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London Edinburgh Glasgow Copenhagen

New York Toronto Melbourne Cape Town

Bombay Calcutta Madras Shanghai

HUMPHREY MILFORD

Publisher to the University

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TRAGEDY

I.

IN *Paradise Regained*, where Milton describes the intellectual glories of Athens, he defines tragedy in a few significant words. It treats

Of fate and chance, and change in human life.

This is the earlier and was once the accepted doctrine. It places the emphasis on something greater than any individual man and external to himself, which he is powerless to resist, and by which he is bent and broken. Tragedy shows the working of such irresistible Destiny.

According to a more modern conception we should look rather to each man himself for the secret of his lot. It is his own character that works out events from within, his own emotions that prompt and mislead him. What he really is, is revealed by what becomes of him in the end. When his story is complete, we see that it could not have been otherwise; and it is upon himself that the ultimate responsibility falls. In this method there is a more subtle process; it sets aside the cold and hard presence of Fate, and finds in tragedy elements of justice and retribution.

But the earlier theory had profound roots in earlier literature; and when a patient historical estimate is made, we cannot well deny that Shakespeare has been influenced by it. He does not adhere to it alone; his outlook is much more comprehensive; and to his clear vision the connexion of events with the strength or weakness of those who experience them is plain enough. But the notion of Fatality is there also; and to construe his works according to that of Responsibility alone would be to pass over elements in them which he himself has sometimes emphasized.

✓ The influence of external and arbitrary events on the

destiny of an individual is symbolized for Shakespeare by the goddess Fortune. In this symbolism itself there was nothing new. Fortune had a place in the Roman pantheon, and passed into the Christian art and literature of the Middle Ages, becoming a familiar name to the poets—among them Dante and Chaucer—and the theme of much moralizing. The blind goddess, it was thought, was constant in nothing but mutability. She smiled upon men, flattered them with the allurements of promised happiness, then changed her countenance, revealed her fickleness and treachery, and cast down those whom she had lifted up. Her wheel revolved without ceasing; men rose with it to its summit, and swiftly descended in its irresistible sweep.

Fortune, thus conceived, had become the presiding genius of Tragedy when the modern stage arose and Shakespeare began to write. It cannot be maintained that Shakespeare was completely influenced and his mind overshadowed by the thought of Fortune's capricious power: he cannot be thus put in a medieval groove. But none the less, he did not break the continuity of tradition. Fortune was always present to his mind; all his characters are familiar with her name and attributes; and the conception of undeserved, unexpected, and crushing calamity, for which the name of Fortune was an emblem, enters very deeply into his work. It is omnipresent in his tragedies.

✓ Even in the comedies the name of Fortune is of frequent occurrence, although the allusions pass into a lighter vein. We read in *As You Like It* of the jester who 'railed on Lady Fortune in good terms, In good set terms, and yet a motley fool'. ✓ Fluellen, the sententious Welshman, speaks of Fortune, and undertakes to expound the subject:

'Fortune is painted blind, with a muffler afore her eyes, to signify to you that Fortune is blind; and she is painted also with a wheel, to signify to you, which is the moral of it, that she is turning and inconstant, and mutability and variation: and her foot, look you, is fixed upon a spherical stone, which rolls, and rolls, and rolls.'

✓ It is in another tone and with a higher imagination that

Shakespeare describes the throne and court of Fortune in the dialogue at the opening of *Timon of Athens* between the Poet and the Painter. It is the longest sustained passage on the subject in his works. But more significant are the brief allusions to the arbitrary decrees of Fortune and her irresistible power that are uttered by Shakespeare's heroes at the very crisis of their story. Such a turning-point appears in *Romeo and Juliet* at the moment when Mercutio is killed, and Tybalt in turn is slain by Romeo himself. Up to that moment Romeo, we are to understand, had not looked upon the feud between the two houses as an insuperable barrier to his marriage with Juliet. They were not yet hopelessly irreconcilable; events might yet take a happier turn; the marriage might yet take place with the consent of both families, or at least their ultimate forgiveness, and might draw them together in amity. But from the instant when he learns that Tybalt is dead Romeo perceives that all hope is lost: there can be nothing now between the houses but an implacable vendetta; and this result he has brought about by his own hand. In his bitterness Romeo exclaims, 'O, I am Fortune's fool!' Fortune has done it, and to her he is only a plaything.✓

✓ Romeo's very words are echoed by King Lear, when he perceives that fate will do its worst with him, 'I am even the natural fool of Fortune'. And at the close of the play his faithful follower, Kent, sums up what is to be said of Lear's tragic history in the words:

⊗ If Fortune brag of two she loved and hated,
/ One of them we behold.✓

We may recall also—for to trace such allusions through one play after another would be a too exhaustive task—the speech of Lady Constance in *King John* to her son, Arthur when it becomes plain that the King of France, who has espoused his cause, is about to forsake it:

But thou art fair, and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and Fortune joined to make thee great.
Of Nature's gifts thou mayest with lilies boast,
And with the half-blown rose. But Fortune,—O,

She is corrupted, changed and won from thee.
 She adulterates hourly with thine uncle, John,
 And with her golden hand hath plucked on France
 To tread down fair respect of sovereignty.

✓ In *Henry IV* the king, at the moment when fatal illness is coming upon him, receives the news that the rebellion of Hotspur has been crushed, and the security of his crown restored. He exclaims:

Will Fortune never come with both hands full,
 But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
 She either gives a stomach and no food;
 Such are the poor, in health; or else a feast
 And takes away the stomach; such are the rich,
 That have abundance and enjoy it not.

In all these passages, and in many more which could be cited, Shakespeare speaks of Fortune as a power higher than the human will, by which men are blindly controlled, their purposes overthrown, and ruin and misery brought upon them. (The belief that there is something arbitrary and irrational in human experience is thus fundamental in Shakespeare's thought.) We may or may not accept it; for we are not bound to assume that Shakespeare is always right. But the belief is there, and cannot be ignored or eliminated.

But it would be a misrepresentation of Shakespeare to suggest that he sees no means of escaping or modifying Fortune's decrees, or in any way reacting against them. (We are not helpless in Fortune's presence, and can control her, if we can control ourselves.) This conclusion is the very core of Shakespeare's philosophy, its most original part, the result [of his own most immediate reflection. ✓ Horatio in *Hamlet* is hardly a dramatic personality at all: he is there as the stage confidant, that Hamlet may have some one to speak to: he is a shadowy being, exercising no influence on the progress and final issue of the action. But Shakespeare, in a noble piece of blank verse, has used the name of Horatio for that of his ideal man, the man of his own heart:

Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
 And could of men distinguish, her election

Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
 A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks; and blest are those
 Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled
 That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
 That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee.

✓ The direst effects of Fortune's blows can be averted by meeting them with firmness of mind. Nor is Fortune to be conceived of as always hostile. She has smiles as well as frowns: our part is to know when she is at last on our side, and to seize the propitious moment before it has passed away. Prospero thus speaks at the beginning of *The Tempest*:

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
 Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
 Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
 I find my zenith doth depend upon
 A most auspicious star, whose influence
 If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
 Will ever after droop.

✓ By fortitude in suffering, when it is inevitable, and by the intelligent management of life with foresight and decision, the influence of mere fatality may be diminished and man's own power asserted against it.) So far as this Shakespeare willingly and gladly goes; his tragedies are not blank and bleak expressions of cruel destiny and nothing else. ✓ Of the two theories already mentioned, those of Fate and Responsibility, he perceives that both, each in its own place, have in them something of truth; that both correspond to indubitable realities of life. Shakespeare was familiar with both conceptions, allowed both to affect the development of his dramas and to colour the utterances of his characters, and preserved in his greatest works a certain balance between them, believing that each was complementary to the other.

But a school of Shakespearian critics in modern times, especially in Germany, has taken a more limited view. It has

turned away from the aspects of fatality, overlooked, ignored, or even denied them. It has argued that no misfortunes or sufferings were ever conceived of by Shakespeare himself as something inevitable, or as due to causes existing outside the character or choice of the sufferer. Fate in any form thus becomes a heterodoxy; and interpretation has been pursued by the rays of Responsibility alone. Whether Shakespeare's own purpose has always been made clear, and the plays understood as he himself understood them, is another matter.

II

Is it possible for a wholly innocent person to be the hero of a tragedy? Or is it necessary that some form of guilt should be assigned to the sufferer, at least some weakness or defect of character, to which the cause of his suffering can be traced? That guilt, or at least failing, fault, or error, must always be present in tragedy is a common opinion, maintained for several different reasons. One is psychological. The suffering of a wholly innocent person, it is said, can cause nothing but distress to the reader. We turn away with instinctive aversion from such a story. Why have our feelings harrowed in vain? Sympathy with the victim of undeserved calamity would be too intense: we shrink from confronting such a situation. To make tragedy possible the strain on the reader's feelings should be diminished by the reflexion that the misery portrayed is not entirely undeserved: only in this way can it be made tolerable. Pain inflicted on the purely innocent, with no cause to which they have contributed, can only shock and repel. • •

✓ This theory was propounded by Aristotle, and has been repeated by Hegel. ✓ These are great names. But the question is one of human nature, and can be considered by means of experience which is within the reach of every one. Is it really true that when we read a work which describes the undeserved sufferings of an innocent man or woman we find it too terrible and lay it aside because we cannot endure it? Is it not rather the case that such descriptions have a peculiar

and intense interest of their own—an interest which has wrought powerfully, not only in literature but in history and religion? There are no other works in existence which are so well known as the Four Gospels. They have been familiar to countless millions of persons; they have been read with the deepest interest and the profoundest emotion. And the Four Gospels present a history of suffering inflicted on perfect Innocence.

A very great part of Christian literature is filled with the stories of saints and martyrs who were destitute, afflicted, and tormented, and of whom the world was not worthy. Aristotle's theory is that such stories are merely unreadable, that they can cause no feeling but instinctive aversion. Yet they have been read; and the fact is a sufficient criticism of Aristotle. They have been read for centuries; they still are read with hushed and absorbed attention. Nor does the reader of such works seek to diminish the pain they may cause him by detecting faults in the hero, or placing responsibility in some degree upon him. Such a process is the last thing in his mind. Heroic greatness and perfect guiltlessness are the secret of their power.

Religion and patriotism may add to their influence, when the hero is sanctified or elevated by the cause for which he suffers. But they are not necessary to awaken the interest or the tragic emotion. (A person in ordinary life who has been conspired against and sinned against, brought to misery or death by the crimes of others, becomes for most men a tragic figure.) Such a theme has its place in literature. It is a legitimate one; and we can only refuse to call it *tragic* by putting some refined or esoteric significance on the word. What shall be said, for example, of Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*? Is it a tragic work, or is it not? In the common opinion it would seem to be; and it is a tale of undeserved persecution, ending in death, inflicted on a woman of noble nature by a perfect villain. The innocence of *Clarissa* is insisted on by the author: it is actually made the most conspicuous aspect of the story, the key to its interest, the first appeal to the reader's mind. Yet the reading public did

not turn away from *Clarissa Harlowe* with Aristotelian aversion. It was fascinated and absorbed : the book went through many editions, and was one of the first English works to gain an immense popularity on the continent. Thackeray has recorded a conversation with Macaulay, who was one of its warmest admirers. Macaulay said :

‘If you have once thoroughly entered on *Clarissa* and are infected by it, you can’t leave it. When I was in India, I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the Governor-General, and the Secretary of Government, and the Commander-in-Chief, and their wives. I had *Clarissa* with me ; and, as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace ! The Governor’s wife seized the book, and the Secretary waited for it, and the Chief Justice could not read it for tears !’

Here there is no lack of enthusiasm ; and the story which inspired it derives all its power from the complete innocence of the heroine. If it were once believed that *Clarissa* was herself in any way at fault, sympathy would disappear, and the interest would collapse.

Aristotle’s theory may be frankly dismissed ; but it is after all only incidental. The belief that some form of guilt or fault is at work in every real tragedy rests on a much wider basis. It springs from a philosophic view of life and the world ; and it is significant that it has been put forward by the philosophers rather than by the poets themselves. The latter are more often satisfied with fragmentary and vivid glimpses of reality ; but the philosophers seek to survey all things and co-ordinate them. There must be one general principle from which all else proceeds, and that principle must be rational and intelligible. Hence the philosophic critic seeks to rationalize and explain even Tragedy itself.

The most powerful influence in modern discussions of Tragedy has been that of Hegel, either directly, or indirectly through his disciples. (Hegel has unbounded faith in Reason : according to his system the world itself is the expression

or revelation of Reason; and everything in it has come there through the unfolding of intelligence and purpose.) Apply this principle to Tragedy, and what ensues? It seems no longer permissible to allow that Tragedy is in its very nature mysterious. As far as may be, mystery is to be eliminated: all things are to be understood, explained, and justified. There must, therefore, be a *reason* for Tragedy itself. It is not the result of blind forces: there is no such thing as mere fatality: everything that happens can be vindicated as what was right and inevitable. It must be so; it would be wrong if it were otherwise.)

(Hegel's object is, therefore, to justify Tragedy; and he finds the explanation in the character of the tragic hero himself. He is responsible for his own fate. By some guilty act, some fault of judgement, or some defect in his nature, he sets in motion the events which prove at last to be the cause of his own undoing. He cannot blame fate; he cannot blame anything but himself. In his final fall the principle of justice is vindicated. By putting the Individual in the wrong, we put the Universe in the right.)

Although Hegel's theory proceeds from a philosophic basis, yet, when it is applied to certain tales or dramas, it ends by being little more than the old doctrine of poetical justice expressed in a new way. Indeed, it almost begins to resemble the familiar morality of the Sunday School: be good and you will be happy; be wicked and you will be punished. Yet that the summary of it just given is not unjust will sufficiently appear from the sentences which follow. They have been selected from different parts of his *Philosophy of Æsthetic* and *Philosophy of Religion*:

✓ 'The necessity of all that individuals experience is made to appear in complete accord with Reason.'

'Destiny is rational: whatever happens, good is the result.'

'The characters should themselves acknowledge the justice of their fate.'

'In the course and final issue of the dramatic action what is fundamentally reasonable and true should be vindicated. We should see the significance of human action and the divine order of the world.' ~

'Blind Fate is unsatisfying. In tragedies Justice is revealed.'

'The dramatic character plucks the fruit of his own deeds.'

'The powers that rule us give to each the lot he deserves for his own acts.'

✓ By this process of interpretation Tragedy is not so much explained as explained away. Every one can consider the significance which he attaches to the word *Tragedy*, and what process of feeling and reflection passes through his mind when reading or witnessing a tragic work. The reader is invited to make such a process of introspection, and to decide for himself whether an element of *mystery* is not inseparable from Tragedy in his conception of it, and whether he does not associate the idea of Tragedy with that of something *wrong* in the world, an inexplicable failure in the general justice of things; whether, in short, a tragedy in which everything can be explained and justified is actually a tragedy at all. ✓✓

III

✓ Much of the discussion of Hegel's theory has centred round a single play, the *Antigone* of Sophocles, which Hegel himself has chosen as its supreme test and example. Polynices, son of Œdipus, has made war upon his native city of Thebes, advancing against it with a foreign army, and has been defeated and slain in battle. Creon, king of Thebes, holds his guilt in such abhorrence, or is so inflamed with vindictive anger, that he issued a decree forbidding the burial of Polynices. His body is to be left exposed on the plain, to be torn by dogs and vultures. Whoever infringes the decree, and ventures to give the rites of sepulture, is to be punished with death. ✓

✓ Antigone, the sister of Polynices, disobeys the order of Creon. She is moved by sisterly affection for the dead, a pure and noble emotion, and also by a sense of religious duty. For the Greeks the burial of the dead was a sacred rite, the commandment of the gods, and its fulfilment devolved upon the nearest of kin, in this case upon Antigone herself as the dead man's sister. The guards, whom Creon has

placed to see that his orders are obeyed, discover Antigone beside the body, sprinkling it with dust, and performing the last ceremonies. She is denounced to the king, condemned to death and led to execution, protesting with her last words that she is about to perish because she would not be faithless to heaven itself.

✓ That the criminality is on the part of Creon soon appears by the judgements that fall upon him. His son, who has been betrothed to Antigone, attempts at the last moment to save her, but fails, and in grief and desperation takes his own life. His mother, the queen, refuses to survive him, and also dies by her own hand. Creon recognizes his guilt and its consequences in the destruction of his own house, and is left at the close of the drama overwhelmed with grief and remorse, a broken and humbled creature; one who has set his will against the will of heaven, and has been shattered to fragments. ✓

✓ How, then, has Hegel interpreted this most beautiful and significant work? He has chosen it as the very touchstone of his theory and the best exemplification of its truth. The death of Antigone must by some means be justified; she must be put in the wrong; and Hegel finds her guilt in her disobedience to the king's decree. It is true that there is a duty laid upon her by religion, the duty of giving burial to her brother's corpse; but she owes a duty also to the state, and is bound to obey the commandment of the king, who represents the state. Public law asks for obedience to constituted authority;—how very German this line of argument is!—disobedience is culpable, however admirable the motive which led to it; and Antigone has brought her fate upon herself by her own act. One whom we might have regarded with pure sympathy as a heroine and martyr becomes thus a well-meaning but mistaken rebel, to whom we may offer a pitying sigh, but not an unmixed admiration. A single sentence from Hegel sums up this interpretation and gives it in his own words, which are thus literally translated:

‘Creon is not only a tyrant, but is likewise a moral power; Creon is not wrong: he demands that the law of the state,

the authority of the government, shall be respected; and punishment follows upon guilt.'

It is not proposed here to consider this interpretation of Sophocles' work. It may be left after another quotation, this time from the greatest of all German poets and critics. When Hegel first propounded his theory of tragedy, Goethe was still at Weimar, in the fulness of age and honours, the undisputed head of European literature. His friend Eckermann discussed with him, on more occasions than one, the new doctrine of tragedy, as it was expounded by one of Hegel's followers, and its application to the *Antigone*. Goethe's reply to the theory that Creon represents the state, and wields its authority, is unhesitating: ✓

✓ 'These are assertions', answered Goethe, with a smile, 'in which no one will believe. ¶ Creon does not act from the morality of the state, but from hatred of the dead. ¶ When Polynices sought to recover his inheritance, from which he had been driven by force, there was in that no such unheard-of crime against the state that his death was not enough, and punishment must be inflicted on the harmless corpse.

'We should never describe any action as public morality which is contrary to morality in general. When Creon forbids the burial of the body of Polynices, and not only allows the air to be infected by the wasting corpse, but permits birds of prey to defile with its fragments the very altars, such an action is insulting to men and gods, and is not the morality of the state, but is rather a crime against the state itself. Moreover, he has all the persons of the drama against him. He has the elders of the state who form the chorus against him; he has the people in general against him; he has Tiresias against him; he has his own family against him. But he will not listen, and obstinately continues in his criminal course until he has destroyed his own house, and he himself in the end is no better than a shadow.'¹ ✓

✓ How the matter appeared to Goethe's clear intelligence is evident, and need not be laboured. He does not recognize in *Antigone* a conflict between two duties, one of which cannot be fulfilled without disobedience to the other,—duty

¹ Eckermann's *Gespräche mit* 28 March 1827.

to religion and duty to the monarch. In his opinion, which reflects that of Sophocles himself, Creon is a capricious and vindictive tyrant, whose behest could have no moral authority whatever.

✓ Direct moral purpose, in this tragedy or in any other, Goethe referred to a secondary place. He knew of no reason, he remarked, why a dramatic poet should not have a moral purpose in view; but when his object is to place his subject in a distinct and effective manner before the spectators, his moral purpose can help him very little, and he must rather have a great power of presentation and knowledge of the stage, in order to know what to do and what to omit. If a moral significance is involved in the subject itself, it will come plainly to light, even when the poet is considering only the artistic treatment of his material.

♥ He distrusted the criticism of tragedy which reduces everything to moral lessons, even when the lesson is one of great retribution for great wickedness. Such retribution is not always visible in the real world. In a half-jesting manner he illustrated his view by an instance from recent history. Napoleon at St. Helena had his troubles: his dark-green uniform became old and shabby; he must have a new one but the cloth could not be matched in the island, and the only green cloth available was too light. The lord of the world could not wear it, and nothing remained but to have the old uniform turned.

♣ It is a really tragic touch, Goethe added ironically. Is it not affecting to see the conqueror so reduced that he must needs wear a turned uniform? And yet, when we consider that this was the fate of a man who had trodden the lives and fortunes of millions beneath his feet, the destiny that overtook him was mild enough; Nemesis had dealt with him tenderly. 'Napoleon gives us an example of how dangerous it is to raise ourselves to the absolute, and sacrifice everything to the development of an idea.'¹

¹ *Ibid.*, 10 Feb. 1830.

✓IV

✓ These were words of wisdom, but they were wasted on the German critics of the next generation. The exposition of Shakespeare was carried on with laborious industry by heavy-handed scholars, of whom Gervinus and Ulrici were the most conspicuous. What is the main principle of their work? It is easily summed up: fate, fortuity, and accident are to be eliminated; tragedy is to be explained and justified, placed upon an intelligible basis; and this is to be done by moral considerations. Where there is suffering there must have been guilt. The cause of disaster is to be found in the tragic hero himself. He has taken the wrong path, made the wrong choice, given free course to his passions, yielded to temptation, or neglected some obvious duty. The calamities that come upon him are a retribution; the moral law is displayed and vindicated. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite were not more certain that suffering is a proof of guilt than were the German exponents of Shakespeare.

✓ Their method of interpretation was applied with monotonous persistence to one play after another. That it may sometimes come near to Shakespeare's own intention cannot well be denied. He does not present all his characters as guiltless victims: there is in many of them a strain of evil, or blindness, or infatuation, which distorts their actions and leads them at last to destruction. Macbeth is an assassin; Mark Antony succumbs to his own sensuous and passionate nature; Coriolanus is driven on to his death by the violence of his temper, his unrestrained arrogance and intolerance. A nature which has many noble qualities but some fatal defect is a legitimate theme of tragedy; but it is not the only theme. Guilt may enter deeply into the tragic matter; but must we believe that, in some form or other, it is necessarily and invariably present, and that without it tragedy is incomplete? So Gervinus assumes; and with clumsy ingenuity he adapts all the tragic dramas of Shakespeare to this conception.

✓ It does not appear that Shakespeare imputes actual guilt to Romeo and Juliet. They are 'a pair of star-crossed lovers'.

They themselves are innocent. The guilt rests upon their families, upon the Capulets and Montagues, who have brought about the fatal situation by their insensate feud. At the close the moral is drawn by the Prince of Verona, whose words express the poet's own meaning:

Where be these enemies? Capulet! Montague!
 See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
 That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
 And I, for winking at your discords too,
 Have lost a brace of kinsmen: all are punished.

All, that is, except Romeo and Juliet themselves. Capulet speaks of them the next moment as—

Poor sacrifices of our enmity.

✓ But this interpretation will not suffice for Gervinus. He conceives of the dramatist as a magistrate sitting on the bench to weigh the demerits of his own characters, as they pass one by one into the dock. Shakespeare is a Rhadamanthine judge, and his favourite, almost his only penalty is death. Jeffreys himself was hardly more inexorable. When the lovers of Verona appear before his tribunal they meet with scanty shrift. Their passionate nature, says Gervinus, exercises justice upon itself. The poet could not suffer those to live who were guilty of their own destruction.

To put Cordelia in the wrong, and to represent her fate as a retribution for defects of character and errors of conduct was a harder task, but Gervinus approached the problem with intrepidity. He must be allowed to speak in his own words on which it would be impossible to improve:

✓ 'Ethical justice is strongly emphasized in this play by the poet himself. Where then lies the justice of Cordelia's death? 'She attacks England with a French force in order to restore her father. The whole responsibility for this step falls upon her. So long as she lived and warred, it might be feared that she would subject the whole kingdom to France. This idea, however, or the possibility that a French army could conquer on English ground, Shakespeare's patriotic feeling never even allows him to admit. Cordelia falls a sacrifice to her own nature.'

There are some writers who possess the happy art of parodying themselves. The best answer to them is to be found in merely setting forth their extravagances.

Desdemona also is sternly dealt with by her creator when he concludes his assize. Her most conspicuous fault is lack of respect for her aged father and of due filial obedience. She makes a runaway match without his consent, and thus, Gervinus writes, 'she falls a victim to her own nature, to a nature which oversteps the limits of social custom, unites guilt and innocence in strange combination, and draws death as a punishment on itself'. Death again.

At this point we naturally ask, and would fain ask of Gervinus, if he were still alive and able to answer,—What of Jessica in *The Merchant of Venice*, and why is her fate so unlike that of Desdemona? At the first glance there seems little difference in culpability between the two Venetian ladies; but of the two Jessica is the more guilty. She not only leaves her father and takes a husband of whom he does not approve, but she also robs him of his diamonds and ducats, and his turquoise ring, which she gives away in exchange for a monkey. Yet, when we last hear of Jessica, she is sitting in the moonlit gardens of Belmont, exchanging lively jest and repartee with Lorenzo, perfectly and outrageously happy. Even the reversion of her father's wealth is secured by order of the Doge: Shylock may not disinherit that lucky young woman; whilst Desdemona must die by inexorable law. For once the Rhadamanthine judge is sadly at fault. x

But there is a deeper error in the method of Gervinus by which it is entirely vitiated. His aim is to set forth the vindication of justice, and to show that suffering is the reward of guilt. But every one knows that justice demands some proportion between the guilt and the retribution, and that disproportioned and excessive punishment is not justice, and may be monstrous injustice. If a man were brought before a criminal court, accused of stealing a box of matches, duly convicted of stealing a box of matches, and then sentenced to penal servitude for life, the public mind would be

outraged: such a penalty would seem to show a deeper guilt in the judge than in the culprit. Of this simple and familiar principle Gervinus is totally oblivious. He goes blithely on his way. ✓ One of Shakespeare's characters is convicted of falling too hastily in love, and is sentenced to death; another is convicted of obstinacy and tactlessness, and is sentenced to death; another is convicted of preferring her husband to her father and is sentenced to death. ✓ Compared with this procedure, the Bloody Assize was humane. A method of interpreting the drama cannot well be sound, if it is wholly inapplicable to real life; and in real life the justice of Gervinus would depopulate the world.^N

V

We have now arrived at the heart of our inquiry, and something has been done towards clearing the course and simplifying the issues. It is apparent that there are tragedies of different kinds, and that these kinds may differ widely from each other. ✓ A general principle applicable to all tragedy is not to be found in the old saying that *character is destiny*, and in the notion that tragedy reveals the influences from within which work unconsciously on outward events; for, whilst some tragic dramas may thus be interpreted, there are others which cannot be approached in this way without forced exegesis and departures from the author's own evident purpose. What can be said, on this basis, of such a work as the *Trojan Women*? The purpose of Euripides in writing it is evident. He wishes to show the horrible sufferings brought by war and conquest on entirely innocent victims. The scene is without the walls of Troy after the fall of the city. There are brought together the hapless wives and daughters of the vanquished Trojans, Hecuba, the widow of Priam, Andromache, the widow of Hector. The women are alone, helpless, fallen without hope of salvation into the hands of inhuman enemies, with no prospect but slavery or death, treated with a cold barbarity and merciless harshness. They have lost everything; nothing remains but to suffer, and suffering will

not be spared. The theme is intensely and even bitterly tragic; it moves the very deepest emotions. But there is no working out of destiny by the influence of the mind and temperament of the victim on his own fate. The overwhelming blow has come from without, from the deeds of others, not from the passions or errors, the ignorance or neglect of those who are plunged into misery. Hecuba and Andromache could have done nothing to save Troy.

There are tragedies, it has been said, of many types. What is common to all is the element of calamity and suffering; and where these are present in literature tragedy may also be present. But there is not actual tragedy if such suffering falls upon a person of weak nature, who accepts it with mere wretched submissiveness. It is present only when there is something of greatness and strength in him, even if it should be only a momentary energy or inspiration of feeling and expression, carrying him beyond and above himself. Tragedy involves reaction against calamity. The character who has been caught in the fatal snare struggles to escape, seeks to break through the net which is gathering about him; or, if effort is unavailing, there is at least a reaction in the mind itself. There is a sense of wonder; he contrasts the present weighed as it is with unforeseen disaster and sorrow, with the past which has been torn from him: it seems as if the past alone had a right to exist, and the present were in some way unreal. The change which has come about has no explanation or cause which the mind can accept or rest in: there is a sense of mystery which is something ultimate and for tragedy essential. The stricken individual marvels why his lot should be so different from that of others; what is his position among men; and what is the position of man in the universe. Vistas open up around him, far stretching leading to the stars and beyond the stars, through which he only dimly sees. The significance of human life itself comes into contemplation; the question whether it has any place of value in the cosmos and the ultimate scheme of things; whether there is any such scheme of things. It is the presence of this haunting sense of mystery that

makes *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* such great and representative tragedies.

✓It seems to follow that tragedy in its most perfect form is poetical, and that the greatest tragic works are poems. But it cannot be excluded from prose, and it would be unfortunate if that were so. The poetical drama has almost ceased to exist under modern conditions. The novel has taken its place. If we pass by the novel, we lose the advantage which may be gained from studying an immense mass of imaginative creation, the work of many men of genius. By basing inquiry on poetical plays alone we are founding on a form of literature which our own age does not create, and which has begun to have a certain remoteness. The modern mind cannot but seek to comprehend any subject in a modern way.

And the novelist has at least one advantage over the dramatist, and even over Shakespeare himself. Shakespeare used old plots, revised old plays—*Hamlet* itself is such a revision—and followed old legends, recreating and animating them with a fresh imaginative life. In such a drama, when a poet is telling an old story in a new way, he seldom adapts all the old material to the new conception: shades of obscurity and inconsistency remain. The novelist invents and creates everything at once—characters, plot, incidents, motives; and they are consistent and coherent with each other. Moreover, when the novelist places his scene in modern society, which his readers know at first hand, and presents modern men and women such as we meet every day, he is subjecting himself to a severe test. The reader is the more able to judge the probability of his tale and the verisimilitude of his characters, and a close attention to naturalness is forced upon him. He may gain in reality and significance what he loses in poetical beauty.

✓It is reasonable therefore to accept the modern novel, and to turn to it for illustrations and examples of tragedy. ✓ This has not always been admitted. Goethe mentions that Schiller found fault with *Wilhelm Meister* because of the presence in it of tragic passages, which should have no place in prose

fiction. 'He was wrong, however,' added Goethe, 'as we all know.'

VI

A novel which is consistently and intensely tragic is rare ; for prose fiction makes a wide survey of life and presents it in different aspects, so that tragedy may enter only in certain scenes and characters, whilst the conclusion may not be found in death, but may bring relief to those whose suffering has been shown. A fatal ending is not essential to tragic interest. And in certain works fiction may reach the border of tragedy without actually crossing it. What shall be said, for example, of Thackeray's *Colonel Newcome*? That his story has many elements of tragedy is apparent. It bears no small resemblance to that of *King Lear*. Colonel Newcome is overwhelmed in his old age by utter ruin, and in his poverty and affliction is persecuted by the terrible Mrs. Mackenzie, a more vivid presentation of character than Goneril and Regan, who, compared with Mrs. Mackenzie, are little more than conventional types. If any doubt arises whether the name of tragedy may be used to describe his sufferings, it can only be because of his meek submission, because there is no reaction in his mind against the cruelty of destiny, and because in his simplicity of spirit and limited intelligence he falls short of the greatness of nature which has been made a tragic essential.

No such doubt can arise in considering the best work of Thackeray's greatest follower. Anthony Trollope had not Thackeray's breadth and subtlety of presentation, he had a less thoughtful mind, and was more of a realist, more concerned to present his characters than to meditate over them. He was extraordinarily unequal, and often sank far below Thackeray's level. But in Mr. Crawley he has created a character who is instinct with life and energy, and to whose sufferings the tragic interest cannot be denied. He has also given to the same character a striking definition of tragedy itself.

The culmination of Mr. Crawley's trials is prosecution on a

charge of theft, of which almost every one believes him to be guilty, with notoriety and scandal by which his sensitive pride is cut to the quick. He has always been poor and unfortunate. Although a profound scholar, he has seen others pass to preferment and easy benefices, whilst nothing has come to him but a perpetual curacy by which he cannot live and support his family. He is overwhelmed with debts, and has to bear the insolence of creditors whom he cannot pay. He is now awaiting trial at the assize; the case against him seems so strong that there is little prospect of acquittal; and conviction will be followed by the loss of his parish and utter destitution.

Crawley is moody, desperate, and embittered. He asks himself at times whether there ever was a man whose existence was so purposeless, so useless, and so deleterious as his own. But he has a powerful and energetic soul; it is by his strength, not his weakness, that he struggles and suffers, and he bears up against the hostile world with determination, not asking favour and even refusing help: he has courage, but no hope.

In his parsonage, whilst the society around him is convinced of his guilt, or admits a charitable excuse in insanity, Mr. Crawley has found a momentary refuge among his books, and is reading Homer with one of his children:

‘He sat down with his youngest daughter, and read—made her read to him—a passage out of a Greek poem, in which are described the troubles and agonies of a blind giant. No giant would have been more powerful—only that he was blind, and could not see to avenge himself on those who had injured him. “The same story is always coming up”, he said, stopping the girl in her reading. “We have it in various versions, because it is so true to life.

Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves.

It is the same story. Great power reduced to impotence, great glory to misery, by the hand of Fate—Necessity, as the Greeks called her; the goddess that will not be shunned! At the mill with slaves! People, when they read it, do not appreciate the horror of the picture. Go on, my dear. It

may be a question whether Polyphemus had mind enough to suffer; but, from the description of his power, I should think that he had. At the mill with slaves! Can any picture be more dreadful than that? Go on, my dear. Of course you remember Milton's Samson Agonistes. Agonistes indeed!" His wife was sitting stitching at the other side of the room; but she heard his words—heard and understood them; and before Jane could again get herself into the swing of the Greek verse, she was over at her husband's side, with her arms round his neck. "My love!" she said. "My love!"

He turned to her, and smiled as he spoke to her. "These are old thoughts with me. Polyphemus and Belisarius, and Samson and Milton, have always been pets of mine. The mind of the strong blind creature must be so sensible of the injury that has been done to him! The impotency, combined with his strength, or rather the impotency with the memory of former strength and former aspirations, is so essentially tragic!"

The definition of tragedy which thus rises to Mr. Crawley's lips may not be a complete one—no definition is—but it is direct and illuminating. Great suffering is premised; and the suffering can only be that of a great nature. It is not physical, for the anguish of the Cyclops' wound is the least part of his affliction; and Polyphemus can be tragic only if he has *mind* enough to suffer. Nor is anything said of desert: great power is reduced to impotence by a greater power which strikes blindly but irresistibly. And to intensify the mental pain there is the instant and overwhelming consciousness of the difference between what he once was and what he is now.

Crawley himself has greatness in him. Although he is moody and despairing, and his friends fear for his reason or his life, neither is actually in danger. He has resources of will, strength, and tenacity that carry him through, until his innocence is established. That his story—in spite of its happy ending—has the nature of real tragedy will be readily allowed. A more difficult question is suggested by another passage from Trollope which will be quoted. He himself has called it truly tragic. The reader, after reflection, will probably concur.

The passage is taken from *Doctor Thorne*, and concerns a character whose position in the story is minor and incidental:

it is little more than an episode, but is an impressive one. Readers of *Doctor Thorne* will remember that a conspicuous part is played in that book by Sir Roger Scatcherd, a man of great energy and capacity who has made his own way in the world. He begins as a working-man, finds his opening when railways begin to be constructed, becomes a wealthy engineer and contractor, a baronet and Member of Parliament. But from one thing Sir Roger Scatcherd cannot refrain. His weakness for drink becomes notorious, and at his election, in a scene of very forcible comedy, the brandy bottle is the favourite theme of his opponents. Before the end Sir Roger is never seen except in intoxication, and he dies in delirium. His only son, Sir Louis, a hopeless and helpless degenerate, speedily follows his father, by the same means, to the grave. In the scene which follows Dr. Thorne arrives after the death of Sir Louis, and pays a visit of condolence to Lady Scatcherd, the bereaved wife and mother : ✓

‘Lady Scatcherd was found sitting alone in her little room on the ground floor. Even Hannah was not with her, for Hannah was now occupied upstairs. When the doctor entered the room, which he did unannounced, he found her seated on a chair, with her back against one of the presses, her hands clasped together over her knees, gazing into vacancy. She did not even hear him or see him as he approached, and his hand had slightly touched her shoulder before she knew that she was not alone. Then she looked up at him with a face so full of sorrow, so worn with suffering, that his own heart was racked to see her.

“It is all over, my friend,” said he. “It is better so; much better so.”

She seemed at first hardly to understand him, but still regarding him with that wan face, shook her head slowly and sadly. One might have thought that she was twenty years older than when Dr. Thorne last saw her.

He drew a chair to her side, and sitting by her took her hand in his. “It is better so, Lady Scatcherd; better so,” he repeated. “The poor lad’s doom had been spoken, and it is well for him, and for you, that it should be over.”

“They are both gone now,” said she, speaking very low; “both gone now. Oh, doctor! To be left alone here, all alone!”

He said some few words trying to comfort her; but who

can comfort a widow bereaved of her child? Who can console a heart that has lost all that it possessed? Sir Roger had not been to her a tender husband; but still he had been the husband of her love. Sir Louis had not been to her an affectionate son; but still he had been her child, her only child. Now they were both gone. Who can wonder that the world should be a blank to her?

Still the doctor spoke soothing words, and still he held her hand. He knew that his words could not console her; but the sounds of kindness at such desolate moments are, to such minds as hers, some alleviation of grief. She hardly answered him, but sat there staring out before her, leaving her hand passively to him, and swaying her head backwards and forwards as though her grief were too heavy to be borne.

At last her eye rested on an article which stood upon the table, and she started up impetuously from her chair. She did this so suddenly that the doctor's hand fell beside him before he knew that she had risen. The table was covered with all those implements which become so frequent about a house when severe illness is an inhabitant there. . . . But in the middle of the *débris* stood one black bottle, with head erect, unsuited to the companionship in which it was found.

"There," said she, rising up and seizing this in a manner that would have been ridiculous had it not been so truly tragic. "There, that has robbed me of everything—of all that I ever possessed; of husband and child; of the father and son; that has swallowed them both—murdered them both! Oh, doctor! that such a thing as that should cause such bitter sorrow! I have hated it always, but now—Oh, woe is me! weary me!" And she let the bottle drop from her hand as though it were too heavy for her.

"This comes of their barro-niting," she continued. "If they had let him alone, he would have been here now, and so would the other one. Why did they do it? Why did they do it? Ah, doctor! people such as us should never meddle with them above us. See what has come of it; see what has come of it!"

What shall we say of this passage? Is it, as Trollope has said, truly tragic, or is it not? Lady Scatcherd is not the central figure of the story; her appearance is episodic; we see or hear little of her afterwards. She is a very ordinary person, a woman without education or mental endowments, who has risen in the world merely because her husband has

translated from Æschylus; but 'ended his sport' is Hardy's own.

In such emphatic expressions of the theory of Fate there is something which must jar upon us, were it but for their over-assertion and too evident confidence. The mystery of the world may not be solved by belief in a divine guidance which visibly brings out all things for good. But neither is it solved by postulating an all-powerful being endowed with the baser human passions, who turns everything to evil, and rejoices in the mischief he has wrought.

VIII

✓ According to a theory which has been advanced by more writers than one, and very emphatically by Émile Faguet, the pleasure which the reader himself finds in Tragedy is malicious. There is something of the primitive savage in all of us. Consciously or unconsciously, we all have a tinge of ferocity; and the satisfaction we find in the sufferings of others is exploited by tragic writers. That the theory is fundamentally cynical is obvious; but cynicism is not a test of reality, and the cold-blooded way to truth does not always get there.

✓ The reader is invited to read the finest passage in tragedy which he may select, and to consider for himself whether the ultimate emotion is not rather one of sympathy and fellow-feeling, one touch of nature making the whole world kin. We may even take a wider view. It is not tragedy alone but the whole of literature which is based on the natural sympathy of man for man. Even satire is not an exception; for if we can read the *Dunciad* with any pleasure, it is because we enter sympathetically into the mind and feelings of Pope; and if we cannot sympathize with Pope, we cannot read the *Dunciad*. Humanity is the subject-matter of all imaginative work; and all humanity is drawn together by invisible ties. Poetry and fiction are an extension of experience; they deepen our knowledge of mankind; and it is of their very essence that they bring us closer to our fellows.

✓ Even the crowd at a melodrama hoots the villain who has

It may be asked how the pain endured in a tragedy is so mitigated for the reader that it is possible to find pleasure in such a work. The question is a subtle one; but an answer may be attempted. We are not in the actual presence of real men and women. Something intervenes between us and the characters; and that something is the mind and genius of the author. The reader is asked again to scrutinize his emotions at the close of a very fine tragic work or passage, and to consider whether one of his strongest feelings is not that of *admiration*. He has never forgotten that a book is only a book, and a play is only a play. Even in the keenest interest caused by the story, he is criticizing; and the sense that he has just read a powerful and beautiful work animates his mind. This is true even of the most realistic novel that ever was written, or that ever can be written. There is all the difference in the world between literature and life, and they cannot be judged by the same standards. Faguet remarks that we need not read a tragic work unless we like; that we deliberately do so, and thus go in quest of suffering, impelled by a primitive pleasure in it, like Romans going to a gladiatorial show. The answer is that we see no real suffering, and are seeking for literary value and literary beauty; that the supreme interest is in the author's power and genius. Our concern is with Shakespeare, not with Hamlet or Macbeth, who have no existence apart from Shakespeare.

If Faguet is right, the study of tragedy can only degrade and brutalize, and should therefore be shunned. But in the universal opinion it elevates and refines. The greatest and most subtle quality of a tragic poet goes beyond the immediate presentation of scenes and persons. It is the power to suggest something illimitable, to place life against a background of eternity, and to make the reader feel the presence of problems which he cannot solve. That this vision of the incomprehensible may lead to a pessimistic philosophy is true; but it has not always done so; and spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues. 'L'âme s'ennoblit dans le voisinage des mystères insondables; elle puise, dans ce travail d'exploration, avec le sentiment de sa petitesse, celui de sa grandeur.' ~

JOHN S. SMART.

ON THE MEANINGS OF CERTAIN TERMS IN THE ANGLO-SAXON CHARTERS

These notes are the result of several years of study devoted to the Anglo-Saxon charters. They are published in the hope that they may prove useful to those who shall hereafter deal with other groups of charters, or to others who may treat of the place-names of England. Some of the conclusions, if they be judged to be well-founded, are of historical importance.

The notes are based on :

- (1) the denotation of terms used in the surveys attached to a large number of AS.¹ charters ;
- (2) other evidence from these surveys ;
- (3) the geographical and geological distribution of names ;
- (4) the attributes applied to terms in the charters and in place-names.

The charters with which I have dealt are those of Berkshire, Hampshire, and Wiltshire. In order that the reader may have some idea of the breadth of the basis on which these notes are founded the following statistic of charters are given, together with figures showing the number of the

¹ Abbreviations :

AS. = Anglo-Saxon.

B. (with number) : No. of charter in Birch's *Cartularium Saxonicum*.

K. (with number) : No. of charter in Kemble's *Codex Diplomaticus*.

TA. = Tithe Award.

Lexicons :

S. : Sweet's *Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon*.

BT. : Bosworth and Toller's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*.

L. : Glossary to Liebermann's *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*.

charters the surveys of which have been either solved, partly solved, or not solved.

	Berks	Hants	Wilts
Solved	51	63	61
Partly solved	8	14	22
Not solved	8	4	20
Wrongly attributed to the county .	1	6	3
Doubtfully attributed to the county	2	3	2

It must be added that in a very large number of cases both Birch and Kemble have either wrongly identified, or have failed to identify, the locality to which a particular charter applies. No *absolute* trust can be placed in their identifications.

AECER. S. Cultivated field, acre. BT. Field, sown land, acre. L. Acker, Feld.

Always used in the charters of a strip of ploughland. The average length would be a furlong. Hence the name 'furlong' applied in field-names to groups of these strips. The breadth of a strip was a chain. But an *aecer* was not a set area. Still, it seems to have been an approximate measure, because a 'healf aecer' is mentioned in an Abingdon¹ and a Bayworth² charter.

AERN(E). S. House. BT. Place, secret place, closet, habitation, house. L. Gebäude.

The gloss 'locus secretior' is also given. I cite the gloss because it comes nearest to that which I believe to be the specific meaning of the term.

The evidence of the charters is all against the assumption that synonymous terms were common in AS. Perhaps *funta* and *floda* may have been so, and possibly *ora* and *ofer*. But even in these cases synonymy is doubtful; and I have not come across any other pair of words in the charters the synonymy of which may be suspected.

Ham means a 'house'; so, we are told, does *aern*. But it may be regarded as certain that they referred to houses or buildings of different kinds.

¹ B. 924. K. 441.

² B. 932. K. 1202.

The actual evidence of the charters does not give any definite clue to the meaning of *aern*. But the attributes of *aern* in compounds, and, too, the attributes of it in the few place-names in which it occurs, suggest a different meaning for it. They suggest 'a building or place used for the deposit or storing of something', and, possibly, 'for the manufacture of something'. In other words 'store' would be its meaning in perhaps the majority of cases, and, possibly, 'factory' in some others.

Cf. the compounds *breaw-aern*, 'brewhouse'; *eorth-aern*, 'grave', i.e. a place where a body is deposited; *bere-aern*, 'barn', where barley is stored.

Cf. also the place-names Bruern (Oxon), 'brewhouse'; Colerne (Wilts), AS. *col-ærn*, a place where charcoal is stored or made; Saltern, AS. *sealt-ærn*, a place where salt is stored or made; Potterne (Wilts), a place where pottery is stored or made; Washerne (Wilts), a place where sheep-washing was carried on.

ÆWIELM. S. Source of river, spring, fountain. BT. Spring, fountain, source. L. Quelle.

Æwielm is a particular kind of spring. It is one of large size, such as are common in the chalk districts; not one of the great intermittent springs also found in chalk regions, but a perennial spring forming a large stream which may be even of the size of a river. The source of the Test at Overton (Hants) is of this nature. Ewelme (Oxon) derives its name from a great spring of this kind.

ANDHEAFOD (ANDHEAFDU). S. Unploughed headland of a field. BT. Headlands, unploughed land where the plough was turned. Not in L.

(See notes on HEAFOD).

ANSTIGA. Not given in S., BT., or L. But is supposed to mean a path for one person.

The few instances in which I have been able to identify its denotation in the charters lead me to believe that it also implied a path going up a hill.

BÆC. S. gives the meaning 'brook', which he queries. BT. does not recognize the word. Not in L. One writer on place-names suggests 'stream valley'.

The charters show that Sweet's interpretation is nearest to the truth. The AS. terms for streams were various; but each was applied to a different type of stream.¹

Bæc meant an intermittent stream of small or moderate volume. To a stream of this kind of large volume the Saxons applied the term *floda*; and *floda* included those mysterious intermittent springs which burst out of the downs at intervals of several years. *Bæc*, on the other hand, is confined to rain-water streams which may start running in any period of heavy rain in valleys or hollows which are usually dry.²

In the charters of Berks, Hants, and Wilts, the topography of which I know, the statistics of the occurrence of the term *bæc* are as follows: Berks four times, Hants nine times, Wilts once. It also occurs twice in a Berks charter, and once in a Hants charter, the topography of which I have not been able to solve. In charters of other counties it appears three times in Worcestershire, and once each in Oxfordshire, Essex, Stafford, and Gloucester. For the establishment of the meaning which I have assigned to it it will not, I think, be necessary to go beyond the evidence of the Hampshire charters.

The crucial instance, if I may so call it, where its meaning is most clearly indicated, is in the charter of Hannington.³ In the survey attached to that charter occurs the following landmark: '*Forth bæ hrittan wæge to bæcce funtan*', i.e. to 'the source of the *bæc*'. In the charter of the neighbouring land-unit of Wootton⁴ one landmark is certain *wyllas*, 'springs' which are the source of a certain *floda*, 'intermittent brook'. But the topography of the two charters shows that

¹ See notes on BROG, BURNA, FLODA, LACU, RITH, RITHIG.

² Such streams are quite common in the chalk districts. I have seen such a stream running down a shallow valley in West Stratton (Hants) to a width of six feet and a depth of one foot. It runs at periods of heavy rain; but it has never cut an actual channel through the grass fields through which it flows.

³ K. 739.

⁴ K. 673

the *bæcce funta* of the Hannington and the *wyllas* of the Wootton charter are the same source or spring, and that the *bæc* of the one and the *floda* of the other charter are the same. *Floda*, as I have said, implies a large intermittent stream. In the present case the different sets of surveyors have estimated the stream in different ways, one set estimating it as large enough to be called *floda*, and the other as small enough to be called *bæc*. It is not my intention to go into detail with regard to all the cases in which a *bæc* mentioned in Hampshire or Berkshire charters may be identified. Suffice it to say that wherever the term occurs it is always associated with a valley or hollow, and, too, with a valley or hollow in which there is no permanent stream.¹

In the charters of the other counties in which the term *bæc* occurs the references are such as might be associated with a stream of the type to which I have referred the term.²

Leland in his Itinerary speaks of crossing 'little bees' in Wiltshire.³

¹ B. 377, K. 1031, a Meon charter, mentions a *bæc* which was in a hollow which ran down into the valley (AS. *Bromdenu*, now Bramdean), which runs through the north part of West Meon parish.

K. 763 mentions a *Bæc* which was in a hollow in the side of the valley known formerly as Selscombe (AS. *Seoles-cumb*) in West Meon parish.

B. 377, K. 1031, mentions a *bæcces Weast Heafod*, 'the west head of the *bæc*,' situated in a valley under the great escarpment which stands west of Petersfield.

B. 689, K. 1107, mentions a *bæc* in the valley which runs from the west boundary of West Meon to Bramdean (*Bromdenu*). The valley has usually no stream in it in this part, though the Tichborne begins to flow a little further down it.

The charters B. 1319, K. 597, and B. 689, K. 1107, mention a certain *heow bæc* which was in an upland hollow on the north side of Butser Hill—which is at the south-east corner of East Meon parish.

The charter K. 743, mentions a *bæc* which ran down a hollow on the west side of the Rectory at King's Worthy, north of Winchester.

² B. 163. K. 88. *bæcces-ora*, 'slope running down to the beck.' B. 233. K. 154. *fox-bæc*, &c., &c.

³ The Rev. H. Goddard, of Clyffe, near Swindon, tells me that 'beck' does not survive in the Wilts dialect. But then *lacu* and *rith* occur in Berks charters; but neither word survives in the dialect of to-day.

BEORH. S. Hill, mountain top, heap of stones, mound.

BT. Hill, mountain, barrow. Not in L.

In the Hants charters alone the term *beorh* occurs thirty-six times. In eighteen cases it refers to barrows still existing. But in no single case is there any real reason to suppose that it means anything but a barrow. The evidence of the Berks and Wilts charters tends more definitely to the same conclusion. *Hyll* is the generic term for hill in the charters.¹

How a *beorh* differed from a *hlaew* I cannot determine on the evidence at present available to me. That there was a difference is practically certain, for, as I have already said, the AS. language does not deal in synonyms. It may be that the one was the long, and the other the short, barrow. But in Berkshire and Hampshire the barrows have been so devastated by excavation that it is almost impossible to determine what was their original shape. When the topography of the Dorset charters is solved it may be possible to identify some *beorh*'s or *hlaew*'s with the barrows excavated and accurately described by General Pitt-Rivers.

BROC. S. Brook. BT. Brook. Not in L.

In the charters a generic term for a brook of some size. (See BURNA, LACU, RITH, &c.)

BURH. S. Fortified place, town, city. BT. Fortified place, castle, town. L. Stadt.

In the charters this term is almost invariably applied to the earthen camps which still exist on the downs and in other elevated situations. That these were not camps in most cases, but places of permanent residence, corresponding to the hill cities which loom large in Caesar's *Gallie War*, is known. These are, of course, pre-Saxon in origin. But in a few cases in the Hampshire charters the reference is to *burhs* on or near rivers, built evidently to block river valleys; and these are probably of Saxon date.²

¹ I am not in any way disposed to maintain that *beorh* cannot have the other meanings attributed to it in the lexicons. All I say is that I have not found them in the charters.

² I will cite specific cases from the Hants charters, though the Wilts and Berks charters would tell the same tale. [See next page.]

As far, then, as my experience goes, *burh* in the charters is applied to the earthen camp (*sic*) of pre-Saxon times, and to forts of the Saxon age, the defensive works of which were probably an earthen rampart with a palisade on top of it. Doubtless a *stanburh* had masonry of some sort worked into it; but the very use of the attribute *stan* shows that this was an exceptional feature in the *burh*. The enclosure or fort surrounded by the true stone wall was called *ceaster* by the Saxons.

BURNA. The lexicons all give 'bourn' or 'brook' as the meaning of this term.

In the charters it implies a stream of large size. There is no trace in them of that later dialectal use of it, whereby it was applied to the great intermittent springs which in certain places break out from the chalk downs in cycles of years. For such *flodu* is the AS. term.

CEASTEL. Not in S., BT., or L.

CISTEL, or CESTIL. S. Chestnut. BT. Chestnut. Not in L.

I take these two words together, not because they have any connexion, etymologically or otherwise, with one another,

(1) Pre-Saxon, identified: *Meres burh* (B. 787, K. 1145, and B. 674, K. 1102), the camp on Ladle Hill, Burghclere; *Burh to West Cleran* (B. 674, K. 1102), the camp on Beacon Hill, Burghclere; *Hoge burh* (B. 1314, K. 589), Egbury Camp in St. Mary Bourne; *Naesan burh* (B. 596, K. 332), Norsebury Ring, Micheldever; *Welna burh* (B. 824), Woolbury Ring in Leckford Abbas; *Eorh burh* (B. 758. K. 1131), camp on Old Winchester Hill, Exton.

(2) Probably Saxon: *Eald burh* (B. 1068, K. 1229, and B. 1076, K. 1230), in Avington Park, close to the Itchen, of which no traces survive; *Abbodes burh* (B. 629, K. 1096), beside Micheldever stream, about opposite Wonston church, of which no traces survive; *Stan burh* (B. 393, K. 1038), the name of which survives in three field-names, Great Stanbury, Stanbury Hanger, and Long Stanbury, just west of the Meon River where the north boundary of Droxford crosses that stream.

The only other *burhs* mentioned in Hants charters are three in a charter which seems to apply to a small grant in Longstock (K. 633). The survey is not traceable, and apparently no traces of the *burhs* survive. My suspicion is that *burh* has been mistakenly written for *beorh* in this charter.

but because they are almost inextricably mixed up with one another in the extant copies of the charters. Moreover, their compounds *stan-ceastel* and *stan-cistel* must be included in the consideration.

These words are of comparatively rare occurrence in the charters; and where they do occur they frequently occur in a corrupt form. It is probable that not one of them as used in the charters has the remotest connexion with a chestnut tree.

For the understanding of *ceastel* and *cistel* it will be necessary to take all the passages in the charters in which they, or some corrupted form of them, occur.

B. 222, K. 130, is one of the rather numerous group of charters referring to the Daylesford district west and north-west of Chipping Norton (Oxon). It mentions *Ceasteltone*, which is the modern Chastleton, a village in that district.

B. 282, K. 180, is a charter which Birch ascribes to Easton, near Welford, in Berkshire. It is, as a fact, a charter of Crux Easton in Hampshire, not far from Newbury. In the survey attached to it, which is in Latin, save that the actual landmarks are given in AS., occur the words 'tum itaque a Bicanstapole per profunditatem et medietatem unius vallis juxta uno acerbo lapidum quem nos stancestil vocamus . . .': 'then so from Bica's pole along the bottom and middle of a valley near a heap of stones which we call *Stancestil*'.

Owing to the fact that there is another extant survey of Crux Easton, and various surveys of the bounds of neighbouring land-units, in existence, the position of every point in the survey under consideration can be easily determined to within a few yards at the present day. But the 6" map does not show anything which can be identified with this *Stancestil*. The translation of the term will be considered later.

B. 525, K. 300, is a charter identified by Birch, probably correctly, with Cheselborne, near Dewlish, in Dorset. The survey contains references to three different *Castel*'s.

B. 526, K. 302, is another copy of the same charter, containing all the landmarks above mentioned.

B. 775, K. 392, is another charter attributed by Birch to

Cheselborne; but its survey does not contain any reference to the *castel*'s, though it refers evidently to a *stanceastel*, which appears in the corrupt form *ston-istel*.

I have not so far attempted to work out the topography of the Dorset charters, so that I cannot profess to give the actual sites of these landmarks. But B. 525 refers to a grant of only two hides, and the landmarks show them to have been more or less on the down at the north end of the parish.

B. 775 refers to eight hides—possibly the whole parish. It is fairly certain that the *ston-istel* (sic), like the *castel*'s, was on the high down.

B. 571, K. 322, is a charter which Birch refers to Frekenham in Suffolk. The survey is very brief. One of the four landmarks is *ffrekeham castel*.

B. 596, K. 332, is perhaps the most important charter relating to the determination of the meaning of this unrecognized word *ceastel*. It is of Micheldever, Hants; and it has a series of surveys attached to it, one of which is headed *Kendefer* (Candover). This survey refers to a part of the parish of Brown Candover, which was originally a detached piece of the neighbouring parish of Northington. The boundary is traceable owing to the survival of AS. names in the field-names. The second landmark is 'to the *stan-cisteles*', the name of which survives in a modified form in the field-name Stanchester. In that field the remains of a Roman villa have been found.

B. 677, K. 353, a charter of Ham (Wilts) is also important for the same reason. The actual or approximate positions of all the landmarks can be traced. One of the landmarks is 'over against the *stan-ceasla*'. The farmer who works the field whereon this *stan-ceastel* stood reports that he is always coming across wall foundations in the course of ploughing it.

B. 740, K. 1121, is again an important charter. It deals with a small region, the bounds of which are difficult to recognize, in the Worthys, north of Winchester. But comparison with the other Worthy charters shows that it related to lands in the present parish of Martyr Worthy. The third landmark of the survey runs thus: 'from the *iwigath* (Yew

Eyot) to *stan-ceaslan*'. This is evidently a corrupt form of *stan-ceastel*; and the reference is almost undoubtedly to the Roman villa the remains of which lie near the east boundary of Martyr Worthy.

B. 892, K. 430, is a charter relating to most of the parish of Chieveley, Berks. (The modern parish is made up of a collection of tithings.) The survey is a very full one, and is easily traceable, especially in that part of it which is of importance for the present purpose. One landmark runs as follows: 'then along a track by the boundary of the people of Winterbourne to the west of the Old Camp on the stony track to the *stan-cystlum*'. Unfortunately no traces of this last landmark survive, though its position may be determined to within a few yards.

Two other charters require but brief mention. B. 917, K. 436, a charter of Broad Chalke in Wilts, mentions in a supplement a boundary which runs 'to the *cistel*'. B. 1105, K. 509, a charter of a place in Naunton, near Winchcombe, in Gloucestershire, speaks of a boundary running 'up to the *cæstello*'.

One negative conclusion seems certain—that there is no reason to suppose that in any of the above cases any reference is made to a chestnut-tree.

On the positive side the conclusions, though not so certain, are highly probable.

There seem to have been in AS. two terms, *cistel* and *ceastel*, both of which, as it so happened, had such meanings as made it possible for *stan* to be applied to them as an attribute. They are derived from the diminutives of two Latin words, both of which, *cista*, a chest or box, and *castra*, a camp, had derivatives in AS., viz. *cist* and *ceaster*. From the Latin diminutives *cistella* and *castellum* the Saxons borrowed two words, *cistel* and *ceastel*. The evidence of the charters quoted is very far from being decisive on the specific meaning of the AS. *cistel*. But the Crux Easton charter above quoted connects it with a heap of stones; and one is led to guess that the reference is to that form of ancient monument known as a *kistvaen*.

The uses of *ceaster* in AS. nomenclature point clearly to its having been applied to an enclosure surrounded by a wall of stone or brick; and its practically exclusive application to Roman stations or camps suggests very strongly that the Saxon associated it with structures dating from the Roman occupation of this country. It would be natural to suppose that the diminutive *ceastel* was applied to small enclosures surrounded by brick or stone walls, such enclosures as the ruined walls of a villa would represent. Its application to the Roman villa at Brown Candover is certain; that to the villa at Martyr Worthy is almost so; and that to a villa at Ham is very probable. One piece of modern evidence points in the same direction. In the parish of Andover, Hants, the site of a Roman villa is called in the Tithe Award 'Castle Field', where 'castle' is evidently a survival of the AS. *ceastel*.

But the other cases of the use of this term in the charters suggest that it was applied to enclosures other than those formed by the ruined walls of villas; for it is not likely that the small area covered by the Cheselborne (Dorset) charter contained the remains of three (or four) Roman villas; and the general connotation of the term was probably 'a small area surrounded by a brick or stone wall'.

There is no question but that the copyists of charters were very apt to confuse the two terms *cistel* and *ceastel*; and to this perhaps is due the fact that they have not been distinguished by scholars in AS. lexicography.

CLIF. S. Cliff, crag, rock. BT. Cliff, steep descent, promontory. Not in L.

No doubt it would be used of a perpendicular rock face, like the modern 'cliff'. But in the Hants, Berks, and Wilts charters the *clif*'s mentioned are 'places in a slope where the fall is distinctly steeper than in the rest of it'.

CRUNDEL. See DÆL (DEL). S. cavity, chalk-pit, pond. BT. Barrow, strip of cover in a dip. Not in L.

DÆL (DEL). S. Valley, gulf, abyss. BT. Dale, den, gulf. Not in L.

THE MEANINGS OF CERTAIN TERMS

It is probable that this term had originally the meaning 'dell', i.e. a small, narrow, steep-sided valley only a few feet deep, such as a stream would cut. But in Hampshire charters and in modern local names in the county it means 'a quarry or pit where stone, chalk, or sand have been dug'.

But it may be conjectured that this use of the term originated in a form of digging for stone, traces of which may be found on many parish boundaries at the present day at points especially where plough land impinges on the boundary. Here stone has been quarried from the balk of the plough land, and, as a consequence, a long trench-like excavation has been formed.

It is necessary to consider the term *del* in conjunction with its compounds *crundel*, *trindel*, and *sanddel*.

Del is very common in the Hants charters, whereas *crundel* is rare. It only occurs once in the Berks charters, whereas *crundel* is common.¹

The only case of its occurrence in Berks charters is in the south, not far from the Hampshire border. This does not appear to be a mere accident. Chalk-pits are common enough in Berkshire, and in the Hampshire charters the term *del* is frequently applied to old chalk-pits; yet, as has been said, it appears but once in the Berks charters. The difference seems to be dialectal in origin; for the Tithe Awards of the two counties show exactly the same contrast. In Hants TA's 'dell' is again and again used of a stone-pit or chalk-pit, in fact of a quarry of any kind. In Berks TA's it never appears. That one meaning of *del* is 'quarry' or 'chalk-pit' is shown again and again by the fact that the actual *del*'s of the charters can be identified with old chalk-pits and quarries still existent.

There is no evidence in the charters as to whether this was its original meaning; but that it had another meaning is certain, viz. 'dell', a small stream valley. I should not be

		Hants	Berks
<i>Del</i>	. . .	23	1
<i>Crundel</i>	. . .	6	17

inclined to translate it 'dale', for that is often used to denote a valley of quite considerable size.

When we turn to the term *crundel*, the difficulty is not to arrive at its meaning, but to ascertain how it was distinguished from *del*. In the first place the lexicographers have never even connected it with *del*. Yet its denotation in the charters clearly shows that it was a compound of that term. BT., following Thorpe, says it means 'barrow', i. e. tumulus. I think it may be definitely said that such an interpretation is impossible. S. says 'cavity', 'chalk-pit', 'pond'. But he queries the last two. Yet 'chalk-pit' is right—as far as it goes.

It is identifiable in the surveys of the charters with many existing quarries or chalk-pits. I had noticed that various *crundel*'s in the charters were represented at the present day by old, narrow, elongated stone-diggings running along the boundaries of parishes, a very common feature in districts where usable stone is near the surface. But in the Tithe Award of Upton Grey in Hampshire the distinction between *del* and *crundel* came out distinctly. In that parish are a number of quarries, some of which are called 'dells' and others 'crundles'. The 'dells' are, roughly speaking, of a circular or a square shape, while the 'crundles' are elongated and irregular in outline, diggings which have followed the narrow lines and the twists and turns of a balk or some other form of boundary.

But the evidence of modern Hants names does not end there. In a TA. of South Hants 'crundle' is the name of two small, winding stream valleys. Therefore, like *del*, *crundel* could have that meaning also.

In so far as the two AS. terms refer to artificial hollows or holes, the development of meaning seems to have been as follows: *del* was the original generic term for any form of stone-pit, chalk-pit, &c. Then the elongated stone-diggings and quarries along balks and boundaries became distinguished from those of circular or square shape, and *crundel* became the specific term for the former, with the result that *del* tended to become limited to the circular or roughly square

form of quarry, though no doubt the liability to use it in its old sense has to be reckoned with.

As to the etymology of *crundel*, I have little doubt that it was originally *crumb-del*, 'crooked or twisting quarry', and that the 'b' sound was lost in the pronunciation of the compound, and the 'm' sound changed to an 'n' before the succeeding dental. In one AS. charter a *crumdel* form actually survives side by side with the usual form *crundel*.

In respect to the meanings of *del* and *crundel* we are, I think, on absolutely safe ground. With regard to *trindæl* (or *trindel*) the evidence is not so convincing, though it does, I think, create a strong presumption in favour of the explanation which follows.

Trindel is far less common in the charters than *del* or *crundel*. When it does occur, it occurs in composition with other terms.

A very important case is in the Exton (Hants) charter,¹ because it there comes in close connexion with another term, *trindleah*, which I am strongly inclined to suspect contains the term *trindel* in an abbreviated form.

To any one who has solved the intricacies of the neighbouring Meon charters, the landmarks of this portion of the Exton survey are easily recognizable. A *trindleah* is mentioned which by a cross-reference in a Meon charter² is absolutely located at the summit of the down at the north-east corner of Exton parish. The next point but two in the Exton survey is the camp on Old Winchester Hill (called *Eorthburh*); and the next point but two after that, in a series of landmarks which come very thickly, is *Trindælgraf*, '*Trindæl Grove*', which must have been at the foot of the down, about one mile from *Trindleah*.

In a charter³ of Bleadon, Somerset, a charter I have not dealt with, there is a reference to a *trindelleah*.

There are various other references to *trindleah*'s in other charters⁴; and I notice that Kemble in his index enters all of them under *Trindelleah*, showing that he regarded that as

¹ K. 1131.

² B. 689. K. 1107.

³ K. 1182.

⁴ K. 1078. K. 1096. K. 1107.

the full form of the term, a conclusion at which I had arrived quite independently.

But whether *trindleah* be *trindelleah* or not, one thing is plain—that there was in AS. a word *trindæl* or *trindel*, though neither S., BT., nor L. mention it. Nor can there be much doubt, I think, that it was some form of quarry. But what is the *trin-* element? There can only be one word from which it is derived—the AS. *trind*, which means a ‘ball’ or ‘round lump’. So far, so good. But how are we to interpret its application to *del*? I am inclined to the belief that *trindel* was a specific term for quarries of rounded shape. Another explanation is possible, but seems to me to be far less probable, namely that *trind* refers to ‘balls’, i.e. heaps of earth built up to act as boundary marks.

But it is impossible to separate the consideration of the specific meaning of *trindel* from that of *trindleah*. We have seen that two forms occur in the charters, *trindelleah* and *trindleah*, the former rare, the latter, as a fact, fairly common. Including a form *trendeleah*, which occurs once, the term *trind(el)leah* (the *(el)* being, of course, doubtful) occurs eight times. Now it would be very hard to find any other compound term which occurs so frequently in the charters; and that suggests that the term was common in local nomenclature in AS. times. The evidence of nineteenth-century Tithe Awards suggests the same thing, for it appears very frequently in them in various forms, such as Trindley, Trinley, Trendley, Trenley, though these names appear but rarely in 1 in. ordnance maps, owing to their being applied as a rule to localities of very minor importance.

Inasmuch, then, as the name is common, it may be assumed that the first element, be it *trind-* or *trindel-*, must apply to something which might commonly be found on a *leah*. A quarry of rounded shape might well be common; but it is improbable that a quarry named from ‘balls’, or boundary mounds, in its neighbourhood would be. This consideration affects the choice between the two possible alternative meanings of *trindel*. If *trindelleah* is the true form, then it is pretty certain that *trindel* means a quarry of rounded shape. But

a compound term. As far as can be seen from the charters such elements appear almost invariably in the genitive, so much so that one may almost conclude that cases in which they do not so appear in our extant texts are due to copyists' errors.¹

I do not think that there can be any doubt that the AS. name of this ford was *Sanddeles-ford*, 'Ford of the Sand-pit'. The dropping of an 's' in certain post-Saxon forms of a name such as this might be exemplified in the cases of many old Saxon names containing 's'.

In the parish of Fordingbridge (Hants) is a hamlet called Sandleheath. Also the names Sandle Farm and Sandle Manor occur in the same locality. The Ordnance Map marks two old sand-pits in the neighbourhood. I have not so far been able to get old forms of these names; but I do not think that there can be much doubt that Sandleheath represents an original *Sand-del-hæth*. It will be noticed that I have not put *Sanddel* in the genitive. My reason is that in this instance the compound term *Sanddel* implies the presence, not of one particular sand-pit, but of sand-pits generally in the neighbourhood.

I believe, but I cannot prove, that there was in AS. another compound of *del*, *wændel*, meaning a quarry with a wagon road leading into it.

DIC. The charters support the meanings given in the lexicons. But they also show that the term could be applied to a stream, part of the course of which had been straightened.

DIERNE. The meanings 'secret', 'hidden', are given in the lexicons.

Applied to natural objects in the charters it seems to imply something which you come across at the last moment, i. e. which is hidden from view till it is close at hand.

¹ It would be possible to cite dozens of instances from the charters, e. g. *Acsceates geat*, Oakshott Gate; *Hornmæres wudu*, the wood of the miry balk; *Lammeres geat*, Claypond gate, &c., &c.

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DUN. S. Hill, mountain, down. BT. Mountain, hill, down.
L. Hügel.

Judging from the lexicons it might be synonymous with *hyll*. In the charters it is always used of that type of land which we still call a 'down'.

EA. S. River, stream. BT. Running water, stream, river.
Not in L.

In the charters it is always used in the specific sense of what we should call a 'river'; and never, so far as I know, of any stream of smaller size, or of water in any other form than a river.

ELEBEAM. S. Olive tree. BT. Olive tree. Not in L.

The term occurs several times in the Berks charters. In translations of the Bible it is undoubtedly used to translate the Greek word for 'olive-tree'. But the Director of Kew Gardens assured me some years ago that the olive could never have flourished in this country, especially on the uplands of Berkshire, where one at least of the references to *elebeam* occurs. I guess the meaning to be 'elm-tree'. But it is a pure guess.

FELD. S. Field, plain. BT. Field, pasture, open country.
L. Ackerflur.

Never in the charters does it denote anything we should call a field. Its meaning seems to be 'wide stretch of land devoid of timber or brushwood'. Probably it was distinguished from *dun*, down, by not being peculiarly hilly. It is uncertain whether it could be applied to arable land.

FLODA. S. Channel, gutter. BT. Channel, gutter. L. Flut, fließendes Wasser.

As a general term it seems to mean 'a large intermittent stream which runs only in very rainy weather'. Cf. *bæc*. But this meaning would also attach to *winterburna*. It was certainly applied to the great springs which at certain places burst out in the chalk downs at intervals of several years.

The evidence of the Berkshire charters is very clear on the point.¹

When we turn to the Hampshire charters the references to those *floda*'s the sites of which are determinable at the present day indicate the fact that the term was not confined to the remarkable springs which break out at intervals of years, but was also applied to intermittent springs of large size which might break out at any period of heavy rain. *The sudden appearance in large volume* seems to be the differentia which distinguishes the term from *winterburna*.

¹ A Brightwalton (Berks) charter (B. 743, K. 1223) has in its survey *andlang weges to maerfloden*, 'along the track to the great intermittent stream on the boundary'. The same *floda* is mentioned in the Farnborough (Berks) charter (B. 632, K. 343): *Thonne forth on tha dic to mærfloðan be eastan Lillinglea*, 'then forth to the dyke to the great intermittent stream on the boundary to the east of Lilley'. The name Lilley still survives. A little book by Mr. G. C. Peachey of Wantage describes this stream: 'This stream probably originated in springs arising from the higher land in the direction of Lockinge Kiln, whence the water flowed down to Farnborough Copse. . . . Running southwards, and forming for some distance the parish boundary, this *maerfloda* was in those days the upper part of the stream which in this year (1904) coursed along the high road towards Newbury, and eventually flowed by the present Chapel Arch, the Ford, and Hazelhanger, to run into the Winterbourne.'

In the same Farnborough charter quoted above is a reference to another *floda*: *Thonne forth on thone weg to Cytelfloðan be Westan Mulescumbes*, 'then forth to the track to Kettle Spring on the west of Mul's Combe'. I have not been able to get satisfactory explanation as to whether this spring is ever active at the present day; but that it was an intermittent spring is shown by the fact that the valley in which it flowed has no permanent stream. When flowing it would be the headwaters of the Pangbourne, the permanent source of which is seven miles further down the valley.

In the Blewbury (Berks) charter (B. 801) is the following landmark: *Of tham byrgelse to thære flodan æt Swin weges slo æt thære wege gelæton*, 'from the burialplace to the intermittent spring at Swineway's slough at the crossroads'. This intermittent spring is one which rises near a small wood on the downs at the southernmost point of Blewbury parish, and flows down past Roden Farm into the valley in which the Didcot-Newbury railway runs. It bursts out at intervals of several years; and runs so strongly that the farmer at Roden Farm has used it to carry down swedes to the sheep pastures in the valley below.

54 THE MEANINGS OF CERTAIN TERMS

DUN. S. Hill, mountain, down. BT. Mountain, hill, down.
L. Hügel.

Judging from the lexicons it might be synonymous with *hyll*. In the charters it is always used of that type of land which we still call a 'down'.

EA. S. River, stream. BT. Running water, stream, river.
Not in L.

In the charters it is always used in the specific sense of what we should call a 'river'; and never, so far as I know, of any stream of smaller size, or of water in any other form than a river.

ELEBEAM. S. Olive tree. BT. Olive tree. Not in L.

The term occurs several times in the Berks charters. In translations of the Bible it is undoubtedly used to translate the Greek word for 'olive-tree'. But the Director of Kew Gardens assured me some years ago that the olive could never have flourished in this country, especially on the uplands of Berkshire, where one at least of the references to *elebeam* occurs. I guess the meaning to be 'elm-tree'. But it is a pure guess.

FELD. S. Field, plain. BT. Field, pasture, open country.
L. Ackerflur.

Never in the charters does it denote anything we should call a field. Its meaning seems to be 'wide stretch of land devoid of timber or brushwood'. Probably it was distinguished from *dun*, down, by not being peculiarly hilly. It is uncertain whether it could be applied to arable land.

FLODA. S. Channel, gutter. BT. Channel, gutter. L. Flut, fließendes Wasser.

As a general term it seems to mean 'a large intermittent stream which runs only in very rainy weather'. Cf. *bæc*. But this meaning would also attach to *winterburna*. It was certainly applied to the great springs which at certain places burst out in the chalk downs at intervals of several years.

The evidence of the Berkshire charters is very clear on the point.¹

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FORD.

There is no reason to discuss the meaning of the term, but it may be pointed out that the passage of a stream a yard wide would be called *ford* in the charters.

FRITH.

Not given in the lexicons; but seems to mean either brushwood, or land covered with brushwood.

FURH.

Of course it means a furrow. In the charters it is used of what was evidently a furrow drawn to an unusual breadth to form a boundary between ploughlands.

GARA.

As the lexicons say, it means, of course, a 'gore' or triangular piece of land. But the charters, in those cases in which the *gara* mentioned by them can be identified at the present day, seem to indicate that the term was applied only to land under the plough.

GEAT.

Certainly 'gate', as the lexicons say. But the term is so frequently used as a landmark in the charters that the question arises as to how a *geat* came to be looked on as being of sufficient permanence to be used as a landmark. The explanation is probably that the *geat*'s were permanent structures the position of which was never changed, structures erected (1) at points where tracks crossed the boundary of the land-unit with a view to prevent cattle straying on to the lands of neighbouring land-units; (2) permanent structures erected at points in the boundaries of the plough-lands to provide access to those lands when the temporary fences were up during the period when the crops were on. These fences were removed wholly or partially when the crops had been gathered, but the gates in them were permanent structures.

In their edition of the Crawford Charters, Messrs. Napier and Stevenson, speaking of the term *sulhgeat*, suggest that it may mean a hollow way running up a hill. I myself have a

strong suspicion that some of the *geat*'s in the charters have a meaning of this kind, viz. that they may refer to depressions in the comb of a ridge which, when viewed from below, present the appearance of a notch in the ridge.

GEMAERE. See MÆRE.

HAETH. S. Heath. BT. Heath, waste, uncultivated land.
Not in L.

As differentiated from *leah* and *feld*, means probably open moorland where heather grows.

HAGA. S. Enclosure, homestead, messuage. BT. Enclosure.
Not in L.

Of these meanings cited above I believe that 'enclosure' only is correct. But as there are various other AS. terms so interpreted in the lexicons, the interpretation is not very enlightening. The term is not rare in Berkshire charters. In the Hants series it is common.

Now in every case in those charters in which the position of a *haga* can be identified—and they are many—it is associated with what either is, or is known to have been, or may be strongly suspected to have been, woodland.¹

Haga is frequently used by itself as a landmark, without any attribute being attached to it. But in the four counties² of which I have made a complete index³ of the landmarks used in the charters, *haga* appears on various occasions with an attribute. In three cases the attribute is a personal name.

¹ e.g. in Berks in the charters of Besselsleigh, Chieveley, Oare, Basildon, Padworth, and Winkfield—and in no others. All of these are at the present day more or less wooded regions.

In Hants it occurs only in the charters of the Meon region (five times) on the edge of the Andred's Weald; in that of Hurstbourne Tarrant, which was partly in Doiley Forest; in Droxford, a wooded region; in Tisted, a wooded region; in Crondall, a wooded region; in Millbrook, which has now a wooded region on its north border; in Upton Grey (Hoddington), a wooded region; and in no other.

² Hants, Berks, Wilts, and Worcestershire.

³ Kemble's index is very incomplete, so much so that it would, for example, throw little light on the use of *haga*.

In two it is the word *gemære*, 'boundary'. In one it is *cinges*, 'the king's *haga*'. In one it is *leas*, i.e. 'the *haga* of the Leas'. In one it is the name of a tree, *boc*, 'beech'. (There are two references to this *haga*.) In all the other cases the attributes are names of animals, namely, *swin* (four times), *wulf* (twice), and *rah* 'roedeer' (once). This suggests that the *haga* had some connexion with animals. My own impression is that *haga* meant in the first instance 'a hedge round a wood'; and moreover, a hedge of a particular type, such as would prevent wild animals, or swine pastured in the woodland, from straying on to the crops. In this way it was distinct from the ordinary term *hege*. But I cannot help thinking that the meaning of the term came to be extended to woodland containing animals and game, and that it might be translated 'game enclosure'.

HAMM. S. Piece of land, dwelling, enclosure. Not in BT.
nor L.

Why S. gives 'dwelling' as one of the meanings of this word I cannot say. That is rather the meaning of *ham*. But that it means 'enclosure' I do not doubt.

But it is with its derivative, the field-name 'ham', that I am concerned. Some modern dictionaries of great repute have given 'water-meadow' as the meaning of this word. The application of 'ham' to water-meadows is, strictly speaking, accidental. The water-meadows were the meads or hay-lands of the early communities. At first the meads were common, the hay being divided among the landholders of the community, probably in shares proportionate to the size of their holdings. But even in late AS. times meads had been in many cases divided up into lots, each of which was attached to the land of an individual holder, and must have become something like his private property. How far this tendency had gone is shown by statements every now and then attached to charters to the effect that 'the mead is common', a statement which would hardly have been made had not private holding in the mead become very usual. There would further be the natural tendency to fence these private lots of mead,

and hence the frequent application of the word 'ham' to water-meadows. In the parish of Romsey, Hants, there are more than a dozen small fields down by the Test river which are called 'ham'. But the application of the term is accidental; for it is found in field-names of enclosures which are not near any stream.

HEAFOD. S. Head, upper part of field, source of stream.

BT. Highest part of field, head. L. Haupt, Kopf.

It does, of course, mean 'head'. It does *not* mean the *upper* or *highest* part of a field, but the headland of a field, i.e. the place where the plough was turned in ploughing the length of the *æcer*'s. If a field was ploughed up and down a slope there would naturally be a headland (*heafod*) at the lowest as well as at the highest point of the field. In other words the term *heafod* as applied to a ploughed field does not imply elevation.

Unless the usage of the charters is exceptional *heafod* in a generic sense may mean the 'head' of anything; but, standing by itself, it can only have one specific sense, viz. 'headland'. It could not, standing by itself, mean 'the source of a stream', as S. implies. That would be *broces heafod*. In other words, when it is expressly applied to the head of anything save a ploughland the thing to which it is applied is mentioned. Cf. *cumbes heafod*, *wylles heafod*, &c., &c.

I have already mentioned *andheafod* or *undheafdu* (both forms are given in the lexicons). I think it may be taken for granted that it had a specific meaning different from that of *heafod*, 'headland'. I am inclined to guess that it was the corner of a mass of ploughland where the plough was turned when the headland came to be ploughed.

HEALH. S. Corner, hiding-place, bay, gulf. BT. says its meaning is doubtful. Not in L.

Its denotation in the charters is clear from the fact that many of the numerous *healh*'s in the surveys can be identified at the present day. It means 'a small hollow in a hillside or slope'. Nor has it any other meaning. It is curious that in

Wilts place-names it has generally developed into -hall; e.g. *Puttan-healh*, Puthall, near Marlborough; whereas in Berks it has generally borrowed an 'n' from a weak genitive of the previous word, and formed endings in -nall, -nell; e.g. *Braccan-healh*, Bracknell. It is a common element in field-names of hilly parishes in Berks.

HEREPATH. S. Main road. BT. Military road. Not in L.

As a general term is used in the charters of any through road of any age, Saxon or pre-Saxon; but its usual application is to such through roads or tracks as developed in the Saxon age.

HLÆW. S. Mound, hill, cave. BT. Artificial or natural mound, a low. Not in L.

In the charters it is, as far as I have been able to trace its denotation, always used of a tumulus. (See notes on *BEORH*.)

HLINC. S. Ridge, slope, hill. BT. Linch, rising ground. Not in L.

In the charters *hlinc* seems to be used in one sense, and in one sense only, namely 'linch', meaning a ledge of ploughland in a hillside formed gradually by ploughing in such a way as to turn the clod down hill. Domesday evidence is eloquent testimony to the very large extent of the land under the plough in late AS. times; and under such circumstances the resort to the formation of linches would be natural. In the years succeeding the close of the Napoleonic wars the high price of corn led to an enormous increase in the acreage of land under the plough, and every hillside which could be ploughed was scarred by linches.

LACU. S. Stream. BT. Pool, lake. Not in L.

Never in the charters has *lacu* either of the meanings which BT. attach to it. In the charters *pyll* (*pul*, *pol*) and *mere* would be used to denote pools and lakes respectively. As for S.'s interpretation, it is of that class of meanings so common in the AS. lexicons which leave the reader in the dark as to the real specific meaning of a term.

Lacu means a stream with a slow or perhaps imperceptible current. In the Berks charters it is used again and again of backwaters of the Thames.

As a dialectic term 'lake' is still used in this sense in Hampshire, where various brooks are still called 'so-and-so lake'. But in Berks the term survives only as an element in place-names such as Stanlake.

LAND.

As an independent term this is not common in the charters. In the few cases in which it does occur it seems to be used of arable land only.¹

LEAH. S. Lea, meadow, field. BT. Lea, meadow, untilled land. Not in L.

This is one of the most common terms in the charters—perhaps the commonest; yet its exact signification is very uncertain. Its most general meaning is, however, fairly certain. An AS. land-unit comprised four categories of land: (1) the ploughlands; (2) the mead, or haylands; (3) the timber land; (4) the *leah* or uncultivated land, used for rough pasture. The *leah* was, no doubt, sown as a rule with trees and bushes; and, if the trees were timber-trees, then category (3) would be included in it. So far we are on firm ground.²

But the difficulties with regard to *leah* and its precise meaning or meanings arise when you come to deal with it in the charters.

¹ Cf. B. 601, K. 1080, *Of thæm byge forth on ane furh oth hit cymth to anre forierthe & sio forierth in to tham lande*. Cf. also in the same charter where a *gar æcer* is mentioned in connexion with *land*.

² I understand that it has been argued from the fact that the *Andredes weald* of Kent and Sussex is called *Andredes leah* in at least one passage that *leah* meant originally woodland. But the remains of the old forests such as Savernake and Wychwood show that they were not by any means composed entirely of thickets, but had plenty of open spaces where bushes and trees were rare, and where pasturage was possible. The very place-names of the New Forest and of the Andred's Weald show that the pasturing of cattle was carried on in them in AS. times. In other words many parts of the forests must have resembled the *leah* of land-units outside any forest area.

The first difficulty can be best explained by taking one example of a very common feature in the surveys. In the charter of Overton, Hants,¹ the survey begins 'first at Street Lea'. Further on come similar landmarks: 'then to *beam leah* (Tree Lea)'. And later: 'then on the inside of *suth leah* (South Lea)'. The difficulty is this: the surveyors are laying down definite boundaries. How can a large (? indefinite) area such as a *leah* be taken as defining a definite boundary? The *leah*'s here mentioned were, of course, on the edges of the land-unit of Overton; but how could they define the limits of that land-unit unless they were themselves bounded in some way. I cannot help thinking that there was some recognized method of marking off the boundaries of a *leah* of one land-unit from that of another, and that this method of marking is, not perhaps unnaturally, assumed in the surveys.

The charters give us little help towards arriving at a more definite meaning of the term. In Hants charters *leah* occurs 122 times, and only in four cases without an attribute. Of the attributes 15 are personal names, 94 are descriptive, and nine are uncertain. In Berks charters it occurs 51 times, and only once without an attribute. Of the attributes 12 are personal, 35 descriptive, and three uncertain. It is impossible to say whether the personal names are possessive, or merely imply residence.

I am afraid that, apart from its general meaning, it is impossible to give any connotation of the term. 'Clearing' has been suggested. There is nothing in the charters to support that meaning.

MAERE. *Gemaere*. S. Boundary. BT. Boundary, limit.
Not in L.

MEARC. S. Mark, limit, boundary. BT. Limit, bound, territory. L. Landschaftsgrenze, Mark.

In the charters these words when used by themselves without any attribute mean the balk of a ploughland. Such expressions as 'andlang *gemaere*' in a survey cannot mean that the survey is traversing the bounds which are being

¹ B. 625, K. 1094.

defined, for that would be mere tautology, and would be of no assistance whatever in defining the boundary. *Maerweg* or *mearcweg*, 'boundary way,' is probably a road which has developed along a balk. Roads which obviously have this origin are called 'meres' in some of the Berks TA's.

But there are expressions such as *mær-beorh*, where *mære* refers probably to the actual boundary of the land-unit. There is also a whole series of expressions in which the meaning of the term is doubtful—where the reference may be either to a balk or to the boundary of a land-unit. These expressions refer to the passing of the boundary along the *mære* of the people of the neighbouring land-unit. In the Crondall charter¹ there is a reference to the *beonot leage gemaere*, 'the Bentley boundary'. In Berks charters² occur *cingtuninga gemaere*, 'the boundary of the people of King-ton', and *Stifinghaeme gemaere*, 'the boundary of the people of Steventon'. On the whole it is probable that the reference is to the balks of ploughlands belonging to the people of the next land-unit. Which of the two meanings *mære* may have in combination with the genitives of personal names (e.g. *Ælfredes gemaere*) cannot be said with certainty; but here also the meaning 'balk' is probable.

What applies to *mære* applies to *mearc* also. But with respect to the employment of the two terms there is a curious contrast between the Berks and the Hants charters. *Mære* is common in the former and rare in the latter; whereas *mearc* is common in the latter and rare in the former.³

This may be a dialectical difference, or merely a difference of customary usage; but it is curiously reflected in the Tithe Awards. The modern term 'mere', meaning a 'boundary',

¹ B. 1307, K. 595.

² B. 1047, K. 1221, and B. 1142, K. 1253.

³

		<i>Mære</i>	<i>Mearc</i>
Berks		72	11
Hants		14	52

Even so, six out of the fourteen instances of *Mære* in Hants charters are doubtful owing to the copyists of the Winchester group of charters having frequently written 'æ' for 'e', so that it is not always possible to say whether *mære* when used in these charters is *mære*, a boundary, or *mere*, a pond.

occurs in the TA.'s of one or two of the out-of-the-way parishes of Berks, and is there applied to a Mere Way which has developed along the balk of some ploughland quite away from the parish boundary. It does not occur in Hants TA.'s, though the term Mark Way, applied to the same type of road, is found in them. It is interesting to find that this difference of usage goes back to AS. times.

MERE.

The only thing to note about its usage in the charters is that it may be applied to any pond, however small.

MOR. S. Moor, mountain. BT. Waste and damp land, moor.
Not in L.

In the charters *mor* and in the TA.'s 'moor' are never used of a hill or mountain, nor even of what we should at the present day call a 'moor'. BT.'s first meaning 'waste and damp land' is all but the meaning in the charters. Many of the *mor*'s of the charters can be identified now, and the denotation is always waterlogged land near a stream. That, too, is the invariable meaning of moor in the Berks and Hants TA.'s.

ORA. S. Bank, shore. BT. Border, edge, bank. Not in L.

The charters only support the meanings 'bank', 'hillside'.

PYLL (POL, PUL).

In the charters, so far as I have come across it, this term is always used of a pool in a river or stream, never of any other form of pool.

RAEWE.

By itself it seems to be used in the charters in the same sense as the word 'row' is still used in Hants, viz. of a row of trees acting as a wind-shelter.

RITH.

In the charters always used of a very small stream, may be a mere trickle of water. As a dialectic term it is still applied in Hants to the small channels through the mud at low tide in Portsmouth and the neighbouring harbours.

RITHIG.

Ought strictly speaking to be a diminutive of *rith*; but in actual use in the charters the two terms are not distinguishable.

ROD. S. Cross. BT. Rod, rood (of land), cross. L. Kreuz.

One writer on place-names suggests 'a clearing in a wood', and adds that as roads were made through clearings the word came to mean 'road'. None of these meanings fit in with the uses of the word in the charters. 'Cross' is ruled out because in various surveys the boundary is described as going 'along *rode*'.¹ Nor is the meaning 'rood' at all probable, for if the AS. surveyors were wont, as they are, to describe a boundary as running along a *rod*, and *rod* meant a 'rood' of land, there would almost certainly be instances of their describing a boundary as running along an *æcer* or a *gara*. Again, whatever *rod* is, it is not the source of our word 'road'. That is AS. *rad*. I am afraid that my conclusions on this term must remain negative, viz. that *rod* had a meaning which is not given in the lexicons.

SANDDEL. See notes on DEL.

SCYLF. S. Ledge, shelf. BT. Peak, crag, tor. Not in L.

Whether this term can ever have the meanings attributed to it by BT. I cannot say; but it never has any meaning at all resembling them in the charters. On the other hand, it has the meanings given by S. It implies a flat step or shelf in the slope of a hillside.

STANCEASTEL, STANCISTEL. See notes on CEASTEL; CISTEL.

STIGEL.

There is no question that it means a 'stile'. Its frequency as a landmark is to be explained on the same lines as the use of *geat*. (See notes on GEAT.)

STRÆT.

A 'made road'. Applied to Roman roads, or to pre-Roman roads which have been 'made' in some part, either by

¹ B. 389, K. 1033; B. 1068, K. 1229; B. 390, K. 1035.

metalling, or by both metalling and straightening. (See paper on the evidence of the charters on the ancient road system of England in the *Archaeological Journal*, vol. xxiv, pp. 79-105.)

STREAM.

In the charters always used of the current of a river or stream, never of the river or stream itself.

TREOW. S. Tree, forest, wood, wood (material), gallows, cross. BT. give same meanings. L. Baum.

This term is a very common landmark in the charters, so common, indeed, that it seems improbable that it could have had as used in them the meanings 'gallows' or 'cross'. But when we come to the constructive side of the question difficulties of a most puzzling character arise owing to the very marked and peculiar nature of the attributes applied to it.

I have counted 88 instances of the occurrences of *treow* in the charters. In all the cases the term is accompanied by an attribute. But the extraordinary thing is that in 58 cases the attribute is a personal name in the genitive. In 23 cases the attributive is descriptive; and in seven cases indeterminable. The descriptive attributes may be classified into (1) Numbers: *threo*, *feower*; (2) Species: *syrfe*, *mapol*, *xppel*; (3) Shape: *twyslede*, *riht*; (4) Size: *great* (twice), *lang*; (5) Colour: *hwit*, *readleafe*; (6) Association: with a *hagu* (twice), with a *hyf*, with a *meare*, with a *cotleah*; (7) Miscellaneous: *gemæne*, *eald* (thrice), *wot*.¹

Why should *treow* be accompanied by a personal name in the genitive in 66 per cent. of the cases of its occurrence? Why should not the same phenomenon be observable in the case of *beam*? The genitive form of the personal names implies, of course, association of the person with the *treow* either in respect to residence or to ownership. The former of

¹ Those who know the difficulty of collecting examples of the use of individual terms from the charters will understand me when I say that the above list may omit some instances of the use of the term. But I can say that, even if it is not absolutely accurate, it is very nearly so.

these two alternatives is not probable by reason of the number of cases; but if *treow* is taken in all instances to mean 'tree', the question arises why should not ownership be similarly indicated in the case of *beam*. Some of the descriptive attributes, on the other hand, necessitate the connotation 'tree'.

Finally, I can only state the phenomena; I cannot explain them.

TRINDEL. See DEL.

WÆNDEL. See DEL.

WEG.

In the charters is the generic term for a track of any kind, with a tendency to a specific use for purely local tracks within the area of one land-unit.

WIELL, WYLL.

Generally means a 'spring'. But there are a very few instances in the charters which I have examined in which it is used of the stream flowing from a spring.

YFRE (?).

Not given, as far as I can see, in any of the lexicons. I cannot be sure of the nominative form. Its meaning is well marked.

It does not occur in the Hants or Berks charters. In those of Wilts it occurs several times. The cases must be taken in detail.

B. 677-9, K. 353 (Ham): *Thonne north ofer dune on meos hlinc weste weardne: Thonne a dune on tha yfre.*

The topography of this charter is not difficult to solve; and the *yfre* is the great escarpment on which Rivar, which is within a quarter of a mile of this point, stands. I suspect that the name Rivar is derived from this term, viz. *æt thære yfre*.

B. 756, K. 387 (Swallowcliffe): *Of thæm crundele on tha lytla hwitan gerythra beneathan yfre on thane thorn.*

Here again the topography of the charter is quite easy, and

the *yfre* identifiable without difficulty. It is the steep north face of the escarpment of Swallowcliffe Down.

K. 687 (Fovant): *Of tham garan in on tha yfre.*

This is also a reference to the escarpment of Swallowcliffe Down.

B. 714, K. 1115 (Burcombe): *Thonne forth be yfre oth hringwoldes treow.*

This is the great slope of the down to the south of Barford St. Martin. The escarpment here is still called Burcombe Ivers. Such is the evidence of the charters. But I may add that the name East Ivers Wood occurs in the parish of Berwick St. John on the steep north face of the escarpment of the down ridge which traverses that parish.

There cannot, I think, be much doubt as to the meaning of the term. It is 'escarpment', meaning a long stretch of steep slope on the side of a ridge or down.¹

It will be noticed that *yfre* (sic) is a feminine noun, and that in all the three cases quoted it is in the dative case. It looks as if its nominative ought to be *yfor*. Now in meaning it is very close to *ofer*, 'slope' or 'bank', the difference appearing to be that, whereas *ofer* is applied to a bank or hillslope of any kind, *yfor* (?) is applied to a long continuous stretch of hillslope. Whether there is any original etymological relationship between the two words I cannot say. I must confine myself to a presentation of the evidence which may be derived from the charters.

G. B. GRUNDY.

¹ I must add a note about an obscure term which occurs in association with the term *yfre*. I cannot interpret it; but the facts I am about to cite may help some future investigator.

In the landmark quoted above from B. 756, K. 387, will be noticed the words *on the lylla hwitan gerythra*.

In K. 687 the landmark next following the one quoted is *of thære yfre in on tha garethru*.

In B. 714, K. 1115, the landmark next preceding the one quoted is *to scorte hrythrum*.

In all three instances this object, whatever it is, is situated at the immediate bottom of the slope of the *yfre*.

It looks as if the term were *ge-rythr-u*. But I cannot find any word in the dictionaries with which the stem *rythr-* can be connected.

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THE FELON SEW

A MOCK-HEROIC POEM OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE *Felon Sew of Rokeby* is a mock-heroic ballad written in the favourite romance stanza of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*. It is an amazingly fine burlesque, and a pleasant example of ironic humour, which deserves to be more widely known. It has an added interest in that Sir Walter Scott made use of it in *Rokeby*, and the best edition of the poem has been that made by Scott in the notes to his *Rokeby*. The following article will offer a critical text of the ballad based on four versions, prefaced by an account of its first transcriber, its transmission, and its publication; and by a description and criticism of the poem. We begin with the only begetter of this ensuing ballad. The scene is Elizabethan London. The curtain rises, and bewrays a chamber in Lincoln's Inn.

I.

On a certain evening in the year of grace 1565 a middle-aged member of Lincoln's Inn might have been observed in the throes of literary labour. He was a barrister named Ralph Rokeby, a friend of that staunch Puritan John Stubbs who, when he was deprived of his right hand for writing a tract against the proposed marriage of Queen Elizabeth with the Duke of Anjou in 1579, raised his hat with his left hand and said before he fainted 'God save the Queen'. Educated in arts at Queens' College, Cambridge, and in Law at Lincoln's Inn, Rokeby became one of the most learned canonists of his age. In later life he was Secretary to the Council of the North which implied residence in or near York, where no

doubt he would often see his cousin, Ralph Rokeby, another lawyer of similar training, who was a councillor-assistant to the Lord-President of the North.

On this particular occasion he was busy writing with a quill pen on parchment a screed which he had entitled (*Economia Rokebeiorum*, namely the history of the ancient family of Rokeby of Skiers, Hotham, and Mortham in Teesdale, one of the most distinguished amongst the minor families of the north of England. He had reviewed at some length the deeds of the knights of Rokeby, and this led him to recollect a ballad, or as he calls it a 'jargon', about his grandfather, an honest Ralph Rokeby of Mortham,¹ who lived in the reign of Henry VII, which tells how the squire of Mortham unwittingly baffled the Franciscan friars of Richmond with his savage sow, a tale which had, he says, the warrant of belief in 'the fresh memory of men yet alive'. And so he was led to record the ballad of *The Felon Sew of Rokeby*, not in the London English which he had hitherto written, but in the northern dialect of the fifteenth century in which he had heard it recited.

II.

Ralph Rokeby's parchment manuscript underwent the fate of an unpublished book. It was lost after its composition in 1565, but found again and revised by the author in 1593 shortly before his death. Then it was that, in recommending his 'own good boys and best beloved cousins' to godliness and good learning, he jotted down an interesting course of reading giving his list of the wisest books in the world.

This is his list: The *Proverbs* of Solomon, the *Wisdom* of Solomon, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Ecclesiastes*, Cicero's *De Officiis*, the *Courtier* of Count Baldassare Castiglione, the *Histories* of Polybius and Tacitus, the *Lives* of Plutarch, the *Memoires* of Philippe de Comines, the *Maxims* of Francesco Guicciardini,

¹ Eldest son of Sir Thomas Rokeby; squire of Mortham in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII; married Margaret Danby of Yafforth; had four sons, the fourth of whom, Ralph, a sergeant at law, was the father of the author of the *Economia Rokebeiorum*.

'the sweet Frenchman of Geneva who writ the *Anti-machiavell* dedicated to Mr. Francis Hastings and Edward Bacon,¹ and Lambert Danaeus his *Aphorismata Politica*.'²

After the death of Ralph Rokeby in March, 1595, the *Œconomia Rokebeiorum* was preserved as a family record, and at length came into the hands of Sir Thomas Rokeby of Gray's Inn, who became a judge of the King's Bench in 1696. He made a copy of the manuscript in 1654 to which he added some verses composed 'by Mr. William Paulden, prisoner at York, 1644, and Mr. Wylkyns, formerly a bookseller in Oxford'.

Ralph Rokeby's original manuscript, still handed down as an heirloom, came still later into the possession of Rev. Thomas Rokeby, Vicar of Norwell in Nottinghamshire, and Rector of Warmsworth, Yorkshire, and was again copied in 1712 by W. Jackson for Richard Boylston, Apothecary, of Birmingham, his grandson. The manuscript was copied again in 1815 by Mr. Langham Rokeby, jun., of Arthingworth, Northamptonshire, the grandfather of Rev. H. R. Rokeby, in whose possession this transcript was in 1887. Another copy is to be found in an eighteenth-century folio manuscript in the Leeds Library, entitled 'The North Riding of the County of York, a Collection of the Coats of Arms and Descents of the several Familys of the Nobility and Gentry. From the MSS.

¹ 'The sweet Frenchman' was Innocent Gentillet, author of an *Anti-Machiavell* published in Latin (1571), translated into French (1576), and again translated into English by Simon Patericke under the title, 'A Discourse upon the meanes of wel governing and maintaining in good peace a Kingdom or other Principalitie. Against Nicholas Machiavell the Florentine.' The British Museum possesses two editions of this book, published by Adam Islip, London, dated 1602 and 1608, but the dedication is dated 1577: 'To the most famous yong gentlemen as well for religion modestie, and other vertues as also for kinred, Francis Hastings and Edward Bacon'. Sir Francis Hastings, d. 1610, was the fifth son of the seventh Earl of Huntingdon, and a Puritan champion in pamphlet and tract. Edward Bacon of Shrubland Hall, Suffolk, was third son of Lord-Keeper Bacon, and half-brother of the great Francis Bacon.

² Danaeus (Lambert Daneau), *Politicorum Aphorismorum Sylva, ex optimis quibusque tum Graecis tum Latinis scriptoribus collecta*, 1583; see *La France Protestante*, Vol. V, col. 62.

of John Hopkinson, Gent., revised and corrected by Tho. Wilson of Leeds'.

The *Œconomia Rokebeiorum* was published by David Douglas in Edinburgh, 1887, edited by A. W. Cornelius Hallen, M.A., F.S.A. (Scot.). The original manuscript being lost, Mr. Hallen based his text on Boylston's transcript, and gave the variant readings of Langham Rokeby's and the Leeds transcripts.

A version of *The Felon Sow* was published as a great rarity by Rev. Thomas Dunham Whitaker, LL.D., F.S.A., in his *History of Craven*, London, 1805, and thence it passed into R. H. Evans's *Old Ballads*, 1810. The quaintness of the tale evidently attracted Sir Walter Scott's attention. He alluded to it in *Rokeby* in 1813:

'For all thy brag and boast, I trow
Nought know'st thou of the Felon Sow,'
Quoth Harpool, 'nor how Greta-side
She roam'd, and Rokeby forest wide;
Nor how Ralph Rokeby gave the beast
To Richmond's friars to make a feast.
Of Gilbert Griffinson the tale
Goes, and of gallant Peter Dale,
That well could strike with sword amain,
And of the valiant son of Spain,
Friar Middleton, and blithe Sir Ralph;
There were a jest to make us laugh!'

He had obtained the favour of Mr. Langham Rokeby, and borrowed a transcript of Ralph Rokeby's *Œconomia Rokebeiorum*, from which in note iii, or note lii of the revised edition of 1830, he published a version of *The Felon Sow*. Scott crossed swords with Whitaker, whose source he described as 'an inaccurate manuscript, not corrected very happily', and he stated that he was able to give a more authentic version 'from being furnished with a copy from a manuscript in the possession of Mr. Rokeby'—'of Northamptonshire, descended of the ancient Barons of Rokeby'. It has been suggested that it was Scott who lost the original manuscript of 1565. 'Letters in the possession of the Rev. H. R. Rokeby (dated 1825) show that the original MS. was in existence in the

beginning of the century, and was written on two rolls of parchment, one three or four yards in length. Mr. Langham Rokeby used to say that Sir Walter Scott borrowed it when preparing the notes to "Rokeby", and that it was never returned'.¹ But Scott's statement that he was furnished 'with a *copy* from a manuscript' is definite enough, and a comparison of his text with the other versions disposes of the notion that he used the lost original.

Sir Walter Scott's 'more authentic' version of *The Felon Sow* stimulated Dr. Whitaker to show his hand, and in 1823 he published in his *History of Richmondshire* an edition of the *Œconomia Rokebeiorum*, which was based on Sir Thomas Rokeby's copy of the original made in 1654, for it has the allusion to the verses of Paulden and Wylkyns made in 1644, which is missing in the transcripts of Ralph Rokeby's original manuscript. Whitaker admits errors in his earlier version published in the *History of Craven*, which he corrects in the later version; but he refuses to admit that Scott's manuscript is nearer the authentic version than his.²

There is a transcript which I have not seen, presumably of Thomas Wilson's 'Leeds' version, in the British Museum, MS. Addit. 24, 470, ff. 294-333, made by Rev. Joseph Hunter, F.S.A. (1783-1861), a keeper of public records in London, author of the *History of Hallamshire*, and of an article 'Œconomia Rokebeiorum' in the *Retrospective Review*, N.S. II, pp. 476-90.

III

The *Felon Sew of Rokeby* is a mock heroic ballad, written in the rime doggerel of Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*. The poem was composed for recitation, as the opening verses indicate, and the tradition of heard ballads is indicated by such alliterative

¹ *Œconomia Rokebeiorum*, ed. Hallen, p. 34.

² Joseph Hunter stated (*Retrospective Review*, N.S. II, p. 478, note) that Whitaker in his *History of Richmondshire* copied the Wilson (Leeds) transcript. But Whitaker's version has interpolations, e.g. Paulden's verses, which are not found in the Leeds transcript; and he says, p. 181, 'the MS. was apparently as old as the time of Charles I'—that is, it was Sir Thomas Rokeby's revised transcript of 1654.

phrases as 'Her force it was so fell', 'As brim as any bear', 'He braided out his brand', 'He strake at her full strong'.

Its date of composition was supposed by Ralph Rokeby to have been at the end of the fifteenth century. The passage is interesting, and I quote it in full :

'And thus leaving our ancestors of record, we must also leave with them the chronicles, and come down to unwritten stories which have yet the testimony of later times and the fresh memory of men yet alive for their warrant of credit; of whom I have learned that in King Henry the Seventh his reign one Rafe Rokeby, Esq., was owner of Mortham, who by report lived well and honestly in his calling, and I guess that this was he that deceived the Friars of Richmond with his Felon Sow, of the which a jargon or song was made, whereof I have heard the beginning of that rude rhyme in these words following.'

From this we learn that it was an unwritten ballad, handed on from generation to generation by tradition, and that it was still remembered by old men in 1565, who believed that the tale referred to a Rokeby who lived in the reign of Henry VII. It is dangerous to challenge a clear statement of this kind, but the presence of *z* in the transcripts for M.E. 3 may indicate that Ralph Rokeby copied the poem; and the final *-es*, the inflexion of the possessive case and of the plural of substantives, which was pronounced in -

These three went at Godes will (l. 31),
and in

Bandes bound with Seales brade (l. 180),

suggests a date earlier than 1500. The romance stanza and the archaic vocabulary of the poem are not inconsistent with a somewhat earlier date; though the spelling, it must be remembered, has been contaminated by later copyists.

The balladist tells of a wild sow which roamed the banks of the Greta. Her owner, Ralph Rokeby, made a present of her to the Grey Friars of Richmond. A friar named Middleton came to fetch the sow home, and brought with him two men, Peter Dale and Brian of Bear. The sow routed the three champions and took refuge in a lime-kiln, whither the friar

and his companions followed her. From a coign of vantage above the kiln they managed to slip a noose around the sow's neck, and they pulled the beast out of the lime-kiln. They managed to lead her for some distance, when suddenly she turned on her captors. Friar Middleton, thinking her to be a fiend in swinish shape, conjured the sow with a portion of St. John's gospel, but without avail,

The sew sho would not Latin heare,

and he was glad to hide behind a tree. Thereafter the three champions fled, and the sow went home to Mortham, where Mistress Rokeby gave her food, and Ralph feared for Friar Middleton. When the friar returned to Richmond with his tale of woe, he was so downcast and moody that the warden forbade the others to question him. Next day the warden engaged two doughty fellows armed with sword and buckler, who went to hunt the felon sow. One of them she knocked down, but the other slew her with his sword, and brought her in paniers to the rejoicing friars, who sang the *Te Deum laudamus*. In other words, Ralph Rokeby having given the sow to the friars, the brethren tried to drive her to Richmond and failed, and then engaged two butchers to kill her on the spot and to bring the dead carcase home.

As a romantic travesty of two simple humorous incidents the ballad is excellent. Friar Middleton's 'earnest' look at the swine, and his attempt to exorcise the fiend by the reading of *In principio* are in the Chaucerian vein. The poor repute in which it was held—it was never printed, and Ralph Rokeby calls it a 'jargon'—is surely owing to its mock-heroic style. The parody of romance is indicated by the hurdy-gurdy stanza of *Sir Eglamour* and *Sir Isumbras*. It is the stanza which Chaucer adopted for his mock-romantic *Sir Thopas*. Chivalry is parodied or rather caricatured in the valour and arms of Gilbert Griffinson and the Bastard Son of Spain.

190 Sho came roming them again
That saw the Bastard Son of Spain,
He braided out his Brand:

Full spiteously at her he Strake,
 For all the fence at he could make,
 195 Sho gat forth of his hand,
 And rave in Sunder half his Shield,
 And bare him backward in the Field,
 He might not her gaynstand.

Wit of this order failed to appeal to the upland northern mind. Simple natures are incapable of enjoying the travesties of romantic burlesque, and, indeed, are often offended by parody. Did not the Host of the Tabard stint Chaucer's *Tale of Sir Thopas*, the flower of burlesque romance?

Na moore of this, for Goddes dignitee,
 Quod ourè Hostè, for thou makest me
 So verry of thy verray lewednesse
 That, also wisly God my soule blesse,
 Min eres aken of thy drasty speche.
 Thou doost noght elles but despendest tyme.

The romances of chivalry came to an end in England not with a *Don Quixote*, but with Spenser's *Faery Queene*. Burlesque romances, like *The Tournament of Tottenham*, do not appear to have enjoyed popular favour. The author of *The Felon Sew*, whoever he may have been, built more skilfully than Ralph Rokeby would admit. He could invest a tale with mock-heroic wit and the extravagance of romantic elaboration. And, if his rimes jingle at times, his solemn smile makes one kind to his metrical shortcomings.

If, as we may assume, the poem was composed by a native of Teesdale or Swaledale, the dialect of the poem should be that of North Yorkshire; but the transcripts have a large number of midland forms of words. Our theory of a northern origin is confirmed by the occurrence of present participles ending in *-and*, such as *liggand* (lying) and *gāpand* (gaping); by the use of *at* as a conjunction; by the pronouns *sho*, and *everilkane*; by the strong preterites *gaf*, *rave*, *strake*, and *wald*; and such definitely northern forms as *bane*, *brade*, *busks*, *hame*, *alane*, *rape*, *sare*, *slike* (such), and *strang*. But throughout the transcripts are forms which are not northern; present participles in *-ing*, such as *roming*; the preterites

tould, would; and such forms as *home, bone, one, and two*, which indicate either a more southerly dialect of a locality on the border between northern and midland, or that the copyists made their text appropriate to London English. The latter supposition is confirmed by the spelling of the text, and moreover by the fact that all the riming words (whether northern or midland in form) make possible northern rimes; and some riming words, e. g. *hame* (home) and *name*, need to be written in their northern form to make a good rime. That the back spirant consonant heard in Scots 'loch' still remained in the dialect of the author is suggested by the rime of *saugh* (saw) with *laugh* (laugh). On the other hand the front spirant consonant heard in Scots 'bricht' had vanished, as is indicated by the rimes of *hee* (high) with *thee* and *tree*, and also by the spelling of 'might' as *meet* in Scott's transcript. This retention of the velar, and loss of the palatal spirant, is still to be observed amongst the Pennines in Upper Calderdale.

So that the preparation of a text of *The Felon Sew* presents an interesting problem. The original version seems only to have been recorded by Ralph Rokeby, and his manuscript and its first revision by Sir Thomas Rokeby are now lost. Sundry transcribers have done their best to make fair copies, and the results are interesting. They agree in scarcely one line, and their transcripts exemplify nearly all the common mistakes made by the rascal herd of clerks. In the present text the most archaic reading has been preferred, especially if it preserve a northern dialect word, against the majority of the transcripts. Our text is based on Boylston's, the eldest of the transcripts, collated with the Leeds transcript, and the version in Whitaker's *Richmondshire*, and that given in note lii of Scott's *Rokeby*.

A comparison of the resultant text with Scott's version reveals Scott's excellence as an editor. He was the first to see that the first word of the poem, 'The' in the transcripts, was a copyists' incorrect correction of an earlier 'Ye'. He restored rightly the 'ancestors' (1) and 'incounters' (43) of his transcript to the original 'aunters'. His knowledge of

the vocabulary of the poem was satisfactory, and he rarely tampered with the text. One or two slips he made. He altered 'Their measure was not meet' (72) to 'Their measure was not so meete'. He emendated 'For all their meet to labour were' (92) to 'For all their meete to labour there', mistaking meet (might) for meat. He altered 'fast then' (201) to 'full strong' to rime with 'throng' (204); and 'every day' (222), which his transcript had wrongly for 'every one', to 'on that day',—not a very happy shot. The baffling line 228, 'More loth of Louth Ryme', became in his version 'Nor Loth of Louthyane', not unnaturally, when Lothian was his great theme. He was not guilty of scoticising the text. The only possible accusations are a change of 'sea' (so) to 'sae', and a possible alteration of 'hend' (232) to 'kend'. When the text was beyond his capacity he left it. The corrupt line 129 he omitted, with the note, 'This line is almost illegible.' Scott's published version was better than Whitaker's. He understood the text. He transcribed it as correctly as he knew it, adding no stanzas and tagging no lines. In this ballad he showed himself a discriminating, a capable, and a careful editor.

T E X T

THE FELON SEW OF ROKEBY

I

Ye men that will of AunTERS¹ mene²
 That lately in this Land hath bene,
 Of one I will you tell;
 Of a Sew at³ was Sea Strang—
 5 Alas at ever She lived Sea Lang,
 For Fell⁴ folke did She wheell.⁵

¹ adventures ² be reminded ³ sow that ⁴ many ⁵ quell

1 Ye: Scott Ye; B, L, W The mene: B meane; rest, *wynne*

- She was mare then other three,
 The Griesliest Beast at ever might be,
 Her Head was great and Graye:
 10 She was bred in Rokeby Wood,
 There was few that thither Yode¹
 That came on live away.

 Her walk was endlang² Greta Side,
 There was no bern³ that Durst her bide
 15 That was fro Heaven to Hell:
 Nor never man that had that Might,
 That ever durst come in her Sight,
 Her force it was Sea fell.

 Ralph of Rokeby with full good will,
 20 The friers of Richmond gave her till
 Full well to gar⁴ them fare;
 Frier Middleton by his Name
 He was sent to fetch her hame
 At⁵ rued him Since full Sare.

 25 With him took he Wight⁶ men two;
 Peter Dale was one of tho,
 That other was Brian of Bear:
 And well durst Strike with Sword or knife,
 And feight full manly for his Life
 30 What⁷ time at mister weare.⁸

 These three went at Godes will,
 This wicked Sowe while they came till,
 Liggand under a Tree:
 Rugg and Rusty was her haire,
 35 Sho rase up with a fellow fare⁹
 To fight again the Three.

¹ went ² along ³ man ⁴ make ⁵ that ⁹ brave
⁷ when ⁸ need were ⁹ fierce look

26 B Paterdale 27 Scott, B *That ever was brim as beare*; W *The to'ther was Brian of Bayre*; L *Tother was Bryan of Beare* 30 Scott *as mister ware*; B *at Nusts weare*; L, W *as Musters were* 31 Scott *men went at God's will*; B *ment at Gods will*; L *Menn wended at their will*; W *men went at their will*

- Sho was So griesly for to meete;
 Sho rave the Earth up with her feete,
 The Bark came fro the Tree:
 40 When Fryer Middleton her Saugh
 Weet ye well he might not Laugh,
 Full earnestly Look't hee.
 These men of awnters was Sea wight,¹
 They bound them bauldly for to fight,
 45 And Strake at her full Seare:
 Untill a Kilne they gar't her flee;
 Wald God send them the Victory,
 They walde ask him no meare.
 The Sew was in the Kiln-hole down,
 50 And they were on the banks abown
 For hurting of their feet:
 They were Sea assaulted with this Sew,
 That amang them was a Stallworth² Stew³
 The Kilne began to reeke;
 55 Durst no man neigh⁴ her with his Hand,
 But put a Reape⁵ down with a Wand⁶
 And heltered her full meeke.
 They haled her forth against her will,
 While they coome unto a Hill
 60 A little fro the Street:
 And there She made them Such a fraye,
 3if⁷ they Should live to Domesday,
 They Tharrow⁸ it never forget;
 She braided⁹ up on every Side,
 65 And ran on them gapand¹⁰ full wide,
 For nothing would She lett:¹¹

¹ eager ² tremendous ³ dust ⁴ approach ⁵ rope
⁶ stick ⁷ if ⁸ might ⁹ started ¹⁰ gaping ¹¹ stop

38 rave: B rase 43 Scott, B aunter that was; W al was; L auncsters
 wre 50 L, W And they were on the bankes aboone; Scott As ... balke;
 B balks 56 L with a wand; Scott, B with his wand 57 L heltered;
 rest haltered: L meeke; rest meete 58 W haled; L hawoll'd; Scott,
 B hurled 59 While: B whiles 62 3if: W; B As if; Scott If; L As
 they had liv'd 63 Scott, B tharrow; W, L colde 65 gapand: so W;
 rest gaping

She gave slike braides at the brand
 That Peter Dale had in his Hand,
 He might not hold his feet.
 70 She chased them so to and fro,
 The wighte¹ men was never so woe,
 Their measure² was not meet.
 She bound her boldly to abide,³
 To Peter Dale Sho came aside
 75 With many a Hedious Yell:
 Sho gaped Soe wide, and cried Sea hee
 The Friar Said 'I conjure thee,
 Thou art a fiend of Hell.'
 'Thou art come hither for Some Traine,⁴
 80 I conjure thee to go againe
 Where thou wast wont to Dwell.'
 He signed him with Cross and Creed,
 Took forth a Book, began to read
 Of St. John his Gospell.
 85 The Sew Sho would not Latin heare,
 But only loked at the Freer,
 That blenked⁵ all his Blee:⁶
 And when Sho would have tane her hould
 The Fryer leaped,—as Jesus would,⁷—
 90 And beald⁸ him with a Tree.
 Sho was as brim⁹ as any Beare,
 For all their Might¹⁰ to Labour were¹¹
 To them it was no boote:
 On Trees and busks¹² at by her Stood
 95 She venged her as Sho was Wood,¹³
 And rave them up by Root.

¹ gallant
⁶ colour
¹¹ wage war

² timidity
⁷ willed
¹² bushes

³ remain
⁸ protected
¹³ mad

⁴ trick
⁹ fierce

⁵ blanched
¹⁰ ability

67 at: so Scott; rest *that* 70 *chased*: Scott *chafed*; B *chaufed*
 W, L *chased* 71 *The wighte men*: L *The wight menn*; B *That weigh*
men 76 *cried*: W *reyed* 86 *only, loked*: B *only Noked*; Scott, L, W
rudely rushed 87 *blenked*: so L, W; Scott *blinked*; B *blenched*
 90 *beald*: Scott *bealed*; L, W *beald*; B *brauld* 92 so B; Scott *For al*
their meete to labour there; L *And gave a grisly hideous Roare*; W omits
 94 at: B as; rest *that*.

He said 'Alas that I was Freer.
I shall be tugg'd in Sunder here.

Hard is my Destinye:

100 Wist my brether in this houre

That I was Set in slike¹ a Stowre,²

Yet walde they pray for me.'

This wicked beast that wrought this woe

Took the rape fro the other twoe,

105 And then they fled all three;

They fled away by Watling Street,

They had no Succour but their feet,

It was the more Pitty.

The fieldes it was both lost and Won,

110 The Sew went hame again full soon,

To Morton on the Greene.

When Ralph of Rokeby Saw the rape,

He wist at there had been Debate,

Where at the Sew had beene.

115 He bad them Stand out of her way:

'For Sho has had a Sudden Fraye

I saw her never so keen:

Full soon some new things Shall we hear

Of her and Middleton the Freer,

120 Some Battle has there been.'

But all that Served him for naught,

Had they not better Succor Sought,

They were serv'd there for ill.

Then Mistress Rokeby came anone,

125 And for her brought Sho Meat full Soone,

The Sew come her until.

¹ such

² conflict

98 *tugg'd*: so W; Scott, B *rugged*; L *lugg'd*. 100 *brether*: so W;
L *broder*; Scott, B *brethren* 101 *slike*: L *sike*; rest *such* 116 *has*:
Scott, B *had*; L *hath* 118 *Full soon*: so L; rest omit 120 *has*:
Scott, W *hath*; B *had* 123 *They were serv'd there for ill*: Scott *They*
were served therefore loe; B *They were ferd therefore Loe*; W *They feard*
she had spoil'd them cleane; L *They fear'd she'd spoyl'd them cleane*
126 *come her until*: Scott, B *came her unto*; L, W *until her come*

THE FELON SEW

She call'd her to the Kiln Door
 And gafe her meat upon the Floor,
 And noy Sho did her none.

130 When Frier Middleton came hame
 His brethren was full faine ilke ane,¹
 And Thanked God of his Life :
 He tould them all unto the End
 How he had foughten with a Fiend
 135 And lived through Mickle Strife.

We gave her battle half a Day,
 And sithin² was fain to flee away
 For saveing of our Life :
 And Peter Dale would never blin,³
 140 But ran as fast as he could Ryn⁴
 Till he came to his wife.

The Warden Said 'I am full woe,
 That ever ye Should be torment Soe,
 But wee had with you⁵ been ;
 145 Had we been there, your brethren all,
 We Should have gar't the Warlo⁶ fall,
 That wrought you all this teen.'

Freer Middleton Sayd Soone 'Nay,
 In faith, ye would have fled away
 150 When most mister⁷ had been.
 You will all Speike words at hame,
 A man⁸ would ding you everilkane,
 And⁹ it be as I weene.'

He look't So griesly all that night,
 155 The warden sayde 'Yon man will fighte,
 If ye Say out¹⁰ but good :

¹ every one ² then ³ stop ⁴ run ⁵ you ⁶ warlock
⁷ need ⁸ one man ⁹ If ¹⁰ aught

127 Scott and B omit 129 So L, W ; B *byer no more* ; Scott omits
 135 *through* : B in 137 *Sithin* : Scott *sithin* ; B *Sichin* ; W *then* ;
 L omits ll. 135-7. 146 *Warlo* : Scott, B *warle* ; W, L *carle* 156 *out* :
 so B ; rest *ought*

yon ghest¹ hath grieved him Sea Sare,
 Hold your Tongues and Speake noe mare,
 He looks as he were wood.'²

160 The warden waged³ on the morne
 Two boldest men that ever was borne,
 I ween, or ere Shall bee:
 The tone was Gilbert Griffins Son,
 Full mickle worship has he won,

165 Both by Land and Sea.

The tother a Bastard Son of Spaine,
 Many a Sarazin hath he Slaine,
 His Dint⁴ hath gar't them Die.

These two the battle undertook,
 170 Against the Sew, as Sayth the book,
 And Sealed security,
 That they Should boldly bide and fight,
 And Scomfit her in main and might,
 Or therefore shulde they die.

175 The Warden Sealed to them againe,
 And Said 'If ye in field be slayne,
 This condition make I:
 Wee shall for you Pray, Sing, and read
 Till Doomesday, with hartie Speed,
 180 With all our Progeny.'

Then the Letters was well made,
 Bandes bond⁵ with Seales brade,⁶
 As deeds of Armes Should bee:
 These men of Armes at was Sea wight,⁷

185 With Armour and with Brandes⁸ bright,
 They went this Sew to See.

¹ Yon ghost ² mad ³ hired ⁴ blow ⁵ Bonds bound
⁶ broad seals ⁷ brave ⁸ swords

157 *Zon ghest*: Scott *Yon guest*: B *Zoe ghest*; L, W *Yond guest*
 163 *The tone*: so W 166 *The tother*: so W; L *Tother*; Scott, B *The*
other was 167 *Many a*: B *Namde* 169 *These two*: Scott, B *These*
two men; L *These men* 171 *security*: B *securelye* 174 B omits
 177 *read*: so Scott, B; W *reed*; L *Beade* 182 *Bandes bond*: B *Bands*
bond; Scott *Bands bound*; W *Bonds ybound*; L *The Bonds were bound*

Sho made on them slike¹ a rerd²
 That for her they were Sore aferd,
 And almost bound to flee.

190 She came roming them³ again,
 That Saw the Bastard Son of Spain,
 He braided⁴ out his Brand:
 Full spiteously at her he Strake,
 For all the fence⁵ at he could make,
 195 Sho gat forth of his hand;
 And rave in Sunder half his Shield,
 And bare him backward in the Field;
 He might not her gaynstand.

Sho would have riven his privy geare,
 200 But Gilbert with his Sword of weare⁶
 He strake at her fast then:
 Her Shoulder till he held his Swerd,
 Then was good Gilbert sare afferd,
 When the blade brake in twayne.

205 Sithin⁷ in Hand he hath her Tane,
 Sho took him by the Shoulder beane
 And held her hold full fast:
 He Strave so Stiffely in that Stour,⁸
 That thorough all his rich armore,
 210 The Blood ran out at Last.

Then Gilbert grieved was Sea Seare,⁹
 That he rave off both Hide and Hayre,
 The flesh came fro the Beane:

¹ such ² roar ³ towards them ⁴ drew ⁵ defence ⁶ war
⁷ Then ⁸ conflict ⁹ sorely

187 rerd: so Scott, B; W *reare*; L *roar* 190 roming; Scott,
 B *roveing*; L, W *running* 193 spiteously: B *spightfully* 194 fence:
 B *force* 195 B *Sho gat Sword forth of his hand*; Scott *She gat sword*
out of hand; W *she gott sword out of his hand*; L *She struck't sword of his*
hand 201 *fast then*: Scott *full strong* 202 L *On her Shoulder still*
the held the sword; Scott *On her shoulder till she held the swerd*; B *On her*
Shoulder till Sho held his sword 204 L *When the blade brake in twang*;
 Scott *in throng*; W *in thrang*; B *in strange* 205 *Sithin*: Scott, B *Since*
in; W *And sine*; L *And when* 208 *strave*: B *straw* 210 *ran out*:
 so B; Scott, L, W *came out*

- And all with force he felled her there,
 215 And wan her worthily in weare,
 And band her him alane,
 And Kest¹ her on a Horse See hee²
 In two Panzers³ well made of Tree,⁴
 And to Richmond anone
 220 He brought her. When they Saw her come,
 They Sang merrily *Te Deum*
 The Fryers every one.
 They thanked God and St. Francis,
 At they had won the Beast of prise⁵
 225 And never a man was Slain.
 There did man never yet more manly,
 Knight Marcus nor yet Sir Guye,
 Nor Gother or Gawaine.
 If ye will any mare of this,
 230 In the Fryers of Richmond written it is,
 In parchement Good and fine:
 And how⁶ a Freer at was sea hend⁷
 At Greta Bridge Conjured a fiend
 In likeness of a Swine.
 235 It is well known to many a man,
 That Freer Theobald was warden then,
 And this fell in his time.
 And Christ them Bless both far and neer
 All that for Solace List to hear,
 240 And him that made the Rime.

¹ cast ² so high ³ paniers ⁴ wood ⁵ renown ⁶ who
⁷ pleasant

214 *felled*: L *held* 219 Scott *And to Richmond they did hay* 220 L *He brought her when they say her come* 222 *everyone*: Scott *on that day*; B *every day* 224 *At*: Scott, B *as*; L *that* 226 L, W *There did yet never man more manly*; B *There did never man yet more manly*; Scott *There did never a man more manly* 228 B *More lothe of Lowth Rime*; Scott orig. *More loth of Louth Kyme*, emend. 'Nor Loth of Louthyane'; L *Nor Louis of Lothraine* 232 *hend*: so W; Scott *kend*; B *lend* 232 *a Freer*: all *Friar Middleton* 237 B omits 238 *And Christ them*: B omits 239 *List to hear*: L *this' do hear*; Scott, B, W *list this to hear*

Ralph Rokeby with full good will,
 The Fryers of Richmond gave her till¹
 This Sew, to mend their fare:
 Fryer Middleton by name
 245 Needs would bring the fat Sew haime;
 That rewed him Since full Sare.

¹ to

244 *by name*: all *by his name* 245 *Needs would*: Scott, B *Would*
needs; L, W *He wolde needs* 246 *since*: W *sine*

NOTES

13. *Greta side*: the banks of the river Greta, a tributary of the Tees.

20. *The friers of Richmond*: Richmond Grey Friars, founded (according to Whitaker, *History of Richmondshire*, p. 98) by Ralph Fitz Randolph in 1258; suppressed 1539. 'There were a warden and fourteen brethren. 'At the bakke of the Frenchgate is the Grey Freres a little without the wawlis. Their house, medow, orchard, and a litle wood is waulid yn. Men go from the market place to hit by a posterne gate. There is a conducte of water at the Grey Freres, else there is none in Richemont' (Leland).

22. *Frier Middleton*: This name is not recorded elsewhere as far as I know. He appears to have been a member of the Middleton family, well enough known locally to be spoken of by his surname.

26. *Peter Dale . . . Brian of Bear*: Whitaker found 'a Brian Metcalfe of Bear near Aysgarth, a man of family and property'. It seems most unlikely that a local franklin should act as a runner. I suggest that these names may stand for two dogs, a terrier and a bear-hound.

60. *the street*: The Roman road from Catterick to Carlisle, which was the highway along which Friar Middleton would endeavour to drive the sow, going eastwards from Greta Bridge to Richmond. The author of the ballad calls it 'Watling Street' in l. 106.

84. *On St. John his Gospell*: This appears to be the beginning of Chapter I 'In principio erat verbum, et verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat verbum', &c., now said as the last gospel of the mass. The friars are supposed to have complied with a popular demand by saying the 'In principio' from house to house. Friar Middleton relies on its efficacy as a profession of faith against the fiend of mankind. Evidently, like the sign of the cross, it could be used either as a blessing or as an exorcism. It was his last resort, after the sign of the cross and the recitation of the creed had failed.

106. *Watling Street*: the Roman road; see note on l. 60.

111. *Morton on the Greene*: Mortham, the hall of Squire Rokeby, which stood east of the confluence of the Greta with the Tees. 'Where the Greta meets the Tees stand the two villages of Rokeby and Mortham. Rokeby is on the left, and Mortham on the right bank of the Greta, about half a mile nearer to the point of union' (Hunter). 'The situation of Mortham is eminently beautiful, occupying a high bank, at the bottom of which the Greta winds out of a dark, narrow, and romantic dell' (Scott). 'Mortham is an embattled house, probably built about the reign of Henry VII; a true border mansion, with all the peculiar features of that era and rank of domestic architecture; a through lobby, kitchens to the left hand, with arched doors out of the lobby to the batteries; a hall on the right hand up to the roof, and an handsome tower beyond the hall. At one end is a barnekyn inclosure for the nightly protection of the cattle from depredators, strongly walled about with stone' (Whitaker, *Hist. Rich.*, p. 185).

163. *Gilbert Griffins Son* . . . a Bastard Son of Spaine: Are these two more dogs, or are they butchers? Whitaker notes: 'There was a neighbouring family at this time, which is mentioned in Gale's *Registrum* under the name D'Espagna, unquestionably the same.' 'Unquestionably' is too affirmative. It is unlikely that a nobleman would help a friar to drive home a pig.

227. *Knight Marcus*: Probably King Mark of Cornwall, the uncle of Sir Tristram. If so, the allusion is not to his courage but to his cunning. He was called 'King Fox', according to Malory, because 'he fareth all with wiles and treason'.

Sir Guye: Guy of Warwick, the famous hero of romance and chap-book.

228. *Nor Gother or Gawaine*: My emendation of 'More Lothe of Lowth Rime'. Sir Gowther was the semi-supernatural hero of a northern romance, written c. 1400. Sir Gawaine was the renowned nephew of King Arthur.

G. H. COWLING.

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENT IN ENGLISH POETRY

THE principle which guided the compilers of a recent anthology of English mystical verse is stated by them to have been 'a desire to include only such poems and extracts from poems as contain intimations of a consciousness wider and deeper than the normal'. It is inevitable that a selection founded upon this somewhat indefinite basis should be remarkable for its omissions. From the fact that nearly five-sixths of the poems included have been written within the last three generations, we may infer that mysticism in English poetry is a comparatively modern growth. It is probably true that, at the present day, a great many persons whose attitude towards life is habitually governed by a sense of secret influences unperceived by the ordinary run of men betake themselves to verse, as the only possible medium of unfettered self-expression, with a certain amount of success. Such verse is the outcome of a need which, if not felt more acutely, is certainly encouraged more readily in our own day than in the past. If it does not always stand the test of publication, it has at any rate the merit of sincerity. It can easily be distinguished, by its fervency, and even by its formal shortcomings and occasional incoherence, from the work, often of greater poetical capacity, of those who, without any special devotion to an inner shrine of their own, project themselves for the time being into the thought of the mystic. This distinction has not been sufficiently observed in the anthology to which reference has been made. Verse about mysticism is a very different thing from the verse of the mystic; and there are certain poems which might have been excluded from the collection in favour of older pieces which, even if their authors may not be reckoned as conscious mystics,

nevertheless contain evident signs of 'a consciousness wider and deeper than the normal'.

The term 'consciousness', however, stands in need of stricter definition. The special form assumed by the consciousness of the mystic is the perception of an eternal principle with which the soul of man desires alliance or complete identity. To apply Shelley's famous image of life and eternity to the passion of the mystic, it is his longing to come face to face with the white radiance, without the interposition of the dome of many-coloured glass. In the English literature of the eighteenth century, traces of this habit of mind are rare; and the Romantic revival opened out a variety of channels for its exercise which the thought of an earlier age, so far as poetry is concerned, had left unexplored. Although the divergence between the transcendental view of the relationship between the human and the divine and the theory of the immanence of divinity in the soul is strongly marked in the verse of the 'metaphysical' poets, their mysticism is fundamentally Christian. Tinged though it is with neo-Platonic ideas, it shows no tendency to accept their consequences beyond the bounds of orthodoxy; and even speculators who were attracted by such esoteric systems as Rosicrucianism sought to build their secret temple within the visible Church rather than to venture outside it on lines of their own. To-day, on the other hand, the mysticism which finds vent in verse is by no means exclusively Christian. The desire of the finite for the infinite, and the stages by which the soul frees itself from the trammels of the world, are essential elements in all forms of religion; and, though the modern mystic still constantly clothes his ideals in mediaeval Christian symbolism, his general tendency is towards eclectic systems to which Christianity is only contributory.

At the same time, it is unquestionable that the terms in which the mediaeval mystic interpreted his longings and attainments exercise a singular spell over his present-day successor. The essence of his thought was the restlessness of the human soul until it found rest in God, and, on the other hand, the persistent pursuit by God of the soul of man. Man,

constantly evading his pursuer, turning to false loves and finding his quest unsatisfied, is at length worn down in the chase, and, in his submission, discovers the real aim of his wanderings. The anonymous author of *Quia amore langueo* roams vainly in mountain and mead, searching for a true love. His condition is that described by St. Augustine in the words which Shelley chose as the motto of *Alastor*: 'nondum amabam et amare amabam, quaerebam quid amarem amans amare'. Christ, wounded by man for man's sake, appears to him, sitting under a tree upon a hill, and pleads with him, recounting His pains, and assuring him of the bliss that the soul will find in union with Him. In this instance man, arrested by the tale of love and suffering, is merely the listener: his persuasion is left to inference from the note of contentment upon which the poem closes. Four hundred years or more later, in Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven*, it is the human soul which records its turnings and doublings before the 'deliberate speed, majestic instancy' of the following feet, and its eventual surrender to their importunity. The pursuer is sovereign rather than suppliant, His entreaties are commands; but the theme, if treated in a somewhat different way, is essentially the same.

The Hound of Heaven, in spite of its profusion of imagery dressed in an unfamiliar vocabulary, is probably the most popular of modern religious poems. One, and perhaps the most powerful, reason for this is its entire freedom from the picturesque but over-sensuous type of metaphor of which the Christian mystic has availed himself liberally in dealing with this theme of eternal interest. The ardour of the 'tremendous Lover' is bent upon recovering and fortifying the wayward soul, not upon overwhelming it with caresses and cloying it with sweetness. When Dr. Inge says that the influence of the Song of Solomon upon Christian mysticism has been 'simply deplorable', and has been responsible for hysterical aberrations which are 'as alien to sane mysticism as they are to sane exegesis', he is uttering an opinion which a great many of his fellow-countrymen will gratefully endorse. It is impossible, however, to judge mystical phraseology

entirely from the standpoint of national common sense, or even from that of ordinary good taste. 'Quid enim?' wrote St. Bernard to the prior and convent of the Grande-Chartreuse, 'egone tam temerarius essem ut inter sponsi brachia suaviter quiescentem auderem suscitare dilectam, quousque vellet ipsa? Putarem illico auditurum me ab illa: Noli mihi molestus esse: ego dilecto meo, et dilectus meus mihi, qui pascitur inter lilia.' Such words, to which a thousand parallels could be found, read unnaturally to minds not fostered upon a symbolical interpretation of Scripture; and the class of poem, of which the supreme example is the 'En una noche oscura' of St. John of the Cross, may seem to many to endow a spiritual experience with the character of a mere love-adventure. An unsympathetic judgement, however, may easily go wrong in reducing language alien to its own standards to the plane of ordinary thought. The mystic, as Suger, the great abbot of Saint-Denis, said of that state of contemplation to which he was often elevated by the sight of earthly beauty, dwells 'in a clime extraneous to the world, not wholly amid the dregs of earth, nor wholly in the pure atmosphere of heaven'; and, in this condition, 'puro e disposto a salire alle stelle', he uses the language and imagery of earth in a refined and spiritualized sense to express those things for which he finds no real equivalent in human speech. It is not his fault if we misunderstand him.

Nevertheless, the Englishman, at any rate since the Reformation, has never been wholly at ease with the symbolic tongue used naturally by the great foreign mystics. Even though there is abundant evidence to show that mystics like St. Teresa have possessed a more than ordinary degree of practical ability in dealing with everyday affairs, he looks upon the contemplative life as eminently unpractical. 'Christian annihilation, extasis, exolution', and the rest of the handsome anticipations of heaven enumerated by Sir Thomas Browne, are outside his experience, and he regards manifestations of them with some suspicion. Nor have they affected his poetry to any great extent. Crashaw is a remarkable example to the contrary; but Crashaw belonged to the com-

munion in which the mystical habit of mind finds peculiar encouragement, and his most enduring verse was inspired by contact with foreign mysticism. Cowley's fine tribute to his dead friend is in the nature of an apology: if his admiration for the poet and saint betrays him into enthusiasm, he must add a saving clause which exculpates himself from complete sympathy with his 'nice tenents'; and, though Cowley's head was a factory of ingenious fancies, he had no mystical tendencies of his own. Cowley and Crashaw, indeed, represent two entirely different products of the school of poets which founded its practice upon fantastic speculation. Cowley's pleasure begins and ends in scholastic argument decked out with artificial metaphor: he works to exhaustion the poetic conventions whose last struggle for life we see in Dryden's earlier poems. Amid such conventions Crashaw walks uneasily: in *The Flaming Heart* he plays with them like a musician improvising upon an uncertain theme. When at last he strays into the right key, his melody frees itself of all superfluous intricacy, and his expression is direct and noble.

The 'metaphysical' fashion in poetry, while it afforded a soil favourable to the growth of the mystical temperament, was not in itself a form of mysticism. The mystic deals with matters that are beyond an ordinary comprehension; but, the clearer his understanding of them, the more readily he abandons encumbrances which cloud his meaning. No Christian mystic has seen deeper than Dante; but where his insight is most profound, his language is most terse and simple. The philosophical and physical arguments into which he digresses are often obstacles to the clearness of his own vision, and their obscurities are not always the fault of the reader's inferior intelligence. Our early seventeenth-century poets were, as a rule, too much in love with the task of hunting out clever comparisons from unlikely sources to get much further. Donne's pious meditations upon the ubiquity of the form of the cross in nature, and his excessively ingenious descant upon his westward ride on Good Friday, are merely knockings at the gate of mysticism. Where, as in his *Hymn to God the Father* or in some of his *Holy Sonnets*, he exchanges his usual

manner for the language of impetuous prayer, he speaks with knowledge of what the mystic feels, but with the consciousness of the barrier that must be beaten down before he can tread the mystic way. The world is still in his path, he is still betrothed to the enemy: the Sun of Righteousness shines on him, but through mists of doubt and fear.

Of the best beloved of Donne's younger contemporaries, George Herbert, it has been truly said that he was an ascetic rather than a mystic. His fancies are clarified from worldliness, and his temptations to rave against restraint are easily repressed. The theological *via media* in which he found happiness, a straight path fenced in securely from the perils of Rome on one hand and of Geneva on the other, was a school of calm contentment whose lessons screened him from the violence of the world's assaults and showed him the heavenly light at the end of his course. His serene gladness falls short of mystical rapture. The charm of the most beautiful and natural of his lyrics, the *Easter Song*,

I got me flowers to straw Thy way,
I got me boughs off many a tree;
But Thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee,

depends upon its perfect application of the joy and brightness of a spring morning to the hallowed associations of the queen of feasts. One has only to compare it with the closing stanza of Crashaw's Nativity hymn:

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
Bright Dawn of our eternal Day!
We saw Thine eyes break from their east
And chase the trembling shades away.
We saw Thee, and we blest the sight.
We saw Thee by Thine own sweet light.

The difference is at once apparent. While Herbert's verse takes its origin from the suggestion of its natural surroundings, Crashaw uses imagery from nature to express an adoration to which time and place are merely an afterthought. The safe Anglicanism in which Herbert was rooted and grounded

was a good field for the exercise of the Christian virtues; but its moderation and its distrust of excess of sentiment made it an insufficient breeding-ground for the mystic. At a later day, the contrast between the tender and pious calm of *The Christian Year* and the ecstasy of *The Dream of Gerontius* illustrates the same divergence of thought and feeling.

In the preface to *Silex Scintillans*, Henry Vaughan confessed himself a convert of George Herbert's 'holy life and verse'. If the prevailing atmosphere of Herbert's poetry is tranquil, that of Vaughan's is the very heart of quietness. Devout English churchman as he was, he was less dependent than Herbert upon the agency of forms and ceremonies. The direct influence upon his verse of the religious system to which he subscribed is relatively small. His lyrics are the result, not so much of moments of pious meditation snatched from an active life, as of hours of undisturbed contemplation in the night-watches and the early dawn, spent in visions of

that mighty and eternal light,
Where no rude shade, or night
Shall dare approach us; we shall there no more
Watch stars, or pore
Through melancholy clouds, and say,
'Would it were Day!'

This light is the perpetual theme of his poetry. Eternity is 'the great ring of pure and endless light', of which Time is the vast shadow, moving within its circle. The habitation of the saints is the world of light, from which their bright memories shine through gloom and mist like stars. In the hush of early morning, when the day-star heralds the dawn above the hills, and the silence is broken only by the voice of the stream, he waits in expectation of some sudden 'all-surprising' light, the radiance of a celestial apparition whose locks are 'crowned with eternity'. Mystical phraseology was familiar to him, and, if he did not share his brother's absorption in the *arcana* of mysticism, he had at any rate a share of his temperament. He once quotes the phrase invented by mystics to express the obscurity of the *O altitudo* to which

they pursue their reason, the 'deep, but dazzling darkness' which is in God.

O for that Night! where I in Him
Might live invisible and dim!

But his habitual conception of God is the source of light, irradiating the 'bright and blest beam' of faith and germinating 'flowers and shoots of glory' in the soul. If Vaughan belonged by kindred to the 'metaphysical' school and frequently, and not always gracefully, followed its habit of fanciful and strained analogy, his best verse is singularly free from its characteristic tricks. The quality of thought in which he anticipates Wordsworth has often been remarked; but he also anticipates that magic in the use of simple words which is the gift of the daily teaching of woods and rills, and of the prompting of

Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind.

Using the formulae of modern exponents of mysticism, one may say that Vaughan, whether consciously or not, has definitely set foot on the mystic way. He has renounced the world for a life of contemplation: he has arrived at a stage at which the things which he sees through a glass darkly disclose themselves to him in clearer outlines, the initial stage of the illumination which is the prelude to union. His whole cast of thought is transcendental. God is an external object of attainment: if His light filled the soul in its 'angel-infancy', the soul has receded from it and needs direction towards it. The yearning of the divine for the human has little place in Vaughan's imagination. On the other hand, the sense of the gulf fixed between God and man, which Milton used all the resources of his genius to emphasize, is absolutely foreign to the mystic, and is absent from Vaughan's verse. The 'ancient track' remains unbroken behind the soul: if, in its weaker moments, it feels incapable of retracing its steps, the line of communication is still open. 'The noble soul', says Dante, 'returns to God as to the harbour whence it set out, when it embarked upon the sea of this life.'

Vaughan, however, feels that, while the way for return exists, the soul meantime has lost its primal light and needs illumination from without. The Platonic doctrine, which Spenser expounded at length in the *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*, the conception of the soul as a 'fair lamp' kindled from the native planet to which it must return, and giving form to the perishable body, is alien to his thought. *The Retreat* is the most widely known of Vaughan's poems, because it states with extreme clearness, and in felicitous and tuneful language, an experience which Wordsworth afterwards developed in his famous *Ode*; but its subject is not one to which he frequently returns. The general likeness between it and the 'How like an angel came I down' of Vaughan's contemporary, who lived and wrote at no great distance from him, Thomas Traherne, is obvious. Traherne's poetry is a recent discovery, and there has been an inevitable tendency to discover in it more than its real merits. It suffers from extravagant and tasteless allusions: the comparison of the soul beloved of God to Danaë and Ganymede may be a logical consequence of the mystical employment of erotic similitudes, but it is a dangerous experiment. The *Hymn upon St. Bartholomew's Day*, a theme which has caused some perplexity to the writers of popular hymns, is a curious exercise in the art, practised with much skill by the 'metaphysical' poets, of making bricks without straw, and containing two of the worst lines in English:

What heavenly light inspires my skin,
Which doth so like a Deity appear!

The number of striking lines in Traherne's verse is, indeed few; and his speculations in prose are, on the whole, more impressive than when strung together in irregular rhyme. His brain was active and fertile, with a strong inclination for losing itself in mystical paradoxes; but his verse is not the natural outcome of ecstasy so much as a rhapsodical attempt to write himself into that condition. Nevertheless, it has the great value, alone among the verse of English poets of his school and age, of bringing out in precise terms a recogni-

tion of the immanence of the divine principle in the soul. Familiar as the idea was to neo-Platonic philosophers and continuous as its history had been since their day, it had not been formulated in English verse with the conviction and consistency with which Traherne held it. His soul is no longer the prisoner of his body. Coming from God full of inextinguishable light, it partakes of the essence of the Deity : it is free to range where it will, to comprehend all things in its supernatural range of operation :

A strange extended orb of Joy,
 Proceeding from within,
 Which did on every side convey
 Itself, and being nigh of kin
 To God did every way
 Dilate itself even in an instant, and
 Like an indivisible centre stand,
 At once surrounding all eternity.

Traherne had not waxed pale at philosophic draughts from the mysteries of Iamblichus and Plotinus ; and in these lines there is a remarkable anticipation of Shelley's description in *Adonais* of the boundless range of activity of the ' intense atom ', man's soul :

Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth ;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference : then shrink
 Even to a point within our day and night.

Traherne died in 1674, Vaughan in 1695 ; and for a century there was an almost entire cessation of mystical thought which found a channel in verse. In *The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse* the eighteenth century, before the day of Blake, is represented by only four pieces, the famous lines upon the *Anima Mundi* from Pope's *Essay on Man*, a lyric by Dr. Watts, John Byrom's *Letter from Jacob Behmen*, and the lines from Cowper's *Task* beginning

The Lord of all, himself through all diffus'd,
 Sustains, and is the life of all that lives.

Byrom, indeed, was a mystic whose contemplation of the 'mystery of Love' celebrated in his universally known Christmas hymn deserves more attention than it has received; and the German mystic whom he followed was also a source of inspiration to a divine of the eighteenth century whose practical manual of the Christian life is still a classic, William Law. The selection from Watts might be enlarged with advantage; for his best verse has nobility of thought and style, and the language of the Song of Songs has seldom been used with such faultless taste and beauty as in his hymn, 'Christ hath a garden walled around'. But Pope's brilliant condensation of pantheism, even though pantheism may be the logical extension to all nature of the doctrine of the 'vital spark of heavenly flame' to which he apparently subscribed, does not prove him a mystic; and Cowper, whose devout love of nature led him into avowals which are virtually pantheistic, would undoubtedly have been horrified to find his sense of the omnipresence of a God who, to him and his school of thought, was simply a 'non-natural man' construed in this way. The pietists of the evangelical movement were emphatically not mystics, at any rate in the popular form which their teaching took. Their influence upon hymnody may be well studied in that familiar anthology, *The Book of Praise*. If we can select from it here and there a lyric, such as Charles Wesley's 'Come, O thou Traveller unknown', which breathes the true spirit of mysticism, these are few. From the greater number the exaltation and energy which belong to mystical verse are wanting; and, with these examples to guide us, we can understand the popular notion which has tacitly divorced hymns from any connexion with poetry.

Blake stands by himself in a lonely place, rapt in visions of his own which fall within no recognized mystical category, seeing the image of the eternal, debased though it may be by man himself, in the human form, and building perfect cities for regenerated man to inhabit in the name of Liberty and under the banner of Love—a Christian mystic, but outside the pale of authorized creeds. To reduce Blake's

utterances to an ordered system is impossible. Such passages as the famous quatrain, 'To see a World in a grain of sand', at the beginning of *Auguries of Innocence*, allows us for a moment to catch sight of the central stronghold of his thought:

Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then
Round the half-glimpst turrets slowly wash again.

These moments are all on which we can depend, and the 'end of a golden string' which he offers us as a clue drops from our fingers, as our destination vanishes in the wreaths of vapour conjured up by our elusive guide.

In his poems of the innocence of childhood, however, Blake supplies a link between the angel-infancy celebrated by Vaughan and Traherne and Wordsworth's glorification of the infant mind. The mystical attitude, incomprehensible to the man of the world, is clearness and simplicity to those who have put the world behind them. They have become as little children, and the secrets hidden from the wise and prudent are revealed to babes, and are the common language of 'the nurseries of heaven'. The real solution of the discrepancy between the heights and depths of Wordsworth's style, between those moments when 'the light that never was, on sea or land' sheds the fullness of its beams upon his verse, restoring the heart and controlling wayward impulse, and those intervals of solemn disquisition upon trifles or of mere prattle which are all too common with him, lies in the essentially childlike candour of his thought. He may lament the departure of 'the glory and the gleam', the progressive obscuration of the divine light of childhood until the vision splendid fades into the light of common day; but the simplicity of childhood remains with him, with its readiness to discover wonder in all things, great or small, irrespective of their actual proportions. Contact with the world has taught him that there is a difference between their value, and his attempts to find material for his verse in trivial objects often reflect his disillusionment; but, on the contrary, those celestial perceptions in which he finds compensation are heightened

immeasurably, and he is able to define them with unequalled power.

Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
 Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
 And see the Children sport upon the shore,
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The mysticism of Wordsworth was fostered under different auspices from that of the seventeenth-century poets: it was learned from nature, and theological conceptions had little or no influence upon it. Its philosophical basis owed little to 'the spectacles of books': how it was acquired and systematized may be read in *The Prelude*. Probably all that can be said of Wordsworth's theory of the relation between man and nature, of the bond of sympathy that exists between both by virtue of the same indwelling source of life, of the power of nature to teach and console, has been said, although it is a point upon which all who have found in his poetry one of the supreme gifts of literature may well be excused for dwelling. At the root of it is the sense of divine immanence which has been frequently explained as a form of pantheism. There is indeed a strong likeness between

A motion and a spirit, that impels
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
 And rolls through all things,

and Shelley's idea, derived from the *Timaeus* of Plato, of 'the one Spirit's plastic stress', which

Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
 All new successions to the forms they wear.

Wordsworth's spirit of nature, however, has a transcendental quality which does not belong to the inherently active force characterized by Shelley. It is a heavenly spirit, taking up its abode in all natural objects, and ennobling them by its presence, an effulgence which tinges them and gives them

a new and special value, showing that they are worth something for their own sake. Wordsworth delights in natural forms and objects as his means of communication with the supernatural being which has given them beauty. Shelley, on the other hand, never feels the same charm in nature. It is a source of imagery of the most beautiful kind, because, without its help, expression would fail. But the spirit with which he would fain stand face to face is imprisoned behind it, labouring to remove 'the unwilling dross that checks its flight' through the dull and dense mass, and to compel it to a form which shall reveal the hidden. The world is the veil which hides reality, a thick haze through which the underlying radiance faintly glimmers. Shelley's sense of the impediment and of his powerlessness to break it down and effect the direct communion which he desires is at war with his susceptibility to natural beauty; and, although his verse constantly glows with an unearthly splendour, and at its highest, as in the concluding lyrics of *Prometheus Unbound*, rises to an ecstasy of clear vision and inspired prophecy, its frequent accent of thwarted endeavour and conscious weakness is in the strongest contrast to the stillness and confidence which the forms of nature revealed to Wordsworth. Nevertheless, if Wordsworth's acceptance of nature as the hallowed dwelling-place in which the divine spirit reveals itself is opposed to Shelley's conception of it as the material covering which hides the divine, neither of these theories can be absolutely identified with pantheism. In neither case, at any rate, is there any attempt to formulate a dogma, and it would not be easy to reduce Shelley's record of emotions swayed by varying impulses to a consistent body of doctrine.

The source of mystical insight in the great romantic poets was that 'strong music in the soul' which Coleridge, lamenting his own loss of it, was able to define more explicitly than Wordsworth, who lived under its influence:

Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which, wedding Nature to us, gives in dower
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud.

The prevailing spirit of romantic poetry is its joy in the recovery of the sense of mystery and hidden beauty in nature. This consciousness of mystery, however, is not in itself mysticism, and a deceptive likeness between words may mislead us into discovering mysticism in the keen perception of the magic charm of nature and the power of putting it into phrases of haunting and undying music—the power which belongs to Shakespeare and Keats above all other poets. This gift, indeed, may work marvels in certain directions, establishing unsuspected relations between man and his surroundings by some sudden and felicitous harmony, some choice of words that give a shape and semblance to the unexpressed or well-nigh inexpressible. It heightens the value of a concrete image by a touch of splendid colour or by some stroke that sets it instantly in sharp relief; but its origin is delight in the things of the earth, and its effect is to etherealize them or place them in a fairyland of the imagination rather than to transform them into a likeness or symbol of the supernatural. Such magnificent similes as that in which Shakespeare likens the decline of Antony's glory to 'black vesper's pageants', such a series of pictures as that which accompanies the narrative of *The Ancient Mariner*, such a reminiscence of dream-land as Keats'

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

are achievements of the shaping spirit of magic, working upon the visible and conjuring from it the essence of its secret attraction, the unsubstantial beauty which makes us acknowledge that we are such stuff' as dreams are made of. But the mystic stands in contemplation of realities which to him are more than dreams: the images which nature summons up before him are not the chance creations of fitful moods, but abiding possessions. 'Black vesper's pageants' are no longer charged with fear and foreboding.

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.

A deep and solemn harmony ' pervades his thoughts ; and, if he is less constantly responsive to the active and restless temperament than the poet who has not attained this state of calm security, the quiet radiance in which he dwells becomes a perpetual source of encouragement and healing. His words of exhortation may in themselves be simple :

Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound !

but they reflect the light of ' the Temple's inner shrine ', with which he has been face to face. These are the signs which give Wordsworth his pre-eminent place as the mystic among the romantic poets: Shelley, no doubt, surpasses him in loftiness and splendour of imagination and style, but Wordsworth attained the clear and uninterrupted vision which was Shelley's aim, and found in direct communion with the heart of nature what Shelley sought in poetry and philosophy.

If mysticism is distinct from the element of natural magic in poetry, or if, to put it in another way, the mystic expresses his sense of the hidden charm of nature in a peculiar accent which is the result of a special intimacy, his language is nevertheless that of symbolism and analogy. He cannot transliterate his experience into mortal characters: he has ' heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter '. Thus mystical poetry is entirely divorced from the type of verse which is merely a medium for dogmatic statement. Such a poem as Swinburne's *Hertha*, with its thorough-going pantheism, simply defines a dogma, in splendid and exalted strains, it is true, but with the precision of a schoolman :

I the grain and the furrow,
The plough-cloven clod
And the ploughshare drawn through
The germ and the sod,
The deed and the doer, the seed and the sower, the
dust which is God.

The conclusion embodied in these lines may be derived primarily from mystical speculation. As has been said

already, when the immanence of the divine principle in the soul is once recognized, the extension of the idea to the acknowledgement of that principle as the soul of the world is natural; but there the mystic stops. To push it further is to run the risk of confounding the spiritual with the material; and Swinburne's verse is simply the triumphant hymn of a materialism which is the negation of mysticism, and is as far removed from it as was the hymnody of the later eighteenth century. The eternal quest of the mystic is to remove the barrier which separates the apparent from the real, to reach a state of mind in which he no longer has to cry :

I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high.

But in this state he is enfolded and absorbed by a conception of reality which is beyond human terms. If he can convey it in language at all, it must be by inadequate symbols or in the phrases of some esoteric system which has more value as a *memoria technica* than as verse. To absorb his conception in himself and to avow, with Swinburne, that there is nothing real but what is apparent, is to abandon the quest.

The attempt of this essay has been to indicate the chief lines which have been pursued by mystical poets in English verse, and the discussion of their development in modern times would do little more than amplify what has been said of the distinction which marks off genuine mysticism from a sensitiveness to mysterious influences. The degree of true mysticism in Christian poetry is always hard to appreciate, so easy is it for the religiously-minded poet to appropriate the mystical language of Holy Scripture to his own emotions. Assuredly, the mere asseveration of religious convictions in verse, or the mere expression of a calm satisfaction in a settled theory, have little to do with mysticism. The sense of a future state which makes all amends for the troubles of life may well be a source of content and happiness; and *The Christian Year*, pervaded as it is by a Wordsworthian joy in the common things of every day and by the knowledge of their power to quiet and alleviate fitful impulses, has been

a strong influence in fostering and strengthening a type of character which it has admirably described :

There are in this loud stunning tide
 Of human care and crime,
 With whom the melodies abide
 Of th' everlasting chime;
 Who carry music in their heart
 Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
 Plying their daily task with busier feet,
 Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

This is the strain which we hear in the verse of Christina Rossetti, ever living in the shelter of the will in which is our peace, and turning from the sorrows of the world to visions of 'Light above light, and Bliss beyond bliss', in which the divine Sufferer welcomes those who have known His griefs. To her brother's question :

Oh! what is this that knows the road I came,
 The flame turned cloud, the cloud returned to flame,
 The lifted shifted steeps and all the way?

to all

Blank misgivings of a Creature
 Moving about in worlds not realized,

she has her confident answer. Yet, in Christina Rossetti, much as she owed to mystical influences, there is perhaps too strong a tendency to differentiate the human from the divine, and to make the raptures of another world an easy solution for the doubts and aspirations of this. To raise mortals to the skies is a less difficult task than to draw an angel down.

It is this harder task which the mystic finds means to perform. It is not so much in moments when the soul is 'whirl'd about empyreal heights of thought' and rises superior to the world, as in the constant search for a peace that transfigures the ordinary emotions and activities of life that the mystic finds the joy of permanent attainment. The prayer of Matthew Arnold :

Calm soul of all things! make it mine
 To feel, amid the city's jar,
 That there abides a peace of thine,
 Man did not make, and cannot mar,

is the cry of one who stands upon the threshold of a retreat of the soul in which things human and divine assume a novel meaning and our seeing is illuminated by a master-light from the fountains of eternal splendour. In such a security there is no clear line of division between the apparent and the real, the material and the immaterial: it is in this transformed aspect of the simplest things that the presence of the divine is found:

The angels keep their ancient places;—
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!

The discovery may reveal itself in divers forms. It may be, as to Wordsworth, a quiet effulgence of glories to which he does not give a name, lighting up the path of life and compelling music and fragrance from all on which it shines. It may come in the sense of a supernatural companionship, guiding and shepherding unconscious souls, and disclosing itself to those to whom it lends 'the vision of a seer', as in Miss Underhill's lines upon

The one who walked with starry feet the western road
by me.

This is the companionship to which the soul yields in *The Hound of Heaven* after long evasion; and nowhere are the struggles of the soul in its efforts after mystical happiness so strikingly and so variously described, or with such wealth of personal experience as in the verse of Francis Thompson, now starting on his journey to 'the land of Luthany, the tract of Elenore', a region as unsubstantial as Edgar Allen Poe's mystic Aidenn, now finding his wanderings about the London streets lit up by visions which unite time with eternity. But whatever be the form which the revelation assumes, life to the initiated seer is no longer the dome of many-coloured glass which death shatters to fragments: the material impediment still exists, but no longer hides, and the white radiance streams through it unchecked.

A. HAMILTON THOMPSON.

ROMANTICISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

THE term 'Romanticism' has the air of a faded shibboleth echoing the outworn literary controversies between 'classic' and 'romantic' of a hundred and more years ago. But old-fashioned weapons, rusty with disuse, may be called into play by the stress of living issues, and thus acquire a seeming relevance to our current aims and notions which they did not originally, and do not it may be properly, possess. In academic America, in particular, 'Romanticism' has been adopted by several very able and distinguished writers, as a comprehensive label for a whole complex of writings and tendencies in modern literature of which they profoundly, and in a great degree justly, disapprove. Mr. Paul Elmer More, for instance, formerly editor of the *New York Nation*, and sometimes described as the Sainte-Beuve of America, supplemented the admirable series of his 'Shelborne Essays' with a comprehensive survey of the degenerate tendencies of modern society, which he called 'The Drift of Romanticism'.¹ And Mr. Irving Babbitt, professor of French at Harvard, has published four volumes of powerful argument and serried erudition, all devoted, in substance, to an indictment of 'Romanticism'.² The last of them, which couples with it the name of Rousseau, it is proposed to consider in the present essay.

In the first place, it is to be observed that we have to do in this indictment with something much weightier and more important than a mere discussion of literary ideas. Any one who opens 'Rousseau and Romanticism' expecting an academic

¹ *The Drift of Romanticism* (Constable), 1913.

² *Literature and the American College* (1908); *The New Laokoon* (1910); *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912); *Rousseau and Romanticism* (Houghton and Mifflin, 1919).

discussion of literary origins will be entirely mistaken. The gravamen of the polemic is that the ideas of Romanticism, and of Rousseau their principal source, are not merely vicious in literature, but morally insidious and destructive in life. Mr. Babbitt believes that these ideas are at work, under a host of specious disguises, fostering disintegration of principle and ethical standards in the vast half-educated population of America, and yet more in the American colleges and universities, where moral contagion through intellectual media is peculiarly easy, direct, and influential. He even proposes to make conduct the court of final adjudication upon the worth of the ideas. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The history of theological controversy abundantly illustrates the hazards incident to this procedure. But as the present essay will be mainly occupied with criticism, I desire at the outset to recognize with sincere respect the concern for vital moral issues, and for the future of America—now, in common with the entire Occident, tending, in his view, 'rather away from than towards civilization'—which informs this book.

I.

The More-Babbitt polemic bears a certain resemblance, on the surface, to the redoubtable performances of the Giffords and Crokers of a century ago against the 'Romantic' revolutionary heresies of Wordsworth and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. They too saw the established standards of classic taste and, as they commonly and not always wrongly added, of orthodox morality, outraged and set aside. These great poets are usually supposed to have long since won a complete triumph over Gifford and his fellows at the bar of criticism. We are not so sure. For Mr. Babbitt the intervening nineteenth century has no claim to have taught us anything of profound and lasting value. It was an age with 'a great peripheral richness and a great central void'. Philosophy and poetry alike have done little but follow misleading lures. Philosophy is 'bankrupt' since Kant, nay since Descartes; almost all modern writers are tinged, if they are not steeped, in 'Romanticism'; and the accepted masters of the present

day are examples of the 'decadence' which for both these critics is a synonymous term. Mr. More, for instance, dismisses the whole 'Celtic renaissance' of Mr. Yeats and his fellow poets and dramatists as a decadent movement; Tolstoy was 'a decadent with a humanitarian superimposed'. For Mr. Babbitt, James, Bergson, Dewey, and Croce denote a parallel falling away from speculative sanity and soundness. Like Greek sophists, 'they are seeking to build up their own intoxication with the element of change into a complete view of life'.¹

But while Mr. Babbitt's polemic has undoubted affinity, both in its objects, its peremptory tone, and its not infrequent blindness, to that of the anti-Romantics of a century ago, it would be grossly unjust to treat the substance of his argument as composed of no better metal than what it will be convenient to call its Gifford vein. If the nineteenth century has been an age of backsliding in the history of man, it has at least lifted its critic at the close to a far higher vantage-ground than was occupied by his analogues at the beginning. It has enriched his armoury with more potent weapons than were at the disposal of his predecessors. He has learnt things that they did not know by merely having breathed an intellectual air in which what were to them fantastic eccentricities have become diffused convictions. He has learnt even from those with whom he would with perfect sincerity scout the idea of having gone to school. If he stands as stoutly as Gifford or Johnson for a fixed standard in literature and ethics, which our expansive idealisms and pragmatisms vainly pretend to develop or enlarge, he yet conceives both poetry and conduct in a way which only the great unfolding of imagination, and of imaginative criticism, during the last three generations, has rendered possible. The 'classicism' for which Mr. Babbitt stands is based, confessedly, upon imaginative vision; and no Romantic has more incisively condemned the Augustan 'pseudo-classicism' which conceived poetry as an operation of reason, and sought to substitute generic and abstract notions for the rich particularity of the things we

¹ Babbitt, *u. s.*, p. xiii.

see and hear and touch. Historically, the awakening of the senses to the rich diversity of the concrete world, and the discovery that imagination, bodying forth fresh forms in boundless profusion, is more vital for poetry than the generalizing reason, were part of the same process, and both together undermined the sway of the pseudo-classic poetic. It was but a step further to the declaration that genius creates and does not imitate, a step taken by Young in his notable *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759). Mr. Babbitt, for all his dislike of the disease, will have nothing to do with this cure. Young's treatise is 'only one of those documents, very frequent in literary history, which lack intrinsic soundness, but which can be explained if not justified as a recoil from an opposite extreme'.¹ We should rather say that, in laying down that true poetry must be original (which does not mean that it is unlike everything that has gone before—is it still necessary to say?)—and not borrowed or copied, Young was merely failing to guard from misapprehension or abuse a vital truth. The liberty of imagination which he demands and enjoins is incompatible only with the servile kind of imitation; far from precluding the 'ideal imitation' of Aristotle, it is the most vital factor in that liberation of 'the universal' from disturbing particulars (and, one may add, from second-rate or outworn substitutes for the universal) which Aristotle, heartily endorsed by Mr. Babbitt himself, found the essence of poetry to be. 'Liberty' is, to our critic, so fundamentally 'dangerous' a thing, that like Dogberry's prisoner it is convicted before it is examined, even when employed in the service of the cause he has at heart. Throughout the book 'liberty' connotes only a rejection of salutary restraint, a revolt against order or law, never the assertion of a higher law against a lower. 'Romantic' imagination is, for him, always a vaguely expansive, 'centrifugal' flight from reality, a beating of revolutionary wings in the nebulous void in vain.² It is only the Classicist who uses aright the gift which Romantic critics and

¹ Babbitt, *u. s.*, p. 37.

² Cf. the whole chapter called 'Romantic Imagination'.

poets were confessedly the first explicitly to vindicate for poetry; for he alone uses it to reach 'the universal', the One amid the Particulars, the One amid the Manifold, Permanence through Change.

As these last phrases may suggest, the Aristotelian basis of Mr. Babbitt's *Poetic* does not touch the bottom of his thought. There is a deeper stratum, not easily reconciled with it, but perhaps more congenial to the temper of his mind. He calls himself a 'positivist' in the sense of one who accepts facts with an open mind, whatever traditions they may destroy, and this is assuredly, as he says, the temper of Aristotle, of science, and of true humanism. But dig a little deeper and we find the symptoms of a different outlook altogether—a suspicion of fact, a dread of actuality, an oriental persuasion that we live in a world of illusion, from which we have to seek deliverance by the vision of an eternal One. This is the temper not of a 'positivist' of any school, but of a mystic. And what is yet more to the purpose in the present connexion, it is as foreign to Homer and Sophocles, the exemplars of true classicism if any are, as it is to Aristotle. 'Man', we are told, 'is cut off' from immediate contact with anything abiding and therefore worthy to be called real, and condemned to live in an element of fiction or illusion; but he may . . . lay hold with the aid of the imagination on the element of oneness that is inextricably blended with the manifoldness and change, and just to that extent may build up a sound model for imitation.¹

Whether this be an adequate analysis of our experience is not here in question. It offers, in any case, a ready weapon against Romanticism as Mr. Babbitt sees it. If existence is resolvable into the One real and the illusory Manifold, and Classicism, the 'imitation of the universal', has the former for its exclusive sphere, then Romanticism, as its opposite, is *ipso facto* shown to be concerned only with the ever-changing 'Many' of the illusory world. And it is significant of Mr. Babbitt's mentality that among the historic interpretations of 'the One and the Many', he has been most influenced by that one which is most deeply imbued with the dread of

¹ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

actuality, the religious abhorrence of change, which permeates his book. His own treatment of it, he expressly announces, is less allied even to the idealism of Plato than to that of Buddha. Such alliances are not unknown in America. There was a strain of the Yankee farmer as well as of the Transcendentalist in Emerson. It is stranger to hear across the trenchant invective of this doughty Harvard professor the wail of a Buddhist monk warning a world given up to agitating lusts that only in the eternal and immutable can rest be found.

In the meantime, however, the application of this summary canon to Romanticism makes the task of refuting it very simple. The formula for an immense and complex literary movement having been found, it has merely to be illustrated in detail in the different provinces of art and life. In a succession of chapters—'Romantic Genius', 'Romantic Imagination', 'Romantic Morality', 'Romantic Love', 'Romantic Irony', 'Romanticism and Nature', 'Romantic Melancholy'—Mr. Babbitt works out an indictment varied only in the terms. The chapters are all, as examples of serried learning, wide reading in many languages (including Pali), and vigorous, pounding argument, admirable. A livelier poetical sensibility and a suppler critical sense might have impaired the uniformity of the reasoning. But the formula never varies. Romanticism is fundamentally a pursuit of limitless innovation—art where there are 'seven and seventy ways of being right', life in which wandering desire replaces fixed principle and the taboos of the moral law give place to the limitless affirmations of individual temperament. Romantic genius is aspiration for a formless infinite, Romantic nature-worship is a futile self-projection, only to be tolerated as a 'holiday or week-end amusement'; Romantic love is lawless passion; while poets, like Whitman, who fall into all these errors, are 'cosmic loafers' or 'humanitarians adrip with brotherhood'.

It will be seen that Mr. Babbitt flings his net wide, and does not over-rigorously discriminate between the different contents of his haul. Nowhere in the book is it, for instance, suggested that, corresponding to the historic distinction between 'classicism' and 'pseudo-classicism', on which he every-

where insists, there may have been a like distinction between higher and lower strains in the Romanticism he denounces.

In his moral loathing for the excesses of passion, in his intellectual scorn for the absurdities of sentimentality, he treats a movement which, by rehabilitating 'emotion' in the scale of values, undoubtedly gave currency to these extravagances, as *ipso facto* condemned. To have vindicated, regenerated, and multiplied the springs of feeling in an age which suffered both morally and intellectually through the narrow range and the inferior status of its emotions, counts for nothing with him because some enthusiasts cried: 'Gefühl ist Alles!', and others declared that the marriage law was not binding when you had ceased to love. Reason and feeling are both, in isolation, blind guides; but Mr. Babbitt invariably sees feeling only as a disintegrating force which saps, relaxes, or evades rational contact, never as a creative or renovating force which quickens perception both of facts and of duties such as reason accepts but could not disclose. Page after page is crowded with examples, culled patiently from an immense variety of sources, of tender anæmic souls floating in luxurious emotion, abandoning themselves to sentimental memories, or to reverie which is only a *libido sentiendi*. But we are never asked to consider the other side of the antithesis which comes into view when, for instance, we compare William Godwin, whose Political Justice is the monument of one for whom pure intelligence was the sufficing key to social welfare and philosophic truth, with William Wordsworth, whose immeasurably ampler and more fruitful vision of 'man, of nature, and of human life' would not have been his, great as his other endowments were, had he possessed in less rich measure 'the deep power of Joy', which 'sees into the life of things'. And even if Wordsworth's vision were held illusory, nothing can destroy the transfiguring effect upon our English speech of his discovery of the emotional power resident in common words as in common things; so that the simplest words can carry a depth of suggestion inconceivable a century before. Whether

'a homeless sound of joy was in the sky'

express a fact or not, the simple words have been impregnated with a new and indefeasible intensity which remains a possession for all who use our speech.¹

II.

In no case is the injustice thus done more grave than in that of Rousseau himself, who is expressly associated in the indictment with 'Romanticism', and, if not explicitly treated as its source, 'has on the whole supplied the most significant illustrations of it'. Now Rousseau is probably the most extraordinary example in history of a mind in which a core of immensely fertile, sane, upbuilding thought slowly forced its way through a husk of disintegrating ideas. His passionate conviction of the dignity of man exploded in the fierce eloquence of the two early prize essays and in the opening chapters of the *Contrat Social*. This was the Rousseau who was hailed rapturously by the youth of Germany, who inspired Schiller's *Robbers*, and *Werther*, and the original draft of *Faust*. 'Man was born free; he is everywhere in chains,' rang the opening sentence of the *Contrat*, and it was easily read as a warrant for the dream of a return to the pristine Arcadia of a freedom still unfringed by the fetters of society. But not only did Rousseau, in the works of his ripe manhood, disclaim emphatically any desire to return to the state of pre-social Nature; it became increasingly clear that the 'freedom' in his mind was something to be won, not in spite of society, but through it. It was not Julie the impassioned mistress of Saint-Preux, but Julie the exemplar and presiding genius of a beautiful and healthy family life, who now satisfied Rousseau's ideal of freedom. Emile's education was not designed to produce a self-sufficing hermit, but a useful member of society, and its originality lay in the perception that this was more effectually done by treating him as a plant to be reared for its own sake, not as material on which a pattern was to be printed. And the *Contrat Social*, primarily a contrivance for overcoming the

¹ Cf. the striking appreciation of Wordsworth's language by M. Cazamian in his *L'Evolution psychologique et la Littérature en Angleterre*.

supposed antagonism between freedom and government by a form of polity in which every member may be said to 'command and obey' himself, is penetrated nevertheless with the profounder conception that life in society is the condition, for the individual, of being completely free.¹ Thought so charged with antagonistic elements was inevitably seized in fragments. The Americans based their declaration of independence on his assertion of equal rights of men; the French Jacobins justified by his authority the absolute rule of the majority. His vital discovery (fostered by the Greeks) was not that all men have equal rights, but that these rights are only realized in the self-governing community. Deeper in him than the abstract metaphysician of Burke's scorn was the organic social thinker who translated the abstractions of Hobbes and Locke into terms of a living society.² This was the man whom our critic declares to have from first to last 'refused to adjust his Arcadian dream to an unpalatable reality' (p. 74). It would be truer to say that, whatever his

¹ The inconsistency is incisively set forth by Dr. C. Vaughan in his monumental edition of *Rousseau's Political Works* (Introd. i. 22). Rousseau had for a moment intended to replace the title *Contrat Social*, with its individualist associations, by the neutral *De la Société civile*, eventually retained as a sub-title.

² In addition to the very emphatic view of Dr. Vaughan (*u.s.*), the following sentences may be quoted from Prof. Bosanquet: 'The revival of a true philosophical meaning within the abstract terms of juristic tradition was the work of the eighteenth century as a whole. For the sake of clearness, and with as much historical justice as ever attaches to an attribution of this kind, we may connect it with the name of a single man—Jean-Jacques Rousseau. For it is Rousseau who stands midway between Hobbes and Locke, on the one hand, and Kant and Hegel on the other, and in whose writings the actual revival of the full idea of human nature may be watched from paragraph to paragraph as it struggles to throw off the husk of an effete tradition . . . His insight was just, when it showed him that every political whole presented the same problem which had been presented by the Greek City state, and involved the same principles. And he bequeathed to his successors the task of substituting for the mere words and fictions of contract, natures, and original freedom, the idea of the common life of an essentially social being, expressing and sustaining the human will at its best.'—(Bosanquet, *Philosophical Idea of the State*, p. 13.)

failure as a man, his whole life as a thinker was a progressive attempt to discover such an adjustment.

Nor was the reaction of Rousseau upon European opinion by any means confined to the cruder phases of his thought, or to the 'expansive emotion' in which Mr. Babbitt finds the essence of 'Rousseauism'. 'Emotional' he was, and he exhibited in his life almost all the disastrous lapses to which loose emotion makes men a prey. But to force on the world the perception that feeling is an integral part of complete human nature was not the less a service to civilization because one consequence of it was to make 'feeling' fashionable, and sentimentality a widespread disease. Whatever excesses he committed or induced, he contributed more than any other single man to release his generation from the one-sided intellectualism of the philosopher, and the too exclusive pre-occupation with destructive analysis of social abuses which that involved. To initiate, as Rousseau did, in a dozen different spheres of life,¹ meant far more than the power of vivid feeling; but it did mean that. Amiel put the antithesis only with somewhat too sharp a point when he said of the *philosophe* movement that it was impotent to construct, 'for construction depends on sentiment, instinct, and will'.² 'Expansive emotion', for Mr. Babbitt, is always like vapour, 'expanding' to diffuse itself idly in the air. But expanding vapour, and expansive emotion too, may equally do enormous work. And however disastrous Rousseau's doctrine, and not a little of his example, might be for the weaker type of emotional temperament—and even, generally, for the feminine type of mind, in either sex—some great intellects of decisively masculine cast recognized that he had redressed the distorted valuation of human nature incident to an age

¹ Cf. Amiel, *Journal intime*, 13 Aug. 1865: 'J.-J. Rousseau est un ancêtre en tout: il a créé le voyage à pied avant Töpffer, la rêverie avant René, la botanique littéraire avant Georges Sand, le culte de la nature avant Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, la théorie démocratique avant la Révolution de 1789, la discussion politique et la discussion théologique avant Mirabeau et Renan, la pédagogie avant Pestalozzi, la peinture des Alpes avant de Saussure . . .'

² *Ibid.*, 7 April, 1851.

fortified in its dogmatic rationalism by the triumphs of mathematical and physical discovery. 'There was a time', wrote Kant in a memorable passage, 'when I believed that all this [the advance of knowledge] might constitute the honour of humanity, and I despised the ignorant multitude. Rousseau set me right. This dazzling prerogative vanishes; I learn to do honour to men. . . .' More explicitly, he goes on to parallel the achievement of Rousseau with that of Newton. Newton had been the first to discover the true nature of the physical cosmos under the complexity and confusion of previous theories about it. 'Rousseau was the first to discover, under the multiplicity of the forms assumed by men, the true nature of Man. Newton and Rousseau justified God.'¹ Whether these sentences be completely warranted or not, there is no doubt of Rousseau's immense significance in the history of European thought. The first and most famous of Kant's *Critiques* becomes more intelligible in the light of them; for there, while sapping the base of the towering edifices of dogmatic metaphysic, he found the master-clue to all experience in the universal human understanding. And Kant's ethics and politics, though informed with a rigour of system beyond Rousseau's reach, yet proclaim his inspiration in the fundamental worth assigned to personality as such ('treat every man as an end, not as a means'), and in the doctrine of the State as conferring Freedom by creating Right.² It is needless for the present purpose to speak of Hegel. The Prussian State, which, at its highest, more definitely than any other pursued his ideal, had grave defects, far better known to the rest of Europe than its signal excellences; but it bore very little resemblance at any time to the idyllic Arcadia of which Mr. Babbitt's Rousseau dreamed, or to the 'Nature' for which it was his single aim to supersede 'convention'.³ It is not as the apostle

¹ Kant, *Werke* (ed. Rosencrantz, xi. 240, 248). I owe the reference to Mr. Bosanquet, *u. s.*, p. 242.

² This development is incidentally touched by Mr. Babbitt, but in terms which leave it wholly unexplained (p. 194).

³ 'The contrast between nature and convention is almost the whole of

of an imaginary primitive society, but as a prophetic pioneer of the modern state, that Rousseau counts in the history of political thought.

III.

But of one, now more familiar, aspect of 'the return to Nature', Rousseau was beyond question an apostle. Gray and many others had felt the passion for wild scenery before him, but the descriptions in the *Nouvelle Héloïse* first gave it a vogue. Mr. Babbitt, in another elaborate chapter, seeks to attenuate the significance of this claim by reducing the Romantic passion for scenery to a mere negation, a flight from the artificialities of civilization. 'It is on the summits of mountains,' he quotes from the *Nouvelle Héloïse* (Pt. iv. ch. 11), 'in the depths of forests, on deserted islands, that nature reveals her most potent charms.' But it is obvious enough that Rousseau, so subject to illusions in the conduct of his life, was a master of realism, when he chose, in his art; and that if disgust with 'civilization' drove him to 'Nature', in the Alps or elsewhere, when once there he painted it with his eye on it and with delicate and intimate veracity. It is not even the utterly 'wild' Nature, where civilization is most completely put by, that he paints, but the rural cultivation of Vevey, the country house with its orchards and dairies; or the scenery of lake and woodland. He sees with emotion and describes with eloquence; but the drawing is clear and precise, not vague or nebulous. What distinguished Rousseau in

Rousseauism' (p. 45). Or again he quotes from a letter in which Rousseau confesses to a friend that his supreme delight is to 'wander alone, endlessly and ceaselessly . . . , to muse or rather to be as irresponsible as I please, . . . finally, to give myself up unconstrainedly to my fantasies . . .', and then comments: 'Rousseau, *then*, owes his significance not only to the fact that he was supremely imaginative . . . but to the fact that he was imaginative in a particular [i.e. Arcadian] way' (p. 75). Mr. Babbitt does indeed cautiously suggest that there may be something more. 'I am inclined', he says, 'to discover in . . . Rousseau . . . a great deal of shrewdness, and at times something even better than shrewdness.' But this faint praise only heightens the effect of the indictment which damns him on the whole.

this matter was not so much that he described Nature instead of civilized life, as that no one before him had made the simple ways of life so exquisitely real. If he inoculated us with the sentiment of Nature, he inoculated us no less, in the significant phrase of Sainte-Beuve, with 'the sentiment of reality'.¹ Such a tribute may well give us pause when we incline to over-accentuate the negative aspect of the passion for the Wild. But it does more. It may remind us that the Romantic imagination in general, for Mr. Babbitt a mere vision of some Arcadian golden age, was, historically, far more signally than this, a new power of seeing the world as it was. In the history of our own Romanticism this is a familiar commonplace; it was not for being too dull to dream, but for being too blind to see, that Keats denounced the Augustans and their leader, 'one Boileau'. But in France, too, the Romantic revolt against classicism was never merely a flight from the bondage of the actual, an ecstatic dream of Faerie, or of a hardly less fabulous Orient or Middle Age. It was also a return to reality, a discovery of the richness and scope of the real world, and a sensitive joy in delineating it. Gautier's famous declaration that he was one 'for whom the external world exists', merely summed up the bent if not the achievement of the entire movement, and it has been possible for a distinguished critic of our day, M. Georges Pellissier, to write a book, already quoted, full of illustrations of what he justly calls 'the realism of Romanticism'.

Nor did this 'realist' side of Romanticism mean no more

¹ Pellissier, *Le Réalisme du Romantisme*, p. 143; Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, t. iii, p. 91. The whole passage is significant from our present point of view: 'En tout, comme peintre, Rousseau a le sentiment de la réalité. Il l'a toutes les fois qu'il nous parle de la beauté, laquelle, même lorsqu'elle est imaginaire comme sa *Julie*, prend avec lui un corps et des formes bien visibles . . . Il a le sentiment de cette réalité en ce qu'il veut que chaque scène dont il se souvient, ou qu'il invente, que chaque personnage qu'il introduit, s'encadre et se meuve dans un lieu bien déterminé, dont les moindres détails se puissent graver et retenir. Un des reproches qu'il faisait au grand romancier Richardson, c'était de n'avoir pas rattaché le souvenir de ses personnages à une localité dont on aurait aimé à reconnaître les tableaux.'

than that those 'Arcadian' dreamers had their prose fits, their matter-of-fact moods, in which they were but as other men are, and 'knew a hawk from a handsaw'. Whether the growth in visualizing power which we chiefly mean when we speak of a recovery of imagination is ever unattended by some quickening of ocular perception, need not here be considered. In the historic Romanticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at least, inner vision and outer perception did not operate in detached compartments—'imagination' plying its loom in a closed inner chamber, while the eye, in the outer office, transacted business with visible actuality. Nor was the intercourse between them mainly of the kind frequent in Shelley, where the shape and identity of objects is lost in an intense irradiation of mind. Rather, we find shape and identity perceived with a magical precision and delicacy, the mind fastening, as it were, with a peculiar intensity of vision upon any counterpart in the visible world of what it has imagined with delight. The crucial example is, of course, Wordsworth. But there is hardly any Romantic visionary of this period whose senses were not at some point quickened by his inner vision. Shelley himself saw with strange intensity cloud and air and water and fire—the visible kin of the children of his brain. And it is now a commonplace that that tissue of lovely dreaming, *Endymion*, is stored with pictures from the real world drawn with unsurpassed veracity of touch, like the famous description of the breaking wave—

Down whose green back the short-lived foam, all hoar,
Bursts gradual with a wayward indolence.

This is, of course, not 'naturalistic' description; it is description such as only a poet could have achieved. But he has not achieved it by means simply of whatever in his mental endowment distinguishes the poet from the naturalist. There has been an intimate co-operation of the endowment which is distinctive of him with the endowment which he shares; a co-operation which has issued in something that transcends the separate potency of either.

Such a phenomenon as a breaking wave might be fit matter for the most fastidiously selective poetry in the world; Sophocles had 'heard it on the Ægean', and Homer before him. What is specifically Romantic in Keats is only the union of minute articulations with light-wrought figure. But it need hardly be recalled that the Romantic poets drew into the field of poetry many aspects of the real world which the pseudo-classics severely excluded or veiled in elegant periphrasis. When Victor Hugo painted with a lavish wealth of phrase and vocabulary the picturesque squalor of old Paris or the grotesque passion of a hunchback; when Wordsworth found noble poetry by way of leech-gathering or a pedlar's pack; or when Coleridge drew with a pitiless fidelity which he himself afterwards found excessive, the horrors of rotting limbs,¹ they were certainly not illustrating that flight from actuality into a visionary Arcadia which Mr. Babbitt ascribes to the Romantic imagination. On the contrary, they were bringing actuality more completely into view and into the recognized domain of art. They were, in short, vindicating for modern art the large liberty of which the pseudo-classics had, while their sway lasted, deprived it, but which the real classics enjoyed in rich measure, Homer and Shakespeare and Dante, so far as we can see, to the full. Even the Æschylean nurse in the *Choephori* can communicate nursery details which Racine would not have dared to hint under however consummate a veil of style. Every one now can see that the dramatic technique which permitted a soldier to remark, in the opening lines of Hamlet: 'Not a mouse stirring', was beneficently freer than the criticism which led Voltaire to lay down that 'mice ought not to stir in tragedy, anyhow'. But it was the Hazlitts and Coleridges and Hugos of the 'Romantic Triumph' who made this so obvious.

IV.

It would seem, then, that we are justified in continuing to hold that the recovery of imaginative power which we chiefly

¹ In the excised stanzas of *The Ancient Mariner*.

understand by Romanticism meant a recovery of vision for the visible world, with whatever 'Arcadian' or ideal dreams this might be allied. But there is one region of reality in which the claim to this recovered vision appears far more dubious. We need not go to Shelley or to Blake, or to the loose livers among the German Romantics, to recognize a widespread repudiation of traditional moral codes; and it did not need Mr. Babbitt's ample reading in the relevant literatures to fill crowded pages with the evidence. But he is uncritically indiscriminate in the use of it, and he deliberately identifies morality with its inhibitory aspect. He sees everywhere the infringement of traditional prohibitions enjoined or excused; criminals treated as noble because they were good at heart, like the hero of Wordsworth's *Borderers*¹ or Hugo's Valjean; fallen women made loveable, like Dostoevsky's Sonja. The distinction between moral and immoral conduct is, for him, it would almost seem, completely conveyed in the distinction between control and desire. Duty is summed up in saying 'no' to appetite. He is angry, accordingly, with Goethe, who uttered so many wise and penetrating things about the need of self-limitation, for defining the devil as the spirit 'who always says no' and making the great affirmer, Faust, his hero. The remark is characteristic. There is no connexion whatever between the cynical negations of Mephistopheles and Mr. Babbitt's weighty vindication of a 'Thou shalt not' morality. But he grudges that a trait so eloquent, to his ears, of inflexible duty as '*der stets verneint*', should be assigned to the principle of Evil! And that a Mephistopheles has somehow slipped in among the crowd of more respectable Deniers, may well suggest a doubt whether all of these are as respectable as they seem. A morality conceived fundamentally as a check upon impulse, an inhibition of desires, may miss something more vital to morality itself than it secures. To use a figure of which Mr. Babbitt is fond, a course apparently 'excentric' in relation to one centre may be

¹ This phase of Wordsworth has been admirably handled by Mr. Oscar J. Campbell: 'Sentimental Morality in Wordsworth's Narrative Poetry', *Univ. of Wisconsin Studies in Lang. and Lit.*, 11.

'concentric' with another; and the 'check' which prevents us from flying off at a tangent from a narrower orbit may be deflecting our path from the curve of one vaster and still more 'central'.

But all 'affirmations' with him are vague appetencies striving away from a stable 'centre', and all prohibitions and contacts are 'central', moral authorities obeyed or resisted by these vagabond desires. An affirmation in conflict with a check is assumed to be in the wrong, to be merely 'centrifugal'. In Mr. Babbitt's view the trouble with modern, and especially with American society, lies just in the prevalence of various forms of 'emotional excess' against the discipline of law. We need not dispute the phenomenon. But the European observer who has watched during recent years the tyranny of war propaganda, the perversion of law into a weapon against Labour, and the prosecution of unpopular forms of opinion, will be apt to think that America needs a doctrine of liberty no less than a doctrine of law.

For there are evidently conflicts between passions and control where the affirmation that says 'yes' is more central, more rooted in the eternal Right, than the check that says 'no'. It is easy to deride the abuses of a 'flabby' morality which puts easy good nature, under the name of 'love', in the place of duty. But the Christian ethic of love and service must sometimes be antinomian too; and a harlot was forgiven *quia multum amavit*. Love, as A'Kempis said, 'spurns all measure', and the 'measure' will often be that 'decorum' of traditional observance on which the Scribe and the Pharisee, and the pseudo-classic, set so high a store. Some kinds of love are related in the scale of values to the moral law as the headstrong animal to the human charioteer; there are other kinds towards which all taboo-morality is but a first step, a preliminary adumbration, of the ideal which only the finest insight and self-devotion can completely work out. Rich, complex, Faust-like natures often have their share of both.

I propose to examine how those canons of criticism work, in two examples, from famous and capital works of English

literature, singled out by Mr. Babbitt himself for special reprobation.

The Ring and the Book is taken by Mr. Babbitt as a salient illustration of Browning's 'drift towards the melodramatic', that is, of his way of dealing with experience 'impressionistically, without reference to any central pattern or purpose . . . The method of this poem is peripheral, that is the action is viewed not from any centre, but as refracted through the temperament of the actors. . . . *The Ring and the Book* is not only off the centre, but is designed to raise a positive prejudice against everything that is central. Guido, for example, had observed decorum, had done all the conventional things, and is horrible. Pompilia, the beautiful soul, had the great advantage of having had an indecorous start. . . . Caponsacchi again shows the beauty of his soul by violating the decorum of the priesthood. . . . The Pope, in seeming to accept the substitution of the morality of the beautiful soul for that of St. Augustine, comes near to breaking all records, even in the romantic movement, for paradox and indecorum.'

We do not think that, even judged from Mr. Babbitt's own standpoint, this can be described otherwise than as a thoroughly perverse piece of criticism. However severely he condemned the conduct of the story or the structure of the book, he ought to have seen what Browning meant. The Gifford strain in his thought, always present but sometimes overlaid by a true and noble classicism, here emerges at the surface undisguised. Gifford, surely, had he been confronted with *The Ring and the Book*, and had patience to read and judge it, would have condemned it on similar lines; nor would he have found anything to quarrel with in Mr. Babbitt's criticism, unless it were the 'indecorum' of a sporting image at the close. For Gifford, Keats, Shelley and Wordsworth were also, in Mr. Babbitt's phrase, 'off the centre'; he saw them as ill-conditioned and unprincipled rebels against the established tradition in literature. No one doubts that Gifford is, for us, less 'central' than these three poets. Literary orthodoxy, as he understood it, is an exploded

heresy, while these heretics are among those from whose discoveries and example the poetic rebel of to-day can least easily break loose. The same want of 'centrality' which Mr. Babbitt ascribes to the Romantics at large, he attributes to Browning's *Ring*. But here we have to do with a question of simple fact, determinable by a moderate degree of literary insight. 'The action is viewed not from any centre, but as refracted through the temperaments of the actors.' But can any one doubt what Browning himself thought about his story, however dramatic, or, in Mr. Babbitt's phrase, 'peripheral', his method of telling it? The action may be 'seen refracted through the temperaments' of 'one half Rome and the other half Rome', of the lawyers, of Guido; and we may follow the spectacle with interest, if not altogether with the huge gusto of the poet. But he holds us by a different and a far more potent spell when we listen to Caponsacchi, to Pompilia, and to the old Pope. For now, though the temperaments are diverse, as untaught childhood from manhood and ripe old age, the real story is not 'refracted' in them, but seen at length with pellucid clearness and compelling force. Far from illustrating Browning's 'way of dealing with experience impressionistically, without reference to any central pattern or purpose', they leave us incapable of questioning that Browning had a 'central pattern or purpose', or of doubting what this central purpose was.¹

But the more serious charge, and the one most relevant to the present purpose, remains. The poem is designed to raise a prejudice against everything that is 'central'. Pompilia, Caponsacchi, the Pope, all violate the 'decorum' of their several states, while Guido, who observes so scrupulously the 'decorum' proper to the husband of an unfaithful wife, is treated with unreasoning animosity. Here the problem is not of art, but of ethics. Browning put before

¹ Were the point in doubt, it might be interesting to recall the judgement of a great master of story. In his *Notes on Novelists* (1914), Henry James imagines 'the Novel of the Ring and the Book', and would make Caponsacchi 'the indicated centre of our situation or determinant of our form.'

us a situation the crux of which the traditional and authorized duties were wholly inadequate to solve. Wifely obedience, priestly subordination, and papal sanction of these duties, all led here to chaos. The old 'centre' remains, but new curves have come into view which cannot be referred to it because the movements are determined by a new centre, and have acquired a new centrality. This is something wholly unlike that with which it is throughout this book identified, the licentious refusal to accept the law of any centre at all.

Into another state, under new rule
I knew myself was passing swift and sure,

declares Caponsacchi in a splendid and significant passage. The ecclesiastical morality based upon mere prohibitions had to be, in this crucial case, superseded by an action damnable in appearance but holding a core of divine and immortal rightness:

Death was the heart of life, and all the harm
My folly had crouched to avoid, now proved a veil
Hiding all gain my wisdom strove to grasp:
As if the intense centre of the flame
Should turn a heaven to that devoted fly
Which hitherto, sophist alike and sage,
Saint Thomas with his sober grey goose-quill,
And sinner Plato by Cephisian reed,
Would fain, pretending just the insect's good,
Whisk off, drive back, consign to shade again.¹

The old Pope finds a yet more pregnant image for this vital alteration of the spiritual perspective when he says of the Molinists—the contemporary heretics who, like Caponsacchi, sought to obey a truth yet unrecognized, but perceptible—that they

Correct the portrait by the living face,
Man's God, by God's God in the mind of man.²

Now it may be objected that most law-breaking decorates itself with some pretension to superior right; that the revolutionary idealist sincerely destroys in the name of a

¹ *Caponsacchi*, 954 f.

² *The Pope*, 1873 f.

higher law. But it is not open to Mr. Babbitt to make this short. For when he is pursuing the positive and constructive view of his argument, he fully allows that the morality of a given place and time may legitimately be contravened in the name of a more fundamental right, which it is the mark and function of the moral imagination to discover. Thus Antigone, who opposes to the law of the state 'something still more universal—the unwritten laws of heaven', is not charged with a failure in Greek 'centrality'; on the contrary she is said to show an 'insight into a moral order that is set not only above her ordinary self but above the convention of her time and country', becoming thereby 'a perfect example of the ethical imagination'.¹ By this phrase is meant, it is explained, 'an imagination that works concentric with the human law'. The distinction, then, we are to understand, between the choice of Caponsacchi, which he derides, and the choice of Antigone, which he approves, is that, while both imaginatively transcend existing morality, her imagination acts 'concentrically' and his 'excentrically' to it. It might be merely playing with the geometrical figure, which, however, no passing metaphor, but a symbolic expression of our critic's entire argument, to object that concentric circles do not easily cross each other's path, so that the clash between Antigone's 'eternal law' and Creon's law of his city-state appears to presuppose some degree of 'excentricity' in her ethical imagination too. But the figure does injustice to Mr. Babbitt's thought. He means that Antigone's ethics differ from Creon's as the universal and eternal from the local and temporary; she has appealed from a king's ordinance to the primeval bond of family which he like any other man recognized even while setting it aside. Only then it ceases to be clear why Caponsacchi is condemned for an analogous infringement of current morality, the mere fact of such a clash being no longer in itself a sign of 'excentricity'. And it is not hard to see that he, like Antigone, has in effect appealed from an institutional ordinance to a more elemental law; he infringes an ecclesiastical rule in order to deliver

¹ Babbitt, *u. s.*, p. 48.

a helpless woman from otherwise irresistible wrong. His infringement is even far less grave than hers; in fulfilling her duty as a sister she directly violates her duty as a citizen; and Creon's cause is not intrinsically wrong but only, under the special circumstances, insufficiently right. Whereas Guido, the champion of connubial 'decorum', has availed himself to the utmost of the criminal abuses compatible with it, while Caponsacchi has effected the rescue of his persecuted wife with a merely formal infringement of her husband's rights. More than that, Caponsacchi transgresses the technical and formal obligation of a Christian priest to accomplish by blind impulse,

as a man would be inside the sun,
Delirious with the plenitude of light,

a Christ-like act. The old Pope mourns the decay of organized Christianity. The Church reflects its divine origin more imperfectly than untaught human nature itself. The portrait is faded or blurred: it is left for Caponsacchi to 'correct it by the living Face'. Here, surely, even more indubitably than in the case of Antigone, it was institutional authority which occupied the ethical periphery, and the lonely rebel who stood at the Centre.

V.

The *Prometheus Unbound* offers more obvious openings for such criticism as Mr. Babbitt's. Some of the critical hostility it has encountered is easily intelligible, and not wholly undeserved; and the hostile animus is in no way diminished by the fact that Shelley was here raising on the foundation of a sublime Greek master an edifice conceived in a wholly different spirit. That there was in Shelley's nature a vein of pure revolt, an impulse strictly 'centrifugal', for which every limit was a barrier and every law a chain, is certain. But had that been all, where would his name now be found unless in some obscure record of criminal pathology? One is almost ashamed to have to reiterate, a century after his death, that deeper in him than the merely centrifugal revolt, and in all his greatest achievements transforming and spiritualizing it,

was the passionate self-subjection to a higher law, sometimes to be called Beauty, sometimes Love. Every one can feel this in his verse. No one imagines that his incessant creation of musical rhythms unheard before was the mere impatience of a metrical anarchist fretting at law and order and the authority of Pope. And it is more plausible doubtless, but at bottom equally unjust, to diagnose his ethics or his religion—granting him to have had anything properly called by either title—as incoherent appetency under dignified names. The *Prometheus Unbound* is, as may be supposed, highly irritating to our critic. ‘In the name of his . . . ideal he refuses to face the facts of life. What is found in this play is the exact opposite of imaginative concentration on the human law. The imagination wanders irresponsibly in a region quite outside of normal human experience. We are hindered from enjoying the gorgeous iridescencies of Shelley’s cloudland by Shelley’s own evident conviction that it is not a cloudland, but a true empyrean of the spirit.’ Well, the crags of Caucasus are remote enough, and neither the action nor the imagery of the *Prometheus* has much evident relation to ‘normal human experience’. But to suppose that Shelley’s thought is equally unrelated and remote is surely to confuse image and purport in a way not to be expected of a literary specialist. Shelley does not ‘refuse to face the facts of life’. On the contrary he grapples with them, and though very much escaped him, in some vital points he saw more clearly than any of his contemporaries. Regarded as a proposed solution of the problems of evil, the action of the play, literally understood, is crude to the point of absurdity. ‘Jupiter’ will not, in this real world of ours, be suddenly dethroned, nor any reign of perfected humanity be thereby brought about. Even as a goal by slow and difficult steps finally to be won, the emancipation from disease and death which he rapturously foretold may well be dismissed as ‘Arcadian’. But Shelley’s conception of the human ideal is by no means equally in the clouds.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
 To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;

To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
 Neither to change, to falter, nor repent;
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
 Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

This is, to most apprehensions, an ideal remote enough from Mr. Babbitt's Paradise of idle Romantic self-indulgence, the Arcadian Cockayne in which all desires are gratified, and duty, with all the sour stress of moral effort, has no longer a place. It is an ideal which not merely admits of, but demands, heroic endurance and 'matchless fortitude', and yet not the mere willingness to suffer and to resist, but a spirit capable of forgiving the wrongs it endures, and of hoping in the midst of despair—in other words the faith, hope, and love of the Christian ideal itself. It is this and nothing else which is the ethical gist of the *Prometheus Unbound*; and when Jupiter totters from his throne, and the liberated Prometheus becomes supreme, we may quarrel with the imperfect justice which sums up the whole Christian church of that day in the figure of an insolent tyrant; but we must not refuse to recognize that what Shelley deliberately sought to enthrone in its place was simply the spirit of Christ, from which the Christian Church had become, in his view, so completely estranged. Mr. Babbitt dreads too acutely the anarchic proclivities of the modern temper to tolerate even an Elysium in which there is nothing to be resisted or endured. As we have seen, he reproves Goethe for making the 'spirit who ever denies' his type of evil. Goethe, if any man, knew the need of self-control, of saying 'no'; but he saw in it a means of concentrating and clarifying, not of thwarting and repressing, the positive and constructive energy of man. Shelley understood the need of self-control far less perfectly than Goethe, though not perhaps less perfectly than Goethe at his years. But his positive ideal was no self-pleasing dream. Our critic conceives himself, in relation to Shelley, as the upholder of inflexible morality exposing the flimsy substance and confused values of a radically unethical poet. His readers will perhaps rather

consider that they have been hearing an exponent of the ethics of the Old Testament denounce one in whose spirit ran, however mingled and alloyed, the golden temper of the New. Shelley infringed some of the accepted duties of his time and of our time; but he recognized friendship and comradeship and the service of man with an ardour known to few of his contemporaries. This Shelley lives beside Shelley the lyric poet, and no less securely. 'Shelley's vision of heaven and earth', it has recently been said, 'has contributed more than any other influence to begetting the passion for a nobler life.'

All great art tends to become 'universal' in the sense that there is some element in it which finally overcomes the limitations of individual and national experience and makes a 'universal' appeal. But this universality and 'oneness' is always relative, and a great creative age, or a single creative mind, may enlarge its scope. Nor is there any royal road to it. The apparently direct road, which enjoins 'imitation' of models already recognized as perfect, is, like many other short cuts, the most fallacious of all. It is the one followed not by the truly 'classical' artists at all, but by the pseudo-classics of every age and country. The great artists, 'classic' and 'romantic' alike, followed their 'inner vision', expressed ultimately their own inmost experience; wrote, as Dante said of himself, when asked by the rhetorical poetasters in Purgatory¹ the secret of his noble style, what Love dictated in their hearts. But the 'experience', while always freshly and individually seen, might hold in solution more of traditional, communal, national, elements, already recognized by the mass of men in common with the poet; or more of personal idiosyncrasy, in the eyes of the mass of men usually 'extravagant' or 'heretical'. This is the broad distinction between 'classical' and 'romantic' art. The one bears the deeper impress of an organized society, the other the livelier accent of personality. But within the compass of Romanticism thus understood there is, no less than in classicism, a hierarchy of ascending ranks. As classicism may degenerate into servile imitation of the 'best models', so Romanticism may become merely an idle

¹ c. xxiv.

indulgence of individual impulse and fantastic caprice. But the higher and truer type of Romantic artist reaches a universality of his own through his apparent eccentricity no less securely than the classic through his apparent normality. His work ignores the canons of his day, but it anticipates and initiates the legislation of a day to come. He has followed the 'dictation' of his personality against the bias of an indifferent or hostile society; but his lonely divinations are built into the fabric of accepted experience in which following generations will dwell. Wordsworth, and Shelley, and Keats had to wait for their audience, and the audience they eventually found they helped to create. They too, in Mr. Babbitt's formula, 'found the One'; but a 'One' which they themselves helped to disengage from the limitations of tradition; and which they found, not by suppressing the voice of their own individuality (or, as our critic calls it, transcending the illusory many), but, precisely, by accepting and following it out with implicit and absolute sincerity.¹

C. H. HERFORD.

¹ Mr. Middleton Murry trenchantly states the distinction when he says (*The Problem of Style*, p. 146): 'The Classical writer feels himself to be a member of an organized society; . . . The Romantic is in rebellion against external law . . . He asserts the rights of his individuality *contra mundum*.'—But the distinction needs to be supplemented by the considerations indicated in the text.

HAZLITT¹

HAZLITT had no special liking for the Scotch: why should he? But no one ever read the *Waverley Novels* with more thorough enjoyment, or felt more truly the power of the poetry of Burns. The English Association in Glasgow might find a local reason for attending to him in the fact that his father was a Glasgow student in the time of Adam Smith Glasgow College, as Lord Bryce reminded us lately at a dinner of the Glasgow University Club in London, was long the favourite University of Nonconformist students from England and Wales—a connexion that lasted even after Thomas Campbell founded London University on our model, free from tests; even after the foundation of the University College of Wales. William Hazlitt, the elder, a Presbyterian Unitarian minister, with his Glasgow education, gave his son, we may believe, a different bent from that of most English literary men, his contemporaries.

Hazlitt has suffered in an odd particular instance from his acquaintance with Scottish dialect. Late in his life he wrote a *Chapter on Editors*, published 1830, the year of his death in the *New Monthly Magazine*, never reprinted by himself but by his son included in *Sketches and Essays*, 1839. In the *Magazine* and his son's collection, and in every edition since, you may read the opening sentence, 'Editors are a sort of tittle tattle, difficult to deal with, dangerous to discuss.' Even the edition of Mr. A. R. Waller and Mr. Glover, for which Henley wrote the introductory essay, prints it so, only adding in a note the cautious opinion that Hazlitt probably wrote 'kittle cattle'. 'Kittle cattle' is what he wrote, and 'tittle tattle' is what English readers have been content to read, and English editors to pass upon the confiding public

¹ Addressed to the English Association, Glasgow, Jan. 7, 1921.

English editors would have done better if they had been 'kittle', and less like dumb driven cattle. We have not R. L. Stevenson's judgement on them. He spent much time on a life of Hazlitt which came to nothing. There is a legend, says his biographer, Sir Graham Balfour, that he offered to write on Hazlitt for a biographical series, and was told that neither he nor his subject was of sufficient importance. No details are given, but we may say that if the story has any foundation the editor of the series was on that occasion not sensibly responsive to stimulus (i.e. 'kittle').

We know from various passages what Stevenson thought of Hazlitt: we wish we knew more. There is provokingly little in the published letters. He tried to get something out of Mr. Pegfurth Bannatyne: 'Hazlitt—he couldnae take his drink—a queer, queer fellow!' he added. We can guess how the unwritten Life would have amplified on this theme. We know how much of Stevenson is amplification and reconsideration of Hazlitt *On Going a Journey*. For Hazlitt was one who, like Stevenson, and Swift in Leslie Stephen's phrase, shared the passion of the wise and good for walking.

I chose my title and text, when your President invited me here, without much thinking. I had nothing ready written, and I have done little study since. My motive was partly laziness. Anyhow, I thought, if I fail to make out any story of my own, I can always fall back on Hazlitt himself, and save myself by reading quotations. It was Hazlitt's own way in lecturing. On Burns, he tells his audience that he will give them the beginning of *Tam o' Shanter*—but he is not sure that he will know where to stop. And the whole of *Tam o' Shanter* is there, in his lecture. The example requires caution, and is not to be followed indiscriminately. I have tried to put together some notes, preliminary, before I come to the *Indian Jugglers* and *My First Acquaintance with Poets*.

Hazlitt was a philosopher and a painter before he wrote the essays which give him his rank among English men of letters. As a young man—very young—he thought hard and independently on problems of moral philosophy; he

seems never to have dealt with metaphysics. I have never read his *Principles of Human Action, an Argument in favour of the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind*, first sketched when he was 18, published in 1805. But he returns frequently to this subject in his essays, and it makes a difference lasting through all his life. If ever you find Hazlitt dry or abstract in his moralizing, you may be sure at least that his reasoning is sincere and thoroughly founded on old and long-continued meditation. His moralizings are not casual suggestions or mere talk, and the ascetic discipline he chose for himself in his youth is recognizable in the seemingly capricious and random flings of his freer style, not less than in his deliberate judgement on *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*.

Likewise his training as a painter gives him an advantage, or, indeed, puts him in a different class, over the literary critics who venture at analogies between poetry and painting. *Gusto*, a favourite term with Hazlitt, is originally a term of art criticism, and he uses it with a more intimate sense of its value, we feel, than those literary men who borrowed it from the schools of painting. His painting terms may not mean for us what they meant for him, who knew the pleasures and the difficulties of painting, but it is something for us to feel that the writer is speaking what he knows when he says, e.g. about Burke, 'his execution, like that of all good prose, savours of the texture of what he describes, and his pen slides or drags over the ground of his subject like the painter's pencil'. 'Texture, ground, slide or drag', any literary man can 'have them all ready', like the people in Shakespeare who kept note-books for effective words; but Hazlitt uses them because he knows as a painter from experience what they really mean; and we, reading, feel that we are listening to no rhetorical pretender.

As a critic Hazlitt is open to many objections. He saw no good in Shelley:

'No one (that I know of) is the happier, better or wiser for reading Mr. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. One thing is that nobody reads it. And the reason for one or both is the

same, that he is not a poet, but a sophist, or theorist, a controversial writer in verse. He gives us, for representations of things, rhapsodies of words. He does not lend the colours of imagination and the ornaments of style to the objects of nature, but paints gaudy, flimsy, allegorical pictures on gauze, on the cobwebs of his own brain, "Gorgons and Hydras, and Chimeras dire". He assumes certain doubtful speculative notions, and proceeds to prove their truth by describing them in detail as matters of fact. This mixture of fanatic zeal with poetical licentiousness is not quite the thing. . . . The poet describes vividly and individually, so that any general results from what he writes must be from the aggregate of well-founded particulars: to embody an abstract theory, as if it were a given part of actual nature, is an impertinence and indecorum.' (*On People of Common Sense.*)

Here, even if Hazlitt be wrong, as many of us think he is about *Prometheus Unbound*, still it would be a mistake not to see what he means when he talks of 'the aggregate of well-founded particulars'—he means imagination as distinct from allegory.

On the other hand, in a quite opposite way, he is surely wrong about Crabbe, when he takes his work for nothing but an aggregate of ill-founded and perversely chosen particulars; as if there were nothing in Crabbe but crude realities. He quotes as an example the tidal river in *Peter Grimes*, where, not to speak of the admirable, lively effect of the passage as 'mere description', he leaves out of account altogether the dramatic value of the scene, its place in the soul of Peter, its accompaniment to Peter's remorse and Nemesis. Even in his unstinted praise of the *Waverley Novels* there is this drawback, that he makes the author too much a mere transcriber of Nature—as if Scott's memory had nothing to do but remember. His painting experience might have taught him better—to find the shaping touch of imagination, even in the right suggestion of mere memory at the right time, in the idiom of Cuddie Headrigg, 'Mither, will ye renunce the covenant o' works?', or Dandie Dinmont, 'It's a' ane to Dandie'.

For a diversion here, let me read Hazlitt's account of his father's portrait. Was there nothing but mere transcription, copying of reality, in this portrait?

‘One of my first attempts was a picture of my father, who was then in a green old age, with strong-marked features, and scarred with the small-pox. I drew it out with a broad light crossing the face, looking down, with spectacles on, reading. The book was *Shaftesbury’s Characteristics*, in a fine old binding, with Gribelin’s etchings. My father would as lieve it had been any other book; but for him to read was to be content, was “riches fineless”. The sketch promised well; and I set to work to finish it, determined to spare no time nor pains. My father was willing to sit as long as I pleased; for there is a natural desire in the mind of man to sit for one’s picture, to be the object of continued attention, to have one’s likeness multiplied; and besides his satisfaction in the picture, he had some pride in the artist, though he would rather I should have written a sermon than painted like Rembrandt or like Raphael. Those winter days, with the gleams of sunshine coming through the chapel windows, and cheered by the notes of the robin-red-breast in our garden (that “ever in the haunch of winter sings”)—as my afternoon’s work drew to a close—were among the happiest of my life. When I gave the effect I intended to any part of the picture for which I had prepared my colours; when I imitated the roughness of the skin by a lucky stroke of the pencil; when I hit the clear pearly tone of a vein; when I gave the ruddy complexion of health, the blood circulating under the broad shadows of one side of the face, I thought my fortune made; or rather it was already more than made, in my fancying that I might one day be able to say with Correggio, “I also am a painter!” It was an idle thought, a boy’s conceit; but it did not make me less happy at the time.’ (*On the Pleasures of Painting*).

Is there nothing but mere recollection in the story of it? Indeed, there is much: there is the whole soul of the writer, and his *gusto* in writing: and nothing less than this makes us read Hazlitt. What he has to tell is his own life. ‘I have had a happy life’, he said at the end of it, and surprised many who knew how unhappy in various respects it had been. But his essays prove that he was right; even his lamentations prove it, even the letter to Gifford, ‘Sir, you have an ugly trick of saying what is not true about any one you do not like; and it will be the object of this letter to cure you of it’. Even in the outburst of rage against the reformers turned Tories:

‘Twice has the iron entered my soul. Twice have the

dastard, vaunting, venal crew gone over it; once as they went forth conquering and to conquer, with reason by their side, glittering like a falchion, trampling on prejudices and marching fearlessly on in the work of regeneration; once again, when they returned with retrograde steps like Cacus's oxen dragged backward by the heels, to the den of Legitimacy, "rout on rout, confusion worse confounded", with places and pensions and the *Quarterly Review* dangling from their pockets, and shouting "deliverance for mankind", for "the worst, the second fall of man". Yet I have endured all this marching and countermarching of poets, philosophers, and politicians over my head, "like the camomile that thrives, the more 'tis trod upon". By Heavens, I think I'll endure it no longer'! (*On Paradox and Common-Place*).

Where his shrewd wit tells most it is always with this sort of *gusto*.

'Charles Fox is not to be blamed for having written an indifferent history of James II, but for having written a history at all. It was not his business to write a history—*his business was not to have made any more Coalitions!*' (*On the Difference between Writing and Speaking*).

On Cavanagh, the fives player:

'He could not have shown himself in any ground in England but he would have been immediately surrounded with inquisitive gazers, trying to find out in what part of his frame his unrivalled skill lay, as politicians wonder to see the balance of Europe suspended in Lord Castlereagh's face, and admire the trophies of the British Navy lurking under Mr. Croker's hanging brow. Now Cavanagh was as good looking a man as the Noble Lord, and much better looking than the Right Hon. Secretary. He had a clear, open countenance, and did not look sideways or down, like Mr. Murray the bookseller.

'He was a fine, sensible, manly player, who did what he could, but that was more than any one else could even affect to do. His blows were not undecided and ineffectual—lumbering like Mr. Wordsworth's epic poetry, nor wavering like Mr. Coleridge's lyric prose, nor short of the mark like Mr. Brougham's speeches, nor wide of it like Mr. Canning's wit, nor foul like the *Quarterly*, nor *let balls* like the *Edinburgh Review*'. (*The Indian Jugglers*.)

Hazlitt, like Goldsmith, Charles Lamb, and Stevenson, lives very much in the memories of his youth; more intensely and

continuously than any one of them. His pleasure in writing of favourite authors, Burke or Rousseau, is in great part the pleasure of remembering what he was when he first read them, though he can defend and explain his authors, Burke e.g., on impersonal grounds. His generous admiration for Buonaparte runs through all his early reminiscences and touches his father's portrait, and his story of the persons that Charles Lamb would wish to have seen :

‘Those days are over! An event, the name of which I wish never to mention, broke up our party like a bombshell thrown into the room, and now we seldom meet,

Like angels’ visits, short and far between.

There is no longer the same set of persons nor of associations’. (*On the Conversation of Authors*—Lamb’s Thursday evening parties.)

The event is the defeat of Napoleon, and you will find the event repeated in different essays of Hazlitt, while the sun of Austerlitz represents the earlier glory of Hazlitt and his hero.

For the happiness of his early life which was his later happiness also, Hazlitt goes back to the year 1798: the year of *My First Acquaintance with Poets*:

‘It was on the 10th of April, 1798, that I sat down to a volume of the *New Eloise*, at the inn at Llangollen, over a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken. The letter I chose was that in which St. Preux describes his feelings as he first caught a glimpse from the heights of the Jura of the Pays de Vaud, which I had brought with me as a *bon bouche* to crown the evening with. It was my birthday, and I had for the first time come from a place in the neighbourhood to visit this delightful spot. The road to Llangollen turns off between Chirk and Wrexham; and on passing a certain point, you come all at once upon the valley, which opens like an amphitheatre, broad, barren hills rising in majestic state on either side, with “green upland swells that echo to the bleat of flocks” below, and the river Dee babbling over its stony bed in the midst of them. The valley at this time “glittered green with sunny showers”, and a budding ash-tree dipped its tender branches in the chiding stream. How proud, how glad I was to walk along the high road that overlooks the delicious prospect, repeating the lines which I have just

quoted from Mr. Coleridge's poems! But besides the prospect which opened beneath my feet, another also opened to my inward sight, a heavenly vision, on which were written, in letters large as Hope could make them, these four words, LIBERTY, GENIUS, LOVE, VIRTUE; which have since faded into the light of common day, or mock my idle gaze.

The beautiful is vanished, and returns not.

Still I would return some time or other to this enchanted spot; but I would return to it alone. What other self could I find to share that influx of thoughts, of regret, and delight, the fragments of which I could hardly conjure up to myself, so much have they been broken and defaced. I could stand on some tall rock, and overlook the precipice of years that separates me from what I then was. I was at that time going shortly to visit the poet whom I have above named. Where is he now? Not only I myself have changed; the world, which was then new to me, has become old and incorrigible. Yet will I turn to thee in thought, O sylvan Dee, in joy, in youth and gladness as thou then wert: and thou shalt always be to me the river of Paradise, where I will drink of the waters of life freely! (On Going a Journey: Table Talk).

He was on his way to visit Coleridge: the 10th of April at Llangollen comes between Coleridge's winter visit to Wem and Shrewsbury as a Unitarian preacher, and Hazlitt's visit to Nether Stowey, where he walked and conversed with Coleridge and Wordsworth, the poets of *Lyrical Ballads*. Let me read the beginning of the essay (*My First Acquaintance with Poets*), even though, like Hazlitt with *Tam o'Shanter*, I may not know when to leave off.

'My father was a Dissenting Minister at W——m in Shropshire; and in the year 1798 (the figures that compose that date are to me like the "dreaded name of Demogorgon") Mr. Coleridge came to Shrewsbury, to succeed Mr. Rowe in the spiritual charge of a Unitarian Congregation there. He did not come till late on the Saturday afternoon before he was to preach; and Mr. Rowe, who himself went down to the coach in a state of anxiety and expectation, to look for the arrival of his successor, could find no one at all answering the description but a round-faced man in a short black coat (like a shooting jacket) which hardly seemed to have been made for him, but who seemed to be talking at a great rate to his fellow-passengers.

Mr. Rowe had scarce returned to give an account of his disappointment, when the round-faced man in black entered, and dissipated all doubts on the subject, by beginning to talk. He did not cease while he staid; nor has he since that I know of. He held the good town of Shrewsbury in delightful suspense for three weeks that he remained there, "fluttering the proud Salopians like an eagle in a dove-cote"; and the Welch mountains that skirt the horizon with their tempestuous confusion, agree to have heard no such mystic sounds since the days of

High-born Hoel's harp or soft Llewelyn's lay!

As we passed along between W——m and Shrewsbury, and I eyed their blue tops seen through the wintry branches, or the red rustling leaves of the sturdy oak-trees by the road-side, a sound was in my ears as of a Siren's song; I was stunned, startled with it, as from deep sleep; but I had no notion then that I should ever be able to express my admiration to others in motley imagery or quaint allusion, till the light of his genius shone into my soul, like the sun's rays glittering in the puddles of the road. I was at that time dumb, inarticulate, helpless, like a worm by the way-side, crushed, bleeding, lifeless; but now, bursting from the deadly bands that

bound them,

With Styx nine times round them,

my ideas float on winged words, and as they expand their plumes, catch the golden light of other years. My soul has indeed remained in its original bondage, dark, obscure, with longings infinite and unsatisfied; my heart, shut up in the prison-house of this rude clay, has never found, nor will it ever find, a heart to speak to; but that my understanding also did not remain dumb and brutish, or at length found a language to express itself, I owe to Coleridge. But this is not to my purpose.'

Hazlitt is never grudging in his regard for the masters who gave him freedom, Coleridge and Wordsworth. He had seemed to himself to have no power of expression in words. Here is a passage, like many others: speaking of Burke, he says:

'If such is still my admiration of this man's misapplied powers, what must it have been at a time when I myself was in vain trying, year after year, to write a single Essay, nay,

a single page or sentence; when I regarded the wonders of his pen with the longing eyes of one who was dumb, and a changeling; and when to be able to convey the slightest conception of my meaning to others in words was the height of an almost hopeless ambition!' (*On Reading Old Books: Plain Speaker.*)

Coleridge's talk gave him spirit and encouragement. *Lyrical Ballads*, he says, gave him insight into the mysteries of poetry. ✓ Both poets disappointed him afterwards; he resented Wordsworth's absorption in his own poetry, not to speak of the change in his political sentiments. But he never allowed his own sense of poetry (or prose either) to be thwarted by politics or personal considerations. One of the most thrilling of all his utterances is a quotation, when after some of his usual severities on Wordsworth, he breaks out:

Yet I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And all that thou hast done for me!

(*On Genius and Common Sense: Table Talk.*)

As for Coleridge, he was perpetually in Hazlitt's mind, a grievance and a fascination from which he could not escape. Hazlitt's malignity (or whatever it is called), his shrewish carping, is like Swift's misanthropy (which Hazlitt understood)—the result of a tragic contradiction, a torturing contrast between the unseen Reality (e.g. the genius of Coleridge) and the obvious phenomenal incompetence of genius when required to work:

'The man of perhaps the greatest ability now living is the one who has not only done the least, but who is actually incapable of ever doing anything worthy of him—unless he had a hundred hands to write with, and a hundred mouths to utter all that it hath entered into his heart to conceive, and centuries before him to embody the endless volume of his waking dreams. Cloud rolls over cloud; one train of thought suggests and is driven away by another; theory after theory is spun out of the bowels of his brain, not like the spider's web compact and round, a citadel and a snare, built for mischief and for use; but like the gossamer, stretched out and entangled without end, clinging to every casual object, flitting in the idle air, and glittering only in the ray of fancy. No subject can come amiss to him, and he is alike attracted

and alike indifferent to all—he is not tied down to any one in particular—but floats from one to another, his mind everywhere finding its level, and feeling no limit but that of thought—now soaring with its head above the stars, now treading with fairy feet among flowers, now winnowing the air with winged words—passing from Duns Scotus to Jacob Behmen, from the Kantian philosophy to a conundrum, and from the Apocalypse to an acrostic—taking in the whole range of poetry, painting, wit, history, politics, metaphysics, criticism, and private scandal—every question giving birth to some new thought, and every thought “discoursed in eloquent music”, that lives only in the ear of fools, or in the report of absent friends. Set him to write a book, and he belies all that has been ever said about him—

Ten thousand great ideas filled his mind,
But with the clouds they fled, and left no trace behind.’

(On the Qualifications necessary for Success in Life: Plain Speaker.)

A last quotation may be allowed here, Hazlitt’s parody of Coleridge’s talk—invented as a substitute for Hazlitt’s regular piece of dramatic criticism—seemingly as true as the imaginary talk of Renan in the version of M. Maurice Barrès :

‘So we, for once, will invoke Mr. Coleridge’s better genius, and thus we hear him talk, diverting our attention from the players and the play.

“The French, my dear Hazlitt,” would he begin, “are not a people of imagination. They have so little, that you cannot persuade them to conceive it possible that they have none. They have no poetry, no such thing as genius, from the age of Louis XIV. It was that, their boasted Augustan age, which stamped them French, which put the seal upon their character, and from that time nothing has grown up original, or luxurious, or spontaneous among them; the whole has been cast in a mould, and that a bad one. . . . His [Racine’s] tragedies are not poetry, are not passion, are not imagination: they are a parcel of set speeches, of epigrammatic conceits, of declamatory phrases, without any of the glow, and glancing rapidity, and principle of fusion in the mind of the poet, to agglomerate them into grandeur, or blend them into harmony. The principle of the imagination resembles the emblem of the serpent, by which the ancients typified wisdom and the universe, with undulating folds, for ever varying and for

ever flowing into itself,—circular, and without beginning or end. The definite, the fixed, is death: the principle of life is the indefinite, the growing, the moving, the continuous. But everything in French poetry is cut up into shreds and patches, little flowers of poetry, with tickets and labels to them, as when the daughters of Jason minced and hacked their old father into collops—we have the *dissecta membra poetæ*—not the entire and living man. The spirit of genuine poetry should inform the whole work, should breathe through, and move, and agitate the complete mass, as the soul informs and moves the limbs of a man, or as the vital principle (whatever it be) permeates the veins of the loftiest trees, building up the trunk, and extending the branches to the sun and winds of heaven, and shooting out into fruit and flowers. This is the progress of nature and of genius. This is the true poetic faculty, or that which the Greeks literally call *ποίησις*. But a French play (I think it is Schlegel who somewhere makes the comparison, though I had myself, before I ever read Schlegel, made the same remark) is like a child's garden set with slips of branches and flowers, stuck in the ground, not growing in it. We may weave a gaudy garland in this manner, but it withers in an hour: while the products of genius and nature give out their odours to the gale, and spread their tints in the sun's eye, age after age—

Outlast a thousand storms, a thousand winters,
Free from the Sirian star and thunder stroke,

and flourish in immortal youth and beauty. Everything French is frittered into parts: everything is therefore dead and ineffective. French poetry is just like chopped logic; nothing comes of it. There is no life of mind: neither the birth nor generation of knowledge. It is all patch-work, all sharp points and angles, all superficial. They receive and give out sensation too readily for it ever to amount to a sentiment. They cannot even dance, as you may see. There is, I am sure you will agree, no expression, no grace in their dancing. Littleness, point, is what damns them in all they do. With all their vivacity and animal spirits, they dance not like men and women under the impression of certain emotions, but like puppets; they twirl round like *tournequets*. Not to feel, and not to think, is all they know of this art or of any other. You might swear that a nation that danced in that manner would never produce a true poet or philosopher. They have it not in them. There is not the principle of cause

and effect. They make a sudden turn because there is no reason for it: they stop short, or move fast, only because you expect something else. Their style of dancing is difficult; would it were impossible." (By this time several persons in the pit had turned round to listen to this uninterrupted discourse, and our eloquent friend went on, rather raising his voice with a *Parulo majora canamus.*) "Look at that Mademoiselle Milanie with the 'foot of fire', as she is called. You might contrive a pasteboard figure, with the help of strings or wires, to do all, and more, than she does—to point the toe, to raise the leg, to jerk the body, to run like wild-fire. Antics are not grace: to dance is not to move against time. My dear Hazlitt, if you could have seen a dance by some Italian peasant-girls in the Campagna of Rome, as I have, I am sure your good taste and good sense would have approved it. They came forward slow and smiling, but as if their limbs were steeped in luxury, and every motion seemed an echo of the music, and the heavens looked on serener as they trod". (*London Magazine* (No. XII), December, 1820.)

If there is room at this time, a hundred years after, for a fresh study of the prose works of Coleridge, Hazlitt will claim a place in the record, a witness unexcelled by any in his evidence of Coleridge's power, more deeply than any other sensible of his failure. The story is worth remembering, if it were only to do justice to an English man of letters whose reputation has suffered, like himself when living, through casual freaks and faults which were really no more than the sparks and sputterings of an intense devotion, a fiery heart.

W. P. KER.

ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND GRAMMARS

LAST year's report on 'The Teaching of English in England' has directed attention anew to the teaching of English Grammar, and, though the actual recommendations of Mr. Fisher's Committee on this thorny subject have not altogether escaped criticism—from more than one direction—it seems to be generally agreed, among those most concerned with instruction in English, that there is need of some reform in the traditional methods.

The charge most generally brought against the teaching of English grammar is that it has always suffered, and still suffers, from too much formalism. The causes of this are fairly obvious. In the first place the usual 'English Grammar'—as taught up to within the last few years—was not really intelligible to students until they had already passed beyond the stage of mastery of the language at which it might conceivably have been of use to them. It was therefore purely a 'mental exercise'—a thing necessary, perhaps, for examination purposes, but without practical utility. In the second place, grammar is a subject the real understanding of which requires either an unusually active imagination or an acquaintance with forms of language which are differently constructed from one's native tongue. In the absence of these it seems almost impossible to avoid confusing grammatical rules with laws of thought. The best training for the investigation of English grammar is probably the teaching of English to students belonging to some race whose language is very different, such as Chinese, Hungarians, Japanese, or even Russians. It must be hard indeed for one whose linguistic knowledge is limited to his own and allied tongues to realize in the smallest degree the difficulties which the rules and explanations of the ordinary grammars present to non-Aryan students.

Perhaps, therefore, one who has not indeed had any opportunity of active participation in grammar-teaching for many years past, but who, as a teacher of English in Japan in the closing years of the last century, was obliged to give a great deal of attention to the matter, and who found out, or thought he found out, some useful things about it, may be allowed to point out what seem to him certain defects in many of the grammars of the day, and to make a few suggestions as to how certain features of our language as we use it to-day may be more correctly presented.¹

To begin with, we must be quite clear what it is that we have to discuss, and I propose that we should limit our consideration to the grammar of present-day English. This grammar we might define as 'an account of the customs which the so-called "educated" classes of England follow at the present time in the use of words for the expression of their thoughts'. We will not concern ourselves with the origin or history of these customs, which is the province of 'historical' grammar, but will take them as we find them. I have, of course, nothing to say against historical grammar. It is a most worthy study, and can be quite an interesting one to those who like it, but it should be kept in its place and not allowed to intrude upon that grammar which is concerned with the language as now spoken. Where it is so allowed, it often tends to confusion of thought, and we find grammarians writing of present-day English as if it were a kind of degenerate or corrupted form of something earlier

¹ Since this paper was written I have learnt from Professor Allen Mawer's lecture before the English Association in May of this year that several of the views which it contains have already been put forward by Professor Jespersen. As, however, Professor Jespersen's writings on the subject are mostly in Danish and therefore inaccessible to the majority of English students—as they are indeed to myself—I have let the paper stand as written. I claim no originality. Most of the criticisms which I have made would, I think, occur to any one who was forced to study English grammar for the purpose of explaining it to students desirous of putting it to practical use. If one of the greatest living philologists, approaching the subject from quite a different point of view, has come to similar conclusions, so much the better.

and better, whereas it is nothing of the kind. Rather is it an instrument of the expression of thought so refined to our modern needs by the experiment and practice of generations as to be unsurpassed by our own language at any earlier period, and perhaps by any other language in the world to-day.

Now as soon as we begin to consider present-day grammar a little closely, we see that there are two distinct kinds of grammar, or perhaps we should rather say, two distinct aspects of it, for we may begin our consideration either with words or with ideas. One kind of grammar concerns itself in the first place with words and their forms, the other with the thought in the mind of the speaker and how this is represented in words. The two grammars are of course inseparable. They are, in fact, like the opposite ends of a passage: persons starting from either end will meet in the middle; nevertheless the approach may be quite different according to which end one starts from.

It is a commonplace that English Grammar—by which I mean, of course, the description of our speech-habits, not the speech-habits themselves—has suffered very greatly from its history. It was first formulated by persons familiar with the grammar of Latin, a language from which even in those days English differed very much in its general character, and from which it now differs still more widely. The result was that in earlier days English grammar was little more than a translation—hardly even an adaptation—of the current grammar of Latin. The days are over now when people solemnly declined English nouns with all the cases of the Latin, and when, for example, ‘cat’ had a vocative ‘O cat’, a genitive, ‘of a, or the, cat’, a dative, ‘to a, or the, cat’, and so on, though one still sometimes finds these same compulsory (and imaginary) ‘cases’ imposed on unfortunate foreign nouns in books intended to teach out-of-the-way languages to Englishmen. Nevertheless the shade of Latin still hangs heavily over English grammar, and not only over its divisions, arrangement, and terminology, but over our general conception of its true nature and purpose. In the

case of a highly inflected language like Latin, where the changes in the form of words by means of terminations or otherwise are of the greatest importance to comprehension of the meaning, it is very natural that the principal concern of the grammarian should be the classification and description of these verbal changes, that he should approach the subject from the 'word' end. The meaning that it is intended to express seems often to be quite a subordinate matter. One can imagine that with a language only slightly more regularly and completely inflected than Latin it might be possible to parse and analyse a sentence correctly without its meaning or the meaning of a single word in it being understood. With English such a proceeding is unthinkable. It is necessary to *understand* the sentence before one can parse it. The natural way to approach the grammar of English is from the 'meaning' end.

And this is, too, the method of approach which is best suited to the needs of those whose aim is to understand English fully and to write it correctly. Such persons do not require to be worried very much about words as words, or about grammatical forms as forms. What they need is that understanding of the spirit of the language which will enable them to appreciate the exact shade of meaning of a phrase which they see or hear used, or to find the necessary expression for a thought which they wish to utter. Grammar for them is something quite different from what it was for the old-time classical scholar.

A little reflection will show that, owing mainly to historical considerations, the two different kinds of grammar resulting from the different points of view have often run together, with the result of a good deal of cross-classification. For example, in the division into Parts of Speech, which comes in the forefront of most grammars, we are taught to consider words not according to their form, but solely according to their meaning and use. Having so divided our words, we next proceed to treat them as *words*, and discuss their forms and changes under the headings of declensions and conjugations. At once we find that now that we are considering

the words as words, and not as mere symbols of meanings, our divisions do not hold good, for what is apparently the same word is used now as one part of speech, now as another. The attempt to reconcile the two, quite different and inconsistent, points of view has led some grammarians to speak of a word described as belonging to one part of speech being 'used as' another part of speech; they will speak, for example, of a noun used as an adjective—an adjective used as a noun, &c., &c. This, however, is surely a contradiction in terms, for our only way of deciding to which part of speech a word belongs is just by observing how it is used. There is and can be no other. If, without violation of our ordinary habits of speech, a word is used as a noun, it *is* a noun, if it is used as an adjective, it *is* an adjective, and that is an end of the matter. What these grammarians mean is that the word is now used in a way in which it was formerly not used; an interesting fact of historical grammar, but not to the point when we are considering English of the present day.

For example, take the phrase 'an oak table'. Some grammarians would describe 'oak' as a noun used as an adjective, but surely they would be wrong. Apart altogether from the fact that the part of speech must follow the use, surely 'oak' in this phrase does not call up at all the same idea as 'oak' in such a sentence as 'that tree is an oak'. When we think of an oak table, the notion of an oak-tree is quite absent from our consciousness, and 'oak' is as truly an adjective attributing certain material qualities to the table, as if the word were 'heavy' or 'solid'. The reluctance to allow that it is here an adjective is merely due to the influence of Latin grammar, where the noun and adjective were usually distinguished by form, perhaps in this case aided by the fact that there was once, and still is in old-fashioned speech, a distinct adjectival form 'oaken'.

So, too, in such an expression as a 'Bath bun', 'Bath' does not recall to our minds either a bath or the town called Bath, but merely certain qualities of sweetness and irregular outline associated with a certain kind of bun. 'Bath' in spite

of its capital letter is as much an adjective as 'sweet', and it is only *historically* that there is anything of a noun about it at all.

A similar confusion of thought makes some regard the word 'boycott' as a proper noun used as a verb (or a common noun). As everybody knows, the expression was *derived from* the name of a person, but *as now used* it is no more 'proper' than such a phrase as 'to have no dealings with'.

An important difference between the two varieties of grammar will be found in their attitude towards words of similar form as being the same or different. In the kind of grammar which concerns itself primarily with words, the word 'runs' in the two following sentences would be regarded as identical:

- (a) He runs for a mile every morning before breakfast.
- (b) He runs an opium den in the East End.

and the evident difference in usage in the two cases would be explained by describing 'runs' in the second sentence as a verb which is 'usually intransitive used transitively with a rather different meaning'.¹

If, however, the grammarian is considering the *meaning* of the words used, he will treat these two verbs as entirely different—as different as if the word in the second case had been 'conducts' or 'carries on'. The fact that they are both pronounced and spelt in the same way will no more concern him than the fact that 'bear' may mean an animal or 'to carry'. All he has to consider is the series of actions called up in the mind (or implied) in the two cases, series which have evidently little or nothing in common, so little indeed that it might be very hard to find a person of whom both predicates would be true.

On the other hand, in formal grammar we shall concern

¹ I have in the course of this paper quoted and commented upon two or three examples and explanations from recently published grammars, but have purposely abstained from giving references, as I do not wish any one to think that I am criticizing these particular books. As a matter of fact they are the best modern grammars that I know, and contain a very great deal that is excellent.

ourselves with the difference between 'go' and 'goes' in 'I go' and 'he goes'. From the point of view of meaning the words will be identical, for the series of actions implied by the verb are the same, though custom still demands (it may not do so much longer) that we should use a different form in the two phrases.

Although therefore it can hardly be said that one of these kinds of grammar is less necessary than the other, it is important to recognize the distinction between them and to know which we are discussing at a given moment.

Another fruitful source of confusion and difficulty is the nomenclature which has descended to us from the Latin grammar. Take, for example, the two participles, the so-called present participle 'eating' and the so-called past participle 'eaten'. In what sense is one of these 'present' and the other 'past'? Though it is of course quite true that the 'present' one is used in certain phrases in which a statement is made of the present time, and the 'past' one in certain phrases in which the statement concerns the past, it appears to me that the *time* is quite otherwise expressed and that these participles have really nothing to do with it. In 'I am going', 'I shall be going', and 'I was going', it is the finite verb and not the participle that gives the time sense; so too in the 'passive' phrase 'he will be eaten by a lion', the time is purely future. The corresponding phrase in the active voice would be 'a lion will eat him', not 'a lion will have eaten him'; there is nothing past about it at all.¹

But if the difference in the signification of the participle is not a matter of *time*, what is it? The matter is, I think, simple. All verbs, with a few exceptions, to which I will

¹ We may note, however, that in certain cases the past participle does seem to have a definitely past signification. Compare 'By the year 2000 most of us who are alive to-day will be dead and buried [i. e. will have been buried],' with 'He will be buried at 2 o'clock to-morrow'. In the first case 'buried' may be considered rather as an adjective than as a part of the verb, cf. 'a buried city', 'a broken plate'. We are really concerned with the condition of the noun at the time of reference, not with the series of actions which caused it.

refer presently, connote a series of actions. The exact series is determined by the subject, object, and the various qualifying phrases, if any, which accompany it, but it is always a *series*. Thus the word 'eat' (when used of a human being) implies opening the mouth, putting something into it, chewing the something and finally swallowing it. If one puts the object out before swallowing it, one cannot use the word 'eat' to describe the action. Of course, as a general rule the series is not present to one's consciousness in detail, but it is there, so to speak, in the background, and any form of expression which contradicts or is out of harmony with it will be automatically inhibited.

Now the simple fact is that *all parts of the verb except one* imply the performance of *the whole series* of actions connoted by the verb: the one which does not is the 'present' participle. That simply implies that the series is or was *in progress* and does not say anything about whether it is, was, or will be finished or not. 'John stood at the window eating an apple' would be perfectly correct even if he had only swallowed the first bite, perhaps if he never even went so far as this with the series of operations.

We therefore use the 'present' participle when we desire to predicate one or more unspecified actions out of the series denoted by the verb; the 'past' participle when we desire to predicate the performance of the whole series. The net result of this intention is, I readily agree, that we do often use the 'present' participle when we are speaking of the present time, and the 'past' participle when we are speaking of past time (because a series of actions which has been completed is necessarily past); but in present-day usage this is a secondary matter: it is the question whether we predicate the whole series of actions denoted by the verb or only an indefinite portion of the series which is the deciding factor in their use. The introduction of time designations into the names of these two participles obscures their real difference and should be abolished.

Another bit of confused nomenclature is connected with the so-called 'present tense'. Most grammars will tell you, for

example, that 'I drink' is the present tense of the verb 'to drink'. Having done so they will proceed to explain :

- (a) That the 'present' tense is customarily used when the action predicated is not confined to a particular time but is indefinite, such as : 'I drink three cups of tea at breakfast', or 'I never drink cider'.
- (b) That when we are actually speaking of the present time we use a form with the verb 'to be' and a participle. 'What are you drinking?' 'I am drinking lime-juice'.

i.e. the 'present' is used to express another meaning and something else is used to express the present.¹

Of course the fact is that the old 'present' (by form) is not the present any longer (by signification). The formation to-day of the present tense of any verb (except those which express not a series of actions—as do most verbs—but merely a momentary action or condition of the subject) is by means of the verb 'to be' and a present participle. Thus the present tense—and the *only* present tense—of the verb '*drink*' is 'I am drinking', of '*walk*', 'I am walking', &c., &c. The form 'I drink', 'I walk' should be called the indefinite or unlimited tense.²

¹ Some good modern grammars will give as an example of the present tense such a phrase as : 'I write a letter now'—of which all I can say is that it is not current English. The idea that such forms *can* be used of the present tense is perhaps due to their use in explanations accompanied by action. Thus, a person explaining how to operate a certain mechanism might say : 'First I draw this arched wire back so that it lies flat on the board, then I bring the straight wire over it and let the loose end rest as lightly as possible in this notch', &c., &c. As the speaker is probably carrying out the actions as he describes them it seems as if 'draw', 'bring' and 'let' were actually used as presents. But reflection shows that this is not the case. Time does not enter into the matter at all ; all that is in consciousness is the sequence of the actions. The verbs are as unrestricted to a particular time as the 'is' in 'gold is heavy'. If this is not obvious, all we have to do is to prefix to the explanation : 'When (or whenever) I set a mouse-trap.' The time is now clearly indefinite and no change has been made in the sense.

² Mention should perhaps be made of certain usages which do not seem

Let us consider the verb a little more closely, and see why this should be so. And first let us note that there are two classes of verbs. One, much the larger, contains all those verbs which imply a *series* of actions, or one action repeated over a considerable time, as 'eat', 'drink', 'walk', &c., noting that however short or quickly performed the series is, a verb will still come into this class if there is a series idea at all. Thus 'sneeze' and 'swallow' come into the first class, though the series of actions is extremely short. For convenience of reference we will call this class of verbs Class A.

The second class of verbs (which we will call Class B) contains all those which express not a series of actions, hardly indeed a single action, but rather a condition in which the subject is, and which is rather a passive state than an action. Thus, 'be', 'see', 'think', 'hope', 'feel', &c., &c.¹

Now let us first, to avoid confusion, confine our attention to verbs of the first class. If we take any statement whatever we shall find that it contains, explicit or implicit, a notion concerning time; the action of the verb must either

- (a) be unlimited as regards time, or
- (b) must be in the past, present, or future with respect to the time at which the statement is made.

Further, many statements contain another idea concerning time—an indication of the period or *length* of time during or within which the action is described as taking place. For instance, 'I wrote to him yesterday afternoon' is in the past,

to accord with what is here stated. Firstly, there are a few fixed phrases, such as 'I drink to you', where this form seems to be used with a present signification. These are, I think, mere survivals. Secondly, there is the so-called 'historic present', where similar 'present' forms are often used. I believe the explanation of this to be essentially the same as is referred to in note 1 above, i.e. we are not really thinking of any particular time at all, but merely of the sequence of the actions.

¹ Compare 'The dog sees a cat' with 'the dog is watching a cat'. In the first case there is really no action—or at any rate no voluntary action—on the part of the dog; in the second a series of actions or, if we will, a single long-continued action.

and, further, the action predicated took place within about six hours. It will perhaps be convenient if we call this indicated length of time—in this case some six hours—the ‘time-extent’ of the sentence.

We must be quite clear as to what this ‘time-extent’ is. It is *not* the time which the action of the verb would require for completion, but the time which we are talking about. This may, of course, be either more or less than the time taken for the verbal series. Thus, in the phrases, ‘Where were you at seven o’clock this morning?’ ‘I was in the bath-room’ (or ‘I was having a bath’), the time-extent of the first phrase, and consequently of the reply, was a moment, namely, the precise instant of seven o’clock. It is by no means implied that my stay in the bath-room was momentary.

Next we must remember that the verb, from our point of view, is not only the single word which the formal grammarians consider as a verb (eat, write, &c.), but this word *together* with its object, or all else which serves to ‘qualify’ it, or to define the series of images which are suggested to the mind of the hearer. Thus, to ‘write a letter’ is one thing, ‘to write a novel’ or ‘to write a history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire’ are others.

Once this is realized, the very simple secret of the use of the present-day English verb becomes clear, namely, that *if the sentence refers, explicitly or implicitly, to a period of time in which the action of the verb takes place, i. e. if it has a ‘time-extent’, no verbal form must be used which implies the performance of a longer series of actions than can be performed within that period of time or ‘time-extent’.*

Thus you could say, ‘Yesterday afternoon I wrote a letter’, but you could *not* say, ‘Yesterday afternoon I wrote a novel’, unless you meant specially to imply some very minute form of novel; you would say, ‘I wrote a chapter of’ or ‘part of’ a novel. Or you might say, ‘I was writing’.

‘Did you see John when he called yesterday?’ ‘No, I was digging in the garden at the time, and no one told me he was here.’ One does not say, ‘I dug’. Why not? Because the employment in the garden was obviously longer than

John's visit.¹ Therefore one must use a verbal form implying not the whole but part of the series of actions referred to; this form is supplied by the present participle, which, as we have seen, denotes one or more unspecified actions out of the series denoted by its verb, together with the verb 'to be'.

The use of a verbal phrase with 'while' affords a convenient and, I think, convincing illustration of this rule. It will be seen that when the time taken by the performance of the two series of actions connoted by the two verbs is not regarded as being the same, the verb implying the longer series is generally in the form with a present participle, and only a section of the whole series is taken into account. Compare:

(1) 'Yesterday while I had my dinner a band was playing in the street.'

(2) 'Yesterday while I was having my dinner a boy threw a stone at the window.'

(3) 'Yesterday while I had my dinner the band played.'

Let us take the third sentence first. This is quite good English, but its natural meaning is that the band played in order to accompany the speaker's dining. It started when he started to dine, and left off when he finished. It is the sort of thing that might be said by persons like Hamlet's uncle, and perhaps by more modern kings and presidents, but hardly by ordinary people.

From the first sentence we should infer that the time during which the band played was longer than the time taken by the speaker's dinner. The form used of the band is one which only implies part of the whole verbal series.²

¹ The time occupied by John's visit is of course the 'time-extent' of the sentence and the reply.

² We might also have 'while I was having my dinner a band was playing in the street'. Our use of this form would imply that we were merely considering parts of two series of actions which happened to coincide, without concerning ourselves with the completion of either or with the question of which series was the longest.

Perhaps I should say that this is by no means intended as a complete analysis of modern practice in the use of these verbal forms. I have only attempted to state the general principle, taking no account of subtleties of usage.

In the second, the reverse is the case. The throwing of the stone is all but momentary, therefore the time-extent, i.e. the phrase 'while . . . dinner' is expressed in a form which could be correct of a moment of time.

But we have not just now to concern ourselves with anything except the present tense. The present is an instant of time, and therefore *no* series of actions, such as are implied by a verb, can take place in it. Therefore the real present of our A-class verbs must always be formed by the verb 'to be' plus a present participle; thus, 'What are you doing?' 'I am eating an apple.'

It may be noted that many verbs which in their usual sense belong to Class B can be used also to express a series of actions (i.e. have also an A-class meaning). Thus, 'to feel' may also mean 'to reach about with the intention of finding something'; 'to hear' may mean 'to listen to something which takes some time'; 'to think' may mean 'to deliberate over'. In such cases the present tense naturally is like that of any other A-class verb. Thus, 'What are you doing on the floor?' 'I am only feeling for my slippers under the couch.' (Not 'I only feel for'.) Compare, 'I feel for him in his misfortunes'. (Not 'I am feeling'.)

'He is hearing John say his lesson.'

'I am thinking whether I had better go by train or by bus.'

A few B-class verbs do not seem to have any such sense, and therefore never (in Standard English) make the present with the verb 'to be' and a participle. Of these are 'know', 'believe', 'prefer', &c. Some others, such as 'hope', 'expect', use the A-form present, as they logically should, when the speaker wishes to stress the fact that the condition is more than merely momentary. Thus, 'We are expecting you on Thursday week' implies more than 'We expect you on Thursday week', in that it suggests that the expectation is not momentary, but that a settled arrangement is referred to, which began before the present and extends after it.

In all cases it is quite clear that the use of the form is governed by the question of whether the action of the verb can be, or cannot be (or is regarded as being or not being),

completed within the period of time to which the sentence is limited.

The present tense of the verb 'drink' is therefore 'I am drinking' and *not* 'I drink'. 'I drink' should be regarded as the universal, unlimited, or indefinite tense.¹

There is another tense the name of which, though we need not call it incorrect, is at least misleading in that the characteristic from which the name is derived is not that which determines its present-day use. This is the so-called perfect tense. The 'perfect' tense is, as a rule, explained, in modern grammars, as being used to indicate that the action of the verb is 'perfect' or completed at the present time. This seems to suggest that the action is somehow more completed than when we use the so-called past or preterite tense. Of what, however, are we really thinking when we use the perfect tense? Not of an action in the past at all, or of whether such action is complete or incomplete, but of a state of affairs in the *present* regarded as the consequence of some action in the past. Thus, when I say, 'Confound it, I have upset the ink!' I am thinking, not of the action of upsetting, but of the disgusting mess which there *now* is in consequence of the upsetting. If I had since wiped it up, I should not in recounting the accident use the perfect tense (though the action would surely be still more 'completed', if such a thing is possible, than in the former case, as even the effects would have been partially got rid of); I should say, 'I upset the ink but have² wiped it up'. So, too, if I said, 'John Smith has married a black woman', I should be thinking, not of the actual marriage at all, but of the fact that Smith's (present) wife is a negress. If she were dead I should say, 'John Smith married . . .'. The perfect tense is thus used to express

¹ I believe that English is almost—if not quite—alone among European languages in distinguishing between an actual (momentary) present and an unlimited or indefinite one. *Je bois, ich trinke, beo, bibo* all mean both 'I am drinking (now)', and 'I drink (as a general rule)', and must be translated according to the context or the intention of the user.

² Perfect here, of course, because the mess is *now* gone as a result of my wiping it up.

a *present* condition regarded as the result of something (generally some action) in the past. It is not within our consciousness whether that something was completed or not, though as a matter of fact the action generally has been completed, seeing that we have before us the consequences of it.¹

Practically all the above remarks will apply equally well, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Pluperfect and the Future Perfect. We are not concerned in the least with the completion or want of completion of the action, but merely with a condition of the subject at the time of reference, regarded as a result of previous action. Thus, 'I shall have finished dinner by eight o'clock', ordinarily means 'at eight o'clock I shall be at liberty (to do something or other)'. 'Caesar had thrown a bridge across the Rhine in the previous autumn' means, in the absence of any statement to the contrary,² 'There

¹ Another somewhat different explanation of the difference between the use of the two tenses is given in some of the older grammars, but, equally with the 'completion' test, it seems to me to fail in practice. Thus in Earle's *Simple Grammar of English Now in Use* (1898), a work which in many ways was, in its day, decidedly progressive, we read:

'The flexional Preterite may well be called Definite because it is used in referring an act to a definite point in past time; the phrasal Preterite [i. e. "Perfect"] simply tells of a completed act without a time reference.

To this Earle adds the following explanatory footnote:

'A foreigner holding the office of librarian in an English library was requested to make a note about a certain book, which he immediately did, and then said: "There, I wrote it down." An Englishman would have said: "I have written it down"; and the rationale of the difference is this—that the "wrote" formula implies a date in past time, which was a thing alien to the occasion.'

Surely there is no more implication of a definite date in past time in 'Smith succeeded Jones as librarian of —' than in 'Smith has been appointed librarian of —'. In both cases the appointment must have taken place at some definite date or point in past time (though we do not necessarily know the date in either case). The 'perfect' is used in the second case simply because we really mean 'Smith is librarian now'.

² We may have more than one pluperfect in a sentence, and in such a case it is only the *nearest* which will refer to the principal time, e. g. if

was a bridge across the Rhine' at the time of which the historian is speaking—incidentally he informs us how it came to be there.

There is only one other verbal form to which I wish to refer, namely the 'passive voice'. About this I have to make what will probably seem at first sight rather a bold suggestion, namely, that if we were now starting for the first time to construct a grammar of modern English, without knowledge of or reference to the classics, it might never occur to us to postulate a passive voice at all. It seems to me that it is questionable whether in spoken English of to-day there is really any such thing, and though, as a matter of convenience, it may be well to retain it in our grammars, I doubt whether it ought to occupy quite so prominent a position as it sometimes does.

Let us consider the following sentences :

'This bird has been in a trap.'

'This bird has been a prisoner in a trap.'

'This bird has been caught in a trap.'

Do we feel that there is sufficient difference in the meaning of these three sentences (which have all the same subject) to make it necessary to regard the verb in two cases as 'active' and in the third as 'passive'? In the third case the mental picture is surely not of the series of actions implied in the verb 'catch', but rather (as in the first two sentences) of the condition of the bird as the *result* of the catching. 'Caught-in-a-trap' seems to describe or qualify the bird in exactly the same way as 'a prisoner-in-a-trap' does. Even if we add to the sentence some phrase such as 'by the gardener' which signifies by whom the catching was done, the verbal action is still not the point of the remark. It is *not* another way of saying, 'The gardener has caught this bird in a trap'.

Or take a somewhat similar phrase, such as 'The boy was kicked by a horse'. Some grammarians would say that here, the sentence just given had continued 'but it had been swept away by the winter floods' we should understand the point of the remark to be that there was *no* bridge (although Caesar had tried to provide one).

though 'boy' is the grammatical subject, yet, logically, 'horse' is the subject and 'boy' the object. They would therefore regard the phrase as exactly equivalent to 'the horse kicked the boy'. To me this seems to be wrong. The sentences certainly describe the same event, and they are equivalent in the sense that neither adds to the information given by the other, but (though grammarians sometimes forget it) language does not merely record events: it records also the attitude of mind of the user of it; and as regards this, there is a great difference between the two phrases. If in ordinary conversation¹ we use the phrase 'the boy was kicked by a horse' we are not thinking, as a rule, of the action of kicking, but of the hurt done to the boy. In fact, consideration will show that the use of the 'passive' construction in ordinary speech is almost restricted to occasions when what really concerns us is the condition of something or other due to the action of something else, and not the action itself. It seems therefore that this something which is the grammatical subject is the logical subject also, and the construction is therefore logically an active one. If we agree with this, such a sentence as 'The boy was kicked-by-a-horse' can be regarded as a phrase of the same general type as 'The boy was ill', and the need for a passive voice vanishes.²

There is one other point in which the classical basis of our grammar leads to serious practical difficulties when we have to deal with students without knowledge of Latin or Greek. English possesses a number of so-called auxiliary verbs such as 'shall', 'will', 'may', 'might', 'should', 'can', 'could', 'dare', &c., which are followed in ordinary usage by an infinitive, and several of which serve to make up tenses corresponding

¹ In writing, a 'passive' construction is often used for mere convenience in linking our thoughts together, and it may then be more strictly equivalent in meaning to the 'active' one.

² I admit that this way of regarding such a sentence leads to some difficulty with the tenses. Owing to the manner in which the language has developed we say 'The cup *has been* broken' when we mean that it is in pieces. But this does not seem to make it any more necessary to regard the construction as truly 'passive'.

in meaning to certain Latin tenses. For example, we call 'I shall take' the future tense, and we call—(or at any rate Earle called)—'I should take' the 'Futuritive Aorist of the Subjunctive Mood'.

What, however, is the real difference from the point of view of a logical grammar between such phrases and 'I may take', 'I might take', 'I must take', 'I can take', &c.? I shall probably be told that in the case of 'shall' and 'should' the significance of the verb is merely temporal—it serves solely to indicate a future (or whatever is indicated by a 'futuritive aorist'), whereas in 'I may take', &c., though most of these have also, for obvious reasons, a future significance, there is always something implied besides the mere time.

Well, suppose I accept this explanation, what follows? Most grammarians recognize emphatic forms of the verbs which include such things as an emphatic present, 'I *do* take'; an emphatic future, 'I *shall* take', &c., &c. Well and good. But 'I *shall* take' implies certainly more than simple future. Its non-temporal force is as important as that of 'you must take', of which it forms a kind of correlative. It seems impossible to treat one phrase as a definite tense of the verb and the other not. But if 'must' can form a tense, then 'may' can—a sort of deliberative or hesitative future—and there is no logical reason for excluding the others. Once, however, we admit forms including 'must', &c., to rank on the same footing as those with 'shall' and 'should', it seems difficult not to go even further. Why should we exclude 'ought' merely because it takes 'to' before the verb?¹ But having included 'ought' where should we stop? Any verb which is used to indicate the attitude of the speaker or of the subject towards the main verb would have to be regarded

¹ I find in one of the best of the modern elementary grammars the phrase, 'He fought as a brave man should fight', and if I understand the author correctly, he means to treat 'should fight' as the finite verb, 'should' being a mere auxiliary. But in such a phrase as this, 'should' is exactly equivalent to 'ought to'.

as forming a sort of extension of the ordinary conjugation of the verb. So far as I can see, in the series

I shall take
 I should take
 I may take
 I must take
 I ought to take
 I hope to take
 I expect to take

there is no point at which we can logically draw a line between those forms in which the finite verb of the phrase is to be regarded as 'take' and those in which it is to be regarded as one of the 'auxiliary' verbs.

To me it seems that in all such cases the real verb of the sentence is the one which happens to be in the infinitive; that, for example, when I say, 'I hope to catch the four o'clock train', the sentence is not really about *hoping* but about *catching the train*, and that the verb should be analysed as a modification of 'catch'. Indeed, in some languages the same idea is regularly expressed by an adverb (such as German *hoffentlich*) and a finite verb.

Grammars are very much better than they used to be, and many of the most objectionable features of the books which were current when I was most concerned with the subject have now disappeared, but there remain many minor points where criticism seems to be called for. I will bring this paper to an end by a brief mention of three of these.

(1) Certain definitions seem to need reconsideration. For example, is it true that a noun is, by itself, 'the name of anything'—if by 'thing' we mean a definite material object having separate existence? Surely not. 'Horse' is a noun, but 'horse' means either horse-meat or cavalry; never, by itself, in ordinary English, the quadruped that the Latins called *equus*.¹ To express this our habits of thought demand that we must consider either *any one* or a *particular one*

¹ Except perhaps in the rare instances of its being used as a vocative, where it is really equivalent to a proper noun.

of the group indicated by the plural word 'horses', and our habits of language that we should add to the word 'horse' the appropriate article or other word which defines whether any horse or a particular horse is thought of. I am not sure that grammar would not be easier to understand and to explain if we took the *plural*, not the singular, as the normal form of a noun of this class, i. e. regarded the basal conception as 'horses', with 'a horse, or 'the horse' as representing parts separated off from the general idea, somewhat as from the consideration of a chemical compound we might pass to a consideration of the molecules of which it is composed. But whether we do this or not, the definition, as generally given, is unsatisfactory.

(2) The Subjunctive Mood has—apart from a few fixed phrases—no real existence in modern English. It would probably be better to treat these phrases as abnormal than for their sakes to teach a whole subjunctive mood with a set of rules which are obviously ignored even by careful writers—to say nothing of careful speakers. In any case, it seems to me utterly wrong to teach that when a verb expresses doubt of any kind, it is in the Subjunctive Mood, and then to give such an example as, 'If he were here, he would speak to me'. There is something contrary to all sound principles of education in suggesting that a condition implies something doubtful.

(3) Very little attention is generally paid to grammatical or sentence stress—though this is not now utterly neglected as it used to be. Still, however, we seldom find any attempt to discuss those differences between spoken and written English which are due to the lack of adequate means of indicating stress and intonation in the written language, and to the consequent avoidance in writing of all forms of language which depend for their force or intelligibility upon the manner of utterance. The study of these differences may, I think, prove very enlightening to those who are beginning the study of written composition.

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PRINTED IN ENGLAND
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

