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Title The Fantasticks. 1945

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*We have also a more sure word of prophecy :
whereunto ye do well that ye take heed,
as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,
until the day dawn,
and the day star arise in your hearts.*

II ST. PETER, i, 19



The Fantasticks

DONNE ★ HERBERT ★ CRASHAW ★ VAUGHAN

BY W. S. SCOTT

JOHN WESTHOUSE
LONDON

1945

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FANTASTICKS was a n^o 18) LTD

given to a certain school of mystical and metaphysical writers who flourished in the seventeenth century, of whom John Donne, the illustrious Dean of St. Paul's, was the chief. They owe this name to the poet Milton, who in his Puritan lack of appreciation of their constant use of 'conceits', thus referred to them slightly in one of his Cambridge verses;

*Not those new-fangled toys, and
trimming flight
Which takes our late fantasticks
with delight.*

The theory which Mr. Scott advances in this book is that these poets, more than any, attained a perfect integration of life through putting into practice their urgent longing to 'reach out and touch'.

This book is an introduction to poets whose work is of outstanding importance to us to-day, when the moulding of life into a valid synthesis is the vital necessity for a generation which has suffered two most shattering world tragedies in the course of a mere thirty years; for if we cannot integrate our human lives, and attain at any rate a reasonable comprehension of the end and purpose of life and how to live it, there is little hope for the future of the world.

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Decorations

The decorations of this book are taken from the *Emblemata Diversorum Principum* of Typotius, 1679, and face pages 25, 33, 41, 49, 53, 69, 73, 79, 85, 89, 93, 113, 123, 135, 155, 159

To
M. W. T.
In gratitude and affection.

The Fantasticks

I AM NOT ATTEMPTING in any way to write a scholarly book on the work of the metaphysical poets, nor do I try to give new views and fresh opinions as to those writers with whom I deal ; my sole purpose in this book is to perform an introduction.

Introduction is primarily a form whereby one is made acquainted with one or more others. It may be that a mere acquaintance is all that results, and sometimes even that soon lapses, but now and again from an introduction real and lasting friendships are born. It is in the hope that this book may cause a few readers to know and love some of the most glorious writers of our country, that I write these lines to introduce them to those whom so far they have not had the privilege and happiness of knowing.

THE FANTASTICKS WAS a name given to a certain school of writers of metaphysical verse, who flourished in the seventeenth century, chiefly on account of their great use of a certain literary device known as the "conceit." This device is to use greatly-contrasting images, which belong to different orders of reality, but which have some apparent, though often far-fetched, similarity between them.

Of these writers, Donne, Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan are so far outstanding, that I propose to limit the subject of this book to these four.

In common with all artists, their aim was clear ; it was the perfect integration of life. They desired, and eventually achieved, a child's capacity for contemplation—for brooding happily, quietly and continuously on the sensation of being " at home, in his Father's house,"—satisfied, contented, fulfilled.

Their work is therefore of outstanding importance to us of the twentieth century, when the moulding of life into a valid synthesis is the vital necessity for a generation which has suffered two of the most ghastly world tragedies in the course of a mere thirty years.

If we cannot integrate our human lives—express ourselves and attain at any rate a reasonable comprehension of the end and purpose of life, and how to live it, there is little hope for the future of this world.

The resolution of the eternal conflict between the desired and the attainable, is essential for man's happiness ; that is a truism ; but it is not so easily seen, and much more rarely comprehended, that such resolution is also vital for man to find the perfect rest and satisfaction in the ultimate which is his right, and which has been taught by all religious leaders since the dawn of history—the merging into the divine, the attainment of the kingdom of heaven, or the reaching of the “ haven where we would be.”

The average man—and this is the major tragedy of life—necessarily prefers the secondary satisfaction of material comfort and physical pleasure, to the search (often an agonizingly painful and terribly arduous search), for spiritual completion. Such a goal does not seem to be worth the race ; and man is tempted either to stop at the side of the road and indulge in the fruits which grow beside the track, or to turn down a lane which promises—though falsely—to lead to more attractive country, and into brighter sunshine than is visible over the hill to which the straight road leads. Such is human nature, and until we can assure ourselves that the following of the road of right and honour does in fact, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, lead us to more delectable country and a finer climate—does in fact pay us better—so we will continue to wander at our own wills down the attractive-looking side lanes, and be content until we find ourselves bogged in the mire of which we were not conscious, and never anticipated until we had fallen into it.

The eternal value of the metaphysical poets is that they (and I do not hesitate to say they more than any) attempted, and in some cases attained, the resolution of this conflict.

They learnt, in the only way in which one can really learn anything in this life, by trial and error. Donne, for example, trod the path of extreme sensuousness, but ended as a soul purged of every stain of earthliness. Herbert, the saint, suffered for years from overweening ambition, and ended his days in complete and utter contentment. They had integrated their lives.

This came about not by a complete change of habit of thought, nor by what is commonly called conversion, nor by a realisation of the wrongfulness or stupidity of their ways of regarding life. Such integration came because they realised that what was required was not an alteration of the *way* in which their brains and emotions looked at life, but a transmutation of the *objects* of their desires.

Therein lies their importance for us to-day. The kind of life

which they were called upon to live was not very different from that which we are living. Their generation was faced with very much the same problems with which we are faced ; the world around them was in a state of complete unsettlement, as it is with us ; one type of civilization had come to a sudden end, and they were faced with the terrible problem of trying to adapt themselves to a new and fresh life, of which mankind had no experience. To secure a valid synthesis of life was of the first importance to them, as it is to us. The way in which they tried to achieve it, and the success they had in their attempt, is shown in their poems.

Not only do the metaphysical poets abound in imagery, but they draw their images from afar—grotesque, unusual, difficult, cryptic images. They use strange similes and conceits ; such is of their very being. Donne and Vaughan found them in the occult, and in the crude scientific knowledge of the time. With Herbert, however, and with Crashaw, it was rather different. The debt that Crashaw owed to his predecessors, and especially to Donne, we shall see when we come to deal with his verse. Herbert, however, despite his affection for, and enormous debt to, Donne, did not voyage into other realms in search of images. He was content to find his similes largely in the domestic life around him—in the village, the house, and above all in the Church.

To the intrinsic loveliness of the verse of these "fantasticks" is added the interest of what Professor Saintsbury has termed the "metaphysical touch." "When it was confined," he writes, "as it was in the best examples of . . . Crashaw and Vaughan . . . to a daring yet not unnatural extension of the rights of metaphor, there can be little doubt that it added to poetry an attraction singularly proper for the chief poetical end of man, the transformation of the hackneyed and familiar into the strange and high."*

Appreciation of the beauty of life, ranging from life crude, sensuous and carnal, to expressions of the most perfect love to be experienced on this plane, and using such beauty as a symbol of the utter and complete love in Eternity ; such was the outlook common to them all. They were seekers ; they were wise ; they were appreciative ; they were gifted with the divine energy ; they sought—and at the last they found.

They of all men could take to themselves the words of St. Peter :

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy ; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts."

* Traill's "Social England," 1897, Chap. xiv, by George Saintsbury.

THE FANTASTICKS

John Donne

By way of prelude to a discussion of Donne's writings, it may be as well briefly to recapitulate the main facts of his life. He was born in London in 1572, of Roman Catholic parents, became a member of the Established Church, and married in 1601 strongly against the wish of his wife's relatives, undergoing imprisonment as a result of their enmity.

For many years he suffered poverty and neglect, and finally, seeing no hope of advancement in any other direction, took Holy Orders at the urgent solicitation of King James I, shortly becoming a Royal Chaplain and Reader in Divinity at Lincoln's Inn. The King presented him to the Deanery of St. Paul's in 1621, where his preaching attracted vast congregations. After a number of years of ill-health and suffering, which he bore with great patience and fortitude, he died at the comparatively early age of fifty-eight.

JOHN DONNE is the subject of as much commentary, both explanatory and argumentative, as any other poet of his time. It is, however, not my intention to enter the lists in order to try to break my lance against redoubtable scholar-knights. I only wish to put before those who may read this book, and have but little knowledge of the subject, my own impressions of one of the most remarkable and fascinating figures in the realm of English literature.

It must be accepted as a fact that to the average reader the poetry of Donne seems to be obscure. To some few people this is remarkable ; they find it crystal-clear ; but the majority consider his thought difficult, and to them the medium of his verse only too often succeeds in obscuring his meaning still more.

It may be of assistance, then, to explain in detail why this difficulty is sometimes felt. In common with all the metaphysical poets,

Donne depended largely upon his use of imagery, and this imagery, though not always explicit, was implicit in everything he wrote. It found expression largely in the desire for satisfaction or fulfilment ; ranging from the most amorous verse, expressive of hungering for sensual satisfaction, to the poems of his later years, wherein he expresses what is in fact again a hunger, a longing after fulfilment in God.

This in itself might well be easy to understand, were it not that Donne himself found a difficulty in integrating these two—to him opposed—sides of his personality. The difficulty that he found in the formation of a valid synthesis of life was the immediate and direct cause of the apparent obscurity of his poetry. That the two sides of his personality are not in any real sense in opposition is not, even in the present year of grace, a matter of common understanding ; but to the poet himself the necessity of integrating his life seemed a process overwhelmingly difficult of accomplishment. He was one of those unfortunate people who were burdened with a consciousness of inescapable sin. Not for him was there any chance of the removal of the horror of guilt ; and though his religion made him intellectually sure that his guilt was washed away, never could he be free from the knowledge of the fact—a fact inescapable—that he was a sinner. To him, more perhaps than to most of the men and women of his generation, and vastly more than to their modern descendants, sin was a very real and heavy burden ; the words of the liturgy were terribly true, the burden of his sins was intolerable.

In his earlier years Donne failed, as I have said, to integrate his own life. He could not see that it was all of a piece ; that given a particular pattern, a particular kind of thread, and a certain arrangement of the bobbins, the cloth would necessarily turn out of a certain kind. Consequently he was never able to see that sins committed and repented were in fact forgiven—washed away as if they had never been ; his consciousness of the fact that he had sinned was too keen for such a realisation to be more than academic. It is only necessary to read such a heart-felt cry as

Batter my heart, three-person'd God ; for you
As yet but knock ; breathe, shine, and seek to mend ;

to be fully conscious of his unending agony of spirit.

I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but O, to no end . . .
Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy.

The basic emotion of all his writings, and in fact the fundamental longing of his whole life, was the longing of the single-minded heart. By this I mean the urgent need of contact ; an irrepressible desire to reach out and touch. As is the longing—impassioned and quite illogical—for the touch of the one loved, so is the need, desperate and agonizing, of the soul to have contact with the divine—a need so urgent and so sweeping that it carries all before it, which must be satisfied, no matter how much pain is caused in the attempt.

Just as the longing of a lover for his mistress becomes at times fierce, irresistible, until it does not seem to matter what force is used so the lover has his way, and he can touch his love ; to hit, to strike, to hurt, to do anything so he may be free to caress the loved object, to touch her hair, to draw his hand slowly down the adored face, to mark the wrinkles of her smiles, to rest his head against her breast, to lie supine and happy in the immediate contact of utter trust and contentment, so is the longing of the soul for the satisfaction it knows it can find in God ; an instinctive knowledge that its fierce and terrible need can be satisfied not by the touch of whatever secondary god there be—by ethical behaviour, or care for the oppressed, or desire for the betterment of others, or any other “good,” which are but as transitory satisfaction, appeasing the lust for the ultimate but as a prostitute—but satisfied only by the touch of the one, true, and perfect mistress,

Along whose side to lie,
Perfect contentment is.

This is perhaps the most important of all the thoughts which are expressed by Donne ; that no matter what our immediate aim, it must be kept ever in the forefront of the mind that it can be but illusory and transitory ; that the real goal and end of life is the merging of oneself with the mistress of one’s heart and soul, the very Ultimate.

We see then that the sensuousness of such verse as Donne wrote in his earlier years was not in any way apart from the feeling expressed, for example, in the Divine Poems. It is of identically the same cloth, woven of the same stuff throughout, and the apparent difference is merely that of pattern, an alteration of warp and woof, resulting in a finer and closer weave.

The Jack Donne of the Elegies—the gallant, gay and witty youth of the Expedition to Cadiz—was not one whit different from the Very Reverend the Dean of St. Paul’s. There was no break in his years, no *cæsura* in the rhythm of his life ; a gradual purification there may have been, but never a change of manner of thought. The mistresses of his early years, the wholly-beloved wife, the

Eternally-satisfying and Transcendent Power of his maturity—all, all were manifestations of the God for whom his whole earthly existence was one longing, agonizing search.

This, as it seems to me, was the fundamental reason (though there were also others) for his fierce preoccupation with death. All satisfaction—of mind or body, 'twas all one—was but a foretaste, almost a symbol, of the utter and complete satisfaction which his reality would one day experience, "in God's good time." Inevitably, then, death was no more a feared and loathed enemy; it was but the "*Janua Vitæ*" through which shone, albeit dimly, the rosy light of everlasting day, in eternal contact with complete and utterly-satisfying love.

What sheer nonsense it is, therefore, to refer to Donne in terms of disparagement, turning away with puritanical distaste from his love poems, as from a disgusting smell. He himself in his after years may have wished, and wished with all his heart, that he had never written them, or at least had never let them see the light of day; so be it; reasons good and weighty enough can be adduced to explain it; but let us not fall into the same error. We have no cause to regret them as he had; our professional prospects are not thereby damaged; we have not been guilty of "kissing and telling"; nor (and this is the real point) can we be conscious of a sin in writing them, as he unhappily was.

"It is a truth," writes Walton, "that in his penitential years, viewing some of those pieces that had been loosely (God knows too loosely) scattered in his youth, he wished they had been abortive, or so shortlived that his own eyes had witnessed their funerals."

Maybe so; but (leaving aside all question of our gratitude for their preservation on account of their intrinsic loveliness, despite the fact that our twentieth-century taste is sometimes offended by coarseness) the important thing is that without them, the graver and exquisite poems of his maturity could never have come to birth. From his early verse, as a rose-tree from the mould, rich and fruitful, and itself satisfying according to its nature, the Divine poems grew and flowered.

No longer, one hopes, is it necessary in this day and generation to say, as did an earlier editor*, "I deplore that Poetry, in every way almost so memorable and potential, should be stained even to uncleanness in sorrowfully too many places." Again, the same writer: " 'With every abatement'—as I say in my Dedication†—

* Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, "Fuller Worthies' Library," Vol. XII, 1872, p. ix.

† Grosart's edition of Donne was dedicated to Robert Browning, "knowing how much his poetry, with every abatement, is valued and assimilated by him."

the Poetry of Donne is imperishable in much of it, and notable in all, and historically and philosophically to be held fast. Granted that as in rose's heart or lily's chalice you are 'shocked to find a slug crawling. Yet none the less is the rose 'a thing of beauty,' none the less the lily of the finest and nicest workmanship of The Gardener ; e.g., here is one line out of many equally arresting, that springs up first (so to say) not merely from 'reeds and rushes' slime-rooted, but as it were out of ordure such as makes one hold the nose :

' Love built on beauty soon as beauty dies.' "

Far is it from my desire to laud Donne for his descent into the slime, as certain of our " moderns " might wish. I merely seek to explain that without the sensuous work of his earlier years, the great verse of his maturity could never have existed.

Donne's own considered opinion, clarified by experience, is expressed in a passage from a sermon which he preached before Queen Anne, consort of King James I, at Denmark House, on December 14, 1617.

" As the Prophets, and the other Secretaries of the holy Ghost in penning the books of Scriptures, do for the most part retain, and express in their writings some impressions, and some air of their former professions ; those that had been bred in Courts and Cities, those that had been Shepherds and Heardsmen, those that had been Fishers, and so of the rest . . . so that soul, that hath been transported upon any particular worldly pleasure, when it is entirely turn'd upon God, and the contemplation of his all-sufficiency and abundance, doth find in God fit subject, and just occasion to exercise the same affection piously, and religiously, which had before so sinfully transported, and possess it.

" . . . So will a voluptuous man, who is turned to God, find plenty and deliciousnes enough in him, to feed his soul, as with marrow, and with fatness, as David expresses it ; and so an angry and passionate man, will find zeal enough in the house of God to eat him up . . . And according to this Rule too, Solomon, whose disposition was amorous, and excessive in the love of women, when he turn'd to God, he departed not utterly from his old phrase and language, but having put a new, and a spiritual tincture, and form and habit in all his thoughts, and words, he conveys all his loving approaches and applications to God, and all God's gracious answers to his amorous soul, into songs, and Epithalamians, and meditations upon contracts, and marriages between God and his Church, and between God and his soul ; as we see so evidently in all his other

writings, and particularly in this text, 'I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me.'

"In which love is expressed all that belongs to love, all which, is to desire, and to enjoy; for to desire without fruition, is a rage, and to enjoy without desire is a stupidity: in the first alone we think of nothing, but that which we then would have; and in the second alone, we are not for that, when we have it; in the first, we are without it; in the second, we were as good as we were, for we have no pleasure in it; nothing then can give us satisfaction, but when those two concur, *amare* and *frui*, to love and to enjoy."

There is one especial respect in which all the metaphysical poets resemble one another, quite apart from the obvious respect of their basic philosophy of life. It is this: that all of them retained in greater or less degree a symbol or mark of integration which is common to almost everybody in their childhood, but which most of us lose with the coming of adolescence, that is, the child's pure, imaginative outlook, the belief (emotional even if not intellectual) in a faery world, a world of pure reality.

It is the loss of this belief, coming as it so often does as the result of some bitter experience, some understanding of the unkindness of life, which interferes with the synthesis which we have previously found valid and sufficient, and casts us adrift on a sea of which we suddenly realise we have no chart, and causes us to feel the desperate unhappiness of being utterly friendless and alone, the "unwanted and unloved" sensation of which in our adolescent years we were sometimes so painfully conscious.

In his view and understanding of life, however, Donne retained a sufficient portion of the pre-adolescent life-synthesis to enable him to succeed, though only after a long period of conflict, in attaining to a perfect integration. This child-outlook, this very rare and valuable quality which while it is in command of the mind makes everything not merely seem but actually be quite simple and evident, constantly took the direction of his life. That at times it was completely non-existent is a tragic truth; had it always been present, his life would have remained what all life should be, simple and clear, black and white, and not what it is to most poor mortals, a state of conflict never completely resolved, whose underlying tone is always gray—a gray tending to off-white, or a gray that is nearly black, but always a gray.

That is the reason, incidentally, that his poems have such intrinsic loveliness. His interest in the unusual and romantic, in alchemy, in the philosopher's stone, are all a part of the perfectly-integrated child outlook.

It was not until later growth, with presumably some experience of sadness or disappointment which did not seem to his immature understanding to march with life as it ought to be, that there arose in his mind the feeling of the unpleasantness of nature, the filth (as he saw it) in which life was embedded, and from which it took its origin.

It would not, perhaps, be unfair to compare him in some respects with Swift, who spent his life searching, but searching vainly, and in such a way as led to madness, for a synthesis which would make all clear. Why, we know not, nor in fact is it of any importance to us ; but it is very evident that something happened that twisted Donne's mind from the happy acceptance of the cycle of life to a state in which there was perpetual conflict, not until his death to be resolved.

He accepted life : and all at once failed to accept it. As Miss Evelyn Hardy puts it, " Its roots for him sprang from, and remained entwined in, unnatural filth."*

An idea that has frequent acceptance is that Donne was a man who, like St. Paul, underwent a sudden and immediate " conversion." Between the exceedingly amorous verse—horrifying in its licentiousness as it appears to many who would otherwise appreciate him more fully—which he wrote in his young days, and which, as Walton tells us, he would in graver years have been happy to have seen forgotten, and the exquisite " Divine Poems " of his later years, when he saw more clearly the real needs of the human soul, there seems to be a complete gap. It is as if in the rhythmic line of his life there was a complete *cæsura*, and that the rhythm started again with a stronger and more impressive beat. In fact, however, as far as I can claim to understand it, the rhythmic beat of life never varied at all. There was merely a transmutation of object ; all the fire and passion, all the " libido " with which his spirit was so entirely filled, was directed in after-life towards another object.

A complete and absolute *cæsura* does not often occur in human life ; that it sometimes does so is, of course, undeniable ; but it most unquestionably did not do so in the case of Donne. The lust for love, the overmastering passion of a young man of his fiercely hot-blooded temperament, was identically the same in quality as the lust for completion, for fulfilment, which was his to the end of his life. His quest was of the type which caused effects less known to-day than in the fiercer, more passionate, more energetic times of the Renaissance, to whose spirit his mind and character were, indeed, more akin than to the spirit of earnest enquiry and less

* " Donne : A Spirit in Conflict," Evelyn Hardy, 1942, p. 252.

quickly moving blood that were in general the characteristics of the times of the "wisest fool in Christendom."

Donne was not of the temper of his own times, any more than was George Herbert, though this fact showed itself in these two friends in vastly different ways. Where Donne in the days of his maturity showed himself both militant and wholly desirous of peace, passionate, headstrong and wilful, yet wholly wishing to subordinate his desires to the will of his Creator, he was none the less always filled with fire, with energy, with ardour. The same ardour was in Herbert, but how differently expressed ! The rhythm of his life was gentle and even, where that of Donne was stormy and turbulent ; not for him the ungoverned and indeed ungovernable passion of Donne ; not for him the experience of the utter self-contempt and degradation ; his was a more even path ; and by that very fact, while denied the deep descent into the valleys of humiliation, he could never ascend to the same heights nor express the transcendent glory of conquest as did he who had plumbed the depths of passion to the very bottom.

Herbert could write " Love bade me welcome " ; only a Donne could have expressed the exquisite poignancy of

" When thou hast done that, thou hast done ;
I fear no more."

Donne experienced, as perhaps few before him, and very few after him, the utter nausea of longing ; he knew the pain, physical in its intensity, of desiring most passionately that for which his soul hungered, knowing that this intense need could never be satisfied in this life, and that he was condemned to bear the cross—of all crosses the heaviest—of a desire that must of necessity remain unsatisfied and unfulfilled.

It was comparable to the longing, such as all mankind is at times capable of feeling, for the touch of someone loved, and gone beyond our reach. In Donne's case, this longing, magnified a thousand times, was one of the causes of the intense preoccupation with death which was one of the marks of his thought. Only in death could be found release from this intolerable strain ; only in the hereafter could be found the answer to the fearful riddle of existence. Death, and death alone, could set him free from the agony of agonies, the longing that cannot be fulfilled.

It is frequently said that Donne's preoccupation with death was caused in part by his love for the beauty of decay. This, it seems to me, is a totally untrue judgment. His death-complex had nothing to do with any such thing. It merely caused him to

discover such beauty as was in decay, but the decay itself had no appeal ; his interest in death had nothing in common with the vulgar and petty inanities of the fin-de-siècle writers, disease-ridden and common, to whom stink and putrefaction had of themselves an irresistible appeal. He was cast in a far different mould, a giant among dwarfs, a seraph among men.

The love poems show the unappeasableness of his desire, ever mounting, ever growing, and at length transmuted into a purer, finer form, but still a desire intense and unsatisfied, implicit with all the burning curiosity and lust for experience that is typical of Renaissance thought, a lust that burned and devoured all it touched, and could be satiated only in death.

That, as I see it, was Donne ; one who strides, Colossus-like, above all the men of his time, pygmies beneath his feet. Lover of lovers, mystic of mystics, of a curiosity utterly insatiable, kinetic, energetic, and burning with the dual fire—the pure cold flame of intellect and the red hot flame of unappeasable desire.

THE SELECTED VERSE OF JOHN DONNE

From SONGS AND SONNETS

THE GOOD-MORROW *I wonder by my troth*
SONG *Goe and catche a falling starre*
WOMAN'S CONSTANCY *Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day*
THE SUNNE RISING *Busie old foole*
THE CANONIZATION *For Godsake hold your tongue*
THE LEGACIE *When I dyed last*
LOVE'S GROWTH *I scarce beleeeve*
THE DREAM *Deare love, for nothing lesse than thee*
THE CURSE *Whoever guesses*
THE APPARITION *When by thy scorne*
THE MESSAGE *Send home my long stray'd eyes*
THE EXTASIE *Where, like a pillow on a bed*
LOVE'S DEITIE *I long to talke*
THE RELIQUE *When my grave is broke up againe*
THE FUNERALL *Who ever comes*

From the ELEGIES

THE AUTUMNALL *No Spring, nor Summer Beauty*
TO HIS MISTRIS GOING TO BED *Come, Madam, come*

From LATIN POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS

GOD GRANT THEE THINE OWN WISH, AND GRANT THEE
MINE

From the HOLY SONNETS

AT THE ROUND EARTH'S IMAGINED CORNERS, BLOW
DEATH, BE NOT PROUD
BATTER MY HEART, THREE PERSON'D GOD
SINCE SHE WHOM I LOV'D HATH PAYD HER LAST DEBT

From the DIVINE POEMS

A HYMNE TO CHRIST, AT THE AUTHOR'S LAST GOING
INTO GERMANY *In what torne ship soever I embarke*
A HYMNE TO GOD THE FATHER *Wilt thou forgive that sinne*
A HYMNE TO GOD MY GOD, IN MY SICKNESSE *Since I am*
comming

The Good-Morrow

I wonder by my troth, what thou and I
Did, till we lov'd ? were we not wean'd till then ?
But suck'd on countrey pleasures, childishly ?
Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den ?
'Twas so ; But this, all pleasure's fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dreame of thee.

And now good-morrow to our waking soules,
Which watch not one another out of feare ;
For love, all love of other sights controules,
And makes one little roome an every where.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne,
Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face is in thine eye, thine in mine appeares,
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,
Where can we finde two better hemisphaeres
Without sharpe North, without declining West ?
What ever dyes, was not mixt equally ;
If our two loves be one, or thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

Song

Goe and catch a falling starre,
Get with child a mandrake roote,
Tell me where all past yeares are,
Or who cleft the Devil's foot,
Teach me to heare Mermaides singing,
Or to keep off envie's stinging,
 And finde
 What winde
Serves to advance an honest minde.

If thou beest borne to strange sights,
Things invisible to see,
Ride ten thousand daies and nights,
Till age snow white haies on thee,
Thou, when thou return'st, wilt tell mee
All strange wonders that befell thee,
 And sweare
 No where
Lives a woman true, and faire.

If thou find'st one, let mee know,
Such a pilgrimage were sweet ;
Yet doe not, I would not goe,
Though at next doore wee might meet,
Though shee were true, when you met her,
And last, till you write your letter,
 Yet shee
 Will be
False, ere I come, to two or three.

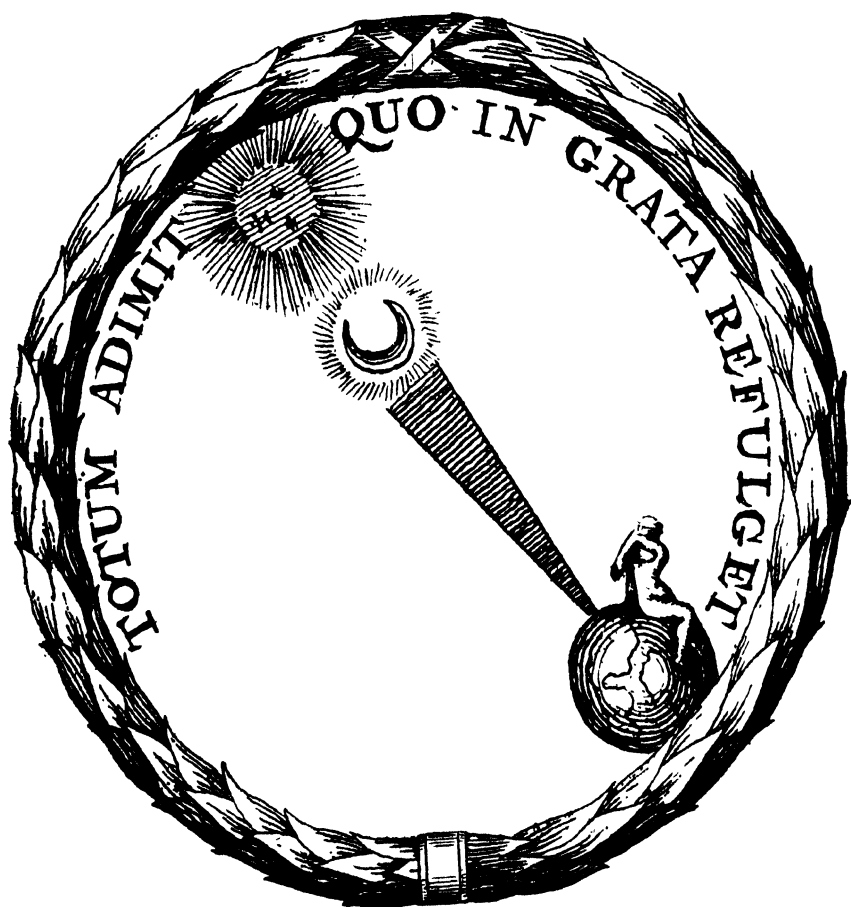
Woman's Constancy

Now thou hast lov'd me one whole day,
To morrow when thou leav'st, what wilt thou say ?
Wilt thou then Antedate some new made vow ?

Or say that now

We are not just those persons which we were ?
Or that oathes made in reverentiall feare
Of love and his wrath, any may forswear ?
Or, as true deaths, true maryages untie,
So lovers' contracts, images of those,
Binde but till sleep, death's image, them unloose ?

Or, your owne end to Justifie,
For having purpos'd change and falsehood ; you
Can have no way but falsehood to be true ?
Vaine lunatique, against these scapes I could
Dispute, and conquer, if I would,
Which I abstaine to doe,
For by to morrow, I may thinke so too.



The Sunne Rising

Busie old foole, unruly Sunne,
Why dost thou thus
Through windowes and through curtains call on us ?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run ?
Sawcy pedantique wretch, goe chide
Late school boyes and sowre prentices,
Goe tell Court-huntsmen that the King will ride,
Call countrey ants to harvest offices ;
Love, all alike, no season knowes nor clyme,
Nor houres, dayes, moneths, which are the rags of time.

Thy beames, so reverend and strong,
Why should'st thou thinke ?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a winke,
But that I would not lose her sight so long :
If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Looke, and to morrow late, tell mee
Whether both th' Indias of spice and Myne
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with mee.
Aske for those Kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt heare, All here in one bed lay.

She's all States, and all Princes I,
Nothing else is.
Princes doe but play us ; compar'd to this,
All honor's mimique ; All wealth alchimie.
Thou, sunne, art halfe as happy as wee,
In that the world's contracted thus ;
Thine age askes ease, and since thy duties bee
To warme the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art every where ;
This bed thy center is, these walls thy spheare.

The Canonization

For Godsake hold your tongue, and let me love,
 Or chide my palsie, or my gout,
 My five gray haire, or ruin'd fortune flout,
 With wealth your state, your minde with Arts improve,
 Take you a course, get you a place,
 Observe his honour, or his grace,
 Or the King's reall, or his stamped face
 Contemplate, what you will, approve,
 So you will let me love.

Alas, alas, who's injur'd by my love ?
 What merchant ships have my sighs drown'd ?
 Who saies my teares have overflow'd his ground ?
 When did my colds a forward spring remove ?
 When did the heats which my veines fill
 Adde one more to the plaguie Bill ?
 Soldiers finde warres, and Lawyers finde out^{er} still
 Litigious men, which quarrels move,
 Though she and I do love.

Call us what you will, wee are made such by love ;
 Call her one, mee another flye,
 We're Tapers too, and at our owne cost die,
 And wee in us finde th' Eagle and the Dove.
 The Phoenix ridle hath more wit
 By us, we two being one, are it.
 So to one neutrall thing both sexes fit,
 Wee dye and rise the same, and prove
 Mysterious by this love.

Wee can dye by it, if not live by love,
 And if unfit for tombes and hearse
 Our legend be, it will be fit for verse ;
 And if no peece of Chronicle wee prove,
 We'll build in sonnets pretty roomes ;
 As well a well wrought urne becomes
 The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombes,
 And by these hymnes, all shall approve
 Us Canoniz'd for Love :

And thus invoke us ; You whom reverend love
Made one another's hermitage ;
You, to whom love was peace, that now is rage ;
Who did the whole world's soule contract, and drove
 Into the glasses of your eyes
 (So made such mirrors, and such spies,
That they did all to you epitomize),
Countries, Townes, Courts : Beg from above
 A patterne of your love !

The Legacie

When I dyed last, and, Deare, I dye
 As often as from thee I goe,
 Though it be but an houre agoe,
And Lovers' houres be full eternity,
I can remember yet, that I
 Something did say, and something did bestow ;
Though I be dead, which sent mee, I should be
Mine owne executor and Legacie.

I heard mee say, Tell her anon,
 That my selfe,—that is you, not I,—
 Did kill me, and when I felt mee dye,
I bid mee send my heart, when I was gone,
But I, alas, could there finde none,
 When I had ripp'd me, and search'd where hearts did lye ;
It kill'd mee againe, that I who still was true
In life, in my last Will should cozen you.

Yet I found something like a heart,
 But colours it, and corners, had,
 It was not good, it was not bad,
It was intire to none, and few had part.
As good as could be made by art
 It seem'd ; and therefore for our losses sad,
I meant to send this heart in stead of mine,
But O, no man could hold it, for 'twas thine.

Love's Growth

I scarce beleewe my love to be so pure
As I had thought it was,
Because it doth endure
Vicissitude and season, as the grasse ;
Me thinkes I lyed all winter, when I swore
My love was infinite, if spring make't more ;
But if this med'cine, love, which cures all sorrow
With more, not onely bee no quintessence,
But mixt of all stuffes, paining soule or sense,
And of the Sunne his working vigour borrow,
Love's not so pure and abstract, as they use
To say, which have no Mistresse but their Muse,
But as all else, being elemented too,
Love sometimes would contemplate, sometimes do.

And yet no greater, but more eminent,
Love by the Spring is growne ;
As, in the firmament,
Starres by the Sunne are not inlarg'd, but showne.
Gentle love deeds, as blossomes on a bough,
From love's awakened root do bud out now.
If, as in water stir'd, more circles bee
Produc'd by one, love such additions take,
Those like so many sphaeres, but one heaven make,
For they are all concentrique unto thee.
And though each spring doe added to love new heate,
As princes doe in times of action get
New taxes, and remit them not in peace,
No winter shall abate the spring's encrease.

The Dreame

Deare love, for nothing lesse than thee
Would I have broke this happy dreame,
 It was a theame
For reason, much too strong for phantasie,
Therefore thou wakd'st me wisely ; yet
My Dreame thou brok'st not, but continued'st it,
Thou art so truth, that thoughts of thee suffice
To make dreames truths, and fables histories ;
Enter these armes, for since thou thought'st it best
Not to dreame all my dreame, let's act the rest.

As light'ning, or a Taper's light,
Thine eyes, and not thy noise wak'd mee ;
 Yet I thought thee
(For thou lov'st truth) an Angell at first sight,
But when I saw thou sawest my heart,
And knew'st my thoughts, beyond an Angel's art,
When thou knew'st what I dreamt, when thou knew'st when
Excesse of joy would wake me, and cam'st then,
I must confesse, it could not chuse but bee
Prophane, to thinke thee anything but thee.

Comming and staying show'd thee, thee,
But rising makes me doubt that now
 Thou art not thou.
That love is weake, where feare's as strong as hee ;
'Tis not all spirit, pure and brave,
If mixture it of Feare, Shame, Honor, have.
Perchance as torches which must ready bee,
Men light and put out, so thou deal'st with mee,
Thou cam'st to kindle, goest to come ; Then I
Will dreame that hope againe, but else would die.

The Curse

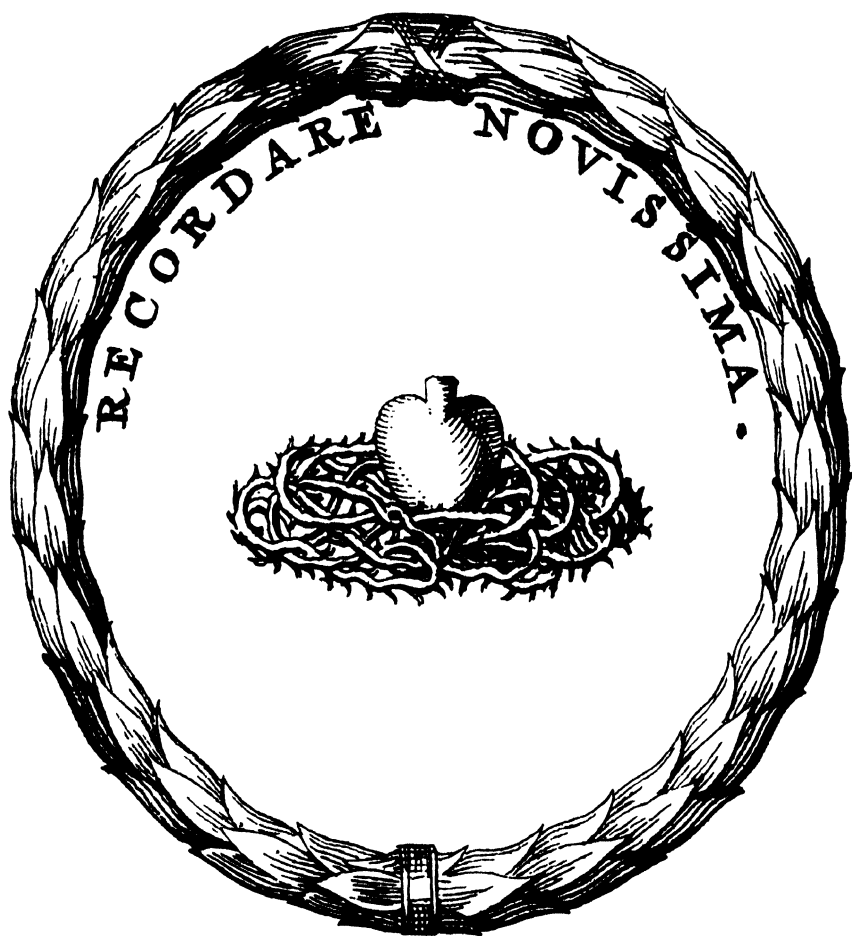
Whoever guesses, thinks, or dreames he knowes
Who is my mistris, wither by this curse ;

His only, and only his the purse
May some dull heart to love dispose,
And shee yeeld then to all that are his foes ;
May he be scorn'd by one, whom all else scorne,
Forsweare to others, what to her he'th sworne,
With feare of missing, shame of getting, torne ;

Madnesse his sorrow, gout his cramp, may hee
Make, but by thinking, who hath made him such :
And may he feele no touch
Of conscience, but of fame, and bee
Anguish'd, not that 'twas sinne, but that 'twas shee :
In early and long scarcenesse may he rot,
For land which had been his, if he had not
Himselfe incestuously an heire begot :

May he dreame Treason, and beleewe that hee
Meant to performe it, and confesse, and die,
And no record tell why :
His sonnes, which none of his may bee,
Inherite nothing but his infamie :
Or may he so long Parasites have fed
That he would faine be their's, whom he hath bred,
And at the last be circumcis'd for bread.

The venom of all stepdames, gamsters' gall,
What Tyrans and their subjects interwish,
What Plants, Myne, Beasts, Foule, Fish
Can contribute, an ill which all
Prophets or Poets spake ; And all which shall
Be annex'd in schedules unto this by mee,
Fall on that man ; For if it be a shee,
Nature beforehand hath out-cursed mee.



The Apparition

When by thy scorne, O murther, I am dead,
And that thou think'st thee free
From all solicitation from mee,
Then shall my ghost come to thy bed,
And thee, fain'd vestall, in worse arms shall see ;
Then thy sicke taper will begin to winke,
And he, whose thou art then, being tyr'd before,
Will, if thou stirre, or pinch to wake him, thinke
Thou call'st for more,
And in false sleepe will from thee shrinke,
And then poore Aspen wretch, neglected thou
Bath'd in a cold quicksilver sweat wilt lye
A veryer ghost than I ;
What I will say, I will not tell thee now,
Lest that preserve thee ; and since my love is spent,
I'd rather thou should'st painfully repent,
Than by my threat'nings rest still innocent.

The Message

Send home my long stray'd eyes to mee,
Which O too long have dwelt on thee ;
Yet since there they've learn'd such ill,
 Such forc'd fashions
 And false passions,
 That they be
 Made by thee
Fit for no good sight, keep them still.

Send home my harmlesse heart againe,
Which no unworthy thought could staine ;
But if it be taught by thine
 To make jestings
 Of protestings,
 And crosse both
 Word and oath,
Keepe it, for then 'tis none of mine.

Yet send me back my heart and eyes,
That I may know and see thy lyes,
And may laugh and joy, when thou
 Art in anguish,
 And dost languish
 For some one
 That will none,
Or prove as false as thou art now.

The Extasie

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant banke swell'd up, to rest
The violet's reclining head,
Sat we two, one another's best.
Our hands were firmly cimented
With a fast balme, which thence did spring,
Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred
Our eyes upon one double string ;
So t'intergraft our hands, as yet
Was all the meanes to make us one,
And pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.
As 'twixt two equall Armies, Fate
Suspends uncertaine victorie,
Our soules,—which to advance their state
Were gone out,—hung 'twixt her and mee.
And whilst our soules negotiate there,
Wee like sepulchral statues lay ;
All day the same our postures were,
And we said nothing all the day.
If any, so by love refin'd
That he soule's language understood,
And by good love were growen all minde,
Within convenient distance stood,
He,—though he knew not which soul spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same,—
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part farre purer than he came.
This Extasie doth unperplex,
—We said,—and tell us what we love,
Wee see by this, it was not sexe,
Wee see, we saw not what did move :
But as all severall soules containe
Mixture of things, they know not what,
Love, these mixt soules, doth mixe againe,
And makes both one, each this and that.
A single violet transplant,
The strength, the colour, and the size,

All which before was poore and scant,
Redoubles still, and multiplies.
When love, with one another so
Interanimates two soules,
That abler soule, which thence doth flow,
Defects of loneliness controules.
Wee then, who are this new soule, know
Of what we are compos'd and made,
For th' Atomies of which we grow
Are soules, whom no change can invade.
But O alas, so long, so farre
Our bodies why doe wee forbear ?
They are ours, though they're not wee ; Wee are
The intelligences, they the speares.
We owe them thanks, because they thus
Did us to us at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are drosse to us, but allay.
On man heaven's influence works not so,
But that it first imprints the ayre,
Soe soule into the soule may flow,
Though it to body first repaire.
As our blood labours to beget
Spirits, as like soules as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtile knot which makes us man ;
So must pure lovers' soules descend
T' affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies.
T' our bodies turne wee then, that so
Weak men on love reveal'd may looke ;
Love's mysteries in soules doe grow,
But yet the body is his booke.
And if some lover, such as wee,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still marke us, he shall see
Small change, when we're to bodies gone.

Love's Deitie

I long to talke with some old lover's ghost,
Who dyed before the god of Love was borne :
I cannot thinke that hee, who then lov'd most,
Sunke so low, as to love one which did scorne.
But since this god produc'd a destinie,
And that vice-nature, custome, lets it be ;
I must love her, that loves not mee.

Sure they which made him god, meant not so much,
Nor he in his young godhead practis'd it.
But when an even flame two hearts did touch,
His office was indulgently to fit
Actives to passives. Correspondencie
Only his subject was ; It cannot bee
Love, till I love her that loves mee.

But every moderne god will now extend
His vast prerogative as far as Jove.
To rage, to lust, to write to, to commend,
All is the purluwe of the God of Love.
O were we waken'd by this Tyrannie
To ungod this child againe, it could not bee
I should love her, who loves not mee.

Rebell and Atheist too, why murmure I,
As though I felt the worst that love could doe ?
Love might make me leave loving, or might trie
A deeper plague, to make her love mee too,
Which, since she loves before, I'm loth to see ;
Falsehood is worse than hate ; and that must bee
If shee whom I love, should love mee.

The Relique

When my grave is broke up againe,
 Some second ghest to entertaine,
 (For graves have learn'd that woman-head
 To be to more than one a Bed)
 And he that digs it, spies
 A bracelet of bright haire about the bone,
 Will he not let's alone,
 And thinke that there a loving couple lies,
 Who thought that this device might be some way
 To make their soules, at the last busie day,
 Meet at this grave, and make a little stay ?

If this fall in a time, or land,
 Where mis-devotion doth command,
 Then he that digges us up will bring
 Us to the Bishop and the King,
 To make us Reliques ; then
 Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I
 A something else thereby ;
 All women shall adore us, and some men ;
 And since at such time miracles are sought,
 I would have that age by this paper taught
 What miracles wee harmlesse lovers wrought.

First, we lov'd well and faithfully,
 Yet knew not what wee lov'd nor why ;
 Difference of sex no more wee knew
 Than our Guardian Angells doe ;
 Comming and going, wee
 Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales ;
 Our hands ne'r toucht the seales
 Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free :
 These miracles wee did ; but now, alas,
 All measure and all language I should passe,
 Should I tell what a miracle shee was.



The Funerall

Who ever comes to shroud me, do not harme
Nor question much
That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns my arm ;
The mystery, the signe you must not touch,
For 'tis my outward Soule,
Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,
Will leave this to controule,
And keep these limbes, her Provinces, from dissolution.

For if the sinewie thread my braine lets fall
Through every part,
Can tye those parts, and make mee one of all ;
These haire which upward grew, and strength and art
Have from a better braine,
Can better do't ; Except she meant that I
By this should know my pain,
As prisoners then are manacled, when they're condemned to die.

What ere shee meant by't, bury it with me,
For since I am
Love's martyr, it might breed idolatrie,
If into others' hands these Reliques came ;
As 'twas humility
To afford to it all that a Soule can doe,
So 'tis some bravery,
That since you would save none of mee, I bury some of you.

The Autumnall

No Spring, nor Summer Beauty hath such grace
As I have seen in one Autumnall face.
Young Beauties force our love, and that's a Rape ;
This doth but counsaile, yet you cannot 'scape.
If 'twere a shame to love, here 'twere no shame,
Affection here takes Reverence's name.
Were her first yeares the Golden Age ; That's true,
But now she's gold oft tried, and ever new.
That was her torrid and inflaming time,
This is her tolerable Tropique clyme.
Faire eyes, who askes more heate than comes from hence,
He in a fever wishes pestilence.
Call not these wrinkles, graves ; If graves they were,
They were love's graves ; for else he is no where.
Yet lies not Love dead here, but here doth sit
Vow'd to this trench, like an Anachorit.
And here, till her's, which must be his death, come,
He doth not digge a Grave, but build a Tombe.
Here dwells he, though he sojourn ev'ry where,
In Progresse, yet his standing house is here.
Here, where still Evening is ; not noon nor night ;
Where no voluptuousnesse, yet all delight.
In all her words, unto all hearers fit,
You may at Revels, you at Counsaile, sit.
This is love's timber, youth his under-wood ;
There he, as wine in June, enrages blood,
Which then comes seasonabliest, when our tast
And appetite to other things, is past.
Xerxes' strange love, the Platane tree,
Was lov'd for age, none being so large as shee,
Or else because, being young, nature did blesse
Her youth with age's glory, Barrennesse.
If we love things long sought, Age is a thing
Which we are fifty yeares in compassing.
If transitory things, which soone decay,
Age must be loveliest at the latest day.
But name not Winter-faces, whose skin's slacke ;
Lanke as an unthrift's purse ; but a soule's sacke ;

Whose Eyes seeke light within, for all here's shade ;
 Whose mouthes are holes, rather worne out than made ;
 Whose every tooth to a severall place is gone,
 To vex their soules at Resurrection ;
 Name not these living Death's heads unto mee,
 For these not Ancient, but Antique be.
 I hate extreames ; yet I had rather stay
 With Tombes, than Cradles, to weare out a day.
 Since such love's naturall lation is, may still
 My love descend, and journey downe the hill,
 Not panting after growing beauties, so
 I shall ebbe out with them who home-ward goe.

To His Mistris Going to Bed

Come, Madam, come, all rest my powers defie,
 Until I labour, I in labour lie.
 The foe oft-times, having the foe in sight
 Is tir'd with standing, though he never fight.
 Off with that girdle, like heaven's Zone glistering,
 But a far fairer world encompassing.
 Unpin that spangled breastplate that you wear,
 That th' eyes of busie fooles may be stopt there.
 Unlace your self, for that harmonious chyme
 Tells me from you, that now it is bed time.
 Off with that happy busk, which I envie,
 That still can be, and still can stand so nigh.
 Your gown going off, such beautious state reveals,
 As when from flow'ry meads th'hill's shadow steales.
 Off with that wyerie Coronet, and shew
 The haiery Diademe which on you doth grow :
 Now off with those shooes, and then safely tread
 In this love's hallow'd temple, this soft bed.
 In such white robes, heaven's Angels us'd to be
 Receav'd by men ; Thou, Angel, bringst with thee
 A heaven like Mah'met's Paradise ; and though
 Ill spirits walk in white, we easily know
 By this, these Angels from an evil sprite,
 Those set our hairs, but these our flesh, upright.

License my roaving hands, and let them go
Before, behind, between, above, below.
O my America ! my new-foun-land,
My kingdome, safeliest when with one man man'd,
My Myne of precious stones, my Emperie,
How blest am I in this discovering thee !
To enter in these bonds is to be free ;
Then where my hand is set, my seal shall be.

Full nakedness ! All joyes are due to thee ;
As souls unbodied, bodies uncloth'd must be,
To taste whole joyes. Gems which you women use
Are like Atlanta's balls, cast in men's views,
That when a fool's eye lighteth on a Gem,
His earthly soul may covet their's, not them.
Like pictures, or like books' gay coverings made
For lay-men, are all women thus arrayed ;
Themselves are mystick books, which only wee,
Whom their imputed grace will dignifie,
Must see reveal'd. Then since that I may know ;
As liberally as to a Midwife shew
Thyself : cast all, yea, this white lynnence hence,
There is no pennance due to innocence.

To teach thee, I am naked first ; why then,
What needst thou have more covering than a man.

*Translated Out of Gazæus,
Vota Amico Facta, 160*

God grant thee thine own wish, and grant thee mine,
Thou, who dost, best friend, in best things outshine ;
May thy soul, ever chearfull, nere know cares,
Nor thy life, ever lively, know gray haire.
Nor thy hand, ever open, know base holds,
Nor thy purse, ever plump, know pleits, or folds.
Nor thy tongue, ever true, know a false thing,
Nor thy word, ever mild, know quarrelling.
Nor thy works, ever equall, know disguise,
Nor thy fame, ever pure, know contumelies.
Nor thy prayers know low objects, still Divine ;
God grant thee thine own wish, and grant thee mine.

Holy Sonnets

At the round earth's imagined corners, blow
Your trumpets, Angells, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of soules, and to your scatter'd bodies goe,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
All whom warre, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despaire, law, chance, hath slaine, and you whose eyes
Shall behold God, and never tast death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and mee mourn a space,
For if above all these my sinnes abound,
'Tis late to aske abundance of thy grace
When wee are there ; here on this lowly ground
Teach mee how to repent ; for that's as good
As if thou'dst seal'd my pardon with thy blood.

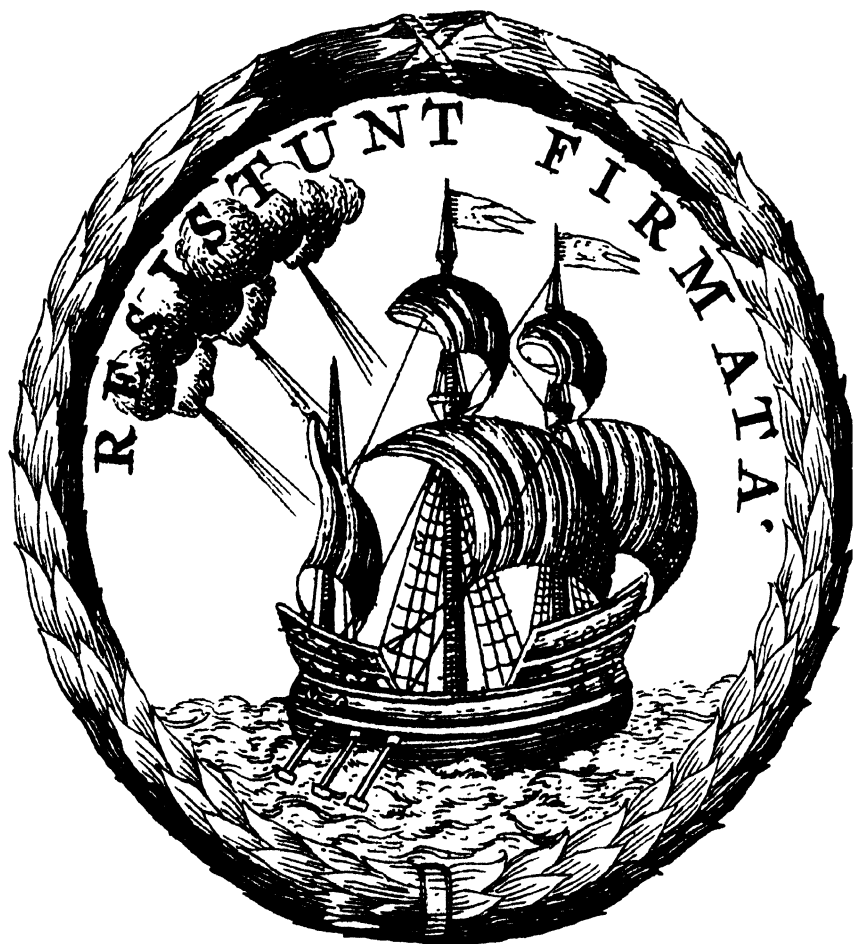
Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
 Mighty and dreadfull, for thou art not soe,
 For those, whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
 Die not, poore death, nor yet canst thou kill mee.
 From rest and sleepe, which but thy pictures bee,
 Much pleasure, then from thee, much more must flow,
 And soonest our best men with thee doe goe,
 Reft of their bones, and soule's deliverie.

For thou art slave to Fate, Chance, kings, and
 desperate men,

And dost with poyson, warre, and sicknesse dwell,
 And poppie or charmes can make us sleepe as well
 And better than thy stroke ; why swell'st thou then ?
 One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,
 And death shall be no more ; death, thou shalt die.

Batter my heart, three person'd God ; for you
 As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seeke to mend ;
 That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow mee, and bend
 Your force, to breake, blowe, burn and make me new.
 I, like an usurpt towne, to another due,
 Labour to admit you, but O, to no end,
 Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
 But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.
 Yet dearly I love you, and would be loved faine,
 But am betroth'd unto your enemye :
 Divorce mee, untie, or breake that knot againe,
 Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
 Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
 Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.

Since she whom I lov'd hath pay'd her last debt
 To Nature, and to hers, and my good is dead,
 And her Soule early into heaven ravished,
 Wholly on heavenly things my mind is sett.
 Here the admyring her my mind did whett
 To seeke thee God ; so streames do shew their head ;
 But though I have found thee, and thou my thirst hast fed,
 A holy thirsty dropsy melts mee yett.
 But why should I begg more Love, when as thou
 Dost wooe my soule for hers ; off'ring all thine :
 And dost not only feare least I allow
 My Love to Saints and Angels things divine,
 But in thy tender jealousy dost doubt
 Least the World, Fleshe, yea Devill putt thee out.



A Hymne to Christ, at the Author's Last Going into Germany

In what torne ship soever I embarke,
That ship shall be my embleme of thy Arke ;
What sea soever swallow mee, that flood,
Shall be to mee an embleme of thy blood ;
Though thou with clouds of anger do disguise
Thy face ; yet through that maske I know those eyes,
Which, though they turn away sometimes,
They never will despise

I sacrifice this Iland unto thee,
And all whom I lov'd there, and who lov'd me ;
When I have put our seas 'twixt them and mee,
Put thou thy sea betwixt my sinnes and thee.
As the tree's sap doth seeke the root below
In winter, in my winter now I goe,
Where none but thee, th' Eternal root
Of true Love I may know.

Nor thou nor thy religion dost controule
The amorousnesse of an harmonious Soule,
But thou would'st have that love thy selfe : As thou
Art jealous, Lord, so I am jealous now ;
Thou lov'st not, till from loving more, thou free
My soule : Who ever gives, takes libertie :
O, if thou car'st not whom I love,
Alas, thou lov'st not mee.

Seale then this bill of my Divorce to All
On whom those fainter beames of love did fall ;
Marry those loves, which in youth scattered bee
On Fame, Wit, Hopes,—false mistresses,—to thee.
Churches are best for Prayer, that have least light :
To see God only, I goe out of sight :
And to 'scape stormy dayes, I chuse
An Everlasting night.

A Hymne to God the Father

Wilt thou forgive that sinne where I begunne,
Which is my sin, though it were done before ?
Wilt thou forgive those sinnes, through which I runne,
And do run still : though still I do deplore ?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

Wilt thou forgive that sinne by which I' have wonne
Others to sinne ? and made my sinne their doore ?
Wilt thou forgive that sinne which I did shunne
A yeare or two : but wallowed in, a score ?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For I have more.

I have a sinne of feare, that when I have spunne
My last thred, I shall perish on the shore ;
Sweare by thy selfe, that at my death thy sonne
Shall shine as he shines now, and heretofore ;
And, having done that, Thou haste done,
I fear no more.



A Hymne to God my God in my Sicknesse

Since I am comming to that Holy roome,
Where, with thy Quire of Saints for evermore,
I shall be made thy Musique ; As I come
I tune the Instrument here at the dore,
And what I must doe then, thinke here before.

Whilst my Physitians by their love are growne
Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie
Flat on this bed, that by them may be showne
That this is my South-west discoverie
Per fretum febris, by these streights to die,

I joy that in these straits I see my West ;
For though their currants yeeld returne to none,
What shall my West hurt me ? As West and East
In all flatt Maps—and I am one—are one,
So death doth touch the Resurrection.

Is the Pacifique Sea my home ? Or are
The Easterne riches ? Is Jerusalem ?
Anyan, and Magellan, and Gibaltare,
All streights, and none but streights, are wayes to
them,
Whether where Japhet dwelt, or Cham, or Sem.

We thinke that Paradise and Calvarie,
Christ's Crosse, and Adam's tree, stood in one place ;
Looke, Lord, and finde both Adams met in me ;
As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
May the last Adam's blood my soule embrace.

So, in his purple wrapp'd, receive mee, Lord,
By these his thornes give me his other Crowne ;
And as to others' soules I preach'd thy word,
Be this my Text, my Sermon to mine owne,
Therefore, that he may raise, the Lord throws down.

THE FANTASTICKS

George Herbert

“ ‘Less than the least
Of all God’s mercies’ is my posie still.”

George Herbert.

SINCE GEORGE HERBERT’S life, perfectly written as it has been by Izaak Walton, is known, at any rate in its broader outlines, to everybody, there is no need to recapitulate here the facts of his birth, education, and early years, save to remind ourselves of the chief details.

He was born in 1593 at Montgomery Castle, his father being Richard Herbert, great grandson of the famous Sir Richard Herbert of Colebrook, younger brother of William, Earl of Pembroke, who flourished in the reign of Edward IV. His mother was Magdalen Herbert, a singularly beautiful woman, who had the greatest influence over her large family of seven sons and three daughters.

George, at the age of twelve, was sent to Westminster School, where he was educated *sub ferula* of Richard Ireland, its great headmaster, and in 1608 he was elected to a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he gained the reputation of being exceedingly ambitious, a reputation which—unlike many—was certainly based on fact.

His scholarship and learning—added, it must be confessed, to the position and influence of his family—caused him to be appointed to the office of Public Orator of his University. The duties of this officer, as well as his privileges, were many. His function it was to write the “Latin letters” sent by the University, and to welcome in a “learned and elaborate” Latin speech all those personages of importance who might visit Cambridge, as well as those distinguished persons whom the University delighted to honour with the bestowal of an honorary degree. The privileges of the office included precedence before all Masters of Arts, and the right in all University processions to walk alone. A more important prerogative was the right, very freely exercised, to present noblemen and their sons for the degree of Master of Arts, *jure natalium*, without examination.

The position of Orator, therefore, was one of the utmost importance, as it necessitated a courtier-like behaviour towards those persons who might be of use and value to the University. To a man of Herbert's stamp, such talents came naturally ; the courtier's graces and the learning of the scholar, as well as the knowledge of a man of the world, were all united in his person. Small wonder, then, that in this appointment Herbert saw the beginning of a career great enough to satisfy the most unbounded ambition. King James I, Francis Bacon, John Donne, Lancelot Andrewes—all these could be counted among his friends, and the whole world of preferment seemed to be within his grasp.

His hopes, however, were not to be fulfilled. It was evident that courtly advancement was not to be his ; the God whom he served so faithfully had other work for him to do. I leave Walton to tell the story in his own words.

"In this time of Mr. Herbert's attendance and expectation of some good occasion to remove from Cambridge to Court, God, in whom there is an unseen chain of causes, did in a short time put an end to the lives of two of his most obliging and most powerful friends, Lodowick Duke of Richmond, and James Marquess of Hamilton ; and not long after him King James died also, and with them all Mr. Herbert's Court hopes ; so that he presently betook himself to a retreat from London, to a friend in Kent, where he lived very privately, and was such a lover of solitariness as was judged to impair his health more than his study had done. In this time of retirement, he had many conflicts with himself, whether he should return to the painted pleasures of a Court life or betake himself to a study of Divinity, and enter into Sacred Orders, to which his dear mother had often persuaded him. These were such conflicts as they only can know that have endured them ; for ambitious desires, and the outward glory of this world, are not easily laid aside ; but at last God inclined him to put on a resolution to serve at His altar."

We need not concern ourselves here with the struggle that went on in Herbert's mind and heart—he had so far followed his mother's advice as to enter into deacon's orders, probably in 1626)—sufficient to say that in 1630 Lord Pembroke asked King Charles to present his kinsman to the living of Fugglestone cum Bemerton Capella, near Salisbury. Charles is reported to have replied in the words, "Most willingly to Mr. Herbert, if it be worth his acceptance."

A sense of the responsibility which admission to the priesthood would impose, threw Herbert into an agony of doubt, and for a whole month he prayed and fasted and deliberated. He then went

to stay with his relative, Lord Pembroke, at Wilton, where King Charles was paying a royal visit. The story is well known of how the village tailor was summoned to measure him for his canonical habit, and the next day, dressed in his new clerical garb, he took the letters of presentation to the Bishop of Salisbury, who instituted him to the living.

He entered upon the duties of his new life with the utmost zeal, and quickly gained the love and respect of his parishioners. Every day, at ten and four, he, his wife, and his servants used to attend at little Bemerton Church opposite the parsonage, to say morning and evening prayer*. "Some of the meaner sort of his parish did so love and reverence Mr. Herbert that they would let their plough rest when Mr. Herbert's saints' bell rung to prayers, that they might also offer their devotions to God with him, and would then return back to their plough."†

During his time at Bemerton, Herbert composed a great number of the poems contained in "The Temple," and also wrote his "Country Parson," a book "so full of plain, prudent, and useful rules, that that country parson that can spare twelve pence and yet wants it is scarce excusable."‡

His chief recreation was music. He usually walked twice a week to Salisbury, carrying his lute, and took part there in a "private music meeting." His love of music is noticeably reflected in his verse. Only a musician could have written such poems as "Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing," "I made a posie, while the day ran by," or the exquisite version of the Twenty-third Psalm, "The God of love my shepherd is." Nearly all his poems partake in greater or less degree of the same quality; "almost singing themselves they run."

Three years only were granted him to carry out his work in Bemerton. The ill-health which had dogged him all his life, became more insistent, and what was evidently a consumption gradually weakened his powers of resistance, and he slipped peacefully away. I again let Walton tell the story. "In this time of his decay . . . he would often speak to this purpose : . . . 'My hope is that I shall shortly leave this valley of tears, and be free from all fevers and pain ; . . . I shall dwell in the New Jerusalem—dwell there with men made perfect ; dwell where these eyes shall see my Master and Saviour, Jesus, and with Him see my dear

* The custom of daily prayers in the old church at Bemerton is still kept up, although the church is not otherwise used, being far too small for the present parish. A larger one, near at hand, now serves for the ordinary use of the congregation.

† Izaak Walton.

‡ Idem.

mother, and all my relations and friends.' . . . After which words he said : ' Lord, forsake me not, now my strength faileth me, but grant me mercy for the merits of my Jesus. And now, Lord—Lord, now receive my soul.' "

The man who appreciates the fact that a failure to gain from life the prize he desires, can be, and often is, not only for his own betterment (an unpleasant lesson which those of us who are no longer young will remember being instilled into us in our nurseries), but also is very frequently for his own happiness—such a man has within himself the seeds of perfect contentment.

It is a common human experience that when we have desired with all our hearts the satisfaction of some particular want, good in itself, and worked as hard as we can to bring about its fulfilment, we see it denied to us. It is an equally common experience that after such a denial of our wish, we receive a better and a nobler gift. - After a number of these experiences we begin to learn that a pattern has been laid down for us to follow, and whereas we can insist through self-will upon refusing to follow the pattern, such refusal will in itself destroy the integration of our life. More still, we begin to see that the following of the pattern is not only simpler and easier and less productive of hard knocks, but is the undoubted beggetter of true happiness.

Fortunate is the man who attains to complete realisation of this fundamental fact of human existence. Such a man was George Herbert, who failed to attain to the prize in life for which he had longed with his whole heart, but gained instead a richer reward, that of the utter satisfaction of complete fulfilment in the last three years of his short life.

I have said that there are three chief qualities common to the metaphysical poets, loveliness, the use of "conceits," and a near approach to integration.

The conceits of George Herbert's writings differ somewhat from those of Donne. They were not drawn, as were those of the elder poet, from the pseudo-science of his day, from alchemy and astrology, from the making of maps and voyages of discovery, but rather from the homely and domestic occurrences of everyday life, from rustic happenings and village festivals. Herbert carried the use of the conceit far further than Donne, for not content with its use as a mode of verbal expression, he went so far as to make a picture by shaping the length of the lines of certain of his poems, and by using acrostic devices.*

The pure and simple loveliness of Herbert's writings have probably

* See pp. 63 and 70. "Easter Wings"; "Our life is hid with Christ in God."

never been surpassed in our language. His verses called "Antiphon," his metrical version of the Twenty-third Psalm, and in particular his exquisite poem, "Love bade me welcome," are of so transcendent a beauty that the mere reading of them lifts one out of the petty worries of everyday life into a realm of purity and peace.

It is very remarkable to find Grosart depreciating Herbert's work in favour of the verse of Vaughan. The whole tendency of to-day is to reverse this judgment, and to put Herbert on a pedestal far above the Silurist. This is what Grosart writes :

"In my edition of his Works I have vindicated for Henry Vaughan not his originality merely, but his well-nigh infinite supremacy over Herbert in all that goes to constitute the aboriginal poet ; and the more I study him the more I feel what an outrage it is to place 'Silex Scintillans,' 'Olor Iscanus,' and 'Thalia Rediviva' beneath 'The Temple' . . . Henry Vaughan in almost every way bulks out a larger-souled, more nobly-dowered poet."

While I should find it very hard to agree with Dr. Grosart, there may be a sense in which this judgment is correct ; but we are concerned here with what I have called "loveliness," and this quality is vastly more apparent in the verse of Herbert than in that of Vaughan.

Whereas in such a poem as "My Soul, there is a country" the intrinsic loveliness is great—overstepping perhaps anything in "The Temple," yet in general, Vaughan cannot really compare with Herbert. He made his appreciation of Herbert quite clear in his poem :

*On Mr. George Herbert's Booke
Intituled The Temple of Sacred Poems*

Know you, fair, on what you looke ?
Divinest love lyes in this booke :
Expecting fier from your faire eyes,
To kindle this his sacrifice.
When your hands untie these strings,
Think, yo' have an angell by the wings ;
One that gladly would be nigh,
To waite upon each morning sigh ;
To flutter in the balmy aire
Of your well-perfumed praier ;

These white plumes of his hee'l lend you,
Which every day to Heaven will send you :
To take acquaintance of each spheare,
And all your smooth-fac'd kindred there.
And though Herbert's name doe owe
These devotions ; fairest, know
While I thus lay them on the shrine
Of your white hand, they are mine.

THE SELECTED VERSE OF GEORGE HERBERT

EASTER *Rise, heart ; thy Lord is risen*

EASTER WINGS *Lord, who createdst man*

ANTIPHON *Let all the world*

MATTENS *I cannot ope mine eyes*

THE CHURCH FLOORE *Mark you the floore ?*

CHRISTMAS *All after pleasures as I rid one day*

OUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD *My words and thoughts*

JESU *Jesu is in my heart*

VERTUE *Sweet day, so cool*

LIFE *I made a posie*

THE BRITISH CHURCH *I joy, deare Mother*

PRAISE *King of Glorie*

SINNE'S ROUND *Sorrie I am, my God*

THE CALL *Come, my Way*

THE PULLEY *When God at first made man*

THE 23 PSALME *The God of love*

DISCIPLINE *Throw away thy rod*

THE ELIXER *Teach me, my God and King*

THE POSIE *Let wits contest*

LOVE *Love bade me welcome*

DEATH *Death, thou wast once*

Easter

Rise, heart ; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
Without delayes,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With him may'st rise :
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee good, and much more just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art.
The crosse taught all wood to resound his name,
Who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long :
Or since all musick is but three parts vied
And multiplied ;
O let thy blessed spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

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.

The Sunne arising in the East,
Though he give light, and th' East perfume ;
If they should offer to contest
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
Though many sunnes to shine endeavour ?
We count three hundred, but we misse :
There is but one, and that one ever.

Easter Wings

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
Though foolishly he lost the same,
Decaying more and more,
Till he became
Most poore :

With thee
O let me rise
As larks, harmoniously,
And sing this day thy victories :
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

My tender age in sorrow did beginne ;
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.

With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victorie ;
For, if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

Antiphon

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
My God and King.

The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither flie ;
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
My God and King.

The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out :
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing
My God and King.

Mattens

I cannot ope mine eyes,
But thou art ready there to catch
My morning-soul and sacrifice :
Then we must needs for that day make a match.

My God, what is a heart ?
Silver, or gold, or precious stone,
Or starre, or rainbow, or a part
Of all these things or all of them in one ?

My God, what is a heart,
That thou should'st it so eye, and wooe,
Powring upon it all thy art,
As if that thou hadst nothing els to do ?

Indeed man's whole estate
Amounts (and richly) to serve thee :
He did not heav'n and earth create,
Yet studies them, not him by whom they be.

Teach me thy love to know ;
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and workman show :
Then by a sunne-beam I will climbe to thee.

The Church Floore

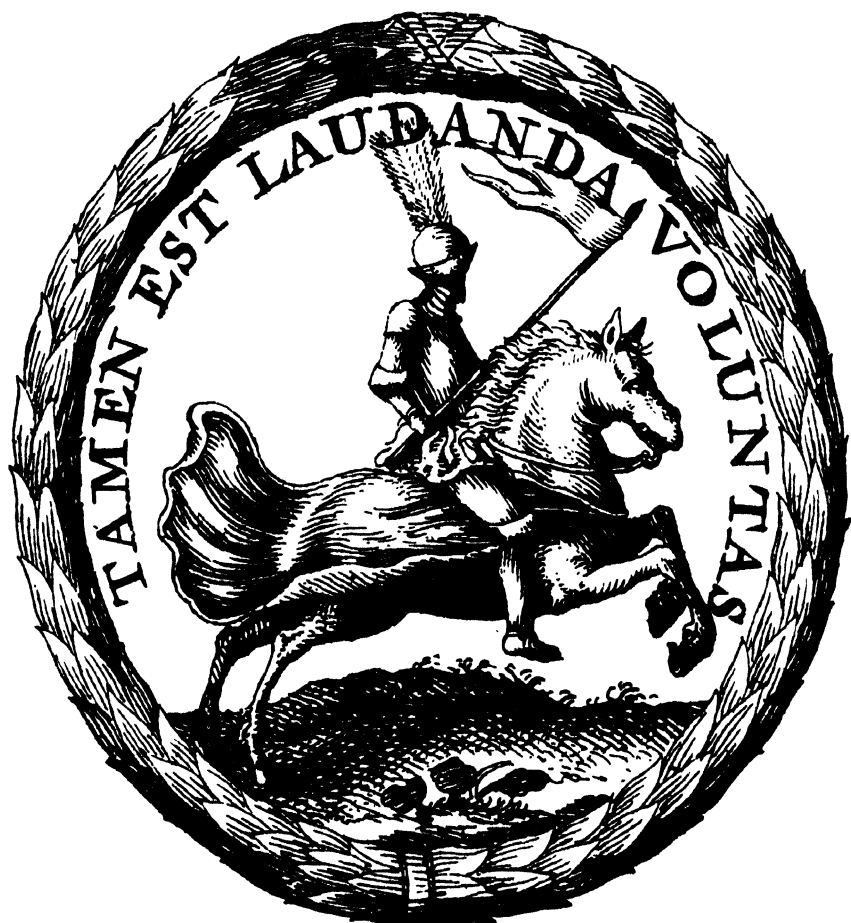
Mark you the floore ? that square and speckled stone,
Which looks so firm and strong,
Is *Patience* :

And th'other black and grave, wherewith each one
Is checker'd all along,
Humilitie :

The gentle rising, which on either hand
Leads to the Quire above,
Is *Confidence* :

But the sweet Cement, which in one sure band
Ties the whole frame, is *Love*
And *Charitie*.

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains
The Marble's neat and curious veins :
But all is cleansed when the Marble weeps.
Sometimes Death, puffing at the doore,
Blows all the dust about the floore :
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the *Architect*, whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart !



Christmas

All after pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I, both tir'd, bodie and minde,
With full crie of affections, quite astray ;
I took up in the next inne I could find.

There when I came, whom found I but my deare,
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to him, readie there
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?

O Thou, whose glorious, yet contracted light,
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger ;
Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right,
To Man of all beasts be not thou a stranger :

Furnish and deck my soul, that thou mayst have
A better lodging than a rack or grave.

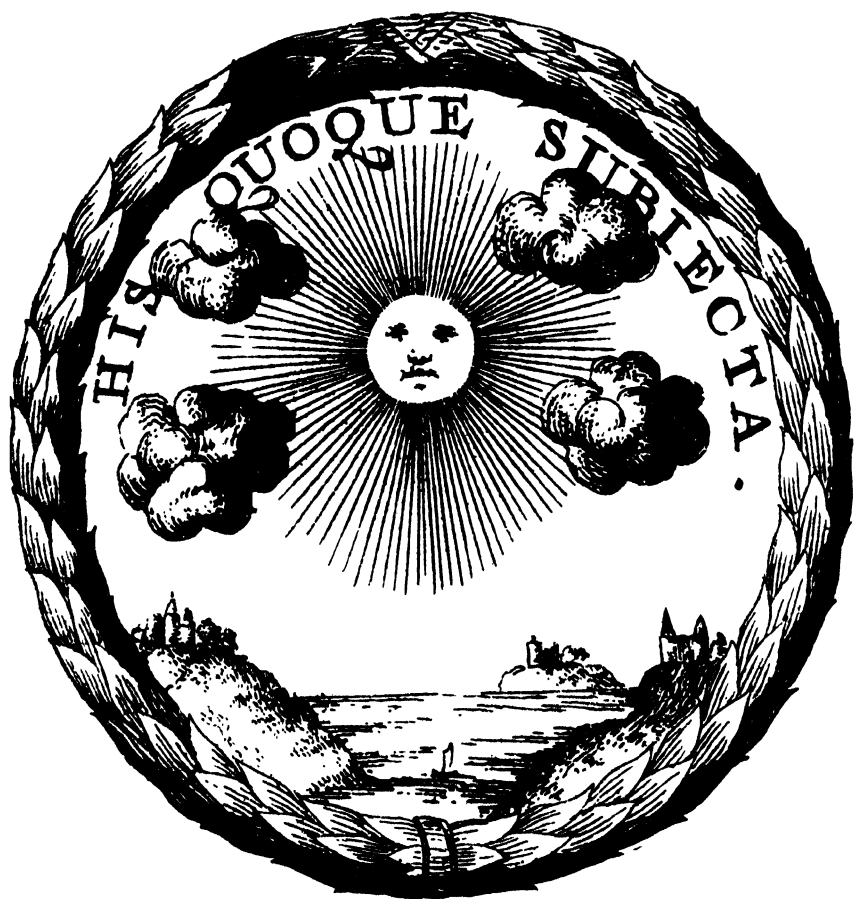
The shepherds sing ; and shall I silent be ?
My God, no hymne for thee ?
My soul's a shepherd too ; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is thy word : the streams thy grace,
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Out-sing the daylight houres.
Then we will chide the sunne for letting night
Take up his place and right :
We sing one common Lord ; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I finde a sunne
Shall stay, till we have done ;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly
As frost-nipt sunnes look sadly.
Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till ev'n his beams sing, and my music shine.

Our Life is Hid with Christ in God

MY words and thoughts do both expresse this notion,
That LIFE hath with the sun a double motion.
The first IS straight, and our diurnall friend ;
The other HID, and doth obliquely bend.
One life is wrapt IN flesh, and tends to earth :
The other winds towards HIM, whose happie birth
Taught me to live here so, THAT still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which IS on high ;
Quitting with daily labour all MY pleasure,
To gain at harvest an eternall TREASURE.

Jesu

Jesu is in my heart ; his sacred name
Is deeply carved there : but th'other week
A great affliction broke the little frame,
Ev'n all to pieces : which I went to seek :
And first I found the corner, where was J,
And after, where E S, and next where U was graved.
When I had got these parcels, instantly
I sat me down to spell them, and perceived
That to my broken heart he was ' I ease you,'
And to my whole is JESU.



Vertue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie ;
The dew shall weep thy fall to night ;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye :
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie ;
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives ;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

Life

I made a posie, while the day ran by :
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
 My life within this band.
But time did becken to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
 And wither'd in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart :
I took, without more thinking, in good part
 Time's gentle admonition :
Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
Making my minde to smell my fatall day ;
 Yet sugring the suspicion.

Farewell deare flowers, sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament,
 And after death for cures.
I follow straight without complaints or grief,
Since if my sent be good, I care not, if
 It be as short as yours.

The British Church

I joy, deare Mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments, and hue
Both sweet and bright.

Beautie in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face,
When she doth write.

A fine aspect in fit aray,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best.

Outlandish looks may not compare :
For all they either painted are,
Or else undrest.

She on the hills, which wantonly
Allureth all, in hope to be
By her preferr'd,

Hath kiss'd so long her painted shrines,
That ev'n her face by kissing shines,
For her reward.

She in the valley is so shie
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her eares :

While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on th' other side,
And nothing wears.

But, dearest Mother, what these miss,
The mean thy praise and glorie is,
And long may be.

Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with his grace,
And none but thee.

Praise

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
I will love thee :
And that love may never cease,
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me :
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spar'd me.

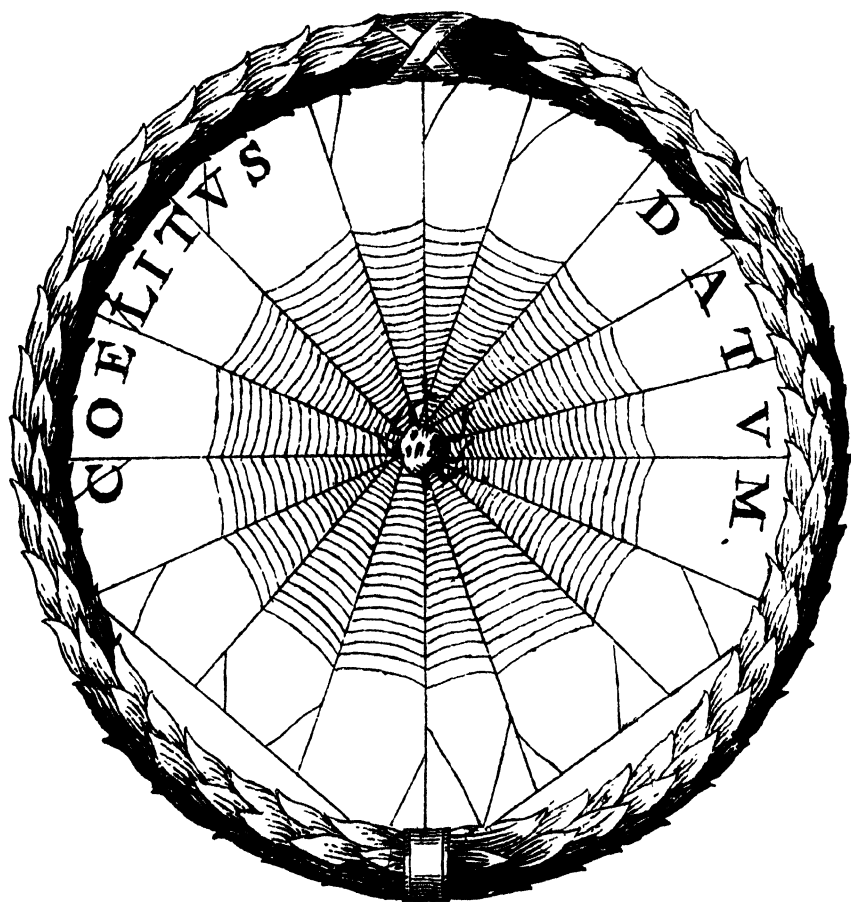
Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though my sinnes against me cried,
Thou didst cleare me ;
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst heare me.

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee.
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.

Thou grew'st soft and moist with tears,
Thou relentedst :
And when Justice call'd for fears,
Thou dissentedst.

Small it is, in this poore sort
To enroll thee :
Ev'n Eternitie is too short
To extoll thee.



Sinne's Round

Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am,
That my offences course it in a ring.
My thoughts are working like a busie flame,
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring :
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.

My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
Which spit it forth like the Sicilian hill.
They vent the wares, and passe them with their faults,
And by their breathing ventilate the ill.
But words suffice not, where are lewd intentions :
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.

My hands do joyn to finish the inventions :
And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Babel grew, before there were dissensions.
Yet ill decds loyter not : for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning : wherefore, to my shame,
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am.

The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life :
Such a Way, as gives us breath :
Such a Truth, as ends all strife :
And such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength :
Such a Light, as shows a Feast :
Such a Feast, as mends in length :
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart :
Such a Joy, as none can move :
Such a Love, as none can part :
Such a Heart, as joyes in love.

The Pulley

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by ;
Let us, said he, poure on him all we can :
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way ;
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdom, honour, pleasure :
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottome lay.

For if I should, said he,
Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts in stead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlesnesse :
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tesse him to my breast.

The 23 Psalme

The God of love my shepherd is,
And he that doth me feed :
While he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want or need ?

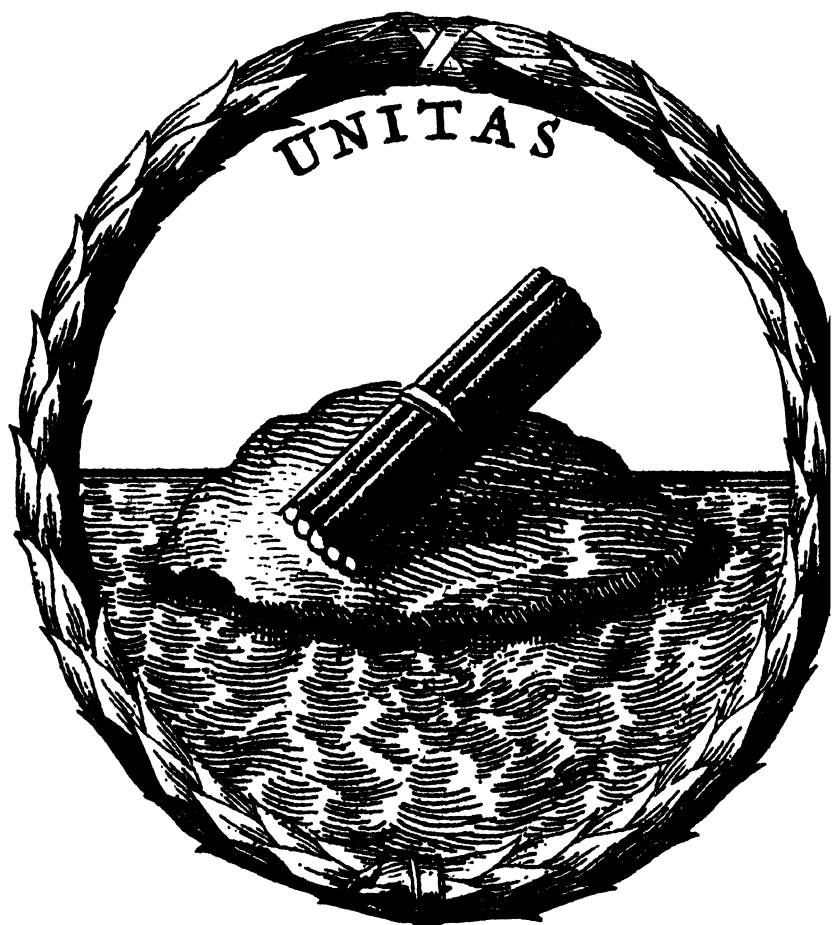
He leads me to the tender grasse,
Where I both feed and rest ;
Then to the streams that gently passe :
In both I have the best.

Or if I stray, he doth convert
And bring my minde in frame :
And all this not for my desert,
But for his holy name.

Yea, in death's shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear :
For thou art with me ; and thy rod
To guide, thy staffe to bear.

Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine,
Ev'n in my enemies' sight :
My head with oyl, my cup with wine
Runnes over day and night.

Surely thy sweet and wondrous love
Shall measure all my dayes ;
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall my praise.



Discipline

Throw away thy rod,
Throw away thy wrath :
 O my God,
Take the gentle path.

For my heart's desire
Unto thine is bent :
 I aspire
To a full consent.

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
 But by book,
And thy book alone.

Though I fail, I weep :
Though I halt in pace,
 Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove ;
Love will do the deed :
 For with love
Stonie hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot ;
Love's a man of warre,
 And can shoot,
And can hit from farre.

Who can scape his bow ?
That which wrought on thee,
 Brought thee low,
Needs must work on me.

Throw away thy rod ;
Though man frailties hath,
 Thou art God :
Throw away thy wrath.

The Elixer

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee :

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action ;
But still to make thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse,
On it may stay his eye ;
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of thee partake :
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with this tincture, ' for thy sake,'
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine :
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th'action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold :
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told.



The Posie

Let wits contest,
And with their words and posies windows fill :
 ' Less than the least
Of all thy mercies ' is my posie still.

 This on my ring,
This by my picture, in my book I write :
 Whether I sing,
Or say, or dictate, this is my delight.

 Invention rest,
Comparisons go play, wit use thy will :
 ' Lesse than the least
Of all God's mercies ' is my posie still.

Love Bade Me Welcome ✓

Love bade me welcome ; yet my soul drew back,
 Guilty of dust and sin.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
 If I lack'd anything.

'A guest,' I answer'd, 'worthy to be here.'
 Love said, 'You shall be he.'
'I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,
 I cannot look on Thee.'
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
 'Who made the eyes but I?'

'Truth, Lord ; but I have marr'd them : let my shame
 Go where it doth deserve.'
'And know you not,' says Love, 'who bore the blame?'
 'My dear, then I will serve.'
'You must sit down,' says Love, 'and taste my meat.'
 So I did sit and eat.



Death

Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,
 Nothing but bones,
 The sad effect of sadder grones ;
Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing.

For we consider'd thee as at some six
 Or ten years hence,
 After the losse of life and sense,
Flesh being turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks.

We lookt on this side of thee, shooting short :
 Where we did finde
 The shells of fledg souls left behinde,
Dry dust, which sheds no tears, but may extort.

But since our Saviour's death did put some blood
 Into thy face ;
 Thou are grown fair and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for, as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad,
 As at dooms-day ;
 When souls shall wear their new aray,
And all thy bones with beautie shall be clad.

Therefore we can go die as sleep, and trust
 Half that we have
 Unto an honest faithfull grave ;
Making our pillows either down, or dust.

THE FANTASTICKS

Richard Crashaw

“Live, Jesus, live, and let it be
My life to die for love of Thee.”

Richard Crashaw's Motto.

OF THE LIFE of Richard Crashaw the date of his birth is uncertain. 1613. His father, Dr. William Crashaw, was the author of a number of works which have received a certain appreciation as “œuvres d’art” and have further reward in the shape of fine editions. He was distinguished by the excessive beauty of his Latin, Roman Catholics, though he was a devoted Protestant, their devotions, and translated several of them.

own. Even ascribed to divine, was received a hit him any was chiefly against the Latin, attracted by the Latin,

among them the exquisite commendation of a departing soul :

Go forth upon thy journey from this world, O Christian soul,
In the name of God the Father Almighty who created thee ;
In the name of Jesus Christ who suffered for thee ;
In the name of the Holy Ghost who strengtheneth thee ;
In communion with the blessed Saints, and aided by Angels
and Archangels, and all the armies of the heavenly host.
May thy portion this day be in peace, and thy dwelling in
the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

He numbered among his intimate friends such famous men as Sir Randolph Crew and Sir Henry Yelverton, Judge of the King's Bench, through whose influence his son Richard was given a place on the foundation of Charterhouse School.

In 1632 the boy was elected a scholar of Pembroke College, taking his degree in the following year. Whilst still at Cambridge, his strong tendency to mysticism began to show itself, and in 1635 he prefixed some verses to Shelford's “Five Pious and Learned Discourses,” a book which was denounced by Archbishop Usher as being not only a disgrace to the Cambridge Press, but also a work “deeply infected with the corruption of Popery.”

The same year he removed to Peterhouse, of which he became a Fellow within twelve months. In 1644, on account of the sympathy which they showed towards their unfortunate Sovereign, the Puritan

authorities of the University expelled Crashaw and several other Fellows from their fellowships.

Crashaw went to France, gave up his Orders in the Church of England, and became a Romanist ; a step which he had apparently long desired to take. The Queen, Henrietta Maria, gave him letters of recommendation to Italy, where he became Secretary to Cardinal Palotta. His singular purity of mind—coupled, it must be confessed, with an interfering habit of mind—caused him publicly to complain to the Cardinal of the evil lives of certain of his household. The animosity of these persons reached such heights that in Crashaw's own interests Palotta dismissed him, and in 1650 sent him to Loretto, where he was made a Canon of the Holy House. In less than three weeks after his arrival, which was in the height of the summer, he got overheated, caught a fever, and died. His death was not without grave suspicion of having been caused by poison.

He was of a curious mixed character. Temperate to severity, and in harshness of conduct a Puritan of Puritans, all the warmth and emotional feeling which might otherwise have shown themselves in more normal ways, were diverted to his religious verse, which is characterised in consequence by a strong animalism. What has been called his "rosy" poetry* clearly shows the dual effect of a strongly inhibited character and a somewhat sensuous religion. The natural desires of an ordinary human being, and the mystical understanding of the supernatural were blended together in such a way that the one was hopelessly underdeveloped, while the other was given an uncontrolled freedom, as is clearly shown in such a poem as the Hymn to the Name above every Name :

Lo where it comes, upon the snowy dove's
Soft back ; and brings a bosom big with loves.
Welcome to our dark world, thou womb of day !
Unfold thy fair conceptions, and display
The birth of our bright joys . . .

What did their weapons but with wider pores
Enlarge thy flaming breasted lovers,
More freely to transpire
That impatient fire
The heart that hides thee hardly covers ?
What did their weapons but set wide the doors
For thee : fair purple doors, of love's devising ;

* See "Hymn to S. Teresa," l. 172 ; "Hymn to the Name above every Name," l. 219, etc., etc.

The ruby windows which enrich'd the east
 Of thy so oft-repeated rising ?
 Each wound of theirs was thy new morning ;
 And re-enthroned thee in thy rosy nest,
 With blush of thine own blood thy day adorning :
 It was the wit of love o'erflow'd the bounds
 Of wrath, and made the way through all these wounds.
 Welcome, dear, all-adored name !
 For sure there is no knee
 That knows not thee.

In the work of Crashaw we see a considerable number of the literary devices known as conceits, with which the writings of all the metaphysical poets were filled. In this fact lies the first reason we have for linking him with such a poet as Donne. The second reason for the link is the religious quality of his verse, expressing a similar mysticism. The third and last reason is the strongest ; that the imagery of which he makes such great use is that of earthly love, carried to a pitch of almost wild extravagance.

It is only necessary to read the " Hymn to St. Teresa " to see the kind of parallels he delights in drawing ; which, unpleasing though they may appear to the large numbers of persons in whom the stream of Puritanism still runs strongly, are nevertheless not in any sense of the words, disgusting or obscene :

" Oh, how oft shalt thou complain
 Of a sweet and subtle pain !
 Of intolerable joys !
 Of a death in which who dies,
 Loves his death, and dies again,
 And would for ever so be slain !
 And lives and dies, and knows not why
 To live, but that he still may die.
 How kindly will thy gentle heart
 Kiss the sweetly killing dart :
 And close in his embraces keep
 Those delicious wounds that weep
 Balsam, to heal themselves with thus ;
 When they thy deaths so numerous,
 Shall all at once die into one,
 And melt thy soul's sweet mansion."

Such an ecstatic description of a mystical experience may be described as morbid, in doubtful taste, and too redolent of the

physical side of human nature : such a judgment may be true in the light of present-day taste ; but it has no validity whatsoever as a criticism of Crashaw's poetry.

That his religion, with its strong emphasis on emotion, was the prime cause of the shape taken by his verse, is a truism. "There can, we think, be little doubt,"—so wrote Gilfillan*—"that a great deal of Popish, and not a little of Protestant piety, is animalism inverted and transfigured . . . Desire, thrown into a new channel, becomes devotion—devotion sincere and strong, although assuming a spurious and exaggerated form. Hence in some writers, the same epithets are applied to the Saviour and to God, which in others are used to the objects of earthly tenderness, and we are disgusted with a profusion of 'sweet Saviour,' 'dear lovely Jesus,' etc."

The deeply sensual basis of the Romish faith, in which "above tiers of angels, and above the Son himself, and on a level with the throne of God, it shews you a woman's face, of ravishing beauty and sweetness—forming precisely such a climax to the universe as human nature would desire . . . all this, and much more than all this, to be found in Roman Catholicism, is calculated to please the fancy or delight the taste, or to rouse and rivet the imagination . . . Crashaw . . . seems without a struggle, to have yielded to the soft seductions of the system, and was soon sighingly but luxuriously lost."†

There is a temptation to think that the cause of the similarity which in this respect exists with Donne, is the same in both cases. This is far from being the case. With Donne, the basic emotion was his need to touch the divine, a need which he expressed, and in his youth attempted to satisfy, through the medium of the love of woman. Quite otherwise with Crashaw ; his need was the satisfaction of his emotional and sensuous nature, a satisfaction whose attainment he attempted to disguise by colouring it with the pale tints of an Italianate and somewhat repellent religiosity.

The unpleasing cause of so much of his religio-erotic verse, however, must not blind us to its frequent and great beauty. Consider, for instance, the following lines, "written in a prayer-book," and, leaving aside the sentimental flavour of the verses, weak and mawkish as it is compared with the bold and passionate male thrill of the love poems of Donne, we still must recognise the real loveliness of his writing.

* "The Life and Poetry of Richard Crashaw," Rev. George Gilfillan, Edinburgh, 1857, p. ix.

† *Supra*, p. xii.

“ Am’rous languishments, luminous trances,
Sights which are not seen with eyes,
Spiritual and soul-piercing glances,
Whose pure and subtle lightning flies
Home to the heart, and sets the house on fire,
And melts it down in sweet desire,
Yet doth not stay
To ask the windows’ leave to pass that way.
Delicious deaths, soft exhalations
Of soul ! dear, and divine annihilations !
A thousand unknown rites
Of joys, and rarefied delights ;
An hundred thousand loves and graces,
And many a mystic thing,
Which the divine embraces
Of th’ dear spouse of spirits with them will bring.”

To quote Sir Edmond Gosse, “ The temper of his (Crashaw’s) intellect seems to have been delicate and weak, fiery and uncertain ; he has a morbid, almost hysterical passion about him, even when his ardour is most exquisitely expressed, and his adoring addresses to the saints have an effeminate falsetto that makes his ecstasy almost repulsive.”

It is impossible to regard this as other than a true and fair judgment ; but it does not destroy nor even minimize the unearthly quality of many of his poems. As pure “ loveliness ” they are worthy of comparison with some of Donne’s finest verse, and there is no doubt but that Crashaw owed the elder poet an enormous debt.

What I have called his “ rosy ” poetry shows evidences of this debt ; the use of the image of sexual love in verse dealing with the longing of the soul, is directly in the Donne tradition, although Crashaw’s understanding of love is of a vastly weaker and less energetic type than the pure masculinity of his prototype. But the debt is evident, none the less.

THE SELECTED VERSE OF RICHARD CRASHAW

From THE DELIGHTS OF THE MUSES

MUSIC'S DUEL *Now westward Sol had spent*
AN EPITAPH UPON A YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE *To these,*
whom Death
LOVE'S HOROSCOPE *Love, brave Vertue's younger brother*
LINES OUT OF THE ITALIAN *Would any one the true case find*
OUT OF CATULLUS *Come and let us live, my Deare*
A SONG OUT OF THE ITALIAN *To thy Lover*
TO HIS SUPPOSED MISTRESSE *Who ere she be*

From STEPS TO THE TEMPLE

THE TEAR *What bright soft thing is this*
UPON THE ASS THAT BORE OUR SAVIOUR *Hath only anger*
an omnipotence

From the CARMEN DEO NOSTRO

A HYMN TO SAINT TERESA *Love, thou art absolute sole lord*

Music's Duel

Now westward Sol had spent the richest beams
Of noon's high glory, when hard by the streams
Of Tiber, on the scene of a green plat,
Under protection of an oak, there sat
A sweet lute's-master, in whose gentle airs
He lost the day's heat and his own hot cares.

Close in the covert of the leaves there stood
A nightingale come from the neighb'ring wood,
The sweet inhabitant of each glad tree,
Their Muse, their Syren—harmless Syren she.
There stood she list'ning, and did entertain
The music's soft report, and mould the same
In her own murmurs, that whatever mood
His curious fingers lent, her voice made good.
The man perceived his rival and her art ;
Disposed to give the light-foot lady sport,
Awakes his lute, and 'gainst the fight to come
Informs it, in a sweet præludium,
Of closer strains, and ere the war begin,
He lightly skirmishes on ev'ry string
Charged with a flying touch ; and straightway she
Carves out her dainty voice as readily
Into a thousand sweet distinguish'd tones,
And reckons up in soft divisions
Quick volumes of wild notes, to let him know
By that shrill taste, she could do something too.

His nimble hands' instinct then taught each string
A cap'ring cheerfulness, and made them sing
To their own dance ; now negligently rash
He throws his arm, and with a long-drawn dash
Blends all together, then distinctly trips
From this to that, then quick returning skips
And snatches this again, and pauses there.
She measures ev'ry measure, ev'ry where
Meets art with art ; sometimes, as if in doubt,
Not perfect yet, and fearing to be out,

Trails her plain ditty in one long-spun note,
Through the sleek passage of her open throat,
A clear unwrinkled song ; then doth she point it
With tender accents, and severely joint it
By short diminutives, that being rear'd
In controverting warbles ev'nly shared,
With her sweet self she wrangles ; he, amazed
That from so small a channel should be raised
The torrent of a voice whose melody
Could melt into such sweet variety,
Strains higher yet, that tickled with rare art
The tattling strings, each breathing in his part,
Most kindly do fall out ; the grumbling bass
In surly groans disdains the treble's grace ;
The high-perch'd treble chirps at this, and chides,
Until his finger, moderator, hides
And closes the sweet quarrel, rousing all
Hoarse, shrill, at once ; as when the trumpets call
Hot Mars to th' harvest of death's field, and woo
Men's hearts into their hands ; this lesson too
She gives him back ; her supple breast thrills out
Sharp airs, and staggers in a warbling doubt
Of dallying sweetness, hovers o'er her skill,
And folds in wav'd notes with a trembling bill
The pliant series of her slipp'ry song ;
Then starts she suddenly into a throng
Of short thick sobs, whose thund'ring volleys float,
And roll themselves over her lubric throat
In panting murmurs, still'd out of her breast,
That ever-bubbling spring, the sugar'd nest
Of her delicious soul, that there does lie,
Bathing in streams of liquid melody ;
Music's best seed-plot ; when in ripen'd airs
A golden-headed harvest fairly rears
His honey-dropping tops, plough'd by her breath,
Which there reciprocally laboureth.
In that sweet soil it seems a holy choir
Founded to th' name of great Apollo's lyre ;
Whose silver roof rings with the sprightly notes
Of sweet-lipp'd angel-imps, that swill their throats
In cream of morning Helicon, and then
Prefer sweet anthems to the ears of men,

To woo them from their beds, still murmuring
That men can sleep while they their matins sing :
(Most Divine service) whose so early lay
Prevents the eyelids of the blushing day.
There might you hear her kindle her soft voice
In the close murmur of a sparkling noise,
And lay the ground-work of her hopeful song,
Still keeping in the forward stream, so long
Till a sweet whirlwind, striving to get out,
Heaves her soft bosom, wanders round about,
And makes a pretty earthquake in her breast,
Till the fledged notes at length forsake their nest,
Flutt'ring in wanton shoals, and to the sky
Wing'd with their own wild echoes, prattling fly.
She opes the floodgate, and lets loose a tide
Of streaming sweetness, which in state doth ride
On the wav'd back of ev'ry swelling strain,
Rising and falling in a pompous train ;
And while she thus discharges a shrill peal
Of flashing airs, she qualifies their zeal
With the cool epode of a graver note,
Thus high, thus low, as if her silver throat
Would reach the brazen voice of war's hoarse bird ;
Her little soul is ravish'd, and so pour'd
Into loose ecstasies, that she is placed
Above herself, music's enthusiast.

Shame now and anger mix'd a double stain
In the musician's face ; 'Yet once again,
Mistress, I come ; now reach a strain, my lute,
Above her mock, or be for ever mute ;
Or tune a song of victory to me,
Or to thyself sing thine own obsequy' ;
So said, his hands sprightly as fire he flings,
And with a quiv'ring coyness tastes the strings :
The sweet-lipp'd sisters, musically frightened,
Singing their fears, are fearfully delighted :
Trembling as when Apollo's golden hairs
Are fann'd and frizzled in the wanton airs
Of his own breath, which married to his lyre
Doth tune the spheres, and make Heaven's self look higher.

From this to that, from that to this he flies,
Feels Music's pulse in all her arteries ;
Caught in a net which there Apollo spreads,
His fingers struggle with the vocal threads,
Foll'wing those little rills, he sinks into
A sea of Helicon ; his hand does go
Those parts of sweetness which with nectar drop,
Softer than that which pants in Hebe's cup ;
The hum'rous strings expound his learned touch
By various glosses ; now they seem to grutch,
And murmur in a buzzing din, then jingle
In shrill-tongued accents, striving to be single ;
Ev'ry smooth turn, ev'ry delicious stroke
Gives life to some new grace ; thus doth h' invoke
Sweetness by all her names ; thus, bravely thus,
Fraught with a fury so harmonious,
The lute's light genius now does proudly rise,
Heav'd on the surges of swoll'n rhapsodies,
Whose flourish, meteor-like, doth curl the air
With flash of high-born fancies, here and there
Dancing in lofty measures, and anon
Creeps on the soft touch of a tender tone,
Whose trembling murmurs, melting in wild airs,
Runs to and fro, complaining his sweet cares ;
Because those precious mysteries that dwell
In music's ravish'd soul he dare not tell,
But whisper to the world ; thus do they vary
Each string his note, as if they meant to carry
Their master's blest soul, snatch'd out at his ears
By a strong ecstasy, through all the spheres
Of music's Heaven, and seat it there on high
In th' Empyreaum of pure harmony.
At length, after so long, so loud a strife
Of all the strings, still breathing the best life
Of blest variety attending on
His fingers' fairest revolution,
In many a sweet rise, many as sweet a fall,
A full-mouth'd diapason swallows all.

This done, he lists what she would say to this,
And she, although her breath's late exercise

Had dealt too roughly with her tender throat,
Yet summons all her sweet powers for a note ;
Alas ! in vain ! for while, sweet soul, she tries
To measure all those wild diversities
Of chatt'ring strings, by the small size of one
Poor simple voice, raised in a natural tone ;
She fails, and failing grieves, and grieving dies ;
She dies, and leaves her life the victor's prize,
Falling upon his lute ; O, fit to have
—That lived so sweetly—dead, so sweet a grave !

An Epitaph

*upon Husband and Wife,
who died and were buried together*

To these, whom death again did wed,
This grave's their second marriage-bed.
For though the hand of Fate could force
'Twixt soul and body a divorce,
It could not sunder man and wife,
'Cause they both lived but one life.
Peace, good reader, do not weep ;
Peace, the lovers are asleep :
They, sweet turtles, folded lie
In the last knot love could tie.
And though they lie as they were dead,
Their pillow stone, their sheets of lead ;
Pillow hard, and sheets not warm,
Love made the bed, they'll take no harm.
Let them sleep, let them sleep on,
Till this stormy night be gone,
And th' eternal morrow dawn ;
Then the curtains will be drawn,
And they wake into that light
Whose day shall never die in night.

Love's Horoscope

Love, brave Vertue's younger Brother,
Erst hath made my Heart a Mother,
Shee consults the conscions Spheares,
To calculate her young son's yeares.
Shee askes if sad or saving powers
Gave Omen to his infant howers,
Shee asks each starre that then stood by,
If poore Love shall live or dye.

Ah my Heart, is that the way?
Are these the Beames that rule thy Day?
Thou know'st a Face in whose each looke
Beauty layes ope Love's Fortune-booke;
On whose faire revolutions wait
The obsequious motions of Love's fate;
Ah my Heart, her eyes and shee
Have taught thee new Astrologie.
How e're Love's native houres were set,
What ever starry Synod met,
'Tis in the mercy of her eye,
If poore Love shall live or dye.

If those sharpe Rayes putting on
Points of Death bid Love be gon,
(Though the Heavens in counsell sate,
To crowne an uncontrouled Fate,
Though their best Aspects twin'd upon
The kindest Constellation,
Cast amorous glances on his Birth,
And whisper'd the confederate Earth
To pave his pathes with all the good
That warms the Bed of youth and blood);
Love has no plea against her eye,
Beauty frownes, and Love must dye.

But if her milder influence move,
And gild the hopes of humble Love :
(Though heaven's inauspicious eye
Lay blacke on Love's Nativitie ;
Though every Diamond in Jove's crowne
Fixt his forehead to a frowne),
Her Eye a strong appeale can give,
Beauty smiles, and Love shall live.

O, if Love shall live, O where
But in her Eye, or in her Eare,
In her Brest, or in her Breath,
Shall I hide poore Love from Death ?
For in the life ought else can give,
Love shall dye, although he live.

Or if Love shall dye, O where
But in her Eye, or in her Eare,
In her Breath, or in her Breast,
Shall I Build his funerall Nest ?
While Love shall thus entombed lye,
Love shall live, although he dye.

Lines Out of the Italian

Would any one the true cause find
How Love came nak't, a Boy, and blind ?
'Tis this ; list'ning one day too long
To th' Syrens in my Mistris' Song,
The extasie of a delight
So much o're-mast'ring all his might,
To that one sense made all else thrall,
And so he lost his Clothes, eyes, heart and all.

Out of Catullus

Come and let us live, my Deare,
Let us love and never feare
What the sowrest Fathers say :
Brightest Sol that dyes to-day
Lives againe as blith to-morrow ;
But if we darke sons of sorrow
Set, O then, how long a Night
Shuts the Eyes of our short light !
Then let amorous kisses dwell
On our lips, begin and tell
A thousand, and a Hundred score,
An Hundred and a Thousand more,
Till another Thousand smother
That, and that wipe off another.
Thus at last when we have numbred
Many a Thousand, many a Hundred,
We'll confound the reckoning quite,
And lose our selves in wild delight :
While our joyes so multiply,
As shall mocke the envious eye.



A Song Out of The Italian

To thy Lover,
Deere, discover
That sweet blush of thine that shameth
(When those Roses
It discloses)
All the flowers that Nature nameth.

In free Ayre,
Flow thy Haire ;
That no more Summers best dresses
Bee beholden
For their Golden
Locks, to Phoebus' flaming Tresses.

O deliver
Love his Quiver,
From thy Eyes he shoots his Arrowes,
Where Apollo
Cannot follow :
Feather'd with his Mother's Sparrowes.

O envy not
(That we dye not)
Those deere lips, whose doore encloses
All the Graces
In their places,
Brother Pearles, and sister Roses.

From these treasures
Of ripe pleasures
One bright smile to cleere the weather.
Earth and Heaven
Thus made even,
Both will be good friends together.

The aire does wooe thee,
Winds cling to thee ;
Might a word once flye from out thee,
Storme and Thunder
Would sit under,
And keepe silence round about thee.

But if Nature's
Common Creatures,
So deare Glories dare not borrow :
Yet thy Beauty
Owes a Duty
To my loving, lingring sorrow.

When, to end mee,
Death shall send mee
All his Terrors to affright mee :
Thine eyes' Graces
Gild their faces,
And those Terrors shall delight mee.

When my dying
Life is flying,
Those sweet Aires that often slew mee
Shall revive mee,
Or reprove mee,
And to many Deaths renew mee.

Wishes to His Supposed Mistress

Whoe'er she be,
That not impossible she
That shall command my heart and me ;
Where'er she lie,
Lock'd up from mortal eye,
In shady leaves of destiny,
Till that ripe birth
Of studied Fate stand forth,
And teach her fair steps to our earth ;
Till that divine
Idea takes a shrine
Of crystal flesh, through which to shine :
Meet you her, my wishes,
Bespeak her to my blisses,
And be ye call'd, my absent kisses.
I wish her beauty,
That owes not all its duty
To gaudy tire, or glist'ring shoe-tie ;
Something more than
Taffeta or tissue can,
Or rampant feather, or rich fan ;
More than the spoil
Of shop, or silkworms' toil,
Or a bought blush, or a set smile.
A face that's best
By its own beauty drest,
And can alone command the rest,
A face made up
Out of no other shop
Than what nature's white hand sets ope.
A cheek where youth
And blood, with pen of truth,
Write what the reader sweetly ru'th.

A cheek where grows
More than a morning rose,
Which to no box his being owes.

Lips, where all day
A lover's kiss may play,
Yet carry nothing thence away.

Looks that oppress
Their richest tires, but dress
And clothe their simplest nakedness :

Eyes, that displace
The neighbour diamond, and out-face
That sunshine by their own sweet grace.

Tresses, that wear
Jewels but to declare
How much themselves more precious are ;

Whose native ray
Can tame the wanton day
Of gems, that in their bright shades play :

Each ruby there,
Or pearl, that dare appear,
Be its own blush, be its own tear.

A well-tamed heart,
For whose more noble smart
Love may be long choosing a dart.

Eyes, that bestow
Full quivers on Love's bow,
Yet pay less arrows than they owe.

Smiles that can warm
The blood, yet teach a charm
That chastity shall take no harm.

Blushes, that bin
The burnish of no sin,
Nor flames of aught too hot within.

Joys, that confess
Virtue their mistress,
And have no other head to dress.

Fears, fond and slight,
As the coy bride's, when night
First does the longing lover right.

Tears, quickly fled
And vain, as those are shed
For a dying maidenhead.

Days, that need borrow
No part of their good morrow
From a fore-spent night of sorrow.

Days, that in spite
Of darkness, by the light
Of a clear mind are day all night.

Nights, sweet as they
Made short by lovers' play,
Yet long by th' absence of the day.

Life, that dares send
A challenge to his end,
And when it comes say, 'Welcome, friend.'

Sydneian showers
Of sweet discourse, whose powers
Can crown old Winter's head with flowers.

Soft silken hours,
Open suns, shady bowers,
'Bove all, nothing within that lowers.

Whate'er delight
Can make day's forehead bright,
Or give down to the wings of night.

In her whole frame
Have Nature all the name,
Art and ornament the shame.

Her flattery,
Picture and poesy :
Her counsel her own virtue be.

I wish her store
Of worth may leave her poor
Of wishes ; and I wish—no more.

Now if Time knows
That her, whose radiant brows
Weave them a garland of my vows ;

Her whose just bays
My future hopes can raise
A trophy to her perfect praise ;

Her that dares be
What these lines wish to see :
I seek no further—it is she.

'Tis she, and here
Lo ! I unclothe and clear
My wishes' cloudy character.

May she enjoy it,
Whose merit dare apply it,
But modesty dares still deny it.

Such worth as this is
Shall fix my flying wishes,
And determine them to kisses.

Let her full glory,
My fancies, fly before ye ;
Be ye my fictions, but her story.

The Tear

What bright soft thing is this,
Sweet Mary, thy fair eyes' expense ?
A moist spark it is,
A wat'ry diamond ; from whence
The very term, I think, was found,
The water of a diamond.

O ! 'tis not a tear,
'Tis a star about to drop
From thine eye, its sphere ;
The Sun will stoop and take it up.
Proud will his sister be to wear
This thine eye's jewel in her ear.

O ! 'tis a tear,
Too true a tear ; for no sad cyne,
How sad soe'er,
Rain so true a tear as thine ;
Each drop, leaving a place so dear,
Weeps for itself, is its own tear.

Such a pearl as this is,
(Slipp'd from Aurora's dewy breast)
The rose-bud's sweet lip kisses ;
And such the rose itself, when vex'd
With ungentle flames, does shed,
Sweating in too warm a bed.

Such the maiden gem
By the wanton Spring put on,
Peeps from her parent stem,
And blushes on the wat'ry Sun :
This wat'ry blossom of thine cyne,
Ripe, will make the richer wine.

Fair drop, why quak'st thou so ?
'Cause thou straight must lay thy head
In the dust ? O no ;
The dust shall never be thy bed :
A pillow for thee will I bring,
Stuff'd with down of angel's wing.

Thus carried up on high,
 (For to heaven thou must go)
Sweetly shalt thou lie,
 And in soft slumbers bathe thy woe ;
Till the singing orbs awake thee,
And one of their bright chorus make thee.

There thyself shalt be
 An eye, but not a weeping one ;
Yet I doubt of thee,
 Whether thou'dst rather there have shone
An eye of Heaven ; or still shine here
In th' Heaven of Mary's eye, a tear.

Upon the Ass that Bore Our Saviour

Hath only anger an omnipotence
 In eloquence ?
Within the lips of love and joy doth dwell
 No miracle ?
Why else had Balaam's ass a tongue to chide
 His master's pride,
And thou, Heav'n-burthen'd beast, hast ne'er a word
 To praise thy Lord ?
That he should find a tongue and vocal thunder,
 Was a great wonder ;
But O ! methinks 'tis a far greater one
 That thou find'st none.



A Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Saint Teresa

Foundress of the Reformation of the Discalced Carmelites, both
men and women ;

A Woman for angelical height of speculation, for masculine courage
of performance more than a woman, who yet a child outran
maturity, and durst plot a martyrdom.

Love, thou art absolute sole lord
Of life and death. To prove the word,
We'll now appeal to none of all
Those thy old soldiers, great and tall
Ripe men of martyrdom, that could reach down,
With strong arms their triumphant crown ;
Such as could with lusty breath,
Speak loud into the face of death,
Their great Lord's glorious name ; to none
Of those whose spacious bosoms spread a throne
For love at large to fill : spare blood and swear,
And see him take a private seat,
Making his mansion in the mild
And milky soul of a soft child.
Scarce hath she lear'nt to lisp the name
Of martyr ; yet she thinks it shame
Life should so long play with that breath,
Which, spent, can buy so brave a death.
She never undertook to know
What death with love should have to do ;
Nor hath she e'er yet understood
Why, to show love, she should shed blood ;
Yet, though she cannot tell you why,
She can love, and she can die.
Scarce hath she blood enough to make
A guilty sword blush for her sake ;
Yet has she a heart dares hope to prove
How much less strong is Death than Love.
Be love but there, let poor six years
Be posed with the maturest fears

Man trembles at, we straight shall find
Love knows no nonage, nor the mind.
'Tis love, not years or limbs, that can
Make the martyr or the man.
Love touch'd her heart, and lo it beats
High, and burns with such brave heats,
Such thirst to die, as dare drink up
A thousand cold deaths in one cup :
Good reason, for she breathes all fire,
Her weak breast heaves with strong desire
Of what she may with fruitless wishes
Seek for, amongst her mother's kisses.
Since 'tis not to be had at home,
She'll travel to a martyrdom.
No home for her confesses she,
But where she may a martyr be.
She'll to the Moors, and trade with them
For this unvalued diadem ;
She offers them her dearest breath,
With Christ's name in't, in change for death :
She'll bargain with them, and will give
Them God, and teach them how to live
In him, or if they this deny,
For him she'll teach them how to die.
So shall she leave amongst them sown
Her Lord's blood, or at least her own.

Farewell, then, all the world, adieu,
Teresa is no more for you :
Farewell, all pleasures, sports, and joys,
Never till now esteemed toys :
Farewell, whatever dear may be,
Mother's arms, or father's knee :
Farewell, house, and farewell, home,
She's for the Moors and martyrdom.

Sweet, not so fast ; lo thy fair spouse,
Whom thou seek'st with so swift vows,
Calls thee back, and bids thee come
T'embrace a milder martyrdom.
Blest powers forbid, thy tender life
Should bleed upon a barbarous knife,

Or some base hand have power to rase
Thy breast's chaste cab'net, and uncase
A soul kept there so sweet ; oh no,
Wise Heav'n will never have it so :
Thou art Love's victim, and must die
A death more mystical and high :
Into Love's hand thou shalt let fall,
A still surviving funeral.

He is the dart must make the death,
Whose stroke shall taste thy hallowed breath ;
A dart thrice dipp'd in that rich flame,
Which writes thy spouse's radiant name
Upon the roof of Heav'n, where aye
It shines, and with a sovereign ray
Beats bright upon the burning faces
Of souls, which in that name's sweet graces
Find everlasting smiles : so rare,
So spiritual, so pure and fair,
Must be th'immortal instrument,
Upon whose choice point shall be spent
A life so lov'd ; and that there be
Fit executioners for thee,
The fairest, and the first-born loves of fire,
Blest seraphims, shall leave their choir,
And turn love's soldiers, upon thee
To exercise their archery.

Oh, how oft shalt thou complain
Of a sweet and subtile pain !
Of intolerable joys !
Of a death in which who dies,
Loves his death, and dies again,
And would for ever so be slain !
And lives and dies, and knows not why
To live, but that he still may die.
How kindly will thy gentle heart
Kiss the sweetly killing dart :
And close in his embraces keep
Those delicious wounds that weep
Balsam, to heal themselves with thus ;
When these thy deaths so numerous,

Shall all at once die into one,
And melt thy soul's sweet mansion :
Like a soft lump of incense, hasted
By too hot a fire, and wasted
Into perfuming clouds, so fast
Shalt thou exhale to Heaven at last,
In a dissolving sigh, and then,
O what ? ask not the tongues of men !
Angels cannot tell ; suffice
Thyself shalt feel thine own full joys,
And hold them fast for ever there,
So soon as thou shalt first appear
The Moon of maiden stars ; thy white
Mistress attended by such bright
Souls as thy shining self shall come,
And in her first ranks make thee room ;
Where 'mongst her snowy family
Immortal welcomes wait in thee.
Oh, what delight when she shall stand,
And teach thy lips Heaven, with her hand,
On which thou now may'st to thy wishes
Heap up thy consecrated kisses.
What joy shall seize thy soul when she,
Bending her blessed eyes on thee,
Those second smiles of Heaven, shall dart
Her mild rays through thy melting heart :
Angels, thy old friends, there shall greet thee,
Glad at their own home now to meet thee.
All thy good works, which went before,
And waited for thee at the door,
Shall own thee there : and all in one
Weave a constellation
Of crowns, with which the King thy spouse,
Shall build up thy triumphant brows.

All thy old woes shall now smile on thee,
And thy pains set bright upon thee :
All thy sorrows here shall shine,
And thy sufferings be divine.
Tears shall take comfort, and turn gems,
And wrongs repent to diadems.

Ev'n thy deaths shall live, and new
Dress the soul, which late they slew.
Thy wounds shall blush to such bright scars,
As keep account of the Lamb's wars.

Those rare works, where thou shalt leave writ
Love's noble history, with wit
Taught thee by none but him, while here
They feed our souls, shall clothe thine there.
Each heavenly word, by whose hid flame
Our hard hearts shall strike fire, the same
Shall flourish on thy brows, and be
Both fire to us, and flame to thee :
Whose light shall live bright, in thy face
By glory, in our hearts by grace.

Thou shalt look round about, and see
Thousands of crown'd souls throng to be
Themselves thy crown, sons of thy vows :
The virgin births with which thy spouse
Made fruitful thy fair soul ; go now,
And with them all about thee, bow
To him ; ' Put on,' he'll say, ' put on,
My rosy love, that thy rich zone,
Sparkling with the sacred flames
Of thousand souls, whose happy names
Heaven keeps upon thy score ; thy bright
Life brought them first to kiss the light
That kindled them to stars.' And so
Thou with the Lamb thy Lord shalt go,
And, wheresoe'er he sets his white
Steps, walk with him those ways of light,
Which who in death would live to see,
Must learn in life to die like thee.

THE FANTASTICKS

Henry Vaughan

“Surdus eram, mutusque Silex,
Moriendo revixi.”

BORN IN 1622, Henry Vaughan and his twin brother Thomas had their early schooling at Llangattock, being taught by the rector of that place, one Matthew Herbert, a kinsman of George Herbert the poet. Designed by his father for the profession of the Church, Thomas Vaughan entered at Jesus College, Oxford in 1638, and it is believed, though it cannot be verified, that his brother entered at the same time, but if so he did not stay long enough to take his degree, presumably owing to the Civil War. On the outbreak of the latter, Henry went to London, where he came under the influence of Jonson's writings. On returning to Wales, he made his home at Brecon, and afterwards at Scethrog, where he practised as a physician. In 1646 appeared a small volume of poems, addressed chiefly to “Amoret,” who became his first wife. Vaughan soon came under the influence of Herbert, to whom he acknowledges his debt in the preface to “Silex Scintillans,” (1650), where he writes: “The first that with any effectual success attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream (in which way he referred to his secular verse) was the blessed man, Mr. George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious converts, of whom I am the least.”

Vaughan, like all the metaphysical poets, was in some degree a disciple of Donne, but followed him as he saw him reflected in Herbert. The influence of Herbert upon him was enormous. Not only in the form of his poetry and in the choice of subjects, but even in the actual expressions used by the elder poet, can his debt be seen. A long list could be made of parallel passages; suffice it to mention here one of the most noticeable.

Perhaps the poem of Vaughan's in which there is the greatest apparent debt to Herbert, is his “Praise.” Not only is the title the same, the form the same, and the basic idea the same, but he even makes use of identical rhyming words.

We have seen in an earlier chapter that whereas in the poets with whom we are dealing there came a moment in the lives of each of them when there was a re-orientation of mind, there was nevertheless nothing in the way of an absolute *cæsura* in the rhythm of their lives.

In Vaughan's life, this moment of re-orientation was less definite ; the cause of it was not one that made a strongly marked division, as in the case of Donne or Herbert or Crashaw, where in each case it was caused by a failure to succeed in the life they had planned out for themselves. With Donne, the royal decision that unless he took Orders there would be no preferment ; with Herbert, the rapidly-succeeding deaths of his three patrons ; with Crashaw, the ejection from his Fellowship ; in each case there was a clear-cut, obvious reason for the re-orientation. But in Vaughan's life, the moment was not so definite. His change of outlook was much more gradual, and was the result of an influence rather than the answer to a necessity.

Even the shortest account of Henry Vaughan ought not to end without an explanation of the name by which he called himself, "the Silurist." This name he adopted, and used on the title page of his most famous work, the "*Silex Scintillans*," or "Sparkling Flint" as a reminder of his nationality. The aboriginal inhabitants of South Wales were known by the Romans as the "*Silures*," and Vaughan was very proud of his ancestry and Welsh blood, and devoted to his birth-place.

He died at the age of seventy-three, and was buried in the churchyard of Llangantffraed.

THE SELECTED VERSE OF HENRY VAUGHAN

From *SILEX SCINTILLANS*

THE PURSUITE *Lord! what a busie restless thing*
GUIDING STARS *Joy of my life*
THE RETREAT *Happy those early dayes*
GHEARFULNESS *Lord, with what courage*
PEACE *My Soul, there is a countrie*
CHRIST'S NATIVITY *Awake, glad heart!*
THE DAWNING *Ah! what time wilt thou come?*
PRAISE *King of Comforts!*
PSALM CXXI *Up to those bright and gladsome hills*
MAN *Weighing the stedfastness*
FRIENDS DEPARTED *They are all gone into the world of light*
THE BIRD *Hither thou cam'st*
THE RAIN-BOW *Still young and fine!*
THE NIGHT *Through that pure Virgin-shrine*

From *PIOUS THOUGHTS AND EJACULATIONS*

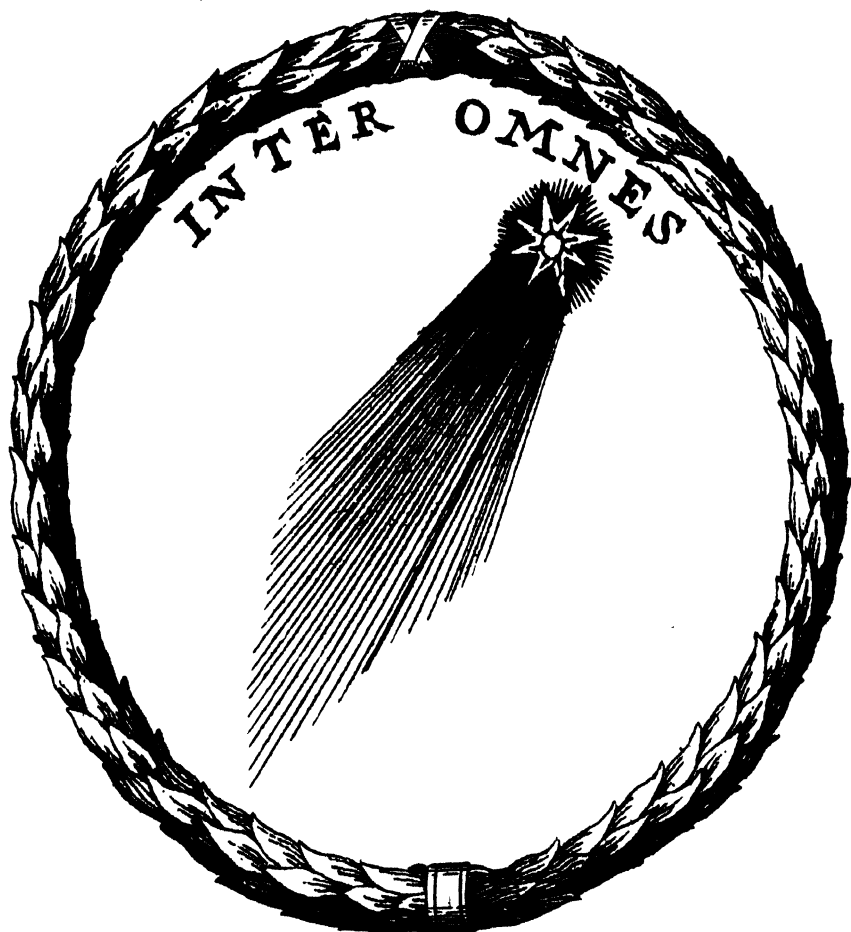
THE SHOWRE *'Twas so; I saw thy birth*
THE ECCLIPSE *Whither, O whither did'st thou fly*
THE REVIVAL *Unfold! unfold! take in his light*

From *POEMS, 1646*

TO AMORET: THE SIGH *Nimble sigh on thy warme wings*
A SONG TO AMORET *If I were dead, and in my place*
UPON THE PRIORIE GROVE, HIS USUAL RETYREMENT
Haile, sacred shades!

The Pursuite

Lord ! what a busie restless thing
 Hast thou made man !
Each day and houre he is on wing,
 Rests not a span.
Then having lost the Sunne and light,
 By clouds surpriz'd,
He keepes a Commerce in the night
 With aire disguis'd.
Hadst thou given to this active dust
 A state untir'd,
The lost Sonne had not left the huske,
 Nor home desir'd.
That was thy secret, and it is
 Thy mercy too ;
For when all failes to bring to blisse,
 Then this must doe.
Ah ! Lord ! and what a Purchase that will be,
To take us sick, that sound would not take thee !



Guiding Stars

Joy of my life while left me here !
And still my Love !
How in thy absence thou dost steere
Me from above !
A life well led
This truth commends ;
With quick or dead
It never ends.

Stars are of mighty use. The night
Is dark, and long ;
The Rode foul ; and where one goes right,
Six may go wrong.
One twinkling ray,
Shot o'er some cloud,
May clear much way,
And guide a crowd.

God's Saints are shining lights : who stays
Here long must passe
O're dark hills, swift streames, and steep ways
As smooth as glasse ;
But these all night,
Like Candles, shed
Their beams, and light
Us into Bed.

They are indeed our Pillar-fires,
Seen as we go ;
They are that Citie's shining spires
We travell to.
A swordlike gleame
Kept man for sin
First *Out* : this beame
Will guide him *In*.

The Retreat

Happy those early dayes, when I
Shin'd in my Angell-infancy !
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white, celestiall thought ;
When yet I had not walkt above
A mile or two from my first Love,
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see a glimpse of his bright face ;
When on some gilded Cloud or Flowre
My gazing soul would swell an houre,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity ;
Before I taught my tongue to wound
My conscience with a sinfull sound,
Or had the black art to dispence
A sev'rall sinne to ev'ry sense,
But felt through all this fleshly dresse
Bright shootes of everlastingnesse.

O how I long to travell back,
And tread again that ancient track !
That I might once more reach that plaine,
Where first I left my glorious traine ;
From whence th' inlightened spirit sees
That shady City of Palme trees.
But ah ! my soul with too much stay
Is drunk, and staggers in the way !
Some men a forward motion love,
But I by backward steps would move ;
And, when this dust falls to the urn,
In that state I came, return.

Chearfulness

Lord, with what courage and delight
I doe each thing,
When thy least breath sustaines my wing !
I shine and move
Like those above,
And, with much gladnesse
Quitting sadnesse,
Make me faire dayes of every night.

Affliction thus meere pleasure is ;
And hap what will,
If thou be in't, 'tis welcome still.
But since thy rayes
In sunnie dayes
Thou thus dost lend,
And freely spend,
Ah ! what shall I return for this ?

O that I were all Soul ! that thou
Wouldst make each part
Of this poor, sinfull frame pure heart !
Then would I drown
My single one ;
And to thy praise
A Concert raise
Of Hallelujahs here below.

Peace

My Soul, there is a countrie
Far beyond the stars,
Where stands a winged Sentie
All skilfull in the wars.
There, above noise and danger,
Sweet peace sits, crown'd with smiles,
And One born in a manger
Commands the beauteous files.
He is thy gracious friend
And—O my Soul awake !—
Did in pure love descend,
To die here for thy sake.
If thou canst get but thither,
There growes the flowre of peace,
The rose that cannot wither,
Thy fortresse, and thy ease.
Leave then thy foolish ranges ;
For none can thee secure,
But One, who never changes,
Thy God, thy Life, thy Cure.

Christ's Nativity

Awake, glad heart ! get up and sing !
It is the Birth-day of thy King.

Awake ! awake !

The Sun doth shake

Light from his locks, and, all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake, awake ! heark how th' wood rings !
Winds whisper, and the busie springs

A Concert make ;

Awake ! awake !

Man is their high-priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Flutt'ring in woods, or lifted far

Above this Inne

And Rode of sin !

Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit roomes for thee ! or that my heart

Were so clean as

Thy manger was !

But I am all filth, and obscene ;

Yet, if thou wilt, thou canst make clean.

Sweet Jesu ! will then. Let no more
This Leper haunt and soyl thy door !

Cure him, ease him,

O release him !

And let once more, by mystick birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

The Dawning

Ah ! what time wilt thou come ? when shall that crie
 The Bridegroom's Coming ! fil the sky ?
 Shall it in the Evening run
 When our words and works are done ?
 Or wil thy all-surprizing light

Break at midnight ?

When either sleep, or some dark pleasure
 Possesseth mad man without measure ;
 Or shal these early, fragrant hours

Unlock thy bowres ?

And with their blush of light descry
 Thy locks crown'd with eternitie ;
 Indeed, it is the only time
 That with thy glory doth best chime,
 All now are stirring, ev'ry field

Ful hymns doth yield,

The whole Creation shakes off night,
 And for thy shadow looks the light,
 Stars now vanish without number,
 Sleepie Planets set, and slumber,
 The pursie Clouds disband and scatter,
 All expect some sudden matter,
 Not one beam triumphs, but from far

That morning-star ;

O at what time soever thou,
 Unknown to us, the heavens wilt bow,
 And, with thy Angels in the Van,
 Descend to Judge poor careless man,
 Grant I may not like puddle lie
 In a Corrupt securitie,
 Where, if a traveller water crave
 He finds it dead, and in a grave.
 But as this restless, vocall Spring
 All day and night doth run, and sing,
 And though here born, yet is acquainted
 Elsewhere, and flowing keeps untainted ;
 So let me all my busie age
 In thy free services engage :

And though, while here, of force I must
Have commerce sometimes with poor dust,
And in my flesh, though vile and low,
As this doth in her Channel flow,
Yet let my Course, my aym, my Love,
And chief acquaintance be above.
So when that day and hour shal come,
In which thy self will be the Sun,
Thou'lt find me drest and on my way,
Watching the Break of thy great day.

Praise

King of Comforts ! King of life !
Thou hast cheer'd me ;
And when fears and doubts were rife,
Thou hast cleer'd me !

Not a nook in all my breast
But thou fill'st it ;
Not a thought, that breaks my rest,
But thou kill'st it ;

Wherefore with my utmost strength
I will praise thee,
And as thou giv'st line and length
I will raise thee ;

Day and night, not once a day,
I will blesse thee ;
And my soul in new array
I will dresse thee ;

Not one minute in the year
But I'll mind thee ;
As my seal and bracelet here
I will bind thee ;

In thy word, as if in heaven,
I will rest me ;
And thy promise 'till made even
There shall feast me.

Then thy sayings all my life
There shall please me,
And thy bloody wounds and strife,
They will ease me ;

With thy grones my daily breath
I will measure,
And my life hid in thy death
I will treasure.

Though then thou art
Past thought of heart
 All perfect fulness,
And canst no whit
Accesse admit
 From dust and dulness ;

Yet to thy name,
As not the same
 With thy bright Essence,
Our foul, clay hands
At thy commands
 Bring praise and incense ;

If then, dread Lord,
When to thy board
 Thy wretch comes begging,
He hath a flowre,
Or, to his pow'r,
 Some such poor Off'ring ;

When thou hast made
Thy beggar glad,
 And fill'd his bosome,
Let him, though poor,
Strow at thy door
 That one poor blossome.

Psalm CXXI.

Up to those bright and gladsome hills,
Whence flowes my weal and mirth,
I look, and sigh for Him, who fills
Unseen both heaven and earth.

He is alone my help and hope,
That I shall not be moved ;
His watchful eye is ever ope,
And guardeth his beloved ;

The glorious God is my sole stay,
He is my sun and shade ;
The cold by night, the heat by day ;
Neither shall me invade.

He keeps me from the spite of foes ;
Doth all their plots controul ;
And is a shield, not reckoning those,
Unto my very soul.

Whether abroad, amidst the crowd,
Or else within my door,
He is my pillar and my cloud,
Now and for evermore.

Man

Weighing the steadfastness and state
Of some mean things which here below reside,
Where birds like watchful clocks the noiseless date
And intercourse of times divide,
Where bees at night get home and hive, and flow'rs,
Early as well as late,
Rise with the sun, and set in the same bow'rs ;

I would, said I, my God would give
The staidness of these things to man ! for these
To His divine appointments ever cleave,
And no new business breaks their peace ;
The birds nor sow nor reap, yet sup and dine,
The flowres without clothes live,
Yet Solomon was never drest so fine.

Man hath still either toyes or care ;
He hath no root, nor to one place is ty'd,
But ever restless and irregular
About this earth doth run and ride.
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where ;
He sayes it is so far,
That he hath quite forgot how to go there.

He knocks at all doors, strays and roams ;
Nay, hath not so much wit as some stones have,
Which in the darkest nights point to their homes
By some hid sense their Maker gave ;
Man is the shuttle, to whose winding quest
And passage through these looms
God order'd motion, but ordain'd no rest.

Friends Departed

John 2, xvi, xvii.

All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the Eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof, but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

They are all gone into the world of light !
 And I alone sit lingering here.
 Their very memory is fair and bright,
 And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy brest
 Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
 Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
 After the Sun's remove.

I see them walking in an Air of glory,
 Whose light doth trample on my days ;
 My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
 Meer glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope ! and high Humility !
 High as the Heavens above :
 These are your walks, and you have shew'd them me
 To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death ! the Jewel of the Just,
 Shining no where, but in the dark ;
 What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust ;
 Could man outlook that mark !

He that hath found some fledg'd birds nest, may know
 At first sight, if the bird be flown ;
 But what fair Well, or Grove he sings in now,
 That is to him unknown.

And yet, as Angels in some brighter dreams
 Call to the soul when man doth sleep :
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted theams,
 And into glory peep.

If a star were confin'd into a Tomb
 Her captive flames must needs burn there ;
But when the hand that lockt her up, gives room,
 She'l shine through all the spheare.

O Father of eternal life, and all
 Created glories under thee !
Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall
 Into true liberty.

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill
 My perspective (still) as they pass,
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,
 Where I shall need no glass.

The Bird

Hither thou cam'st : the busie wind all night
Blew through thy lodging, where thy own warm wing
Thy pillow was. Many a sullen storm
(For which course man seems much the fitter born,)
Rain'd on thy bed
And harmless head.

And now as fresh and chearful as the light
Thy little heart in early hymns doth sing
Unto that Providence, whose unseen arm
Curb'd them, and cloath'd thee well and warm.
All things that be, praise him ; and had
Their lesson taught them, when first made.

So hills and valleys into singing break,
And though poor stones have neither speech nor tongue,
While active winds and streams both run and speak,
Yet stones are deep in admiration.
Thus Praise and Prayer here beneath the Sun
Make lesser mornings, when the great are done.

For each inclosed Spirit is a star
Inlightning his own little sphaere,
Whose light, though fetcht and borrowed from far,
Both mornings makes, and evenings there.

But as these Birds of light make a land glad,
Chirping their solemn Matins on each tree :
So in the shades of night some dark fowls be,
Whose heavy notes make all that hear them, sad.

The Turtle then in Palm-trees mourns,
While Owls and Satyrs howl ;
The pleasant Land to brimstone turns
And all her streams grow foul.

Brightness and mirth, and love and faith, all flye,
Till the Day-spring breaks forth again from high.

The Rain-Bow

Still young and fine ! but what is still in view
We slight as old and soil'd, though fresh and new.
How bright wert thou, when Shem's admiring eye
Thy burnisht, flaming Arch did first descry !
When Terah, Nahor, Haran, Abram, Lot,
The youthful world's gray fathers in one knot,
Did with intensive looks watch every hour
For thy new light, and trembled at each shower !
When thou dost shine, darkness looks white and fair,
Forms turn to Musick, clouds to smiles and air :
Rain gently spends his honey-drops, and pours
Balm on the cleft earth, milk on grass and flowers.
Bright pledge of peace and sun-shine ! the sure tye
Of thy Lord's hand, the object of His eye !
When I behold thee, though my light be dim,
Distant and low, I can in thine see Him,
Who looks upon Thee from His glorious throne,
And mindes the Covenant 'twixt All and One.
O foul, deceitful men ! my God doth keep
His promise still, but we break ours and sleep.
After the Fall the first sin was in Blood,
And Drunkenness quickly did succeed the flood ;
But since Christ dyed, (as if we did devise
To lose him too, as well as Paradise,)
These two grand sins we joyn and act together,
Though blood and drunkenness make but foul, foul weather.
Water, though both Heaven's windows and the deep
Full forty days o'r the drown'd world did weep,
Could not reform us, and blood in despite,
Yea, God's own blood, we tread upon and slight.
So those bad daughters, which God sav'd from fire,
While Sodom yet did smoke, lay with their sire.

Then peaceful, signal bow, but in a cloud
Still lodged, where all thy unseen arrows shrowd ;
I will on thee as on a Comet look,
A Comet, the sad world's ill-boding book ;
Thy light as luctual and stain'd with woes
I'll judge, where penal flames sit mixt and close.
For though some think thou shin'st but to restrain
Bold storms, and simply dost attend on rain ;
Yet I know well, and so our sins require,
Thou dost but court cold rain, till Rain turns Fire.

The Night

John 2, iii.

Through that pure Virgin-shrine,
That sacred vail drawn o'r thy glorious noon
That men might look and live, as Glo-worms shine,
And face the Moon :
Wise Nicodemus saw such light
As made him know his God by night.

Most blest believer he !
Who in that land of darkness and blinde eyes
Thy long expected healing wings could see,
When thou didst rise,
And, what can never more be done,
Did at mid-night speak with the Sun !

O who will tell me, where
He found thee at that dead and silent hour !
What hallow'd solitary ground did bear
So rare a flower.
Within whose sacred leafs did lie
The fulness of the Deity.

No mercy-seat of gold,
No dead and dusty Cherub, nor carv'd stone,
But his own living works did my Lord hold
And lodge alone ;
Where trees and herbs did watch and peep
And wonder, while the Jews did sleep.

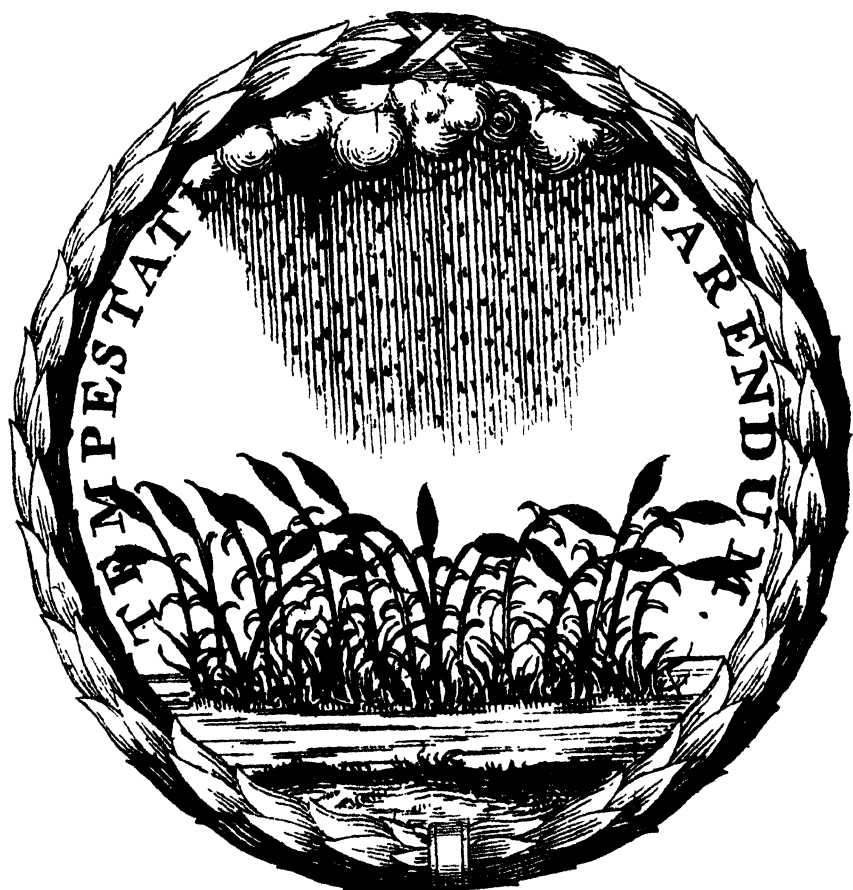
Dear night ! this world's defeat ;
The stop to busie fools ; care's check and curb ;
The day of spirits ; my soul's calm retreat
Which none disturb !
Christ's progress, and his prayer time ;
The hours to which high Heaven doth chime.

God's silent, searching flight,
When my Lord's head is filled with dew, and all
His locks are wet with the clear drops of night ;
His still, soft call ;
His knocking time ; The soul's dumb watch,
When spirits their fair kindred catch.

Were all my loud, evil days
Calm and unhaunted as is thy dark Tent,
Whose peace but by some Angel's wing or voice
Is seldom rent ;
Then I in Heaven all the long year
Would keep, and never wander here.

But living where the Sun
Doth all things wake, and where all mix and tyre
Themselves and others, I consent and run
To ev'ry myre ;
And by this world's ill guiding light,
Erre more than I can do by night.

There is in God, some say,
A deep, but dazzling darkness ; as men here
Say it is late and dusky, because they
See not all clear.
O for that night ! where I in him
Might live invisible and dim !



The Showre

'Twas so ; I saw thy birth. That drowsie Lake
From her faint bosome breath'd thee, the disease
Of her sick waters, and infectious Ease.

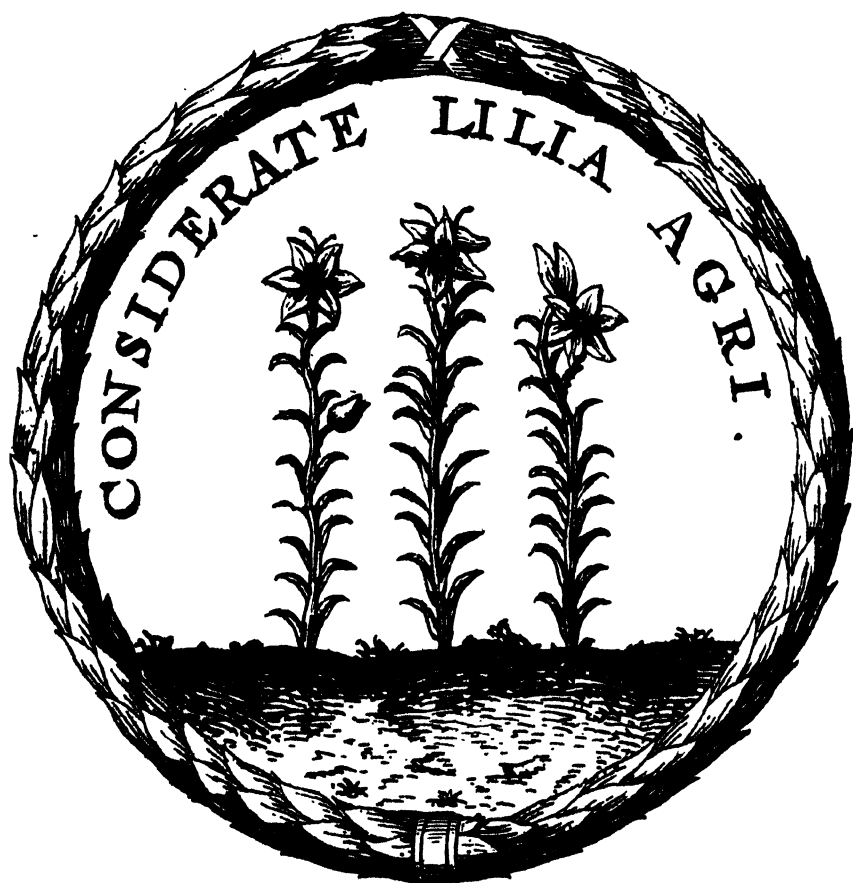
But now at even,
Too grosse for Heaven,
Thou fall'st in teares, and weep'st for thy mistake.

Ah ! it is so with me ; oft have I prest
Heaven with a lazie breath ; but fruitles this
Pierc'd not ; Love only can with quick accesse
Unlock the way,
When all else stray,
The smoke and exhalations of the brest.

Yet if, as thou doest melt, and, with thy traine
Of drops, make soft the Earth, my eyes could weep
O're my hard heart, that's bound up and asleep,
Perhaps at last,
Some such showres past,
My God would give a Sun-shine after raine.

The Eclipse

Whither, O whither did'st thou fly
When I did grieve thine holy Eye ?
When thou did'st mourn to see me lost,
And all thy Care and Councils crost.
O do not grieve, where e'er thou art !
Thy grief is an undoing smart,
Which doth not only pain, but break
My heart, and makes me blush to speak.
Thy anger I could kiss, and will :
But O ! thy grief, thy grief doth kill !



The Revival

Unfold ! unfold ! take in his light,
Who makes thy Cares more short than night.
The Joyes which with his Day-star rise,
He deals to all but drowsie eyes ;
And, (what the men of this world miss),
Some drops and dews of future bliss.

Hark ! how his winds have chang'd their note !
And with warm whispers call thee out.
The frosts are past, the storms are gone,
And backward life at last comes on.
The lofty groves in express Joyes
Reply into the Turtle's voice ;
And here in dust and dirt, O here,
The Lilies of his love appear !

To Amoret: The Sigh

Nimble sigh on thy warme wings,
Take this message and depart ;
Tell Amoret, that smiles and sings,
At what thy airie voyage brings,
That thou cam'st lately from my heart.

Tell my lovely foe, that I
Have no more such spies to send,
But one or two that I intend
Some few minutes ere I dye,
To her white bosom to commend.

Then whisper by that holy spring
Where for her sake I would have dyed,
While those water-nymphs did bring
Flowers to cure what she had tryed ;
And of my faith and love did sing.

That if my Amoret, if she
In after-times would have it read,
How her beauty murther'd mee,
With all my heart I will agree,
If shee'le but love me, being dead.

A Song to Amoret

If I were dead, and in my place,
Some fresher youth design'd,
To warme thee with new fires, and grace
Those Armes I left behind ;

Were he as faithful as the Sunne,
That's wedded to the Sphere ;
His bloud as chaste, and temp'rate runne,
As Aprils mildest teare ;

Or were he rich, and with his heapes,
And spacious share of Earth,
Could make divine affection cheape,
And court his golden birth :

For all these Arts I'de not believe,
(No though he should be thine)
The mighty Amorist could give
So rich a heart as mine.

Fortune and beauty thou mightst finde,
And greater men than I :
But my true resolved minde,
They never shall come nigh.

For I not for an houre did love,
Or for a day desire,
But with my soule had from above,
This endles holy fire.

Upon the Priorie Grove, His Usual Retirement

Haile, sacred shades ! cool, leavie house !
Chaste treasurer of all my vowes
And wealth ! on whose soft bosome layd
My love's faire steps I first betray'd :
Henceforth no melancholy flight.
No sad wing, or hoarse bird of Night,
Disturbe this aire, no fatall threate
Of raven, or owle, awake the note
Of our laid eccho, no voice dwell
Within these leaves, but philomel.
The poisonous ivie here no more
His false twists on the oke shall score,
Only the woodbine here may twine,
As th' embleme of her love, and mine ;
The amorous sunne shall here convey
His best beames, in thy shade to play ;
The active ayre, the gentlest show'rs
Shall from his wings raine on thy flowers ;
And the moone from her dewie lockes,
Shall decke thee with her brightest drops ;
What ever can a fancie move,
Or feed the eye ; be on this grove.

And when at last the winds, and teares
Of Heaven, with the consuming yeares,
Shall these greene curles bring to decay,
And cloathe thee in an aged gray :
—If ought a lover can foresee :
Or if we poets prophets be—
From hence transplanted, thou shalt stand
A fresh grove in th' Elysian land ;
Where—most blest paire !—as here on Earth
Thou first didst eye our growth, and birth ;
So there againe, thou'lt see us move
In our first innocence and love ;
And in thy shades, as now, so then,
Wee'le kisse, and smile, and walke again.

THE FANTASTICKS

A Summary

TO THE READER who tastes the wares of the metaphysical poets for the first time, there is one particular aspect of their verse which makes an irresistible appeal. This is a certain quality which the poetry of them all has in common, difficult to describe because faint, evocative, and distant—a quality which for want of a more exact and descriptive word may be termed “loveliness.” It is lovely as a woman may be lovely, beautiful in appearance, style and character, breathing and doing good, bringing a faint and almost indistinguishable odour of sweetness and light.

To borrow a simile from Herbert’s beloved art, it is not in the perfection of the orchestration, nor in the constant trick of change from major to minor key ; it is not in the sublimity of the thought, nor in the gorgeousness of the wording ; it is not in the pure beauty of sound, or rhythm, or proportion, or in the extravagance of the conceits, or in the exquisiteness of their imagery ; it is in something which partakes perhaps of all these, and yet is something more.

It is the same rare quality—this loveliness—which haunts one in such passages as the last two stanzas of the “Ode to a Nightingale,” or Milton’s “Thick as autumnal leaves . . . in Vallombrosa,” or Tennyson’s “Far-off things, and battles long ago” ; a quality which finds its perfect expression in the unforgettable lines of Théodore de Banville, “Nous n’irons plus au bois, les lauriers sont coupés.” This loveliness is composed of many different strands ; but there is one which transcends all the others, and it is pure magic.*

The writings of the poets with whom this book deals are full to the brim with this quality. It is fundamental, and past all question is more experienced in their poetry than in that of any other period

* In certain of Donne’s poems, for example, this quality of loveliness is so vivid, that it produces music out of a form in which there is no intrinsic music whatever. Consider the “Hymne to God the Father,” (p. 68). In the last verse the implicit drama is so strong that it can only be described in musical form, as, e.g., the third line begins with a strongly marked change from minor to major ; that line and the one following are so emphatic, and *marcato*, that the poetic rhythm is lost, and a music rhythm takes its place. In the earlier poems this particular type of beauty is not especially noticeable but in the poems of his later years, it gradually comes to take a greater place.

in the whole of English literature. Few persons would deny that they find it in the verse of Herbert, of Crashaw, and of Vaughan ; but for some reason or other Donne has often been charged with a lack of it.* I would deny as forcefully as possible any suggestion that his verse is devoid of this basic quality. Though I can understand why such a charge is sometimes brought against him, I cannot see that it has the slightest validity. The magic which is the essence of loveliness utterly pervades Donne's verse. If it does not, then I have not the slightest idea of loveliness. The matter is, of course, unarguable ; either he is to the reader a purveyor of magic, or he is not. I can, but give my own view ; but this much at least is certain, that if in the poetry of Keats we can find what we call magic ; if the reading of such lines as "Darkling I listen" gives us the "frisson" which can only be the result of the experience of utter loveliness ; if this be so, then I maintain that Donne's verse is of the same order, and beautiful beyond belief.

As I have tried to show in an earlier chapter, the immediate aim and object of the metaphysical poets was the attainment of a complete and valid synthesis of life. They were aware of this search ; that is the point. Everybody desires this integration ; but very few are aware of their desire or even of their vital need. But the Fantasticks were abundantly aware of both ; therein lies their importance.

I would submit that Donne achieved this integration, after many stormy years ; Herbert at length achieved it, attaining to the utter content and fulfilment of the completed soul only in the last three years of his short life ; Crashaw attained to it, also at the last ; while Vaughan possessed it from the beginning. There is therefore an enormous difference in their characters, and hence in their lives and works ; but their common realisation of aim gives them a common "quality" which, difficult though it is to express, is none the less easy to feel.

The second point of interest to note about them is that they were figures only partially of their own time. Though the fire of the Renaissance was almost extinct, they drew their genius more from its dying embers than they did from the newly-kindled flames of their own generation. They forged their thoughts, albeit in a new and different language, in the furnaces of Shakespeare and Spenser,

* In her interesting article, "John Donne and the Baroque Doubt" ("Horizon," XI, 66), Miss Kathleen Raine writes : "Want of beauty is a charge that has often been made against Donne's poetry ; and in a certain sense with justice. For the worlds of beauty and of reality, too, were pulling apart at the turn of the century. . . . Donne spoke a language stripped of magic, bare, in that sense, of magic."

and not in those of Lovelace and Suckling. Not for them the charming and the dainty, but the passionate and the strong.

What they wrote, they meant ; what they said they practised. Their poetry is vibrant and palpitant with truth—absolute, heart-felt truth. Referring to Donne's ministry, Izaak Walton, his churchwarden at St. Dunstan-in-the-West, wrote : "A preacher in earnest ; weeping sometimes for his auditory, sometimes with them ; always preaching to himself, like an Angel from a cloud, but in none."

That is the secret of the enormous value of the *Fantasticks*—a secret which might be better known and more widely acted upon in these present days—"they preached to themselves." This was one of the main steps in their climb towards integration ; what they advised and suggested to others, that they themselves practised.

That is their supreme value at the present day, when the whole world is searching, and searching vainly, for something—it knows not what—that may give a purpose and meaning to life. It is lamentably true that to a vast number of people the lying judgment of Macbeth bears the genuine stamp ; to them life is but

a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

This, above all else, the *Fantasticks* do ; they point the way. Of all the qualities of the only perfectly-integrated human creature, a tiny baby, there is only one which is universal—the desire to touch. It is both an assistance towards and a result of, integration. This quality was noticeably present in the characters of Herbert and Crashaw and Vaughan ; and supremely so in that of Donne.

The tangibility of the divine was to them a complete reality ; not something merely accepted as an intellectual truth, but a fact borne out by the deepest experience. God was a goal to which the runner could race, a friend on whom a friend could rely, the mistress whom at any moment the lover could reach out and touch. In these men, true sons of the Renaissance, was the holy urge of life itself, insistent and vital, producing in them the spirit of energy, the lust for adventure, the willingness to experience—the prime requisites for the satisfaction of the needs of the soul, that clamant longing which, like steel to a magnet, is ever drawn to that divinity from which it took its being, and which, ever seeking, it one day again must find.

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