or adorn a tale. Human curiosity was, of course, active then as now, but in a 'pre-scientific age we are not to expect the sense of fact, the same notion of proof, to which we pay at least lip-service. A long trail opens up here; in the interests of brevity I must be content to hazard the assertion that, to average reading and writing Elizabethans, History was *materia rhetorica*; in so far as a long view was taken, History was God's great Persuasion, to be manipulated on the human plane, of course, as by the

Mirror for Magistrates team. In its more piecemeal aspect, it connoted a collection of anecdotes and *exempla*, of which the sanction was not so much knowledge as *use*. Rhetoric, then, in the interests of its own art provided the framework within which information was organized and a stimulus to its collection in 'Nizolian paper-books'.

Yet further, the arts of rhetoric were an expression of, and an appeal to, patriotism. The vernacular rhetoricians, like the great army of translators, have the common end of the *défense et illustration* of the mother-tongue. They had to guide and assert the capacities of English, not only against the Ancients, but against the Italians and the French. Rhetoric was armament; words and figures were ammunition.

Finally, rhetoric remained, of course, a forensic instrument as it was in ancient times and always is where debate, advocacy, eulogy, or denunciation are in question. Parliament and the law courts maintained then, as they do now, a tradition of genuine oratory. There is plenty of evidence that the quality of effort and attention given to the spoken word was higher then than now; connoisseurship in language was more widely spread. The alms-basket of words was freely scattered among the humble. We may note that in the drama the playwright may be 'explicit' in finger-posting facts of plot, situation, or character—not in his language. There he expected his audience to rise or to penetrate; he grew rapidly more and more 'implicit' as time went on. Some of this capacity for attention may be credited to rhetoric in its religious context. Children trained to recapitulate on Monday Sunday's hour-long discourse might find Hamlet, Ulysses, or Coriolanus admirably pointed and brief.

Aristotle and Quintilian may be said to have set the limits within which subsequent rhetorical schools could oscillate. Though a wealth of formal devices was a part of Aristotle's knowledge and experience, what he stressed was the functional side of rhetoric. The orator's business was 'with reference to any given situation or subject to discern all the available means of persuasion'. In our jargon, we should say that he gave to the study a psychological slant, since it must be grounded in the accurate perception of the varieties and niceties of human character and situation. There is, therefore, no necessary connexion with what Plato called

'cookery'. Brutus's speech over Caesar might have been as successful rhetorically as Antony's had it rested upon insight into the human factors and the nature of the audience. To a group of high-minded and laconic Stoics, the very bluntness might have been excellent persuasion.

Though Quintilian based his orator's art upon a broad synthesis of the culture of his day as well as upon the forensic utilities, his equation of its end with *bene dicere*, was capable of over-simplification. Humanists of the calibre of Sir Thomas Wilson did not propagate any such simplification, but inherited medieval grooves, the Ramist reduction, and the renaissance or baroque urge towards ornament and ingenuity, tended, on the average educational level, to equate rhetoric with the arts and graces of style. The treatises of schemes and tropes, such as Richard Sherry's, offer a popular short-cut to a popular conception of *bene dicere*—we are, in fact, in the world of 'cookery'. The element of 'persuasion' is here whittled down to the provision of those pleasurable elements which will induce the listener to pay attention and the reader to finish the book.

These two definitions, 'all the available means of persuasion' and 'well-saying' or fine writing represent the two poles within which rhetoric swings. Sidney, in the *Apologie for Poetrie* and in the *Arcadia* respectively, has illustrated both in their contemporary forms.

There will be little doubt as to how Lyly with his 'For as the Camomile . . .', or Spenser with his 'preaty Epanothorses', or Kyd with his 'O eyes, no eyes . . .' are to be classified. The word 'rhetorical' as applied to Shakespeare's early plays records our recognition of his share in the cult of *bene dicere* as practised by the men of the eighties and early nineties. The classical purity of taste which had striven to keep poetry free from mannered schemes and the more grossly oratorical tricks had no meaning for the Elizabethan poet, as Gascoigne shows. The contribution of scheme and trope to the texture of verse and prose in the Elizabethan heyday is well recognized and it is not my intention to pursue it further. Our use of the word 'rhetorical', however, is still often coloured by modern reservations which impede full appreciation of Lyly's stylized art or Shakespeare's exuberant 'copie'. The word needs to be neutralized. It appears, too, in some illegitimate associations—for example, of the 'youth' of the

writers with the cult of ornament, as if an old poet about 1590 (had there been one) would not have written 'rhetorically'. This is particularly easy in the case of one who, like Shakespeare, was destined to become a Jacobean and acquire a different style. The author of the early plays in the Canon was no stripling, and it is hasty to assume that the 'young' poet amplified merely because he had not yet acquired an adult power of condensation. The dramatists emerging in the latter eighties may have been youngish men and this may have added *Energeia* to their diction and exuberance to their 'copie', but the rhetorical turn of their style—the patterning, play of alliteration and assonance, the variation, amplification—was the working out of a tradition centuries old, then moving to its climax, indeed, destined to reach by the mid-nineties completion of phase, a tradition, moreover, fully shared by the public for which the dramatist catered. When 'artificial' was a term of praise, it would be idle to expect a poet to restrain his virtuosity.

It is essential to understand the relation during this period between the thing to be said and the saying of it. The dominant notion of style was not the old classical *mentis imago*, not the style which, whether easy and flexible, or instant, packed, and vibrant, produces the illusion of offering us, as Caxton's *Book of Curtesye* said of Chaucer's language, 'verely the thyng'. Over and over again, writers apply to language the clothes analogy. Recollection of well-known portraits of Elizabeth or Sir Walter Raleigh should enable us to vivify this analogy—to see that it conveyed something very strong and definite in the days of farthingales and stuffed breeches. What these do to the poor, forked radish they conceal, style does to the thing, feeling or thought; it is to be analysed and enjoyed as a separable element.

Chaucer, in the fourteenth century, had been very much to the point here:

But sodeynly bigonnè revel newe,
Til that the brightè sonnè lost his hewe,
For thorizonte hath refte the sonne his lyght—
This is as much to seye, as it was nyght.

(*Franklin's Tale*, lines 1015 seq.)

The poet here himself analyses his total statement into its two elements: fact and amplification, 'body' and 'clothes'.

Against this can be set some lines from *2 Henry VI*, iv. i, where

there enter from a boat a captain, a master, a mariner, &c. The captain gives the time-signal:

The gaudy, blabbing and remorseful day
Is crept into the bosom of the sea,
And now loud-howling wolves arouse the jades
That drag the tragic, melancholy night;
Who with their drowsy, slow and flagging wings
Clip dead men's graves, and from their misty jaws
Breathe foul contagious darkness in the air.
Therefore bring forth the soldiers of our prize.

It will be noticed that Chaucer, having blown his little bubble of amplification, pricks it; the Elizabethan does not.

These lines may remind us of a term very much to the fore in literary satire from about 1589 to 1593—the word ‘bombast’. We must not forget that when Nashe speaks of the swelling bombast of a bragging blank verse the word was still vivid with metaphor. Bombast was stuffing—the material and the process by which unaccommodated man was endowed with bulbous curves. Nashe and his circle were perfectly familiar, by first-hand experience, with the analogous literary process and, with their usual disregard of *tu quoque*, were always ready to hurl the term at a rival. Greene's gibe at Shakespeare's bombasting out a blank verse expresses as much envy as criticism. It was the writer's business to dress and deck his subject, even to inflate it, if this was done with ‘art’. No hollowness or redundancy was felt, because language itself was loved and pursued as a great and urgently delightful reality. ‘The chronicle plays, Shakespearian and other, are excellent examples of this nation-wide satisfaction in *bene dicere*.’

We know that this style changed gradually in the later years of the Queen's reign. The retreat of the scheme and the more self-advertising devices of *elocutio* was accompanied by a great prosodic change. Every schoolboy who has ‘done’ English Literature can, as he pursues Shakespeare out of the Workshop into the World and from the Depths up to the Heights, be glib enough about single-moulded lines, light endings, enjambment, and variation of caesura—though the whole scope and inwardness of the change remain to be explored. This new verse has a penetrative edge, a power to play upon the nerves and sensibilities which the tragic verse of *Romeo and Juliet* had not and did not seek to have. If

to the dramatists, we add the poet Donne, we find a poetic *elocutio* to which most people feel themselves more attuned. It is at least our first impression that urgency is being transferred within, that *mens* and *imago* are more commensurate.

At the core of the long tradition of Amplification there had lain a certain passivity towards the past and towards the world. The best and greatest had been done, known, and said; Invention, we know, was finding, not discovering. When the whole universe was figure and parable, the sense of thing-in-itself could not be strong. In the Elizabethan expansion an energy of the blood overflowed the old channels, but did not obliterate them. This energy, however, could feed itself on contemporary life and habit and renew itself from patriotic zeal for the 'exornation' of language. By the end of the century the *défense et illustration* were complete; the battle of language against language had been won and forces were lining up for a new contest. Language, particularly the new technique of verse, was to measure itself against new needs, new complexities in man and in the universe, against, even, the intransigence of things.

The functional rhetoric of Aristotle had been the doctrine of the master of those who know and had accompanied an inductive method. It is hard to think it entirely fortuitous that Bacon, who took all knowledge to be his province, should, in the *Advancement of Learning*, challenge the whole renaissance pursuit of words rather than things and cut back to the Aristotelian roots. No transference of rhetorical allegiance is, of course, sufficient to explain the new poetic aims and qualities. A host of factors combine, yet it may not be unhelpful to suggest that the changes, in so far as they can be brought under a rhetorical head, illustrate a switch-over from fine speaking to persuasion, in which the bare, the tough, and the ample may all have a function to discharge.

The word 'rhetorical' when applied to Shakespeare's early plays is mainly stylistic in its application—it is in line with the Elizabethan emphasis on *elocutio*, though it may be combined with recognition of the number of 'rhetorical' occasions—debate, formal address, and so on—offered by the chronicle plays. With the clue of functional rhetoric in mind, it is interesting to look on to some of the mature plays where, without raising thorny ques-

tions as to the relation of rhetoric and poetry, we can watch 'rhetoric in action' and form some idea of Shakespeare's response to the whole Art.

Troilus and Cressida, *Measure for Measure*, and two Roman plays—*Julius Caesar* and *Coriolanus*—offer particularly striking examples of this rhetoric in action, forensic, deliberative, and epideictic. Of these, the first two are most interesting, partly, of course, because of the perennially stimulating problems offered by these plays, but also because they seem to illustrate a difference in the degree of our collaboration with the dramatist in his use of rhetoric. In scenes of genuine clash and debate we have the chance of enjoying sheer Shakespearian intellectual power. There may be occasions where the new verse-technique masks the persistence of the old rhetorical ways and means; just because it can so supremely unpack the heart with words, we may upon occasion be at fault in linking *mens* (or 'character') with *imago*.

Troilus and Cressida contains perhaps Shakespeare's toughest debate. Act I, sc. 3 is largely devoted to a meeting of Greek chieftains under Agamemnon to discuss the slow progress of the war; this is interrupted by the strongly contrasted high-flown Trojan challenge and ends with Ulysses uncovering his designs to Nestor in an easier vein. The *dispositio* and *inventio* both of the whole scene and of Ulysses' harangues are worth study. Agamemnon introduces the topic in the tone of the leader, the Chairman, the responsible Minister, inured to long delays—'the protractive trials of great Jove'. Nestor's experienced tongue, in the following speech, expends itself, somewhat unexpectedly, purely in the 'colouring' or emotive task of rhetoric. It sounds the recall to heroism; it is the reply of valiant blood:

In the reproof of chance

Lies the true proof of men

and the bulk of it consists of pictorial amplification and variation as full as any in the earlier plays, but moving now with the new pace and rhythm—to us, therefore, less 'rhetorical'. With Ulysses the head takes control. The great speech on Degree is a little model of the *oratio*—from the introductory *insinuatio*—the preliminary lenitive fomentation—'Agamemnon . . . nerve and bone of Greece', 'And thou [Nestor] most reverend for thy stretcht out life', followed by the firm, crisp statement of the thesis, 'The specialty of rule hath been neglected', to the establishment of

the great general principle of Degree, after which Ulysses comes down to earth with a cogent application and recapitulation ending in a rhyming tag that could be carried away from the meeting by the beefiest military brain. The master of Persuasion must discern *all* the available means; assent to an argument is no guarantee of action. Ulysses then proceeds to *his* demonstration of the emotive force of rhetoric. Under cover of savagely satirical mimicry of the frivolous and disrespectful behaviour of Achilles and Patroclus he rubs salt in the wounds of greatness; by a ruthless sharpening of the rhetorical weapon which Puttenham christened the 'fleering frumpe' he applies the goad to affronted egotism.

The speech on Degree enables us to recall the extent of common ground which rhetoric in the full sense could share with logic. For the most telling element in persuasion should be proof or demonstration. When Ulysses bases his notion of Degree upon 'the heavens themselves, the planets and this centre', he is substituting Analogy for mere *similitudo* or metaphor. He is invoking the cosmic correspondences which knit the whole world in one. Analogy, in its strict rhetorical interpretation, *was*, in those days, proof, and the recognition of these transcendental harmonies or symmetries was not the prerogative of a few moonstruck Platonists. Puttenham, that dweller in the open daylight, expresses his casual and natural acceptance in his definition of what 'the Greekes called Analogie or a convenient proportion. This louelie conformitie between the sense and the sensible hath nature her selfe first most carefullie obserued in all her workes.' The invocation of this lovely conformity conferred not only beauty but vision and supramundane efficacy upon the poet's word. As the astronomers came forward one after the other to confound the mystical mathematics of the city of heaven, not only would intelligent men feel themselves mentally astray, but poets might, more obscurely, sense a threat to a source of happy valiancy. Before this happened, Ulysses could add oracle to his music and his wit.

The Greek debate on the Achilles-situation is balanced by a Trojan debate (Act II, sc. 2) on the Helen-situation, less formal, but even subtler and more inward. The problem is: 'shall Helen be given up to end the siege?' It might appear to the modern reader that all four Trojan brothers can fur their gloves with reason rather than that any of them 'gloze but superficially'. Each point of view is fully entered into, but we are meant to find

most persuasive efficacy in Troilus's arguments since they move Hector against his practical judgement. In both these debating scenes Shakespeare's mind has been burning with language: it seems inevitable that the triumphant Helen should be, not the flesh-and-blood beauty whom Paris had won, nor the symbol of Trojan prestige which Hector acknowledges, but the Helen of the poet's word

Whose price hath launcht above a thousand ships
and of the orator's eloquence

She is a *theme* of Honour and Renown.

In *Measure for Measure* the success with which, in the scenes between Isabella and Angelo, Shakespeare has fused the forensic occasion of advocate *versus* judge with dramatic tension and the poetry of human urgency needs no demonstration. Here, at any rate up to the moment of Isabella's revulsion in the last speech of Act II, sc. 4, the dramatist carries us with him. In Act III, sc. 1 seams and joints begin to show. Much ink has been expended on the 'characters' of Isabella and the Duke as 'revealed' by what they say here. Clearer recognition of the necessity of accepting the imposed contrivances of a romantic plot has cleared away much lumber of explanation and counter-explanation; recognition of the conventions of rhetoric in a supporting role may clear away a few more.

Shakespeare's deliberate modification of the old plot has produced a dilemma. The sister, in his hands, is not even to consider the sacrifice of her chastity; it is for her an absolute. This means death for Claudio. It is an *impasse*, only to be saved from a tragic issue by a *deus ex machina*. Act III, sc. 1 is a contrived situation, very different from the preceding scenes. In the interests of dramatic suspense and of tone-pattern, the shadow of death is to be deepened over Claudio. The disguised Duke accordingly gets busy at once: 'Be absolute for Death. . . .' This long speech is a piece of poetic persuasion designed to make seductive what usually repels; it is related to the Paradox. Though the speaker says, 'Reason thus with life . . .', there is no argument, merely a sustained Amplification with variations, lightly but sufficiently pointed by Anaphora: 'thou art death's fool . . . thou'rt by no means valiant . . . thou art not noble. . . . Happy thou art not. . . . Thou art not certain . . . thou hast nor youth nor age. . . .' We

are not to look here for any bearing on character. The Duke does not speak these words either in his real or his assumed character. As a man, he drives the characters through all sorts of shifts to avoid death for every one; as for the seeming friar, 'Be absolute for death' without a hint of spiritual destinies has no echo of the voice of the church. No Elizabethan would be baffled here; he would understand the rhetorical occasion. And we are not much concerned; we soon recognize the Duke for what he is—the plot's wire-puller. We are more troubled over Isabella, for with her advocacy we have previously identified ourselves. Over against the shadow should stand the shining theme of chastity, but it cannot be said that either the invention or the eloquence devoted to it equal those on the other side—the 'bravery of the stoikes' in 'Reason thus with life . . .', the momentary steel of a young man's resolution, 'I will encounter darkness as a bride', the voice of Everyman on the brink of the abyss, 'Ay, but to die and go we know not where. . . .' The speeches of Isabella, indeed, have, as regards posterity, proved bad persuasion; they have lost her many votes. At one time, they called down Freud upon her. Many reasons could be canvassed for this. The Elizabethan was here cut off from great tradition; earlier secular poetry provided more abundant equipment for the assault on chastity than for its defence and exposition. That Shakespeare should by-pass the full Catholic doctrine of Virginity is, indeed, explicable, but the novice of St. Clare sounds not one note of dedication. The sister recalls the ties of blood only to outrage them

Heav'n send my mother play'd my father fair.

The ensky'd and sainted here commands no accent of Christian pity

Take my defiance!

Die, perish!

Elizabethan dramatists had a brand of strong, even tigerish, eloquence with which, when no Griselda or Lucrece model served their turn, they could always make do on the subject of female chastity, an eloquence which left it a cold and self-regarding virtue

More than our brother is our chastity

or a legalistic matter of marriage lines and pre-contracts. It is idle, with other parts of this play and other plays before us, to pretend

that a fuller humanity was beyond Shakespeare's grasp in this context had he chosen to reach for it. This play stands poised between the Elizabethan and the Jacobean. The older drama had maintained in general a strong, though sometimes crude, black and white morality. Those who are themselves subtle can find, if they wish, Jacobean subtleties beginning in the next scene. Here, what Shakespeare wants is the strongest black and white contrast and the maximum tension, and he knew that if he struck the right forceful note, he could still count on the collaboration of his audience. The utmost was to be extracted from this brink-of-disaster situation. The apparent irreconcilables—brother's life and sister's virginity—were to be presented in the sharpest terms, and the 'characters' speak to their briefs—Claudio speaks to at least three. *Praxis* carries it over *ethos*, and *logos* is made the ally of the winning side.

GLADYS D. WILLCOCK

CHARLES LAMB AND THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMATISTS¹

THE story of how Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the Time of Shakespeare* originated was told by J. Dykes Campbell in the *Athenaeum*, 25 August 1894, and was retold, with slight additions, by E. V. Lucas in volume iv of his edition of *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb* (1904). As early as May 1796, when Lamb was in his twenty-first year, he was transcribing in letters to Coleridge passages from a little extract-book, full of quotations, from Beaumont and Fletcher in particular, to whom, as he puts it, 'all poets after Shakespeare yield in variety of genius. Massinger treads close on their heels.' In the following September, after the tragedy in which his sister, seized with sudden mania, killed their mother, he burnt both his own verses and the book of extracts. But by the spring of the next year he had begun to retranscribe the passages into a new note-book, and between 1798 and 1800 he was communicating his enthusiasm about some of the dramatists to Southey and Wordsworth.

It was after the failure of his farce *Mr. H*— in December 1806 that Lamb, apparently under an arrangement with Longmans, took the *Specimens* in hand. As he tells in his preface, he made use of Dodsley's twelve-volume *Select Collection of Old Plays* (1744), 2nd edition by Isaac Reed (1780); Thomas Hawkins's *The Origin of the English Drama* (1773); D. E. Baker's *Biographia Dramatica* (1764, 2nd edition 1782); and the works, probably his own copies, of Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger. But more than one-third of the *Specimens* were from plays which Lamb found only in the British Museum and in some scarce private libraries. His time for research among these was short, his two brief office holidays from the India House in 1807 and 1808. What he sought, as he tells, were 'scenes of passion, sometimes of the deepest quality, interesting situations, serious descriptions, that which is more nearly allied to poetry than to wit, and to tragic rather than to comic poetry.... My leading design

¹ A paper read to the Charles Lamb Society and revised for publication.

has been to illustrate what may be called the moral sense of our ancestors.' The book was published probably towards the end of 1808. The *Monthly Review* gave it an unappreciative notice in April 1809. The *Annual Review* had a favourable article on it, possibly written by Coleridge.

In 1825 Lamb retired from the India Office, and next year, with all his time at his disposal, he returned to the Garrick collection in the Museum and 'discovered in it a treasure rich and exhaustless' beyond what he had previously imagined. By January 1827 he had filled two note-books with *Extracts* from the plays, supplementing the earlier *Specimens*. To his friend William Hone he offered these for publication in his weekly periodical, *Table-Book*, so arranged in articles as to run through the year. In 1835 the *Specimens* and the *Extracts* were printed together in a two-volume edition by Moxon, of which Lamb, as Lucas thinks, had seen the proof-sheets before his death on 27 December 1834. Lucas therefore took this 1835 reprint as the basis of his own admirable edition, to which he added some extracts from the note-books which Lamb did not send to Hone, and some passages in the articles which were not printed.

Lamb's treatment of Shakespeare's leading immediate predecessors presents some curious features. It may be set down to his credit that, at a time when the importance of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* in the development of English drama was little recognized, he should have given a specimen from it. But unfortunately the specimen that he chose, though of the highest quality, is not from Kyd's pen. Horatio is murdered in the garden of his father Hieronimo, the Marshal of Spain, while he is making love to Belimperia. Her shrieks rouse the Marshal, and he comes forth in his shirt calling aloud:

What outcries pluck me from my naked bed,
And chill my throbbing heart with trembling fear?

He sees a body hanging on a tree.

But stay what murderous spectacle is this?

Alas! it is Horatio, my sweet son.

O no! but he that whilome was my son.

Lamb ignores this passage, which was echoed for years in the Elizabethan theatre, and merely states, 'Upon this he goes

distracted'. But it is in the gradual oncoming of Hieronimo's madness and in the delays and hesitations before he takes his revenge for his son's murder that Kyd shows his psychological insight and his dramatic skill. Indeed, the Marshal is never in the original play so completely distraught as in the scene quoted by Lamb which was one of the 'additions' in the 1602 quarto. Hieronimo is wandering at midnight in his garden, searching everywhere by torchlight for his murdered son, when a painter enters and the Marshal questions him.

Art a painter? Canst paint me a tear, or a wound?

A groan or a sigh? Canst paint me such a tree as this?

Canst paint a doleful cry?

Painter. Seemingly, sir.

Hier. Nay, it should cry; but all is one.

Well, sir, paint me a youth run thro' and thro' with villains' swords hanging upon this tree.

The whole scene is of supreme romantic quality, but from one point of view it is a major blunder of Lamb's to speak of it as 'the very salt of the old play' which otherwise is 'but a caput mortuum'. With his own lamentable family experience it is strange that he should have found merely 'flatness' in the delineation, apart from this 'addition', of Hieronimo's distracted grief, and that he should have found nothing but a 'caput mortuum' in the most dynamic in its influence of pre-Shakespearian plays. On the other hand he shows his discrimination in not accepting Henslowe's entry of two payments to Jonson for additions to *The Spanish Tragedy* as evidence that his hand is to be found there. 'I should suspect the agency of some "more potent spirit"'. Webster might have furnished them. They are full of that wild solemn preternatural cast of grief which bewilders us in *The Duchess of Malfy*. The authorship of the Additions is still an enigma, but Lamb's description could not be bettered.

Lamb in his 1808 preface mentions Marlowe as one of the dramatists who have been 'slighted', and whose 'more impressive scenes' he intends to exhibit. Yet his treatment of the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors is in the main curiously unsatisfactory. I do not lay stress on the fact that he begins his extracts from him with *Lust's Dominion*, which has now been rejected from the Marlovian canon. But what is truly astonishing is that he could find nothing better to quote from the two Parts

of *Tamburlaine* than the description of his person and the account of his custom in war of pitching, as his fury mounts, symbolic tents of white, red, and black in turn. Of these quotations he remarks that he had difficulty in 'culling a few sane lines' from the play. 'The lunes of Tamburlaine are perfect "midsummer madness". Nebuchadnezzar's are mere modest pretensions compared with the thundering vaunts of the Scythian Shepherd.' Then he refers to the passage spouted by Pistol in *2 Henry IV*, where Tamburlaine cries to the conquered kings yoked to his chariot,

Holla! ye pampered jades of Asia:
What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day?

'Till I saw this passage with mine own eyes I never believed that it was anything more than a pleasant burlesque of Mine Ancient's. But I assure my readers that it is soberly set down in a Play which their Ancestors took to be serious. I have subjoined the genuine speech for their amusement', and he proceeds to quote it at length in what we may call a derisory footnote. Of course the speech is superlative bombast, but it is strange that a man of Lamb's insight did not realize that it was dramatically appropriate to Tamburlaine and not merely material for amusement. It is still more surprising that a leader of the romantic critical movement should have been insensitive to the beauty and rapture of the lines beginning,

If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts:

or

Nature that formed us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds.

Lamb is happier in his choice of extracts from *The Jew of Malta*, where he gives the opening scene of Barabas in his counting-house gloating with almost poetic fervour over his gold and jewels, followed by a passage in which he descants on the worldly prosperity of the Jews. Yet Barabas, even when contrasted with Shylock, is something more than the 'mere monster, brought in with a large painted nose, to please the rabble', as Lamb puts it.

From *Dr. Faustus* the selections are naturally the opening scene where the Doctor in his study 'runs through the circles of the sciences; and being satisfied with none of them, determines

to addict himself to magic', and the tremendous climax when he awaits the midnight hour when Lucifer will claim his soul. Of this Lamb finely says, 'The growing horrors of Faustus are awfully marked by the hours and half-hours as they expire and bring him nearer and nearer to the enactment of his dire compact. It is indeed an agony and bloody sweat.' He then adds what strikes us to-day as rather a prim comment:

Barabas the Jew, and Faustus the conjurer, are offsprings of a mind which at least delighted to dally with interdicted subjects. They both talk a language which a believer would have been tender of putting into the mouth of a character though but in fiction. But the holiest minds have sometimes not thought it blameable to counterfeit impiety in the person of another, to bring Vice upon the stage speaking her own dialect, and themselves being armed with an Uncion of self-confident impunity, have not scrupled to handle and touch that familiarly, which would be death to others.

He instances Milton speaking through Satan and the precise straitlaced Richardson through Lovelace. But while Lamb thus goes near to censuring Marlowe for dallying with interdicted subjects he is apparently unconscious that through the lips of Mephistophilis the so-called atheist gives a spiritual interpretation of hell, which no 'believer' has ever bettered:

Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God,
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?

It is with *Edward the Second* that Lamb is at his best in his dealing with Marlowe. The extracts are well chosen, including passages illustrating the barons' enmity towards the favourite Gaveston, the king's surrender of his crown, and his murder in the vaults of Berkeley Castle. Of the surrender scenes Lamb uses the unforgettable words, 'The reluctant pangs of abdicating Royalty in Edward furnished hints which Shakespeare scarcely improved in his *Richard the Second*.' And he declares that 'the death-scene of Marlowe's king moves pity and terror beyond any scene ancient or modern with which I am acquainted'. Whether any one scene in the whole range of drama from Aeschylus onward can thus be singled out as fulfilling beyond all others the Aristotelian view of the function of tragedy is disputable, but Lamb's arresting statement is proof that here at least he had come under the full spell of Marlowe's genius.

Of George Peele when he edited the *Specimens* Lamb does not appear to have had a high opinion. His only selection was from the opening episode in *David and Bethsabe* where David from above views Uriah's wife bathing and is inflamed by her beauty. While it is not of high poetic merit the passage has a Renaissance decorative charm, as in the lines:

Now comes my Lover tripping like the Roe,
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.

Yet Lamb has merely the acid comment, 'there is more of the same stuff, but I suppose the reader has a surfeit; especially as this Canticle of David has never been suspected to contain any pious sense couched underneath it, whatever his son's may'. When, however, in 1827 he published the *Extracts* he did more justice to Peele. He added further quotations from *David and Bethsabe* including the dialogue in which Nathan tells David 'thou art the man', and two speeches by rebellious Absalom.

He also gave extracts from *The Arraignment of Paris* where he was attracted more by the love of Paris for Oenone and her despair after his desertion than by the contest between the three goddesses for the golden apple and Paris' fine oration vindicating himself before the Olympian deities, from which he does not quote. What charmed him most was the roundelay sung by Paris and Oenone, 'Cupid's Curse', with the refrain,

They that do change old love for new,
Pray Gods they change for worse.

He wrote to his 'esteemed friend and excellent musician' Vincent Novello:

I conjure you in the name of all the Sylvan Deities, and of the Muses, whom you honour, and they reciprocally love and honour you—rescue this old and passionate *Ditty*—the very flower of an old *forgotten Pastoral*, which had it been in all parts equal, *The Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher had been but a second name in this sort of writing—rescue it from the profane hands of every common Composer. . . . Oblige me; and all more knowing Judges of Music and Poets; by the adaptation of fit musical numbers, which it only wants to be the rarest Love Dialogue in our language. Your implorer. C. L.

Sad to say this typically Elian adjuration seems to have been fruitless.

Neither Greene nor Lodge figured in the *Specimens*, but in the

Extracts there is a passage from their joint-play *A Looking Glass for England and London*, where Alvida, the paramour to Rasni, the great king of Assyria, courts a petty king of Cilicia, and sings to him a 'passing passionate' song which doubtless attracted Lamb:

Beauty, alas! where wast thou born,
 Thus to hold thyself in scorn,
 When, as Beauty kiss'd to woo thee,
 Thou by Beauty dost undo me?
 Heigho, despise me not!

Lyly too makes an appearance in the *Extracts* with a short quotation from *Love's Metamorphosis* and five from *Sapho and Phao*, depicting the mutual love of the ferryman Phao and the high-born Sapho, in which some have seen an allegory of the relations between Elizabeth and Leicester.

Passing from Shakespeare's predecessors to his contemporaries, let us turn first to Dekker. Lamb's longest excerpts in the *Specimens* are from the loose-jointed comedy of *Old Fortunatus*, who is endowed with an inexhaustible purse which allows him to travel where he will. The passages in which he chooses riches rather than wisdom, strength, health, beauty, or long life, and in which he recounts his travels to his sons are quoted. But Lamb's enthusiasm is chiefly reserved for the episode in which the French noble Orleans, a prisoner in the English king's court, is enamoured to frenzy of his daughter Agripyna, and bursts out to a friend:

Ha, ha, when I behold a swarm of fools
 Crowding together to be counted wise
 I laugh because sweet Agripyne's not there
 And weep because she is not anywhere;
 And weep because (whether she be or not)
 My love was ever and is still forgot: forgot, forgot, forgot.

On this Lamb somewhat surprisingly comments: 'The terror of a frantic lover is here done to the life. Orleans is as passionate an Inamorato as any which Shakespeare ever drew.' Then in his Elian reflective vein he adds:

We have gone retrograde in the noble Heresy since the days when Sidney proselyted our nation to this mixed health and disease; the kindest symptom yet the most alarming crisis in the ticklish state of youth; the nourisher and the destroyer of hopeful wits; the mother of twin-births, wisdom and folly, valour and

weakness; the servitude above freedom; the gentle mind's religion; the liberal superstition.

From the much greater two-part play *The Honest Whore* Lamb's chief quotation is from the second Part where Bellafront, the reclaimed harlot, recounts some of the miseries of her former profession:

when in the street
A fair young modest damsel I did meet,
She seem'd to all a Dove, when I pass'd by,
And I to all a Raven; every eye
That follow'd her went with a bashful glance;
At me each bold and jeering countenance
Darted forth scorn.

Upon this he comments in an unctuously moralizing vein akin to that which we have found in his footnote to *Dr. Faustus*:

This simple picture of Honour and Shame, contrasted without violence, and expressed without immodesty, is worth all the *strong lines* against the Harlot's Profession, with which both Parts of this Play are offensively crowded. A Satyrist is always to be suspected, who, to make vice odious, dwells upon all its acts and minutest circumstances with a sort of relish and retrospective gust.

Swinburne, as Lucas reminds us, has pointed out that Lamb has no word about the appealing figure of Bellafront's father, who in the disguise of a servant watches over the changes of her fortune: 'It is strange that Charles Lamb, to whom of all critics and all men the pathetic and humorous charm of the old man's personality might most confidently have been expected most cordially to appeal, should have left to Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt the honour of doing justice to so beautiful a creation.'

In *Satiromastix* I am glad that Lamb quoted a striking passage from the romantic plot of Sir Walter Terill and his bride Celestina, which more recent criticism has tended to overlook in dwelling upon the satirical attack by Dekker on Jonson as Horace. A short quotation from this attack was afterwards included in the *Extracts*, and Lucas prints (pp. 588-9) a number of notes and quotations relative to it found in Lamb's manuscript but which were not sent to Hone.

It is remarkable that Lamb makes no reference to the most delightful of all Dekker's plays, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. To so devoted a Londoner this attractive picture of civic life in the

capital, and the jovial figure of Simon Eyre among his craftsmen would, one thinks, have made an irresistible appeal.

If Lamb did not get the best out of Dekker, he, on the other hand, has the credit of doing justice to Marston, who until recently has been often underestimated partly owing to Jonson's burlesque of him in *Poetaster* and still more to his frequent lapses into rhodomontade. From *Antonio and Mellida* he detaches the episode in which Antonio's father, Andrugio, Duke of Genoa, banished from his own country, is cast up on the territory of his enemy, the Duke of Venice, with an attendant nobleman Lucio. He compares their situation with that of Lear in his distresses and the Duke of Kent, and in another of his exquisitely apt phrases says that 'Andrugio like Lear manifests a kind of royal impatience, a turbulent greatness, an affected resignation'. From the second Part, *Antonio's Revenge*, he first quotes the Prologue, beginning:

The rawish dank of clumsy winter ramps
The fluent summer's vein: and drizzling sleet
Chilleth the wan bleak cheek of the numb'd earth,
While snarling gusts nibble the juiceless leaves
From the naked shuddering branch.

These lines contain some of Marston's outlandish terms, and while the prologue as a whole is impressive, Lamb goes too far when he claims that 'for its passionate earnestness and for the tragic note of preparation which it sounds [it] might have preceded one of those old tales of Thebes, or Pelops' line which Milton has so highly commended. . . . It is as solemn a preparative as the "warning voice which he who saw the Apocalypse heard cry"'.

Other passages from *Antonio's Revenge* are given, and are followed by citations from the tragedies *The Wonder of Women* and *Sophonisba*, from the tragi-comedy *The Malcontent* and the comedy *What you Will*. One of those from *What you Will* is a description of a gaily attired Venetian merchant in

A Florentine cloth o' silver jerkin, sleeves
White satin cut on tinsel, then long stock;
French panes embroider'd, goldsmith's work.

On this Lamb's footnote has the flavour of an Elian essay:

To judge of the liberality of these notions of dress we must advert to the days of Gresham [the great Elizabethan merchant who founded the Royal Exchange and Gresham College], and the

consternation which a phenomenon habited like the Merchant here described, would have excited among the flat round caps and cloth stockings upon Change. . . . The blank uniformity to which all professional distinctions in apparel have been long hastening is one instance of the Decay of Symbols among us, which whether it has contributed or not to make us a more intellectual, has certainly made us a less imaginative people.

From Dekker and Marston it is natural to turn to Ben Jonson, concerning whom in the main Lamb displays fine taste and judgement. An anthologist to-day would prefer to quote from *The Silent Woman* and *Bartholomew Fair* than from Ben's earliest extant play *The Case is Altered* or the incomplete pastoral *The Sad Shepherd*. But the picture of a miser worshipping his gold from *The Case is Altered* suggests another characteristically Elian comment:

The old poets when they introduce a miser, constantly make him address his gold as his mistress, as something to be seen, felt, and hugged; as capable of satisfying two of the senses at least. The substitution of a thin, unsatisfying medium for the good old tangible gold, has made avarice quite a Platonic affection in comparison with the seeing, touching, and handling pleasures of the old Chrysophilites. A bank-note can no more satisfy the touch of a true sensualist in this passion, than Creusa could return her husband's embrace in the shades.

There follow selections from *The Poetaster*, *Sejanus*, *Catiline*, and *The New Inn* which, as Lamb puts it, 'may serve to show the poetical fancy and elegance of mind of the supposed rugged old Bard'. They are all well chosen, especially Lovel's discourse on Love from *The New Inn*, the 'Romeo and Juliet,' dialogue between Ovid and Julia in *The Poetaster*, and the discussion on Poetry between the emperor Augustus and his courtiers in the same piece. This prompts Lamb to a defence of Ben against his enemies in his own days and ours, who have said that he made a pedantic use of his learning:

He has here revived the whole court of Augustus, by a learned spell. . . . We are admitted to the Society of the illustrious dead. . . . Nothing can be imagined more elegant, refined and courtlike than the scenes between this Lewis the Fourteenth of Antiquity and his Literati.

All this is admirable, but Lamb spoke unadvisedly when he maintained that Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Tibullus, 'converse in our

own tongue more finely and poetically than they expressed themselves in their native Latin'. Jonson's comic vein is illustrated by long selections from *The Alchemist* and *Volpone*. Of Sir Epicure Mammon's elaboration of the details of a sensualist paradise Lamb remarks with a spice of exaggeration, 'If there be no one image which rises to the height of the sublime, yet the confluence and assemblage of them all produces an effect equal to the grandest poetry.'

With Lamb's lack of appreciation of the *Tamburlaine* vein in Marlowe I should not have been surprised if he had been as critical as Dryden of the bombastic element in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*. But he quotes from it generously in the *Specimens*, including the account of the duel between Bussy and two friends against three adversaries in which Bussy is the sole survivor, and the contrast between the courts of Elizabeth and the French king Henry. Lamb also quotes at some length from *Byron's Conspiracy* and *Byron's Tragedy, The Tragedy of Chabot*, and from *Caesar and Pompey*. In the 1827 *Extracts* he adds to the *Bussy, Chabot*, and *Caesar and Pompey* quotations, and gives others from *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois*, and from three of the comedies. Had Lamb in 1808 devoted more attention to these comedies he might have modified part of his footnote in that year to the Chapman selections: 'Dramatic Imitation was not his talent. He could not go out of himself, as Shakespeare could shift at pleasure, to inform and animate other existences, but in himself he had an eye to perceive and embrace all forms.' In some of the figures in *The Gentleman Usher* and *All Fools* Chapman shows more powers of strictly dramatic creation than Lamb credits him with here. But in what follows he goes straight to the mark:

He would have made a great Epic Poet, if indeed he has not abundantly shown himself to be one; for his Homer is not so properly a translation as the Stories of Achilles and Ulysses rewritten. The earnestness and passion which he has put into every part of these poems would be incredible to a reader of more modern translations. His almost Greek zeal for the honour of his heroes is only paralleled by that fierce spirit of Hebrew bigotry, with which Milton, as if personating one of the Zealots of the old law, clothed himself when he sat down to paint the acts of Sampson against the Uncircumcised.

Lamb then digresses into a passage of the finest critical quality on the phraseology of Chapman's Homer.

Of all the Elizabethans Lamb's heart seems to have gone out most fully to Thomas Heywood. In a footnote to an excerpt from *Fortune by Land and Sea*, by Heywood and William Rowley, in the 1827 *Extracts* he tells us, 'If I were to be consulted as to a Reprint of old English Dramatists, I should advise to begin with the Collected Plays of Heywood. He was a fellow Actor, and fellow Dramatist, with Shakespeare.' This sentence is somewhat misleading, as Heywood acted with the Lord Admiral's, not the Lord Chamberlain's, Company, and he never, so far as we know, collaborated with Shakespeare. Lamb continues:

He possessed not the imagination of the latter, but in all those qualities which gained for Shakespeare the attribute of gentle, he was not inferior to him. Generosity, courtesy, temperance in the depth of passion; sweetness in a word and gentleness; Christianity; and true hearty Anglicism of feelings shaping that Christianity shine throughout his beautiful writings.

Of nothing in the Heywood canon are these words so true as of the exquisite scene in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, quoted in the *Specimens*, where Frankford forgives the dying wife who has sinned against him:

Even as I hope for pardon at that day,
When the great judge of heaven in scarlet sits,
So be thou pardon'd. Though thy rash offence
Divorc'd our bodies, thy repentant tears
Unite our souls.

It is to this scene that Lamb appends the famous comment: 'Heywood is a sort of *prose* Shakespeare. His scenes are to the full as natural and affecting. But we miss the *Poet*, that which in Shakespeare always appears out and above the surface of the nature.' While, of course, Heywood has not the Shakespearian transfiguring quality, Lamb's definition suggests a more pedestrian element in him than he perhaps meant to imply. Lamb is also somewhat rash in asserting that his plots are almost invariably English. He himself quotes from the series of dramatized classical stories, *The Brazen*, *Silver*, and *Golden Age*. He attributes to Brome instead of Heywood the attractive two-part play, *The Fair Maid of the West*, which has indeed a Devon heroine, but which takes us in its course to Fayal in the Azores and to Morocco. And as Heywood tells in the introduction to his play *The English Traveller*, from which Lamb quotes, that he had a

hand in 220 pieces of which only between 20 and 30 survive, any generalization about their plots must be speculative. And though Heywood was usually gentle, it has to be remembered that *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), by him and Brome, from which Lamb quotes both in the *Specimens* and the *Extracts*, was hastily written to stir up popular feeling against the unfortunate women who were in 1634 accused of witchcraft.

From *The Late Lancashire Witches* we may pass to *The Witch of Middleton*, from which Lamb quotes several scenes in which Hecate appears with her attendant spirits. If Middleton borrowed some of his witches' charms from *Macbeth*, on the other hand the figure of Hecate seems to have been imported into that play by the editors of the Folio from Middleton's piece. She is alien in speech and atmosphere from the midnight hags whom Macbeth meets on the blasted heath. Lamb in well-known words notes the difference between them and Middleton's witches: 'These are creatures to whom man or woman plotting some dire mischief might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood and begin bad impulses in men. . . . They are foul Anomalies of whom we know not whence they are sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending.' The other Middleton selections in the *Specimens* are from *Women Beware Women*, *More Dissemblers besides Women*, and *No Wit like a Woman's*. In the *Extracts* he added quotations from other comedies including a short one from *A Game at Chess*. But Lamb does not seem to have realized the distinctive quality of this play as belonging to the Aristophanic tradition in that it was a merciless burlesque of the Spanish ambassador Gondomar as the Black Knight, and of Antonio de Dominis, as the Fat Bishop, and thus produced one of the greatest Caroline theatrical sensations and had to be stopped by the Government.

Perhaps the most surprising omission from both the *Specimens* and the *Extracts*, as Swinburne has noted, is any quotation from Middleton and W. Rowley's *The Changeling*. The relation between Beatrice-Joanna and the saturnine De Flores, whom she employs to murder a detested wooer, and who exacts her person as his price, seems a theme ideally fitted for Lamb's penetrating diagnosis. On the other hand he has given a long selection from another play by these two dramatists, *A Fair Quarrel*. The title indicates the central situation. Captain Ager is called by a

colonel in a dispute 'the son of a whore'. He challenges the colonel to a duel, but his mother to prevent risk to his life falsely accuses herself of unchastity. Thereupon Ager refuses to fight in what he thinks is a bad cause, but when the colonel charges him with cowardice, he considers that he has a fair quarrel and engages and defeats his adversary. It is an intriguing complication, but I confess that I am puzzled why it should have provoked from Lamb the long, remarkable footnote of which the earlier part runs:

The insipid levelling morality to which the modern stage is tied down would not admit of such admirable passions as these scenes are filled with. A puritanical obtuseness of sentiment, a stupid infantile goodness, is creeping among us instead of the vigorous passions, and virtues clad in flesh and blood, with which the old dramatists present us. Those noble and liberal casuists could discern in the differences, the quarrels, the animosities of man, a beauty and truth of moral feeling, no less than in the iterately inculcated duties of forgiveness and atonement. With us all is hypocritical meekness. A reconciliation scene (let the occasion be never so absurd or unnatural) is always sure of applause. The audiences come to the theatre to be complimented on their goodness.

One would like to know if this singular outburst was prompted by any particular plays of the late eighteenth-century sentimental school of drama. I find it easier to appreciate Lamb's personal confession of the effect upon him of the scene in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, where the brothers Vindici and Hippolito denounce their mother who has urged their sister to become the paramour of the duke's son. 'I never read it but my ears tingle, and I feel a hot blush spread my cheeks, as if I were presently to proclaim such "malefactions" of myself, as the Brothers here rebuke in their unnatural parent; in words more keen and dagger-like than those which Hamlet speaks to his mother.' Lamb is naturally not troubled by the doubts of some modern students (including myself) whether *The Revenger's Tragedy*, published anonymously, is by Cyril Tourneur, whose name is on the title-page of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, from which he gives some shorter quotations.

With Tourneur as a master of poetic tragedy Webster is naturally linked. Lamb gives a generous selection from his four chief plays, and of the two greatest he has written in his most exquisitely felicitous strain. He contrasts 'the dreadful apparatus' with which the Duchess of Malfi's death is ushered in with

'the conceptions of ordinary vengeance', such as Procrustes' bed and the like. 'To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wear and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit—this only a Webster can do.' When Vittoria Corombona, the White Devil, has finished her specious defence of herself against the charges of murdering her husband and becoming the duke's mistress, 'we seem to see that matchless beauty of her face which inspires such gay confidence into her; and are ready to expect, when she has done her pleadings, that her very judges, her accusers, the grave ambassadors who sit as spectators, and all the court, will rise and make proffer to defend her in spite of the utmost conviction of her guilt'.

Of the dirge sung over Marcello by his mother—

Call for the Robin-redbreast, and the Wren,
 Since o'er shady groves they hover,
 And with leaves and flowers do cover
 The friendless bodies of unburied men—

Lamb says, 'I never saw anything like this Dirge, except the Ditty which reminds Ferdinand of his drowned Father in *The Tempest*. As that is of the water, watery; so this is of the earth, earthy.'

The third of the group of masters of poetic tragedy is John Ford, of whom Lamb wrote to Wordsworth in October 1804 that he 'is the man after Shakespeare'. He gives selections from his chief plays, beginning with the beautiful description in *The Lover's Melancholy* of the contest for mastery between a youthful musician with a lute and a nightingale which became 'music's first martyr', and ending with scenes from *The Broken Heart*. Then follows the famous comment: 'Ford was of the first order of Poets. He sought for sublimity not by parcels in metaphors or visible images, but directly where she has her full residence in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds. There is a grandeur of the soul above mountains, seas, and the elements.' It was this eulogy that drew from Gifford in the *Quarterly Review*, December 1811, the denunciation of 'the blasphemies of a poor maniac who it seems once published some detached scenes from *The Broken Heart*'. When Gifford speaks of 'blasphemies' he is doubtless referring to Lamb's declaration that the transcendent scene of the spiritual martyrdom of the

princess Calantha 'almost bears me in imagination to Calvary and the Cross'. Lamb did a notable service in gaining recognition for the genius of Ford, who had fallen into neglect, but he was asking for trouble in suggesting a comparison between the most sacred of all scenes and an episode in the work of a dramatist with whose finer qualities there mingles a tainted element.

The later figures of Shirley and Brome and relatively minor playwrights, Day, Glapthorne, Davenport, and others, who appear in the *Extracts* I must here pass over. But the wide range of Lamb's selections bears witness to his catholicity of taste and to his eagerness to rescue from neglect any dramatist, however obscure, or even anonymous, who was worth his salt. I turn lastly to the two whom Lamb in his preface to the *Specimens* had singled out as 'in the estimation of the world the only dramatic poets of the Elizabethan age who are entitled to be considered after Shakespeare', and in whose case he therefore looked upon himself as less of a pioneer—Fletcher and Massinger. With regard to Massinger neither Lamb's quotations nor comments would fully explain the exceptional rank accorded to him in 1808. He makes no mention of *The Roman Actor*, in Massinger's own opinion his best play, nor of *The Maid of Honour* so rated by some modern critics. From *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* he gives one comparatively short scene. This play kept the stage for long more persistently than any Elizabethan piece outside the Shakespeare canon. When acted by Kean it had paralysing effects both upon his company and the audience. It is therefore surprising to hear Lamb's verdict on Massinger: 'He never shakes or disturbs the mind with grief. He is read with composure and placid delight. He wrote with that equability of all the passions, which made his English style the purest and most free from violent metaphors and harsh constructions of any of the dramatists who were his contemporaries.' No one would gather from this that Massinger is distinguished by his bold handling of religious and political themes, nor that his style, though pure and lucid, has less of poetic quality than that of any other major contemporary dramatist.

It is this poetic quality that so strongly marks the scenes that Lamb gives from the Beaumont and Fletcher plays, especially those relating to Aspatia in *The Maid's Tragedy* and to Euphrasia (Bellario) in *Philaster*, both of whom assume masculine disguise

to serve their ends in love. From plays by Fletcher alone Lamb quotes from *Bonduca*, *Love's Pilgrimage*, *Wit without Money*, and the pastoral *The Faithful Shepherdess*. He has selected some of the most exquisite scenes from the pastoral and has appended a footnote declaring that Fletcher was infatuated in 'mixing up with this blessedness such an ugly deformity as Cloe, the wanton shepherdess'. As he sums it up in an expressive image, 'if Cloe was meant to set off Clorin by contrast, Fletcher should have known that such weeds by juxtaposition do not set off, but kill sweet flowers'. Lamb also shows himself a sound textual critic in assigning the first two scenes that he quotes from *The Two Noble Kinsmen* to Shakespeare, and the third to Fletcher. But two of the plays which he attributes to Fletcher only, *The False One* and *Thierry and Theodoret*, are now held to be in part from Massinger's pen. Yet there can be no doubt on metrical grounds that the scene in the latter which stirs Lamb to warmest enthusiasm is Fletcher's. Thierry, king of France, who is childless, is told by an astrologer that he shall have children if he sacrifices the first woman that he meets coming out of the Temple of Diana. This proves to be his wife Ordella veiled, and when she uncovers her face, he lets fall his sword. But she cries:

Strike, sir, strike;
And if in my poor death fair France may merit,
Give me a thousand blows, be killing me
A thousand days.

'I have always considered', says Lamb, 'this to be the finest scene in Fletcher, and Ordella the most perfect idea of the female heroic character, next to Calantha, in *The Broken Heart* of Ford, that has been embodied in fiction. She is a piece of sainted nature.'

I wish Lamb had ended there. But he continues in a passage of which I quote parts:

Yet noble as the whole scene is it must be confessed that the manner of it compared with Shakespeare's finest scenes is slow and languid. Its motion is circular, not progressive. . . . Another striking difference between Fletcher and Shakespeare is the fondness of the former for unnatural and violent situations, like that in the scene before us. . . . Shakespeare had nothing of this contortion in his mind, none of that craving after romantic incidents, and flights of strained and improbable virtue, which I think always betrays an imperfect moral sensibility.

Personally I cannot see why Fletcher's method in this affecting scene should be called 'circular'. There is more foundation for the reference to 'an unnatural and violent situation'. But the passage is a striking illustration of an attitude that tends to 'date' Lamb's criticism and that to some degree defeats his own splendid purpose. This purpose is most explicitly set forth in an unexpected place, in the footnote to his selections from Henry Porter's *The Two Angry Women of Abington* in the *Extracts*. Lamb there urges that the unexhausted treasures of the old dramatists should be revealed by their publication, and asks:

Are we afraid that the genius of Shakespeare would suffer in our estimate by this disclosure? He would indeed be somewhat lessened as a miracle and a prodigy. But he would lose no height by the confession. When a Giant is shown to us, does it detract from the curiosity to be told that he has at home a gigantic brood of brethren, less only than himself? Along *with* him, not *from* him, sprang up the race of mighty Dramatists.

Nothing could be truer, or more exactly expressed, than this and the rest of the passage. But what Lamb fails to see is that he himself tends to make of Shakespeare 'a miracle and a prodigy'. Indeed in his preface to the *Specimens* he speaks of his 'divine mind and manners'. He can scarcely ever refrain, after a panegyric on a scene from a contemporary play, from comparing it to its disadvantage with something similar in Shakespeare. This use of Shakespeare, whose genius, though it was transcendent, was not flawless, as a yardstick, becomes tiresome to us to-day and tends to degrade his contemporaries from the position of brethren to that of poor relations—the last thing that Lamb intended.

Nor in the light of our fuller knowledge to-day can all Lamb's estimates of the individual dramatists be fully accepted. He understood those of the Stuart age better than those of the Tudor, and some of his generalizations and his superlatives provoke resifting and retesting.

Moreover he was not so completely the first in the field as he believed. *Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*. He had forerunners, unknown to him, who had sought to popularize the Elizabethan dramatists by means of anthologies. Dr. G. E. Bentley has recently called attention to a neglected work, John Cotgrave's

Treasury of Wit and Language (1655).¹ Cotgrave might as well or even better have forestalled Lamb by calling his book *Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the Time of Shakspeare*. Indeed on the title-page he described his *Treasury* as 'Collected out of the most and best of our English Drammatick Poems', and in his preface he stated:

The Drammatick Poem seems to me (and many of my friends better able to judge than I) to have beene lately too much slighted, not onely by such, whose Talent falls short in understanding, but by many that have had a tolerable portion of Wit, who through a stiffe and obstinate prejudice have (in neglecting things of this nature) lost the benefit of many rich and usefull Observations, not duly considering, or believing, that the Framers of them, were the most fluent and redundant Wits that this age (or I thinke any other) ever knew.

Cotgrave can claim the distinction of being the first to compile an anthology entirely from English plays. But his selections are not considered in their dramatic relevance; they are arranged as 'rich and usefull Observations' under alphabetical subject-headings. In no case is the play or the author specified, but in a copy in the British Museum manuscript notes in several hands have identified nearly all these. As Dr. Bentley points out, they are predominantly Jacobean and Caroline; the predecessors of Shakespeare have virtually no place.

It was Cotgrave's deliberate omission to indicate the sources of his extracts that mainly led William Oldys to make a prejudiced attack upon his anthology in his preface to Dr. Thomas Hayward's three-volume *The British Muse* (1738). It may have been on this account that Mr. R. D. Williams has ignored the *Treasury of Wit and Language* in his article, *Antiquarian Interest in Elizabethan Drama before Lamb*.² With him *The British Muse* serves as starting-point. It is true that Hayward had the advantage over Cotgrave in that in every case he gives the source of his quotations which on his title-page he describes as 'Thoughts, Moral, Natural and Sublime' from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets. His anthology, as this indicates, was of a general character and his extracts, grouped under subject-headings, are

¹ See his informative article, 'John Cotgrave's "English Treasury of Wit and Language" and The Elizabethan Drama' (*Studies in Philology*, April 1943).

² In *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* (June 1938).

only in part taken from plays. Other works mentioned by Mr. Williams, such as the collections of Dodsley and Hawkins and the *Biographica Dramatica*, were, as Lamb himself has told us, used by him. They were not 'specimens' but included either whole plays or accounts of their authors and analyses of plot.

It is therefore no true service to Lamb to get his achievement out of focus, to assert with Swinburne that 'to him and to him alone it is that we owe the revelation and resurrection of our greatest dramatic poets after Shakespeare'. It is sufficient disproof of this to name Edmond Malone whose collection of plays, now in the Bodleian, rivals that Garrick collection in which Lamb found unending delight. Moreover, as I have tried to show, with increased knowledge, altered perspective, and varied taste, we may differ from some of his verdicts and ways of approach. But his is the unfading laurel of the pioneer who first presented episodes from the Elizabethan playbooks not as 'beauties' or 'thoughts' but as specimens of dramatic quality. And the best of his accompanying notes, masterly in their content and form, combining clearest insight with delicacy of expression in prose of subtle and sensitive rhythm, raised criticism to the level of creation.

Finally, I would stress the fact that Lamb does not speak merely as a literary expositor. As some of my citations have shown, his comments spring not merely from his reading of the plays but from his experience of life. Here his footnotes seem to me to be akin to some of the observations in a work otherwise radically different in outlook—Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*. The spirit in fact in which Lamb worked was not that of an ordinary anthologist but of a crusader with a mission on behalf both of the dead and of the living. To the Elizabethan dramatists he felt that he owed the debt of rescuing them from undeserved neglect, of making reparation (to adopt Browning's words concerning the early Italian painters) to 'the wronged great soul of an ancient master'. For his contemporaries he was aflame to point them the way to share his enjoyment of the rich treasure that he had rediscovered. He would therefore have rejoiced in the activities of the Societies that have been founded in his name, and which, when they do homage to the Elizabethans, are following the trail that he has blazed.

F. S. BOAS

JONSON AND DICKENS: A STUDY IN THE COMIC GENIUS OF LONDON

THE greatest poet of England, though he spent many years in London, was not essentially a Londoner. Shakespeare's comedies are set for the most part in an enchanted country of the mind, which takes shape as the Forest of Arden, or the sea-coast of Illyria, or Prospero's magic island. Even when we meet with prosaic folk like Bottom and his company, they savour more of a small provincial town like Stratford than of the metropolis. True, there is the tavern in Eastcheap to remind us that Shakespeare could depict a London scene to the life whenever he had a mind to do so, but such scenes are few and far between. It was left to Jonson to give us the full picture of what London in the age of Elizabeth and James looked like to a man of genius. In *Every Man in his Humour*, *The Alchemist*, *The Silent Woman*, and *Bartholomew Fair*, we have the crowded London scene depicted by a master. Jonson was a Londoner born, and he knew every aspect of the city. In his dramas we meet courtiers, foppish gallants, sober tradesmen and their wives who ape court fashions, Puritan preachers, needy soldiers of fortune, barbers, lawyers, apprentices, druggists, and in addition all the under-world of knaves who batten on the vices of the metropolis. Jonson wrote as a satirist, and the London scene as he presents it has many unlovely features, but he had an immense gusto for life. *Bartholomew Fair* is perhaps the best example of his power of presenting this scene and filling it with individual characters. In the crowded Fair we meet the harmless but vain Littlewit with his pretty young wife and his voluble mother-in-law, the puritanical Dame Purecraft. In their search for the roast pig for which the Fair is famous they are helped by Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, the Banbury baker turned Puritan preacher. They enter the booth where the enormously fat Ursula is cooking her pigs, and immediately find themselves among a crowd of disreputable characters, horse-courers, pimps, and thieves. Meanwhile another group of innocents has appeared in the persons of the country squire Cokes, a lad not yet of age, with his tutor Humphrey Wasp, and his affianced bride, Grace Wellborn. Cokes is a country bumpkin who

is determined to spend as much money as possible in the Fair. He buys up a whole stall of gilt gingerbread, hires a troupe of fiddlers, has his pocket picked by a gang of thieves, loses his hat, his cloak, and his sword in a brawl, and finally has the mortification of losing his bride, who is quietly annexed by a young gallant, Winwife, who substitutes his own name for that of Cokes in the blank marriage licence which Humphrey had been carrying in a box for his master. Cokes, though a fool, takes his misfortunes with a certain philosophical stolidity. Provided that he can borrow the entrance money for him to see the puppet-show, he is quite cheerful. When Littlewit expresses surprise at meeting him in doublet and hose, without a cloak or hat, Cokes answers:

‘I have lost all i’ the *Fayre*, and all my acquaintance too; did’st thou meet any body that I know, Master *Littlewit*? my man *Numps*, or my sister *Overdoo*, or Mistresse *Grace*? pray thee Master *Littlewit*, lend mee some money to see the *Interlude*, here. I’le pay thee againe, as I am a Gentleman. If thou’lt but carry mee home, I have money enough there.’

The scene of *Every Man in his Humour*, the earliest of Jonson’s great comedies, was originally laid in Florence, and its characters bore Italian names. It was in this form that the play was printed in quarto in 1601, but when Jonson revised the play he altered the scene to London, where it undoubtedly belonged. Master Stephen lives at Hogsden, the modern Hoxton, and despises the archers of Finsbury, and the citizens ‘that come a-ducking to *Islington* ponds’. London was still surrounded by country. Edward Knowell says ‘I am sent for, this morning, by a friend i’ the old *Jewrie* to come to him; It’s but crossing over the fields to *Moregate*. Will you beare me companie?’ Cob the water-bearer dwells at the bottom of Coleman Street at the sign of the Water Tankard, hard by the Green Lattice. With him lodges the needy adventurer, the self-styled Captain Bobadil, who is ‘a Paul’s man’, that is, he frequents ‘the middle aisle’ of old St. Paul’s, where all the idle and profligate of London were wont to throng together. Bobadil is a great advocate of tobacco, and claims to have existed on it in the Indies without ‘the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one and twentie weekes, but the fume of this simple onely’. Cob, on the other hand, marvels what pleasure men can find in taking tobacco:

‘It’s good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of

smoke, and embers; there were foure died out of one house, last weeke, with taking it, and two more the bell went for, yesternight; one of them (they say) will ne're scape it: he voided a bushell of soot yesterday, upward and downeward.'

It is to Jonson that the student of social history must turn to learn how the Londoners of Jacobean times took their pleasures. It was still Merrie England, though Justice Overdoo and Zeal-of-the-Land Busy might inveigh against the iniquities of Bartholomew Fair, its gingerbread images, its Popish name, its enormities and abominations. Londoners flocked to see the motion-man exhibit his puppets, or to listen to the ballad-singer, or to eat roast pork in one of the booths of the fair. The corn-cutter and the tinder-box man bawled to the passers-by, and the sellers offered their wares, hobby-horses and drums, fiddles, dolls, and little dogs. There were singing and drinking, wrestling and fighting in the side alleys of the great fair. For contrast to this scene of summer revelry, Jonson has given us in *Christmas his Masque* a delightful burlesque of the mummings and disguisings so popular with the citizens of London in mid-winter. Old Father Christmas enters with his ten sons and daughters who represent various aspects of the Christmas festivities. Some of these, such as Carol, Gambol, and Mince-Pie, are still familiar to us, but who was Post-and-Pair, who entered 'with a paire-Royall of Aces in his Hat; his Garment all done over with Payres, and Purrs'? One of the train is 'New Year's Gift', who reminds us that in Jonson's time the giving of presents belonged to the New Year and not to Christmas Day. Eldest of the family is Misrule, a reminder that the medieval custom of appointing a Lord of Misrule for the Christmas season lingered on into Jonson's day. Wassail with her bowl was to survive till the nineteenth century, for did not Mr. Pickwick and his friends sit down on Christmas Eve to 'a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, or a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible'? The last of the train was Baby-Cake, whose usher carried 'a great Cake with a Beane and a Pease'. The bean and the pea had a significance in folk-lore, and they lingered on in Christmas feasting long after Jonson's day.

The whole masque has a close connexion with the Mummings' Play, which still survives in a few corners of rural England even

in the twentieth century. R. J. E. Tiddy says of it that 'the characters are exhibited and described in turn exactly in the manner that is still almost universal wherever the Mummers' Play survives'. But Jonson emphasizes that it is a burlesque of the City Christmas-tide entertainments: 'It was intended, I confesse, for Curryers Hall.' 'Gi' me leave to aske, for I bring you a Masque from little little little little *London*.'

Almost two and a half centuries after Ben Jonson another great Londoner appeared in the person of Charles Dickens. He was to do for the London of the earlier nineteenth century what Jonson had done for the London of James the First. His medium was the novel and not the drama, and whereas Jonson had used both verse and prose, Dickens was limited to the more humdrum form of expression. Nevertheless *Pickwick* and *Micawber*, *Sam Weller* and *Traddles*, the *Fat Boy*, *Bob Sawyer*, *Silas Wegg*, *Bill Sikes*, and *Fagan*, all these are in the true line of descent from *Bobadil* and *Face*, *Doll Common* and *Ursula the pig woman*. The comic genius of London, which had expressed itself to the full in Jonson's plays, reappeared in the *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *David Copperfield*.

Dickens and Jonson had many things in common. Each knew and loved the London of his day, was familiar with its narrow streets, its taverns and eating-houses, its theatres, its shops, its alleys and slums, as well as its noble buildings, its cathedral, and its churches. Dickens was fully conscious of the stimulus which he derived from the London streets. In Lausanne he found himself in difficulties over *Dombey & Son*. He wrote to Forster:

I suppose this is partly the effect . . . of the absence of streets and numbers of figures. I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain, which it cannot bear, when busy, to lose. For a week or a fortnight I can write prodigiously in a retired place (as Broadstairs), and a day in London sets me up again and starts me. But the toil and labour of writing day after day, without that magic Lantern, is *immense* (Forster, *Life of Dickens*, i. 441).

The river to which London owes its origin plays a considerable part in the works of both men. Dickens's imagination was fascinated by the romance and mystery of the river, the dark tragedies which lurked in the shadow of its wharves and bridges. The subplot of *Our Mutual Friend* is largely concerned with the men who

make a precarious living out of the rescue of corpses from the lower reaches of the Thames, and the shadow of robbery and murder which hangs around such an occupation. Jonson shows no such interest in the sinister aspect of the river. For him it is the thoroughfare of London on which the boats of courtier and merchant pass up and down on their errands. Lantern Leatherhead in *Bartholomew Fair* translates the story of Hero and Leander into a London setting in order to make of it a 'motion' for his puppets. With great justice he asks what would Sestos and Abydos mean to an audience of London prentices? 'Thou art i' the right', answers Cokes, 'I do not know myself.' So the Thames takes the place of the Hellespont, and Leander of Puddle Wharf sees the lovely Hero land at Trig-stairs, and inquires her name.

Both these men had the immense advantage of a thorough knowledge of the mean streets, the alleys, and slums of London. The London of the rich traveller does not differ so very widely from Paris or New York. First-class hotels have a devastating likeness to one another all over the world. The writer, and above all the comic genius, finds his opportunity in the idiosyncrasies of the by-streets and the taverns. Jonson gloried in his knowledge of the Mermaid and the Apollo, 'the Sun, the Dog, the Triple Tun'. There he met not only his fellow playwrights, Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, but wits like Donne and Corbet, young law-students, swaggering soldiers, boastful travellers full of tales of Venice or the Indies. Here he must have seen the prototypes of Bobadil and Master Stephen, Captain Otter so bold in his cups but so pitiful a figure before Mistress Otter, the journalist gathering intelligence for the news-sheets which are ridiculed in *The Staple of News*, Abel Drugger inquiring how to bring fortune to the shop he means to build, Sir Epicure Mammon gloating over the pleasures which his money will buy. It is this intimate individual knowledge which saves Jonson from the reproach sometimes brought against him of creating nothing but types. He has a whole gallery of dupes, but the dupes are so nicely differentiated from one another that we know them as individuals. Dapper is distinct from Drugger, though both are foolish and greedy. The one wants a 'fly', a familiar spirit which will make him lucky at cards. He wishes to pay as little as possible for such a treasure, and professes that he has with him nothing but a small gold coin. Folly and greed are equally present in the mind of Sir Epicure

Mammon, but he rises far above Druggier and Dapper through the power of his imagination. He has the sensuous delight of the poet.

Dickens too has a long gallery of dupes and knaves, but he is of a kindlier temper than Jonson. His books are full of amiable eccentrics like Pickwick and Micawber, who excite friendly laughter rather than derision. Mr. Micawber, always in difficulties, always hoping for something to turn up, would have seemed to Jonson an unmitigated fool, I fear. Pickwick, our beloved Pickwick, became hopelessly entangled in the celebrated case *Pickwick v. Bardell*, but though we laugh at him, our hearts are with him. Jonson would have given the portrait a slightly more satiric cast, so that a touch of contempt would have lessened our sympathy with him. Jonson's gulls are invariably stripped at last of their feathers, and look ugly enough in their nakedness. Dickens is seldom so cruel. Micawber may suffer a temporary imprisonment for debt, but he comes out smiling, and is even rewarded with quite unnatural prosperity—in Australia! Dickens knew that in London Micawber would be led by his own nature from one indignity to another, so he determined to force on him a happy ending at the Antipodes as Wilkins Micawber, District Magistrate of Port Middlebury.

Dickens's perception of the various grades of amiable folly is as acute as Jonson's of the less attractive types.

'I am happy in the prospect of your company, sir,' said Mr. Pickwick. 'Ah' said the new-comer 'it's a good thing for both of us, isn't it? Company, you see—company is—is—it's a very different thing from solitude—ain't it?'

'There's no denying that 'ere,' said Mr. Weller, joining in the conversation with an affable smile. 'That's what I call a self-evident proposition, as the dog's meat man said, when the housemaid told him he warn't a gentleman.'

Jonson and Dickens are alike in their inability to create heroines who should be attractive creatures of flesh and blood. There is no Rosalind, Beatrice, or Viola in the comic scene of these writers. Jonson has the colourless Grace Wellborn, whom even the humours of Smithfield cannot rouse to laughter. She is glad to be rid of the foolish Cokes as her destined husband, but she cannot choose between Winwife and Quarlous, and has to leave the decision to the arbitrament of a mad beggar. Florence Dombey is almost as colourless. She is patient and gentle, she suffers in silence, and the same description would apply to Lizzie

Hexam. Dora Spenlow, who became Dora Copperfield, has a little more individuality, but Dickens has overlaid her so thickly with sentiment that we quickly weary of her.

Yet both Dickens and Jonson could create subsidiary women characters who genuinely belong to the world of comedy. Jonson has the robust foul-mouthed Doll Common, a fitting accomplice for Subtle and Face, and Ursula the pig woman, with her superficial good nature, and her sinister association with the pick-pockets and their gang. He has the Puritan matron, Dame Purecraft, with her genuine concern for her daughter, her contempt for her son-in-law, and her strong spice of hypocrisy. In one of his latest plays, *The Magnetic Lady*, the best-drawn character is that of Dame Polish, the confidante and housekeeper of Lady Loadstone. She had substituted her own infant daughter for the niece and heiress of her mistress, and she is unwise enough to quarrel, many years later, with the nurse who knows the jealously-guarded secret. In revenge the nurse threatens to shout out the truth all through the house till it reaches her lady's ears. Polish asks:

'Didst thou not sweare to keepe it secret? and upon what booke?
(I doe remember now) *The Practice of Piety*.'

Keepe answers

'It was a practice of impiety
Out of your wicked forge, I know it now. . . .'

Indeed all Jonson's quarrelling women are superb. We remember that he told Drummond that his wife was a shrew, and we are tempted to hear her voice in some of the vituperation which Mistress Otter or the newly-wed Mistress Morose pours out so freely.

In the masques Jonson had some thumb-nail sketches of London women which will bear comparison with his more finished portraits in the plays. In *Christmas his Masque* there enters a deaf tire-woman whose little son is to play the part of Cupid before the King. She is indignant at the difficulty she has had in entering the hall:

'Now, all the Lords blesse me, where am I tro? where is *Cupid*? Serve the King? they may serve the Cobler well enough, some of 'em, for any courtesie they have, y'wisse; they ha' need o' mending; unrude people they are, your Courtiers, here was thrust upon thrust indeed! was it ever so hard to get in before, tro?

Father Christmas. How now? what's the matter?

Venus. A place forsooth, I do want a place; I would have a good place to see my Child act in before the King and Queenes Majesties (God blesse 'em) to night.

Christmas. Why, here is no place for you.

Venus. Right forsooth, I am *Cupid's* Mother, *Cupid's* owne Mother: forsooth; yes forsooth: I dwell in Pudding-lane; I forsooth, he is Prentice in Love-lane with a Bugle maker, that makes of your Bobs, and Bird-bolts for Ladies.

Christmas. Good Lady Venus of Pudding-lane, you must go out for all this.

Venus. Yes forsooth, I can sit anywhere, so I may see *Cupid* act; hee is a pretty Child, though I say it that perhaps should not, you will say: I had him by my first Husband, he was a Smith forsooth, we dwelt in Doe-Little lane then, he came a moneth before his time, and that may make him somewhat imperfect: But I was a Fish-mongers daughter.

Christmas. No matter for your Pedigree, your house; good Venus will you depart?

Venus. I forsooth, he'll say his part I warrant him, as well as ere a Play-boy of 'em all: I could ha' had money enough for him, an I would ha' beene tempted, and ha' let him out by the weeke, to the Kings Players: Master *Burbadge* has beene about, and about with me; and so has old Mr. *Hemings* too, they ha' need of him, where is he, tro' a? I would faine see him, pray God they have given him some drinke since he came.

Christmas. Are you readie, Boyes? strike up, nothing will drown this noise but a Drum: a' peace, yet, I ha' not done. Sing—*Now their intent, is about to present. . . .*

Dickens too has a series of unforgettable female characters. There is Mrs. Gummidge 'a lone lorn creatur', always 'thinking of the old 'un'. There is that detestable creature Mrs. Gamp, upheld by the praises of the fictitious Mrs. Harris. There is the majestic Mrs. Wilfer, sublimely conscious of her condescension in having married Mr. Wilfer. Even so minor a character as Mrs. Crupp, who let 'a desirable and compact set of chambers, forming a genteel residence for a young gentleman', is sketched with unerring hand.

'When the present set were took for you by your dear aunt, Mr. Copperfull,' said Mrs. Crupp, 'my remark were, I had now found summun I could care for. "Thank Evin!" were the expression, "I have now found summun I can care for!"—You don't eat enough, sir, nor yet drink.'

'Is that what you found your supposition on, Mrs. Crupp?' said I.

'Sir,' said Mrs. Crupp, in a tone approaching to severity, 'I've

laundressed other young gentlemen besides yourself. A young gentleman may be over-careful of himself, or he may be under-careful of himself. He may brush his hair too regular, or too unregular. . . . But let him go to which extreme he may, sir, there's a young lady in both of 'em.'

Mrs. Crupp shook her head in such a determined manner, that I had not an inch of vantage-ground left.

'It was but the gentleman which died here before yourself,' said Mrs. Crupp, 'that fell in love—with a barmaid—and had his waistcoats took in directly, though much swelled by drinking.'

'Mrs. Crupp,' said I, 'I must beg you not to connect the young lady in my case with a barmaid, or anything of that sort, if you please.'

'Mr. Copperfull,' returned Mrs. Crupp, 'I'm a mother myself, and not likely. I ask your pardon, sir, if I intrude. I should never wish to intrude where I were not welcome. But you are a young gentleman, Mr. Copperfull, and my advice to you is, to cheer up, sir, to keep a good heart, and to know your own value. If you was to take to something, sir,' said Mrs. Crupp, 'if you was to take to skittles, now, which is healthy, you might find it divert your mind, and do you good.'

With these words, Mrs. Crupp, affecting to be very careful of the brandy—which was all gone—thanked me with a majestic curtsy, and retired.

Among the greatest of Dickens's characters must be reckoned the inimitable Sam Weller. He is a true Cockney, shrewd, resourceful, full of humour. He is devoted to his master, whom he helps out of endless difficulties. He has some affinity with Jonson's Brain-worm in *Every Man in his Humour*, but Brain-worm owes something to the cunning slave in the comedies of Plautus, whereas Sam Weller is triumphantly original. His conversation is a continual delight.

'Hold on, sir,' said Mr. Weller, invigorated with the prospect of refreshments, 'Out of the way, young leathers. If you walley my precious life, don't upset me, as the gen'l'man said to the driver, when they was a carryin' him to Tyburn. . . .'

'Weal pie,' said Mr. Weller, soliloquizing, as he arranged the eatables on the grass, 'Wery good thing is a weal pie, when you know the lady as made it, and is quite sure it ain't kittens; and arter all though, where's the odds, when they're so like weal that the very piemen themselves don't know the difference?'

'Don't they, Sam?' said Mr. Pickwick.

'Not they, sir,' replied Mr. Weller, touching his hat. 'I lodged in the same house, with a pieman once, sir, and a wery nice man

he was—reg'lar clever chap, too—make pies out o' anything, he could. "What a number o' cats you keep, Mr. Brooks," says I, when I'd got intimate with him. "Ah," says he, "I do—a good many," says he. "You must be wery fond o' cats," says I. "Other people is," says he, a winkin' at me; "they ain't in season till the winter though," he says. "Not in season!" says I. "No," says he, "fruits is in, cats is out." "Why, what do you mean?" says I. "Mean?" says he. "That I'll never be a party to the combination o' the butchers to keep up the prices o' meat," says he. "Mr. Weller," says he, a squeezing my hand wery hard, and vispering in my ear, "don't mention this here agin—but it's the seasonin' as does it. They're all made o' them noble animals," says he, a pointin' to a wery nice little tabby kitten, "and I seasons 'em for beef steak, weal, or kidney 'cordin' to the demand.'"

In considering Jonson and Dickens as delineators of London comedy, we cannot rule out the direct influence of Jonson's work on Dickens. Dickens played the part of Bobadil in a number of amateur performances of *Every Man in his Humour*, and he delighted the audience by his rendering of Jonson's great comic creation.¹ He and his friends considered the possibility of a production of *The Alchemist*, in which Dickens was to take the part of Sir Epicure Mammon, and they got as far as two or three rehearsals, in which John Forster particularly admired his friend's rendering of the part.² The humbug spiritual 'shepherd', Mr. Stiggins, is a direct descendant of Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in *Bartholomew Fair*, though pineapple rum and hot buttered toast have replaced roast pork and small beer in his diet. The second Mrs. Weller's adulation of Mr. Stiggins recalls Dame Purecraft's fulsome worship of Rabbi Busy.

Jonson's effect on Dickens's work was perhaps healthier than that of Shakespeare. Everyone knows how the murder of Duncan obsessed Dickens's imagination, so that he gave to a mean and coarse murderer like Jonas Chuzzlewit the shadowy apprehensions and mental torment of a highly gifted imaginative Macbeth. In

¹ J. Forster, *Life of Dickens*, i. 395–8, and ii. 3–6. There were two London performances in 1845, and performances in Manchester and Liverpool in 1847, when the profits were devoted to helping Leigh Hunt and John Poole. Of the earlier performances Forster wrote, 'Bobadil fell to Dickens, who took upon him the redoubtable Captain long before he stood in his dress at the footlights; humouring the completeness of his assumption by talking and writing Bobadil, till the dullest of our party were touched and stirred to something of his own heartiness of enjoyment' (ibid i. 396).

² Ibid. ii. 19.

the long procession of Dickens's books the murderers, one after another, hear mysterious knockings or ringings, find that they have 'murdered sleep', and have no zest for their ill-gotten gains. Jonson's influence was less dominating than Shakespeare's, so that while we can trace a family likeness here and there, the originality of Dickens is abundantly clear. The greatest creator of comic characters since the Elizabethans had no need to borrow from any man. The native genius of English humour flowered in him once again as it had done in Falstaff and Mistress Quickly, in Bobadil and Ursula the pig-woman.

The differences between Jonson and Dickens are typical of the differences between the Jacobean and the Victorian ages. Jonson is more of a realist than Dickens, he is harder, fiercer, less humane. Social reform is a passion with Dickens; his satire has behind it an urgent desire to make life more tolerable for the poor and the oppressed. *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Oliver Twist*, *Bleak House*, these are pamphlets against abuses in education, the poor-law system, and the Court of Chancery. They contain memorable writing, but as literature they cannot be compared with the *Pickwick Papers*, or *David Copperfield*. Bumble is not truly a comic character, he is merely a puppet intended to illustrate the vices of workhouse officialdom. Again, Dickens is often too sentimental, a charge which can never be levelled against Jonson. There is no Paul Dombey or Little Nell in Jonson's gallery. Yet though we may weary of Dickens's excess of sentiment, he remains a more lovable writer than Jonson, and his characters have a wider appeal.

The London of Dickens was a much larger city than that of Jonson, and many of the ancient landmarks had disappeared in the Great Fire. Its outward appearance would have seemed strange indeed to Jonson, but its essential character remained the same. Throughout the centuries London, whatever its population and acreage, has continued to be the heart of England, the centre of its government, commerce, and civilization. It is a royal city, ancient, yet full of vitality, a magnet which draws to itself the genius of the kingdom. In the plays of Jonson and the novels of Dickens we discern the perennial fascination which London has exercised over the minds of men.

EVELYN M. SIMPSON



Terracotta bust of Apollo, probably by Edward Marshall, from the
Apollo Room at the Devil's Tavern, now at Child's Bank

By permission of Messrs Child, from a photograph by Mr. T. D. Kendrick

BEN JONSON AND THE DEVIL TAVERN

And each true Briton is to Ben so civil,
He swears the Muses met him at the Devil.

TO most of us the fact that Shakespeare and Ben Jonson met at the Mermaid for those 'wit combats' which Fuller has immortalized has tended to obliterate the fact that we know very little of the Mermaid itself, whereas of Ben's later haunt, the Devil, we know a great deal, and as we shall see, two of its most important features survive to this day. It seems worth while, therefore, to put together more fully than has hitherto been done, what we know of the tavern where Ben met his 'Sons', Herrick, Brome, Randolph, James Howell, and the rest, and where the landlord was worthy of the company.

When the Devil was founded is unknown, but it was an inn in 1464, and its sign was St. Dunstan pulling the Devil by the nose with his tongs; it stood between Temple Bar and Middle Temple Lane, and in Ben's early days there the landlord was Simon Wadloe, who seems, from Ben's lines over the door of the Apollo Room, to have himself served the wine to the company. Certainly, as Chappell's *Popular Music* has shown, an older ballad seems to have been applied to him, and he became for posterity not only 'Old Sir Simon the King, with his ale-dropt hose and his Malmsey nose', who died in 1627, but the subject of the tune which Sophia Western had to play more often than any other:

It was Mr. Western's custom, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play upon the harpsichord, and his favourite tunes were *Old Simon the king*, *St. George he was for England*, and some others. . . . The Squire declared, if she would give him t'other bout of *Old Sir Simon*, he would give the gamekeeper his deputation, the next morning. *Sir Simon* was played again and again, till the charms of music soothed Mr. Western to sleep.

Old Sir Simon's son, the 'landlord Wadlow' of Pepys's Diary, was likewise a notable figure, a Wolsey it was said, among tavern keepers, who set a new standard of magnificence in tavern furnishings, employed the great Isaac Fuller to paint the sign of his other tavern, the Sun, headed a company of 'young and comely'

soldiers at Charles II's coronation procession, was finally commemorated in a set of Latin Verses beginning

Apollo et Cohors Musarum
Bacchus vini et uvarum,

and was the landlord of the Devil when, as we shall see, Bulstrode Whitelock gave a banquet there.

We know far more of the Apollo Room—the Oracle—than of any other tavern room of the period; and in it Ben's Club met for good talk, sweetened and stimulated by good wine. There was a raised seat for Ben Jonson; there was provision for music in the shape of a musicians' gallery, though the bands of peripatetic fiddlers who went from tavern to tavern, house to house, were refused entrance; there were hangings on the walls—Cordovan leather rather than tapestry, in all probability; there were Ben's verses over the entrance, Ben's Rules over the mantelpiece; and—over his seat, it would seem—a bust of Apollo, patron of the choice spirits there assembled. The verses must be first given, with their tribute to Old Sir Simon, his Tower Bottle—and why Tower I know not—as his tripod:

Welcome all who lead or follow
To the Oracle of Apollo,
Here he speaks out of his pottle,
Or the tripod, his Tower bottle;
All his answers are divine,
Truth itself doth flow in wine.
Hang up all the poor hop-drinkers,
Cries old Simon, king of skinkers,
He the half of life abuses
Who sits watering with the Muses,
Those dull girls no good can mean us,
Wine it is the milk of Venus,
And the poet's horse accounted,
Ply it, and you all are mounted.
This the true Phoebian liquor,
Cheers the brains, makes wit the quicker,
Pays all debts, cures all diseases,
And at once three senses pleases.
Welcome all who lead or follow
To the Oracle of Apollo.

A later hand added the phrase upon his gravestone in Westminster Abbey: 'O rare Ben Jonson.'

As for Ben's Rules, written in his 'fine and elegant Latin'

they are said to have been 'engraven in marble over the chimney'; if that were really so, the marble was replaced—and replaced in the seventeenth century, as the script shows—by the existing Rules, which are in light yellow letters on a black ground, just as when Isaac Bickerstaff arranged a wedding breakfast for his friend Tranquillus, choosing 'the *Apollo*, of the *Old-devil at Temple-bar*, as a place sacred to mirth, tempred with discretion, where *Ben Jonson* and his sons used to make their liberal meetings. . . . As soon as the company were come into that ample room, *Lepidus Wagstaff* began to make me compliments for chusing that place, and fell into a discourse upon the subject of pleasure and entertainment, drawn from the rules of *Ben's Club*, which are in gold letters over the chimney' (*Tatler*, No. 79).

It is from Prior's joint and earliest poem, *The Hind and Panther transvers'd* (1687) that we learn that Ben's seat was raised, and that a handrail was there to help him mount the steps even as Prior and Charles Montagu mounted them forty years after his death:

Thus to the place where Jonson sat we climb,
Leaning on the same rail that guided him,

and though I nowhere find it stated where the bust of Apollo stood, it was probably on the wall above this seat. We shall have more to say of this bust presently, but must now turn to the Rules, which were excellently if not literally translated by Alexander (not Richard) Brome. His version is here given in full, as the lines throw much light on Ben's ideal of Club life:

Let none but guests, or clubbers, hither come;
Let dunces, fools, sad sordid men keep home;
Let learned, civil, merry men be invited,
And modest, too; nor be choice ladies slighted.
Let nothing in the treat offend the guests;
More for delight than cost, prepare the feasts.
The cook and purvey'r must our palates know,
And none contend who shall sit high or low,
Our waiters must quick-sighted be, and dumb,
And let the drawers quickly hear, and come.
Let not our wine be mix'd, but brisk and neat,
Or else the drinkers may the vintners beat.
And let our only emulation be
Not drinking much, but talking wittily.

Let it be voted lawful to stir up
 Each other with a moderate chirping cup;
 Let not our company be, or talk, too much;
 On serious things, or sacred, let's not touch
 With sated heads and bellies. Neither may
 Fiddlers unask'd obtrude themselves to play.
 With laughing, leaping, dancing, jests, and songs,
 And whate'er else to grateful mirth belongs,
 Let's celebrate our feasts: and let us see
 That all our jests without reflection be.
 Insipid poems let no man rehearse,
 Nor any be compelled to write a verse.
 All noise of vain disputes must be forborne,
 And let no lover in a corner mourn.
 To brawl and fight, like Hectors, let none dare,
 Glasses or windows break, or hangings tear.
 Whoe'er shall publish what's here done or said,
 From our society must be banished.
 Let none by drinking do, or suffer, harm,
 And, while we stay, let us be always warm.

The word 'Hectors' in the sixth line from the end needs explanation. We find in Shadwell's *The Scornor* (1691) that the old rake Tope protests: 'I knew the Hector's, and before them the Mun's, and the Tityretu's, they were brave fellows indeed. In those days, a man could not go from the Rose Garden in Russell Street, Covent Garden to the Piazza once, but he must venture his life twice.' It was in Rose Alley that Dryden was set on by hired ruffians of this type in 1679, but that was the result of private enmity, not the promiscuous hooliganism of the 1620's.

The verses certainly expand our ideas of Ben's hospitality, but unluckily there seems to be no account of a Ladies' Night at the Apollo. We see, as already said, that the room was hung with Cordovan leather or tapestry, and that privacy was, as in all clubs worthy of the name, a first essential; but we do happen to know of one case in which a young man who was neither Guest nor Clubber did invade the Oracle, and became one of its most ardent supporters. This was Thomas Randolph, who, as an undergraduate (he went up to Trinity in 1624) was possessed by a truly Boswellian impulse to meet Ben Jonson and other literary leaders. On a visit to London he one day crept into the Room during a Session of the Poets, to borrow Suckling's phrase, and, challenged by the guests and bidden to order his quart of sack, had to confess that

he was penniless, and could only drink at their expense. Ben Jonson took to the youth, 'ever after called him his son' and was rewarded by three gracious and grateful poems addressed to himself. James Howell, a member of the Club, is less racy than usual in his account of the 'solemn supper' to which he was invited by Ben himself in 1635: true 'there was good company, excellent cheer, choice wines, and jovial welcome', but Ben engrossed too much of the conversation, and praised his own works too emphatically, though Howell forgave this 'Roman infirmity . . . now that time hath snowed upon his *pericranium*' because, after all, 'if one may be allowed to love the natural issue of his body, why not that of the brain?' Why not indeed?

Yet self-praise is hardly a clubbable virtue, and in view of his Sons' devotion, Ben can rarely have offended thus, or Herrick would scarcely have addressed his 'Prayer to Ben Jonson', that most lovable of appeals in verse:

When I a verse shall make,
Know I have pray'd thee,
For old religion's sake
Saint Ben, to aid me

and the rest, or have beheld him in Elysium 'plac'd As in a globe of radiant fire'. If we are not disposed to treat Jonson primarily as the most human of poets, these tributes from his most accomplished 'Son' should give us pause.

We have, unfortunately, no description of the admission of these 'Sons' by adoption; most were probably introduced as guests, approved, and finally admitted, but as in the case of Randolph, Jonson could, and did, admit, if not at sight, at least after an evening's experiment. After all, it was after the first accidental meeting with Dr. Johnson that Tom Davies said to Boswell, 'Don't be uneasy—I can see he likes you very well', and it was only a few days later that Boswell heard 'stay, don't go' from the lips which even then he venerated.

A few words may be said as to the later history of the Devil, in general, and the Room in particular, before discussing the bust of Apollo which it is my privilege to publish.

It is hard to-day to realize how completely destitute London was of large rooms for concert and lecture purposes right down to the reign of George III. Even in Ben's lifetime the Apollo Room was borrowed, as we know from an entry in Whitelock's *Memorials*.

Shirley's Masque *The Triumph of Peace* was set to music by Henry Lawes and Simon Ive, when young Bulstrode Whitelock was Master of the Revels to the four Inns of Court who had joined to present it; he gave the musicians the princely reward of £100 apiece, but 'for the four French gentlemen, the Queen's servants, I thought that a handsome and liberall gratifying of them would be made known to the queen their mistress, and well-taken by her. I therefore invited them one morning to a collation att St Dunstan's Tavern, to the great roome the oracle of Apollo, where each of them had his plate lay'd for him, cover'd, and the napkin by it, and when they opened their plates, they found in each of them forty pieces of gould, of their master's coyne, for the first dish, and they had cause to be much pleased with the surprisall.' Ben was probably not ill pleased to be in a position to countenance so noble and courtly a banquet.

This is the only contemporary episode outside Ben's own Club which I have traced during his life-time, but there is much of literary interest in the later history of the Devil. Even in the next generation—and the Restoration was not an age remarkable for reverence—it was a distinction to have been of the Company. Shadwell's Oldart boasts, 'I was created Ben Jonson's Son in the Apollo'; Dryden in his *Defence of the Epilogue* speaks of those who 'can tell a story of Ben Jonson, and perhaps have fancy enough to give a supper to Apollo, that they might be called his *Sons*'; and Shadwell was probably one of them. For, by an odd collocation, it is Dryden, always Shadwell's enemy, who tells us that Shadwell (who in the Preface to his first play avowed himself Ben's disciple, and earned that name by certain scenes in *The Squire of Alsatia*) had 'a fall at the Old Devil, when he broke no ribs, because the hardness of the stairs could reach no bones' owing to the 'mountain belly' which Dryden elsewhere mentions, as he does all else to that dramatist's discredit.

On 18 March, 1703, at a time when there were no fixed and regular auction rooms in London, the jewels of La Belle Stuart, the Duchess of Richmond who repelled the advances of Charles II and was the model for the Britannia on our first copper coinage, were sold 'in the Apollo chamber'; an odder, yet not inappropriate, use of it is an established fact—the official Odes of successive poets Laureate were practised in it. The rather obscure lines in Book I of the *Dunciad* spoken by Dulness herself:

She ceas'd. Then swells the Chapel-royal throat,
 God save King Cibber! mounts in ev'ry note

Back to the Devil the last echoes roll

are thus explained by Warburton:

The Voices and Instruments used in the service of the Chapel-Royal being also employed in the performance of the Birth-day and New Year Odes. . . . The Devil Tavern in Fleet Street, where these Odes are usually rehearsed before they are performed at Court. Upon which a Wit of those times made this Epigram;

When Laureates make odes, Do you ask of what sort,

Do you ask if they're good, or are evil?

You may judge—from the Devil they go to the Court,

And go from the Court to the Devil.

Even so late as the reign of George I books of Ben Jonson's Jests—largely apocryphal—were being published, but one fancies Swift thought little about him when he dined at the Devil with Garth and Addison on 2 October, 1710, though Addison at least can hardly have forgotten that, as he tells us in No. 70 of the *Spectator*, Ben Jonson used to say, he had rather have been the author of Chevy Chase than of all his works.

A far more celebrated dinner is that which took place in December, 1750, when, as Hawkins tells us, Dr. Johnson, the host, celebrated the birth of Mrs. Lennox's 'first literary child' *Harriot Stuart*, the repast concluding with 'a magnificent hot apple pyc stuck with fig leaves, because, forsooth, Mrs. Lennox was an authoress and had written verses—and further he had prepared for her a crown of laurel, with which, but not until he had invoked the Muses by some ceremonies of his own invention, he encircled her brows'. It was on this occasion, about five in the morning, that 'Johnson's face shone with meridian splendour', and that 'the waiters were all so overcome with sleep, that it was two hours before we could get a bill'. After this it is a sad descent to the Shakespeare Lectures (1774) of William Kenrick, whom the *D.N.B.* sums up as 'a superlative scoundrel'; but the episode again illustrates the dearth of public rooms in London, though the Great Rooms of the Society of Arts in Spring Gardens were by then available for certain purposes.

But the end was at hand. The tavern came into the market; the site was supremely central and convenient; and in 1788 it was bought and pulled down by Child's Bank, to become the

Sign of the Marigold, not of the Devil. With farseeing piety the firm preserved Ben Jonson's Rules and the bust of Apollo, and Peter Cunningham in his *Handbook of London* (1850) tells with delight of his pleasure at seeing them in 1843. Exactly a century later, in this year of grace 1943, I had the same privilege, and with this advantage, that Messrs. Child most generously acceded to my request that—for the first time—they should be photographed before being removed, also at my suggestion, to a place of safety. For the first time therefore the Apollo and the Rules are recorded, and members of the English Association may share with Ben Jonson and his Sons, with Pepys, Swift, Dr. Johnson, and a hundred more, the sight of one of these incomparably interesting relics.

Of the Rules there is nothing to say other than what has been said already, but the bust is of terracotta, but heavily painted; the head laureate and turned sharply to the left, the drapery fastened on the left shoulder with a heavy brooch. Artistically speaking it is of the highest importance, as the earliest English seventeenth-century terracotta known, and the quality of the modelling is high. Can we make a guess at the author? I think that this is virtually certain, since, opposite the Devil Tavern under the very shadow of St. Dunstan's, was the yard of Edward Marshall (1598–1674) later, like his son Joshua after him, Master Mason to the Crown. He was out of his apprenticeship to the mason who built Lincoln's Inn Chapel in 1624, and started a yard of his own which, enlarged from time to time, lasted as a centre of artistic activities till Joshua's death in 1678. Marshall, moreover, was a friend of the men of letters of the day, the author of the bust of Drayton in Westminster Abbey and of a lost bust of Quarles, and the friend of Aubrey and of James Howell, who directs in his will that he should make his monument. Moreover, the laurel crown resembles Drayton's; the work is in Marshall's manner, strong and masculine, and we have fifty or sixty busts and effigies, both in alabaster and marble, from his chisel to judge by. Topography and history alike justify us in ascribing this noble terracotta to the young sculptor who knew those men of letters whom Jonson also knew so well, and in seeing in the Apollo of the Oracle a work by that fine and long-forgotten artist, Edward Marshall.

KATHARINE A. ESDAILE

