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# ESSAYS AND STUDIES

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# ESSAYS AND STUDIES

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THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

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## ALDRED THE SCRIBE

THE Old English gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels (British Museum, Cotton MS. Nero D. iv) and the Old English gloss to the so-called 'Durham Ritual' (Durham Cathedral, MS. A. IV. 19) are the two chief sources for our knowledge of the language of the northern part of Northumbria in the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> Wanley believed that Aldred, who wrote the famous colophon to the Gospels, was the writer of the gloss in both manuscripts. Describing the Ritual, he says 'Auctor ejus seu potius scriptor erat proculdubio Aldredus ille Presbyter qui Codicem Evangeliorum . . . Nero D. 4 . . . Versione Dano-Saxonica interlineari illustravit: cujus quidem manum in hoc Codice statim atque conspexi agnoscebam, codicemque hunc Dunelmensem cum Cottoniano conferens, unum Aldredum utriusque, quoad maximam partem, scriptorem esse reperi. . . .'<sup>2</sup> Wanley's decided opinion was respected until the second half of the nineteenth century. Then, with the revival of interest in palaeography, variations in the writing of the gloss to the Gospels, both in its general style and in the form of particular letters, led Skeat and others to suppose that only the gloss to the gospel of St. John and some corrections were actually in Aldred's hand.<sup>3</sup> The present opinion on the subject dates from 1884, when Maunde Thompson gave reasons for thinking that the gloss to all four gospels is by Aldred. At the same time he

<sup>1</sup> Eric Millar, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, 1923, shows eight complete pages of the Gospels containing writing, and parts of thirteen other pages; *Palaeographical Society*, first series, pl. 3, shows f. 34; F. G. Kenyon, *Facsimiles of Biblical Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 1900, pl. 11, shows f. 90; *Ancient Manuscripts in the British Museum*, pt. 2, Latin, 1884, pls. 8, 9, shows ff. 91, 259. These facsimiles, numerous as they are, do not convey an adequate idea of the variety of writing in the gloss. Aldred's colophon is reproduced by Millar, pl. 36, and in *Ancient Manuscripts*, pl. 9. The most important facsimiles of the Ritual are by R. A. B. Mynors, *Durham Cathedral Manuscripts*, 1939, pls. 12, 13, and by A. Hamilton Thompson and U. Lindelöf, *Rituale ecclesiae Dunelmensis* (Surtees Soc. cxl), 1927, pl. 3. The collects and inscription of Aldred the provost are shown by Mynors, pl. 13 b, and in *Pal. Soc.*, first series, pl. 241.

<sup>2</sup> H. Wanley, *Librorum vett. septentrionalium Catalogus* (vol. 2 of Hicke's *Thesaurus*), 1705, p. 298.

<sup>3</sup> W. W. Skeat, *The Gospel according to St. John in Anglo-Saxon and Northumbrian Versions*, 1878, p. viii.

stated, without giving his reasons, that the gloss to the Gospels and the gloss to the Ritual are 'undoubtedly by different hands'.<sup>1</sup>

Some nineteenth-century writers identified the scribe of the gloss to the Ritual with Aldred the provost, who wrote collects and an inscription on a blank leaf near the end of the manuscript. Maunde Thompson dealt summarily with this theory, saying that the writing of the provost 'is of a later date and quite different'. As to the date he is not supported by more recent scholars, who assign the gloss to the second half of the century and the inscription to the year 970, or possibly 981, nor by Wanley, who considered the writer of the gloss and the writer of the inscription to be contemporaries. The statement that the hands are quite different has not been challenged.

I think that Maunde Thompson and others have shown conclusively that the gloss to all four gospels is in one hand and that the gloss to the Ritual is in one hand.<sup>2</sup> Two questions remain without satisfactory answers. Is the gloss to the Gospels in the same hand as the gloss to the Ritual? Did Aldred the provost write the gloss to the Ritual?

On the first question there is a disagreement between Wanley and modern scholars. It appears to me that the former saw the essential similarity of the writing in the two manuscripts and that the latter have been misled by unimportant differences, like those which misled Skeat. It is necessary to show what the differences are and why they are unimportant.

The similarities are obvious: for example, the use of four different kinds of *a*, the common pointed *a*, an open-headed *a* usual in the combination *æ*, a straight-topped *a*, and an *a* which resembles Caroline *a*; the manner in which the tall strokes of *b*, *h*, and *l* are formed; the continual variation in the slope and length of the upstroke of *d* and in the forms of *m* and *n*, the minims of which sometimes have feet and sometimes are pointed and curve inwards; the broad, almost flat base of *l*; the tendency for the head of *t* to curve down at the left end and up at the right end; the form of *w*, which lacks the spur or thickening at the top of the vertical stroke seen in *f*, *p*, and *s*; the tendency to link letters, especially

<sup>1</sup> *Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts in the British Museum*, pt. 2, Latin, 1884, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> On the second point see Thompson and Lindelöf, *op. cit.*, p. li.

*r* and *g*, on to a following letter; the use of a majuscule as well as a minuscule script.

What are the differences between the writing of the two glosses? There is, in the first place, a difference in appearance. The gloss to the Gospels looks, almost always, more formal and restrained than the gloss to the Ritual. We should expect this. In the Gospels the writing of the main text is larger—six letters to an inch, against eight in the Ritual—, the space between the lines is wider, and the long vertical strokes of letters in the main text did not inconvenience the glossator as they did in the Ritual. Also, and most important, the manuscript of the Gospels inspires wonder and veneration in all who see it. The grandeur of its majuscule demands something better from a glossator than the cursive script suitable enough for the gloss to the Anglo-Saxon minuscule of the Ritual. Aldred tried to make his script worthy of the occasion. He tried to write larger than was natural to him, to provide his minims with feet, to space out his letters and to avoid ties between them, to bring up the shoulder of *f*, *r*, and *s* steeply from the foot of the descender, to prolong the tail of *r*, and to close the tail of *g*. Sometimes he succeeded, but more often he failed, and evidence that his natural hand was a small pointed cursive appears on almost every page. He is most calligraphic on ff. 29–89 and least so near the beginning and near the end of the manuscript. Near the beginning and near the end and in the corrections in red ink the difference between his script and that of the gloss to the Ritual is not, in fact, at all marked. His famous colophon is an extraordinarily uneven piece of work and an instructive illustration of what he was trying to do. It shows, too, in the space of a few lines, how dangerous are palaeographical arguments based merely on *differences* in script.

Certain letter-forms are features of the Ritual, but not of the Gospels. In the Ritual the head of *f* and of *s* often rises above the general level of the letters, especially when *s* is combined with a following *t*, a high form of *e* is frequent in combination with a following *a*, *f*, *g*, *m*, *n*, *o*, *s*, *t*, the rising stroke of *f*, *r*, and *s* often diverges from the vertical descender almost at the foot, so that the letter is deeply split, and the tail of *g* is regularly open. All these letter-forms occur in the Gospels, but only in the least formally written parts, and rarely there. What is important is that they do occur. Aldred was familiar with them and used them

when his writing was least constrained. They do not show that he did not write the gloss to the Ritual any more than do the variations in the form of *ð*, in the use of *v*, *w*, and *u*, and in the use of *e* and *i* in the prefix *ge-*, *gi-*.<sup>1</sup>

‘Minor divergences in spelling . . . and in the grammar and vocabulary of the two glosses’ can be explained in more than one way.<sup>2</sup> The linguistic divergences are slight and do not suggest that we have to do with different dialects of Northumbrian.

The Ritual, like the Gospels, contains a scribal inscription. It states that four collects on p. 167 were written by Aldred the provost at a certain time and place. As I have said, the theory that the glossator of the Ritual is identical with the writer of the collects has been dismissed summarily by modern scholars. The script of the collects, an ordinary Anglo-Saxon minuscule, cannot be compared, however, with the small cursive script of the gloss. It can be compared only with writing of the same kind, either with the writing of the main text of the Ritual, which is evidently different, or with the writing of pp. 153–66, 169–76, which is in the hand of the glossator. If we compare p. 167 with these

<sup>1</sup> (a) Examples of tall *f* in the Gospels are *færende* f. 149<sup>v</sup>, of f. 3<sup>v</sup> margin, *forðon* f. 139, *heafvdværd* f. 251.

(b) Tall *s* occurs in the Gospels several times on f. 241 and in the combination *st* on f. 202<sup>v</sup>, col. 1, l. 24.

(c) High *e* is frequent in the Gospels in a few patches. An example in one of Aldred’s corrections in red ink is *giboeta* f. 4.

(d) Open-tailed *g* is common near the end of the Gospels and in the colophon (see facsimiles of f. 259).

(e) In the Gospels up to f. 53 Aldred uses frequently a form of *ð* in which the cross-stroke is made separately. This is the regular form in the Ritual. After f. 53 Aldred uses regularly a *ð* made in a single stroke, resembling a medieval Arabic figure 4, upside down. This form occurs very rarely in the Ritual, e.g. *earðhifign* p. 65 (ed. p. 68, l. 17).

(f) On *v*, *w*, and *u* in the Gospels see *Ancient Manuscripts*, p. xxi. Skeat in his edition of the Gospels prints *u* where the manuscript has *v*. *w* and *u* occur, rarely, in the Ritual, e.g. *giwune* p. 64 (ed. p. 68, l. 1 has the misprint *giwunne*).

(g) On *ge-*, the regular form, and *gi-* in the Gospels, see Skeat, *St. John*, p. x. *gi-* is the form in the colophon. On *gi-*, the regular form, and *ge-* in the Ritual see Thompson and Lindelöf, op. cit., p. li.

<sup>2</sup> See Thompson and Lindelöf, op. cit., p. lii. For a theory of orthographic variation see A. S. C. Ross, *Studies in the Accidence of the Lindisfarne Gospels*, 1937, pp. 26–32. The language of the two glosses can be compared most conveniently by means of A. S. Cook, *Glossary of the Old Northumbrian Gospels*, 1894, and U. Lindelöf, *Wörterbuch zur interlinearversion des Rituale ecclesiae Dunelmensis*, 1901.

pages we must bear in mind that it was written in different circumstances. Pages 153 sqq. were written carefully and at leisure. Page 167, on the other hand, was written in bishop Ælfsige's tent, quite carefully also, but certainly not in ideal conditions. As a result the lines slope in different directions, the spacing between the words and between the letters is irregular and the shapes of the letters vary. Yet, essentially, the letter-forms are similar to those on pp. 153 sqq., where the script is beautifully proportioned and regular: note especially *d*, *g*, the abbreviation for *pro*, the two forms of *a* and of *m*, the deeply split *f* and *s*, and the forms of the capital letters. The various forms of high *e* are clumsy variants of the form on pp. 153 sqq. The forms of *g* and of *r* are rather different, but resemble forms which occur in the glosses to the Ritual and to the Gospels.

The Old English inscription which follows the Latin collects is not so carefully or so formally written. It is, in fact, an example of that mixed type of writing which we see also in the Gospels. The scribe took over some of the careful forms which he had used when writing the collects and wrote them regularly (*g*), or occasionally, beside more cursive forms (*a*, *d*). He allowed himself to write, twice, the tall form of *f* which occurs, commonly, in the gloss to the Ritual. There is the same deep splitting of *f* and of *s* and the same variation in the form of *r* as there is in the gloss: *w* is formed in the same way. The lines written in the lower margin slope downwards like the last lines of Aldred's colophon to the Gospels.

I have tried to describe the palaeographical evidence on which the answers to my two questions must be based. That evidence appears to me to indicate clearly that the gloss to the Gospels, the gloss to the Ritual, and the collects on p. 167 of the Ritual are either the work of one and the same scribe or are products of the same scriptorium. The latter seems the less likely, but it is a possibility if there was a scriptorium in the North in the tenth century, where a standard form of writing was taught, as it seems to have been taught at Exeter and Worcester in the mid-eleventh century, and at Canterbury, Rochester, and elsewhere in the early twelfth century. The confusion of the times, the condition of the Church, and the absence of any records or references in chronicles make the existence of such a centre of writing highly improbable. In extant books, apart from the Gospels and the Ritual, only a

few notes and scribbles can be attributed to members of the congregation of St. Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street.<sup>1</sup> These are in archaic, uncalligraphic scripts, which bear no resemblance to Aldred's. The few remaining tenth-century books, now or formerly at Durham, have no claims to have been written in the North.<sup>2</sup> The *Liber Vitae* was not kept up. These considerations and the coincidence in name make it safe, I think, to identify Aldred the son of Alfred with Aldred the provost and to attribute to him the gloss to the Ritual as well as the gloss to the Gospels. In doing so we gain new light on Aldred's capabilities as a scribe. His skill is apparent, indeed, in the Gospels, but his mastery, both of book-hand and of the smaller glossing hand, is seen only in the humbler Ritual.

N. R. KER.

<sup>1</sup> There are a few entries in the *Liber Vitae* (facsimile ed. Surtees Soc. cxxxvi, 1923), scribbles in Durham Cath. MS. A. II. 17 (facs. by Mynors, *op. cit.*, pl. 2). and an entry on f. 96 of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS. 183. The burnt fragments of Cotton MS. Otho B. ix contain some tenth-century additions.

<sup>2</sup> See Mynors, *op. cit.*, nos. 14-19 and p. 30.

## MARCHING SONG

### 1

**B***Y marching song* is here meant poetry that a man has got by heart, and that he 'reads', passing it repeatedly through his mind, while tramping the country roads. There may be poetry that is fully 'read' only when so 'read', but the purpose of a man in equipping himself with *marching song* might be, not to 'read' that verse better, but to live his entire life more in the heart of all poetry. Still it is true that some poetry is better read out of doors. Thus until one has seen, say the Himalayan snows flushed by the sunset, then grow grey, then flush again for a little, he may not fully take in :

For note, when evening shuts,  
A certain moment cuts  
The deed off, calls the glory from the grey :  
A whisper from the west  
Shoots—'Add this to the rest,  
Take it and try its worth : here dies another day'.

So, I believe, with Shakespeare's Sonnets : they are read best, when the matter spoken of is also before the eyes, as when the words are :

Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy ;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face, . . .

or when they are :

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light  
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,  
Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;  
And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill,  
Resembling strong youth in his middle age,  
Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,  
Attending on his golden pilgrimage ;  
But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,  
Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day,  
The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are,  
From his low tract, and look another way : . . .

or when they are :

From you have I been absent in the Spring,  
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,  
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,  
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.

or when they are :

When I do count the clock that tells the time,  
And see the brave day sunk in hideous night ;  
When I behold the violet past prime,  
And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white ;  
When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,  
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,  
And summer's green all girded up in sheaves,  
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.

It is so, too, for though one is tramping the roads for pleasure,  
one has left loved ones behind, when the words are :

How heavy do I journey on the way,  
When what I seek, my weary travel's end

(one is sometimes weary, even when tramping for pleasure, the  
distance between the last inn and the next being long : one is  
sometimes weary for the food, for the fire, and the travel's end—  
but to continue)

When what I seek, my weary travel's end,  
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say,  
'Thus far the miles are measured from my friend !'  
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe,  
Plods dully on, to bear the weight in me,  
As if by some instinct the wretch did know  
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee :  
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on  
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide ; . . .

(one's own body is one's beast, and the spur is one's urging will) ;  
or when the words are :

Till I return of posting is no need.  
O, what excuse will my poor beast then find,  
When swift extremity can seem but slow ?  
Then should I spur, though mounted on the wind,  
In winged speed no motion shall I know :  
Then can no horse with my desire keep pace ;  
Therefore desire, of perfect'st love being made,  
Shall neigh—no dull flesh—in his fiery race.

Though last words are specially good to tramp to :

Therefore desire . . .

Shall neigh—no dull flesh—in his fiery race !

No other English poetry, I have found, makes better marching song than the Sonnets ; for they are never dim ; are ever new, being full of dramatic life and interest. They are so wise, too ; so ripe, so mature. There is Nature in them ; all the passion of love ; all the divine speech of that passion ; and there is so much old-man wisdom.

Two years<sup>1</sup> ago I tested the Sonnets again as marching song. This was along the roads that take one from Simla, in the Himalayas, to Baghi and beyond to the eternal snows ; past hills, all grass on the southern side, and pines on the northern. There, now in sun, now with the shadows of the hills on the roads, with roses and other flowers by the way, with scarlet, black, yellow, and olive-green minivets ; woodpeckers, magpies, green pigeons, and tits in the forests ; with the same kind and variety of human life on the roads ; with the rain falling now, and now the sun shining. It was as if the little book said ; ‘Test me ; measure me against all that life ; measure me with my “green all girded up in sheaves” with those terraced fields of barley, which the cuckoos, calling as in England, fly over ; with those grassy hillsides.’ So I measured it as far as lay in my power.

It seems a good thing to make an effort to secure more attentive readers for the Sonnets ; more men and women to use them as marching song. If we lived close to some body of free, pure, joyful, fearless English poetry, nobody could say of us :

Some life of men unblest

He knew, which made him droop, and filled his head.

He went ; his piping took a troubled sound

Of storms that rage outside our happy ground ;

He could not wait their passing, he is dead,

and that, if it is not said of us, might so well be.

What would living close to such a body of poetry mean exactly ? It would mean more than having an ear for the melody ; more than just sharing in man’s delight in harmonious words, a sharing that is possible without much accompaniment of understanding of the wisdom and insight. It would mean more

<sup>1</sup> Written several years ago.

than mere apprehension of the dictionary meanings of words. Should the words be:

Nativity, once in the main of light,  
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,  
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,  
And time that gave doth now his gift confound.

The words have grown a little obsolete; no man now expresses himself so; but no men ever did but great poets, and with such as 'ripeness is all' they have that power of reconciling our spirits to decay and death that any great beauty of utterance has of reconciling men to whatever it may be.

Or suppose the words are:

Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,  
Since, seldom coming, in the long year set,  
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,  
Or captain jewels in the carcanet.

That is very beautiful verse; but the thought must be applied, to put it so. A carcanet is a necklace. Think of a few great stones set between smaller stones: those are our feasts, and that their 'seldom coming', as men's holidays so seldom come, and bright sunny days to enhance their worth, makes them better feasts. The Sonnets themselves are captain jewels in the carcanet of poetry. Among the English poets Shakespeare, Milton, Blake, Keats, Wordsworth, Browning, and Hopkins are the 'stones of worth'. To regard feasts, poems, poets so, the greater as far outshining the smaller stones in the necklace, is a manner of applying in one's daily life the wisdom of 'Therefore are feasts' and the other words of that quatrain.

I am convinced that some such applying follows inevitably from any living close to poetry; in fact that, until an applying has been forced upon a reader, he has not really *read*, but poetry has been for him but as sound.

This is applying: suppose that the words are:

Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,  
And made myself a motley to the view,  
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,  
Made old offences of affections new;

then one must have some such thought as that, in a settled, conventional society such as any society tends to grow more and more to be, it is not often a question of a man's goring his own

thoughts; for most of them come to him already gored. He has new affections none, and he is, to think of him half-jestingly, an old offence. Or suppose the words are:

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,  
And almost thence my nature is subdued  
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand;

the applying then must be one's having such a thought as that, in a settled, conventional society, all men are dyed. There is not even the variety of the priests dyed black, the soldiers red, the sailors blue, the politicians green; for we are all dyed the same drab.

Sometimes there will be no applying; the application of some lines is a thing beyond the stretch of such imaginations as ours. Then it must be enough, if we are stirred by the passion that prompted the words. We cannot apply:

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come;

but when one is marching, passing the words through one's mind, it is within one's reach to hear them as if a crash of music had come from heaven.

The Sonnets are inexhaustible; but how surely so can be fully known only to those who have lived close to them. It is neither true that they are 'derivative, artificial, and even academical', which has been said, though many could be read, in a parodying voice, so as to bring out the derivative, artificial, and academic element in them; nor true, as one, a good reader too, once said to me, that what stands out for a reader of the Sonnets is the amount of repetition in them, their monotony. If they descend to what they descend, they ascend to what they ascend, and who knows quite what the body of them is; as, for instance, if these or those are not such as exercises on a rainy afternoon in a country-house, or even if some of the sonnets are not Shakespeare's own?

They are inexhaustible: a man will not, in one lifetime, take in the whole mind of Shakespeare so expressed. They are full of old-man wisdom. It is the kind of writing that in France might easily have been published as maxims—the *Maxims of Shakespeare*, of which there is an abundance also in the plays. There are maxims for us all; for statesmen and politicians, those whose job, it being the most difficult, it is to be expected should

be the worst done ; maxims for aging men, for mature women, for young lovers ; only nothing, it would seem, for little children.

Is it impossible that men and nations and peoples should live so close to some of the Sonnets that their thoughts and acts were influenced by them, as by

No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change :  
 Thy pyramids built up with newer might  
 To me are nothing novel, nothing strange ;  
 They are but dressings of a former sight.  
 Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire  
 What thou dost foist upon us that is old ;  
 And rather make them born to our desire  
 Than think that we before have heard them told ?

or by :

If there be nothing new, but that which is  
 Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,  
 Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss  
 The second burthen of a former child !

or by :

. . . it is a greater grief  
 To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury,

and

The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief  
 To him that bears the strong offence's cross ?

It has been said :

For two hundred years after its appearance, the volume seemed as though

It might for fortune's bastard be unfathered,  
 As subject to time's love or to time's hate,  
 Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd—  
 the illegitimate issue of the press of a thievish publisher, little regarded, little mentioned for either praise or blame. But for the next hundred years . . . the words in which that sonnet goes on are as strikingly applicable :

No, it was builded far from accident ;  
 It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls  
 Under the blow of thrall'd discontent  
 Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls :  
 It fears not policy, that heretic,  
 Which works on leases of short numbered hours,  
 But all alone stands hugely politic,  
 That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.

Even that, excellent example as it is of a happily chosen quotation; not false, or but half true, as so much literary criticism is, is surely ineffective for any deeper purpose than the lecturer's wish to give his audience something to make them feel their having come to listen was worth while. His were no words to send many of his hearers away with the strong impression that the Sonnets *must* be read; that not to read them to a degree of knowledge imperishable until death were to neglect a cornerstone of poetry and wisdom. Ought we to suppose that many of them read the little volume because of what they had heard? It was too faint a call. Which of them would read the book, who would not have read it, but that they had heard *that*?

## 2

For the love poetry in the Sonnets, one has only to point to some of it: how to apply it nobody will need any telling. There is:

And yet believe me, my love is as fair  
As any mother's child, though not so bright  
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air.

What is your substance, whereof are you made,  
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?

Being your slave, what should I do but tend  
Upon the hours and times of your desire?  
I have no precious time at all to spend,  
Or services to do, till you require.  
Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour  
Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,  
Nor think the bitterness of absence sour,  
When you have bid your servant once adieu.

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all:  
What hadst thou then more than thou hadst before?

Those will be applied, by whoever reads, to himself and whom-ever he loves.

There is still deeper passion expressed in *Antony and Cleopatra*: in that play, too, there are ways of loving expressed that find no voice in the Sonnets. If we lost *Antony and Cleopatra*, it would be to think of as our lost Alsace and Lorraine. Let that be admitted; but as marching song for the solace of a man who has been forced to leave a loved woman; for the solace of a woman

who is parted from a loved man, there is poetry in the rest of Shakespeare, and especially in the Sonnets, that would be felt, surely, had it been better read, as almost better for the man's spirit or the woman's than the loved presence itself. It would be good marching song, too, while they were together.

To go back to where this paper began, that testing of the Sonnets in the Himalayas; let whatever else that I have said be doubtful, it is not doubtful that it was wonderful exceedingly how, in my spirit-lonely, marching man's mind, the poetry went, day after day, with all the varied sights and sounds of those roads. So near the seasons as one was; the terraced fields of barley were ready for harvesting; round all the homesteads were stacks of brown pine needles, and one came upon women gathering more needles with a bright implement to rake them together shaped like a bird's talon; the needles for bedding for the cattle; so near the seasons as one was, with minivets still in ecstasy over their courtship, it was good to march, with thought of whatever loved one in one's mind, to:

Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleet'st,  
And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,  
To the wide world and all her fading sweets;  
But I forbid thee one most heinous crime:  
O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,  
Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen.

There were many lines drawn, there on the rocks, on the face of the cliffs, as river beds far below, with that antique pen. There the wide world was; in the scented white roses on the way from Mathiana to Narkanda were some of its fading sweets. On the roads were men and women, boys and girls. The little girls had their heads tied in handkerchiefs usually red in colour. One day a group of girls and women passed; the youngest and prettiest of the group was wearing green silk pyjamas, for they were all dressed as for a wedding, a pink coat or smock, but with a black cloak over it, so that only the last few inches of the pink showed. Some Himalayan boy might have said of her:

. . . believe me, my love is as fair  
As any mother's child, though not so bright  
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air.

Behind this group, always keeping the same distance from it, walked a very old woman, her brow carved into innumerable lines

by the antique pen ; her legs bowed like a cavalryman's ; a crone of the hills. Old woman, girls, women, but the crone especially (she as if Time itself, that Time so much oftener in Shakespeare's thought than in ours), were all of the world of the Sonnets, and very much in the same setting.

J. A. CHAPMAN

## THE ACTION OF COMUS

### 1. *Introductory*

THE centre of *Comus* is the scene where the Lady, imprisoned in the magic chair, conducts an argument with the Enchanter on the subject of chastity. It is disputed who had the best of it. Professedly the Lady, and Comus is made to admit it; but Comus speaks so well that Milton has been accused of being here (as elsewhere) on the Devil's side without knowing it. Beneath every opinion is the assumption that one or other of the disputants is right; Milton being singled out from the great poets as the one to whom the privilege of being on both or on neither side at the same time must without question be denied. The assumption is false. Comus and the Lady are both wrong, or, if right, in ways they did not perceive. And if Milton is on the Devil's side at any point, he knew very well what he was doing. Not till the final words of the Attendant Spirit is the truth revealed.

If these contentions can be proved they change the action of the masque. *Comus*, instead of being an academic dispute ending in stalemate with a final dose of lyricism to anaesthetize the reader's critical fastidiousness, will have a plot that is not solved till the very end and which gives an answer to all the previous questions. It will be a living unity for all the varieties of style in which it was written: a better work of art.

### 2. *The Texts of 1634 and 1637*

For the above account the Attendant Spirit's epilogue (line 976 'To the ocean now I fly' to the end) is crucial; and unfortunately this is one of the few places in the whole poem where there are serious textual variations. These may end by pointing to an interesting possibility but they will have first of all to be stated in all their native dullness. It is no use discussing Milton's intentions till we are clear what he really wrote.

*Comus* was performed at Michaelmas 1634, but it was not printed till 1637. The earliest printed edition agrees substantially with the later editions and thus represents Milton's final recension.<sup>1</sup> There

<sup>1</sup> For convenient summaries of the textual variants of *Comus*, referring

are two manuscript versions, one preserved, among other writings of Milton, in the Trinity Manuscript, the other once in the possession of the family in whose honour *Comus* was written and known as the Bridgewater or the Egerton Manuscript. These manuscripts, which were written before the performance in 1634, are in general very close. But there are certain omissions and transferences in the Bridgewater Manuscript, which can all be accounted for as modifications to suit the actual performance: some of the longest speeches were cut, and the first twenty lines of the epilogue, beginning 'To the ocean now I fly', were transferred to the beginning. To fit the new place, *To the ocean* was changed to *From the heavens*. The reason for the transference was simple. Lawes wanted music at opening and close and found portions of the epilogue suited his purpose. 'From the heavens now I fly' was forced to become the opening song. It says much for Milton's good nature that he allowed Lawes a liberty so disastrous to the arrangement of the poem. The Bridgewater Manuscript, then, is the stage version adapted by whatever means from the version in the Trinity Manuscript, which represents Milton's own early version. In sum, the versions that matter are the Trinity Manuscript and the 1637 printed edition, which is the text we know; while the changes we have to consider are those either within this manuscript or those between it and the edition of 1637.

The changes within the complete version of *Comus* in the manuscript are interesting, the best known being the omission of a lovely passage from the Attendant Spirit's prologue. But they do not affect the poem's general intention. Besides the complete version there is a separate addition, namely a revised form of the epilogue. This is plainly an afterthought and may have been written much later than the complete version it follows. As it is the same as the 1637 epilogue, I shall, to avoid confusion, ignore it, merging it as it were in the 1637 edition. The change between manuscript (by which I now mean the latest complete version in the Trinity Manuscript without the revised epilogue) and edition is of larger units and consists of additions to the Lady's refutation of *Comus* and to the Spirit's epilogue; and it is just in these added lines that I find the clue to the way Milton to previous discussions, see John S. Diekhoff in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 1937, pp. 705, 725 ff.

meant us to interpret the debate between Comus and the Lady. I must therefore go on to discuss them.

In the Trinity Manuscript the Lady begins her last speech to Comus in answer to his grand tirade on the bounties of nature and the unnaturalness of virginity, in the words we know, 'I had not thought to have unlockt my lips in this unhallow'd air', and goes on to defend temperance against luxury. But when she reaches her climax on this theme,

for swinish gluttony  
Ne're looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,  
But with besotted base ingratitude  
Cramms, and blasphemes his feeder,

she ends and Comus replies, as at the end of line 806 in the version we know,

Com, no more,  
This is meer moral babble, and direct  
Against the canon laws of our foundation.

The Lady's defence of the sun-clad power of chastity and of the sage and serious doctrine of virginity, with Comus's admission (spoken aside) that she fables not and that he is frightened, are not there, being added in the 1637 edition. The epilogue begins in the Trinity Manuscript in the familiar way, 'To the ocean now I fly', and goes on to talk of the Hesperian gardens. Four lines (984-7) from the description of them are not in the manuscript but were added in 1637. These are ornamental, not important for the general meaning. But a little after, in describing Iris, the manuscript begins to differ from the familiar version, reading as follows:

Iris there with humid bow  
Waters the odorous banks that blow  
Flowers of more mingled hew  
Than her purfl'd scarfe can shew,  
Yellow, watchet, greene, and blew,  
And drenches oft with manna dew  
Beds of Hyacinth, and roses,  
Where many a cherub soft reposes.

And omitting all reference to the Garden of Adonis, Venus, Cupid, and Psyche, the manuscript goes on to the last lines of all, 'Now my message well is done'. The 1637 edition added the lines on the Garden of Adonis, and in the passage just quoted

altered *many a cherub to young Adonis*; and for *Yellow, watchet, greene, and blew* substituted *List mortals, if your ears be true*, to draw attention to the special allegorical significance of the Adonis passage.

### 3. *The Reason for the 1637 Additions*

Why did Milton add these two passages between 1634 and 1637? If the first passage stood alone, we might answer very simply: to give sufficient weight to the Lady's reply to Comus. In the early version she had answered only his arguments for profusion and luxury, not his cheapening of 'that same vaunted name Virginity', and something on the latter subject too would give better balance. But the second addition admits of no such explanation. First, the deliberate exhortation 'List mortals, if your ears be true' shows that Milton thought the meaning important and wanted it heeded. And secondly, the passage itself points to high and solemn themes. It was Thomas Warton who noticed that the passage referred to Spenser's account of the Garden of Adonis in the sixth canto of the third book of the *Fairy Queen*, and his contention has not been disputed; but I doubt if people have realized how much this reference amounts to. For myself I certainly did not till quite recently. But first for the truth of the reference: we must have no doubts of that if we are to give much weight to the passage. Iris, wrote Milton, in the paradisiac region where the Attendant Spirit will return,

drenches with *Elysian* dew  
 (List mortals, if your ears be true)  
 Beds of *Hyacinth*, and roses  
 Where young *Adonis* oft reposes  
 Waxing well of his deep wound  
 In slumber soft, and on the ground  
 Sadly sits th' *Assyrian* Queen;  
 But far above in spangled sheen  
 Celestial *Cupid* her fam'd son advanc't,  
 Holds his dear *Psyche* sweet intranc't  
 After her wandring labours long,  
 Till free consent the gods among  
 Make her his eternal Bride,  
 And from her fair unspotted side  
 Two blissful twins are to be born,  
 Youth and Joy; so *Jove* hath sworn.

In Spenser the Garden of Adonis consists of the outer realms, the seminary of all created things, and of an inner sanctuary, overgrown with hyacinth and other plants, where Venus, mistress of the garden, enjoys the love of Adonis, the boar which wounded him now being bound in a 'strong rocky cave' hewn beneath the mountain on which the bower is situated. It is to this inner sanctuary, described in stanzas 45 to 50, that Milton refers, but he varies his version by imagining an earlier moment before Adonis is quite healed of his wound. Cupid is there in the Garden of Adonis with his Psyche, who has already borne him a child, Pleasure. Milton again varies by putting the marriage in the future and foretelling a second child, Youth, as the offspring of it. The component parts of the two passages are mythological commonplaces, accessible to any poet, but the identity of the parts themselves, the above variations apart, and the order they are arranged in are so close that I can see no alternative to Milton's intending a reference to Spenser.

To perceive what such a reference meant, we must consider Milton's readers. In the year 1637 Spenser was still the great modern poet. It was no longer the fashion to imitate his style, but he was the unchallenged poetic classic of modern English literature, and everyone read him. Now the episode of the births of Belphoebe and Amoret and of the Garden of Adonis was one of the most famous in the whole of the *Fairy Queen*. When Milton wrote *Comus*, the *Fairy Queen* had been published upward of forty years, and its familiarity would be roughly that of one of the best-known episodes from the *Pickwick Papers*, say the case of Bardell *v.* Pickwick, in the year 1880; while the more restricted passage to which Milton refers would be as familiar as Sam Weller's evidence in that same trial. Further we must remember that Milton's readers were far nearer to the Middle Ages than to ourselves in their fondness for putting allegorical interpretation on classical myth. For all his modernity Bacon could write the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, which to a modern is a tissue of dreary and unprofitable fantasy, a disgrace to the author of the *Advancement of Learning*. Here is a typical passage:

Pan's crook also contains a fine representation of the ways of nature, which are partly straight and partly crooked; thus the staff, having an extraordinary bend towards the top, denotes that the works of divine providence are generally brought about by remote

means or in a circuit, as if somewhat else were intended than the effect produced, as in the sending of Joseph into Egypt etc. So likewise in human government they who sit at the helm manage and wind the people more successfully by pretext and oblique courses than by such as are direct and straight; so that in effect all sceptres are crooked at the top.

Bacon did not mean this to be funny, nor would Milton's contemporaries have taken him otherwise than seriously. Bred to such ways of thinking about allegory, contemporary readers of *Comus* would have been eager to get the hidden meaning of the passage to which the Attendant Spirit calls special notice.

For the above reasons Milton's second important addition to *Comus* would have stood out as a most striking and significant passage, the very reverse of lyrical sedative and able to give a decisive turn to the meaning of the whole poem. It looks indeed as if Milton, though he added so little in bulk, did between 1634 to 1637 wish to alter the poem's whole intention. When we reflect that he was in the process of educating himself at the time, we need not be in the least surprised.

#### 4. *The first Version of Comus*

Up to the time of *Comus* Milton's longest poetical exercise had been *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. These, as I have tried to prove elsewhere, are modelled on the form of the university prolusion or disputation, *L'Allegro* being in praise of day and *Il Penseroso* of night. There is no third section attempting to reconcile the two pleas. It was quite natural that Milton should use the same technique for constructing the first version of *Comus*. There are of course complications, but the centre of the masque is an academic disputation for and against chastity, with the Lady and Comus as disputants. Milton was doing nothing new in treating the topic in this argumentative way; Marlowe, for instance, is much more academic when he makes Leander argue thus with Hero:

This idol which you term virginity  
Is neither essence subject to the eye,  
No, nor to any one exterior sense,  
Nor hath it any place of residence,  
Nor is't of earth or mould celestial,  
Or capable of any form at all.  
Of that which hath no being, do not boast:  
Things that are not at all, are never lost.

Now in a university disputation an undergraduate might be called on to support either side of a debated question: he was not expected to say what he happened to think himself. Thus Milton is quite impartial in his treatment of day and night in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. It may be that this habit of impartiality helped him to make his Comus put his case so well. Milton of course takes sides, and the Lady is made to win her passive victory. Indeed, in the early version (which, let it be remembered, is the one now under consideration) her victory is not at all emphatic; half Comus's plea is unanswered. And the rest of the masque does nothing to answer Comus's declaration that beauty such as the Lady's could be better employed than in spinning or embroidery. It is in structure no more than the fitting coda to a piece of action already concluded.

But though structurally the 1634 *Comus* was an elaborated university disputation, it is in some ways much more serious than *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Milton has emerged from the relatively personal and local to the public and the traditional. The allegorizing of Circe's herd into human beings subdued by one or other form of sensuality must have begun in Greek times. It was a commonplace of the Christian classicizers; it was a medieval possession through Boethius; and it was popular in the Renaissance. Milton in using a variant of the theme competes with all western literature, just as in choosing the masque form he adopted a standard that had been exalted by the genius of Ben Jonson. He is using public material too in expressing the perplexities and perils of life through the allegory of a dark and tangled forest. In particular he is beginning to compete with Spenser.

Even more important, Milton in *Comus* resembles the greatest Elizabethans in giving us man in his cosmic setting, in his middle position on the great chain of being between the beasts and the angels and attuned in his own microcosm to all the great happenings of the enveloping universe. It is somewhat ironic that of all the characters Comus should do most to help this process. But we must remember that Comus was a god, that the classical gods were orthodox devils in disguise, and that the Devil himself is the chief ape of the Almighty. Comus indeed succeeds wonderfully in expressing the great cosmic commonplaces worthily while giving himself away as an impostor.

We that are of purer fire  
 Imitate the Starry Quire,  
 Who in their nightly watchfull Sphears,  
 Lead in swift round the Months and Years.  
 The Sounds, and Seas with all their finny drove  
 Now to the Moon in wavering Morrice move,  
 And on the Tawny Sands and Shelves,  
 Trip the pert Fairies and the dapper Elves ;  
 By dimpled Brook, and Fountain brim,  
 The Wood-Nymphs deckt with Daisies trim,  
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep.

Comus here speaks of the traditional picture of the whole universe as one great dance, from the highest angel dancing round God's throne to the humble vine wreathing the elm in its own rhythm or the wind blowing the dust in eddies: the picture given with such compelling charm by Sir John Davies in his *Orchestra* or hinted at in Daedalus's first song in Jonson's masque of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*. But what impudence in Comus to claim that his own disorderly revels are tuned to the music of the spheres and keep the measure of the planets and the tides! The imposture is patent. Again, when Comus makes his great speech to the Lady (line 706 'O foolishnes of men') and praises the bounty of nature, he is in the tradition of the Fathers of the Church praising the wonders of God's creation in their commentaries on *Genesis* or of the medieval theologians advising their disciples to repair the error of their first parents by seeking God in his works, *per speculum creaturarum*. He is also competing with Spenser who, himself in this same tradition, described the plenitude of God's creation in the canto of the *Fairy Queen* already referred to, with a rapture equalled only by Milton himself when he came to describe the 'enormous bliss' of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. But here again Comus overdoes it, ending his description with a riot of hyperboles that suggest he has been drinking:

Th'earth cumber'd and the wing'd air dark't with plumes ;  
 The herds would over-multitude their Lords,  
 The Sea o'refraught would swell, and th'unsought diamonds  
 Would so emblaze the forehead of the Deep,  
 And so bestudd with Stars, that they below  
 Would grow inur'd to light, and com at last  
 To gaze upon the Sun with shameless brows.

But though the setting of *Comus* is larger than that of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, in one matter Milton was more private: the matter of chastity. When for my *Milton* I was working at Milton's thoughts at the time of *Comus* I could not help inferring that he was greatly exercised by the question of chastity; that he had deliberately chosen that way of life for himself; that for him the choice was not quite healthy and did not make *Comus* the better poem. The evidence grew bulky and had to be put into an Appendix. The conclusions stated have been disputed. After going over the ground again I have had to stick to them—the accumulation of evidence is so strong—but always with the suspicion that there were things in *Comus* I did not understand. And now I think that those conclusions were not wrong but defective; that in *Comus* Milton means more than one thing by chastity; and that his opinions on the subject changed between the two versions of the poem in 1634 and 1637.

### 5. *The final Version of Comus*

The doctrine of chastity in *Comus* is so much bound up with the changes Milton made in the poem that I shall now deal with the two themes concurrently.

First let me make it clear that any private concern Milton had with the doctrine is primarily a biographical affair interesting to the specialist in Milton. Its influence on the poetic quality of the masque is confined to a few passages. Thus there is in the Elder Brother's long speech on the topic (lines 418–75) an insistence on the power given by chastity and a slightly hectic exaggeration of tone that betrays an intrusion of personal feeling. But if this intrusion irritates, it does so but passinglly.

Secondly, we must not forget that chastity had a wider meaning in Milton's day than in ours. It meant monogamy as well as virginity. The matter is made particularly clear in a poem well known to Milton, Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*.<sup>1</sup> Among the various mental qualities personified and described allegorically in this poem are twin ladies: Agnia and Parthenia.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1633 but written earlier. Giles and Phineas Fletcher were closely connected with Cambridge. Milton would certainly have read the *Purple Island* in manuscript years before he wrote *Comus*.

<sup>2</sup> Canto X, stanzas 24–40.

Agnia, who is Chastity in the married, is mild and modest, and she wears no armour.

Upon her arched brow unarmed Love  
Triumphing sat in peaceful victory.

Her emblem is a pair of turtle doves. She receives four stanzas of description. Parthenia, who gets much more attention, is Virginité, or Chastity in the single; and she is militant.

With her, her sister went, a warlike maid,  
Parthenia, all in steel and gilded arms;  
In needle's stead a mighty spear she sway'd,  
With which in bloody fields and fierce alarms  
The boldest champion she down would bear,  
And like a thunderbolt wide passage tear,  
Flinging all to the earth with her enchanted spear.

She is dazzlingly fair, hotly pursued, but chooses a heavenly not an earthly lover.

A thousand knights woo'd her with busy pain,  
To thousand she her virgin grant deni'd,  
Although her dear-sought love to entertain  
They all their wit and all their strength appli'd:  
Yet in her heart love close his sceptre sway'd,  
That to an heavenly spouse her thoughts betray'd,  
Where she a maiden wife might live and wifely maid.

It is Parthenia that Milton celebrates in his first version of *Comus* through the Elder Brother's speech. Chastity there is like the huntress Diana, like Minerva with her Gorgon-shield, both militant goddesses, and in the end she gives her votaries supernatural, heavenly powers. I can find no trace of the mildness of Agnia.

When Milton revised his poem, both his main additions concerned chastity. The lines added to the Lady's speech are a fierce defence of chastity. And beyond doubt she is Parthenia. It is the sage and serious doctrine of *virginité* that she defends. And she is extremely fierce, speaking of her rapt spirits being kindled to a flame of sacred vehemence. She is indeed Diana or Minerva in action. Chastity too is a mystery, able to give her votaries supernatural powers. It is all the more surprising therefore that the second large addition, concerning the Garden of Adonis, should be, as it is, directly opposed to the strict doctrine of virginité.

In expounding these lines I can hardly avoid seeming laboured, over-ingenious, or even quite mistaken, to a reader not very familiar with the allegorizing habits of the Elizabethan or Caroline ages. I admit a tedium I should be glad to avoid but I believe honestly that I am not squeezing out of the lines a drop more meaning than would have been quite plain to all educated contemporaries of Milton. The best I can do is to ask the reader to remember the habitual exercise of tact in dealing with allegory that must have existed in a generation for whom Spenser was the most popular poet. Spenser slides without warning from one allegorical extreme to another: from the mathematically precise equivalences of the House of Alma to something which, primarily mere metaphor or ornament, may yet give the briefest glance at an allegorical significance. In reading Spenser (and this is one of the things about him that best balances the narcotic quality of his verse) one's intellect should be in a state of constant alertness to assess the percentage of general allegorical meaning intended, and once this is assessed, to decide which of several possible meanings to adopt. Much practice would make the process easy, creating a tact in recognizing the signs of much or little allegorical content.

In expounding the lines Milton added to the Epilogue I shall have to consider the whole; for the added lines put a different interpretation on the existing ones they followed. The Attendant Spirit begins by saying that he will return to a realm where among other denizens are Hesperus and his three daughters; and by so doing he invites his contemporary audience to exercise their allegorical tact, for the Gardens of Hesperus were rich in mythological allegory. Research could probably unearth a wide variety of meaning put on the Gardens of Hesperus with their golden-fruited tree, which a dragon guarded and round which Hesperus's three daughters sang their songs. But there were two prevailing meanings: the paradisiac and the erotic. It was thought that the myth was a pagan reminiscence of the Garden of Eden. In Raleigh's words:

So also was the fiction of those golden apples kept by the dragon taken from the serpent which tempted Eva. So was Paradise itself transported out of Asia into Africa and the Garden of the Hesperides.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *History of the World*, i. 6, 4.

Alternatively the golden apples were symbols of fertility and love. Milton shows a knowledge of both interpretations in *Comus*. In the lines excised from the Trinity Manuscript that followed the fourth line of the poem the Hesperian Gardens are purely paradisiac. Here is the passage in its setting :

Before the starrie threshold of Joves Court  
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes  
Of bright aereall spirits live insphear'd  
In regions mild of calme and serene aire,  
Amidst th'Hesperian gardens, on whose bancks  
Bedew'd with nectar and celestiall songs,  
Aeternall roses grow, and hyacinth,  
And fruits of golden rind, on whose faire tree  
The scalie-harnest dragon ever keeps  
His unchanted eye.

But in the Second Brother's speech (lines 393-7) the erotic symbolism is obvious :

But beauty like the fair Hesperian Tree  
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard  
Of dragon watch with unchanted eye,  
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit  
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.

When, therefore, Milton's readers met the Hesperian Gardens in the epilogue of *Comus* they would at once be on the alert for allegory and, though ready for pretty well anything, would be especially ready for a paradisiac or an erotic significance or for both at once. Now in the earlier version they would have found only the paradisiac significance to the point: their expectation of the other would just be allowed to drop. But not so in the revised version: there the plain fertility symbolism of the Garden of Adonis would realize the expectation of an erotic significance in the other mythical garden. In fact the whole of the revised epilogue would be concerned with love, as well as with some form of Paradise.

We are at last in a position to examine the meaning which Milton, through Spenser, put on the Garden of Adonis.

The Spenserian episode of the Garden of Adonis occurs in that great unit of the *Fairy Queen*, the third and fourth books, that deals with every form of love from bestiality to the most refined spiritual affection. Its immediate context is the story of Belpheobe and Amoret. These two were twins, daughters of

Crysgone, who conceived them miraculously from sunbeams and bore them miraculously in a sleep without pain. Girls from the train of Venus found them while their mother still slept and took them away. Diana adopted Belphoebe and brought her up in perfect maidenhead till she developed into a bright fierce virgin (the plain prototype of Phineas Fletcher's Parthenia). Venus adopted Amoret and brought her up in the inner sanctuary of the Garden of Adonis.

Hither great Venus brought this infant fair,  
 The younger daughter of Crysgone,  
 And unto Psyche with great trust and care  
 Committed her, yfostered to be  
 And trained up in true femininity;  
 Who no less carefully her tendered  
 Than her own daughter Pleasure, to whom she  
 Made her companion and her lessoned  
 In all the lore of love and goodly womanhead.

After this education she became the

loadstar of all chaste affection  
 To all fair ladies that do live on ground.

She was in fact the pattern of perfect married affection, and appears again as Fletcher's Agnia. In the end she marries Scudamour, and, bred as she was in the very origin and seminary of all earthly life, she was plainly destined to carry out God's command of 'increase and multiply' with a thoroughness calculated to satisfy the exacting procreative standards of Elizabethan England. But that is one side of the Garden of Adonis only. It was in days of Eden that God pronounced his command and in some sort this garden is heaven too. It is Psyche herself, the immortal soul, that teaches Amoret her lore; even though that lore is in part earthly. Like the soul the Garden of Adonis is the great meeting-place of the temporal and the eternal, of the shifting phenomena of nature and the eternal law under which these phenomena operate.

### 6. *The Meaning of the Additions*

What then did Milton mean by referring to this familiar but complicated tissue of erotic lore? I believe that he meant to give the whole poem a new turn and in particular to settle the debate between Comus and the Lady.

Comus had spoken magnificently but perversely of the bounty of God. The Lady in reply had countered the perversity by a plea of moderation and of equal distribution, yet in so doing had shown less sense of that bounty than her adversary. The Attendant Spirit by mentioning the Garden of Adonis, the very workshop of nature, gives the solution. This garden has all the bounty described by Comus and all the comeliness and order insisted on by the Lady. Both disputants are shown partly right and partly wrong.

Then for the second topic, chastity. The Lady thinks herself cast for the part of Belpheobe or Parthenia; Comus would like to turn her into a Hellenore, a wanton. That is what he means when he says to her after praising her beauty,

There was another meaning in these gifts,

and that is what she understands him to mean, and what Milton in his first version meant him to mean and her to understand him to mean. But later Milton saw that both the Lady and Comus were wrong: that there *was* another meaning in these gifts, but that it was not Comus's. The meaning was marriage. The Lady was not really cast for Belpheobe but for Amoret, not for Parthenia but for Agnia. And he conveys his correction—too obliquely for some tastes—by the Attendant Spirit's references to the Garden of Adonis where Belpheobe and Parthenia were quite out of place.

The gain is great. The ignorance of Comus and the Lady, explained above, becomes dramatic irony, and the whole play instead of being an unresolved debate is given a shape and a solution. A Marxist critic would call the revised *Comus* dialectical. Milton himself would have been content with the word Aristotelian. The play concerns chastity and the Lady is the heroine. Comus advocates incontinence, *Acrasia*; the Lady advocates abstinence. The Attendant Spirit gives the solution, advocating the Aristotelian middle course, which for the Lady is the right one; and it is marriage. This perhaps is putting the matter too baldly. The Lady's resistance to Comus is not meant to be bad, as Comus's seductions are. It is good; it may even be an act of a probation: but it is not final. The setting is aristocratic; the Lady, though but young, will one day be a great lady. She must take her place in society and do what is expected

of her. And by having triumphed as Belpheobe she is free to proceed to her true part of Amoretta.

This interpretation is the more probable when we remember the whole aristocratic setting of the masque-form and the specimen of it to which Milton owed most, Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*. This figures Hercules routing Comus 'the god of cheer or the belly' after having killed Antaeus, and crowned for his pains by Hermes. After such labours of virtue, pleasure is no longer inept, but Virtue and Pleasure may be reconciled. A troupe of twelve masquers (one of them the Prince, son of Hesperus, King of the West, *alias* James I) issue from their home in Mount Atlas, where they are being educated in austere virtue by Daedalus the wise. They are permitted to dance an allegorical measure with twelve noble ladies, Virtue and Pleasure again being reconciled. But they must return to their hill of superior and difficult education. Finally Virtue is praised in words which Milton remembered when he wrote *Comus*:

She, she it is in darkness shines,  
'Tis she that still herself refines  
By her own light to every eye ;  
More seen, more known, when Vice stands by ;  
And though a stranger here on earth,  
In heaven she hath her right of birth.

Milton's possible debt to certain details of Jonson's masque is well known, but he may have got a more general aid from it. The theme itself, the clear firm outline of the structure, the sense of social responsibility, may well have stimulated him to mend the simplicity of the first provisional draft. In a way by his alterations Milton approximates his theme to Jonson's; only the title of *Virtue Reconciled to Pleasure* would be more appropriate. In Jonson the emphasis is on the pleasure with the warning note that the conjunction, however legitimate in its proper seasons, can be but temporary. In Milton the emphasis is on the trial and the struggle, through the winning of which Virtue may legitimately be reconciled with Pleasure, the reconciliation being just hinted at the end.

### 7. Epilogue

Aubrey records that Milton was 'extreme pleasant in conversation but satirical'. If Milton watched the performance of his

own masque (slightly garbled to suit the music and cut to suit the actors) he may have felt some ironical amusement at witnessing an ordinary little girl sustaining the tremendous part of Belphoebe. If so, he may have felt even then the possible irony in the line

There was another meaning in these gifts,

and have had suggested to him the changes he ultimately made. Moreover, the Earl and Countess of Bridgewater, for whom he wrote the masque, were themselves the parents of an immense family of four sons and eleven daughters. The Garden of Adonis was their spiritual home. Was it not the spiritual home of their daughter Alice too, who took the part of the Lady? All this is pure romancing, but if it happened to be true, Milton was not the only ironist. For all his added hints about wedlock, fate contrived that the Lady Alice Egerton, though she married, deceased without issue.

E. M. W. TILLYARD

## AN ADDITION TO THE CANON OF JOHNSON'S WRITINGS

JOHNSON'S contributions to *The Gentleman's Magazine* were numerous and important; they included, in addition to original poems and translations, biographies, essays, reviews of books, and Parliamentary Debates, the editorial prefaces or their equivalent for seven years (1738–44). Boswell ascribes these prefaces to Johnson on internal evidence and John Nichols, who was editor and part-proprietor of the magazine from 1778 to 1816, and wrote its history, and was therefore in a position to know the facts, confirms the ascription.<sup>1</sup> One preface escaped the notice of Boswell. This is the Preface to the first Index published in 1753. Nichols in the above-mentioned account of the magazine wrote as his opening paragraph:

In presenting to the numerous and respectable Readers of the Gentleman's Magazine a General Index to the Volumes from 1787 to 1818, it may not be irrelevant to request their re-perusal of the Preface already given to the First Volume of the former Index, more particularly when they are informed that the greater part of that Preface was written, and the whole of it corrected, by my illustrious Predecessor,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Samuel Johnson.<sup>3</sup>

Later on in the same Preface Nichols wrote:

Not long before Mr. Cave's death, he was busily employed in preparing and printing a General Index to the first Twenty Volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine, which was published in 1753, with a Preface by his incomparable Friend.<sup>4</sup>

These references have been overlooked<sup>5</sup> and the Preface has never been included in Johnson's works. They are made to two

<sup>1</sup> 'A Prefatory Introduction descriptive of the rise and progress of the Magazine' contributed to the *General Index to the Gentleman's Magazine*, 1821, vol. iii.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. John Hussey wrote in his copy of Boswell's *Life*, now owned by Prof. Nichol Smith: 'Johnson told me that he was employed by Cave as editor of the Gentleman's Mag. from 1738 to 1745.' *Life*, ed. Hill-Powell, i. 532. Johnson is stated to have received an annual payment of £100 for his services. See A. T. Hazen, *Johnson's Prefaces and Dedications*, 1937, p. xvii n. <sup>3</sup> *General Index to the Gentleman's Mag.*, 1821, iii, p. iii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xlviiii.

<sup>5</sup> By everybody except Mr. E. S. de Beer, the Secretary of the Johnson Club, who brought them to my notice.

versions of the same Preface; one, the later, is readily accessible in all good libraries; the other, the original, is rarely to be found. The first is printed in the first volume of the *General Index to Fifty-Six Volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine from its commencement in the year 1731 to the end of 1786*, compiled by Samuel Ayscough, first published in 1789 and reprinted in 1818, and the second in *A General Index to the first Twenty Volumes of the Gentleman's Magazine*, published in 1753.<sup>1</sup> The original Preface is here reprinted together with the variants from it, and the additions to it, in the revised version; it will be seen that the differences between the two versions are not inconsiderable.

The Utility of a General Index, to so mixt<sup>2</sup> a Work as the Gentleman's Magazine, when by the Indulgence of the Publick it has increased to above Twenty<sup>3</sup> Volumes, is too evident to be questioned; and we therefore hope that we are now making some return to our Friends, however unequal, for the Favours which we have received; for not to be able to find what we know to be in our possession, is a more vexatious circumstance than the mere want of what we have neglected to procure.

But<sup>4</sup> this Index will not only assist the Forgetful and direct the Inquisitive; it will enable those who read for higher purposes than mere Amusement, to class many<sup>5</sup> Subjects which our extensive Plan has included, and to bring together much useful Knowledge in Theology, Morality, Politics, Commerce, Mathematicks and Philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

By this Index our Historical Chronicle may be reduced to the most regular, as it has recorded the most authentic<sup>7</sup> Account of all the Publick<sup>8</sup> Events that have happened during the Reign of his present Majesty<sup>9</sup>; of these Events the Chain will be unbroken, and the Chronology perfect; nor is there any Period in which Publick Events have been more numerous or more important.<sup>10</sup> For since the Commencement of our Volumes Two<sup>11</sup> Wars by which almost all the known World was in some degree affected, have been begun and concluded. The Views, the Powers, and the Interest of every State in Europe have been necessarily discovered, by the part which they appear to have taken in the Quarrel, the changes which they have suffered in the Contest, and the Obligations they have incurred by

<sup>1</sup> There is a copy in the British Museum. The only other copy known to me is my own. American friends and correspondents have failed to find a copy in the great libraries of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Miscellaneous.

<sup>3</sup> Fifty-six.

<sup>4</sup> But omitted.

<sup>5</sup> the many.

<sup>6</sup> Mathematicks, Philosophy, and Biography.

<sup>7</sup> impartial.

<sup>8</sup> important.

<sup>9</sup> Reigns of King George the Second and his present Majesty.

<sup>10</sup> interesting.

<sup>11</sup> Three.

Treaty.<sup>1</sup> With respect to our own Country, the deep and extensive designs of a Statesman, as able perhaps as any that ever existed, and the Opposition that was inflexibly maintained against him, have produced such a Series of Argumentation as has comprised all Political Science, and ascertained the Right of the Crown and the Privileges of the People, so as for ever to prevent their being confounded in the Cause either of Tyranny or of Faction.<sup>1</sup> The<sup>2</sup> Period will be render'd still more remarkable in English History by a Rebellion, which was not less contemptible in its beginning than threatening in its progress and consequences ; but which, through the Favour of Providence, was crushed at once, when our Enemies abroad had the highest expectations from it, and has contributed to our greater security.<sup>3</sup>

By the List of Names, which in this Work are Alphabetically digested, all<sup>4</sup> the changes which have been produced in every Family,<sup>5</sup> that is<sup>6</sup> not too obscure to raise Curiosity, may<sup>7</sup> be traced either by Marriages, Births, Deaths, or Promotion, with ease and perspicuity.<sup>8</sup> The General Index to the Books\* is a complete<sup>9</sup> Catalogue of the Books and Pamphlets that have been publish'd during the last Twenty<sup>10</sup> Years,<sup>11</sup> and this will be thought of yet greater Utility by the Literati, when they are informed that by

<sup>1</sup> the paragraph With . . . Faction omitted.

<sup>2</sup> This.

<sup>3</sup> highest] expectation of its success, and which in the end contributed to our still greater security. *This is followed by a new paragraph*: That innate strength and intense energy of action is described, which has enabled this kingdom, in our own day, not only to oppose the united efforts of the Three most potent States in Europe (each of which was formerly thought our equal in strength), but has also enabled us to baffle their utmost exertions, even when our own most favoured Colonies had joined the confederacy against us. And above all, the dismemberment of America from this Empire, of which the progress is in these Volumes most accurately detailed, forms an Epoch of the greatest notoriety in the Annals of our Country.' *Another new paragraph follows*: 'Another object, in which by the kind assistance of our Correspondents we have been particularly successful, is in preserving the scattered remains of Antiquity discovered by accident, or which have been long concealed in the Cabinets and Libraries of the Curious. It is with pleasure we observe that there is scarcely any Publication of Local or County History in which the Magazine is not frequently referred to ; and to future Writers on these subjects, the contents of the Magazine will be rendered more known, and consequently more useful.'

<sup>4</sup> most of. <sup>5</sup> in Families. <sup>6</sup> are. <sup>7</sup> may] with ease and perspicuity.

<sup>8</sup> by] Births, Marriages, Promotions, and more especially by our Obituary.

\* Note added in 1789. <sup>9</sup> a Catalogue of almost all. <sup>10</sup> Fifty-six.

<sup>11</sup> Years] ; a period the more important, as it is nearly twenty years antecedent to the first appearance of the 'Monthly Review'. [And added.

turning to the Volume in which any Book is Registered they will<sup>1</sup> be able to find the original Price, and the Name of the Person for whom it was printed, for when this is not known, the Booksellers themselves frequently find it difficult to execute the Orders of their Correspondents.

But this Index, tho' it was principally intended for those who have compleat Sets of the Magazine, may yet be of great Advantage to others. The larger Figures<sup>2</sup> shew the Volume, and correspond with the last Figures in Date of the Year.\* As this will be easily remember'd, the time of any remarkable Event of whatever kind may be readily ascertained: for the Event being found in the Index, the Year will be known by the Number of the Vol. referred to, and as every Month contains about 50 Pages,<sup>3</sup> by noting the Number of the Page, the Month may also be guess'd with a good<sup>4</sup> degree of accuracy; it will therefore be as useful a Common-place Book for these purposes as any extant.<sup>5</sup> As to the Work itself it is an Index, and to the perfection of an Index little more is necessary than can be produced by Diligence and Labour;<sup>6</sup> we may therefore affirm without the imputation of Vanity, that we know of but one way by which it can be Improved, the Communication of such Errors as shall be found upon Inspection, by those to whom it owes its Existence; a Favour which we earnestly request, and shall study to deserve.

The *Miscellaneous Correspondence*, consisting of Pieces sent for the Magazine, an Index to it is annexed at the desire of some Contributors.

This must be the Preface of which Nichols informs his readers that 'the greater part was written and the whole of it corrected' by Johnson, in spite of his reference to the revised version. Samuel Ayscough, the prince of Index-makers, completed his Index to the *Monthly Review*, 1749-84, in 1786, and he probably started to compile the new Index to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the terminus of which was 1786, soon after. It is reasonable to suppose that the necessary changes in the original were made by him: they could hardly have been made by Johnson.

L. F. POWELL

<sup>1</sup> will] in most cases *added*.      <sup>2</sup> numeral letters.

\* *Note*. Thus Figure 1 refers to the Magazine of 1731, Figure 2 of 1732, and so on to 1740 which corresponds to Vol. 10, and 20 to the year 1750. *In the 1789 Preface this note is adjusted to the new Index by substituting for the last sentence and] the fifty-sixth Volume to 1786.*

<sup>3</sup> Month] during the first Fifty Years, contains about 50 Pages, and the Six latter Volumes about 100, [by.      <sup>4</sup> with] some.

<sup>5</sup> a more useful Common-place Book for these purposes than any yet extant.      <sup>6</sup> The revised text stops at this point.

## HARMONIOUS JONES

Here early parts accomplished Jones sublimes,  
And science blends with Asia's lofty rhymes;  
Harmonious Jones! who in his splendid strains  
Sings Camdeo's sports, on Agra's flowing plains,  
In Hindu fictions while we fondly trace  
Love and the Muses, decked with Attic grace.

(JOHN COURTENAY, 1786.)

THE dust lies heavy on the works of Sir William Jones, Orientalist and jurist (1746–94), and those who have the curiosity to look into them may be somewhat surprised at the reputation he once held. The only passage that is commonly cited is from an address given in 1786 to the Bengal Asiatic Society, and it is the usual prelude to any history of Indo-Germanic philology: 'No philologist could examine them all three [i.e. Greek, Latin, Sanskrit] without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which perhaps no longer exists.' It is an odd fate by which Jones is bracketed with Bopp, Pott, and Schleicher, and associated with the Science of Language: for 'Universal Grammar' was one of the least of his many interests, and he was content, while paying due homage to Harris, Lowth, and Johnson, to learn strange tongues merely in order to extract the poetry. His discovery was no lightning-flash of intuition arising from his contact with the Sanskrit verb: a letter of 1779 shows that he had already surmised the nature of the problem, and that he made no claim to originality. 'How so many European words crept into the Persian language, I know not with certainty. Procopius, I think, mentions the great intercourse between the Persians and the nations in the North of Europe and Asia whom the ancients knew by the general name of Scythians. Many learned investigators of antiquity are fully persuaded that a very old and almost *primaevae* language was in use among these northern nations, from which not only all the Celtic dialects, but even the Greek and Latin are derived; in fact we find *πατήρ* and *μητήρ* in Persian, nor is *θυγατήρ* so far removed from *dokter* or even *ὄνομα* and *nomen* from *nām*, as to make it ridiculous to suppose, that they sprang from the same root. We must confess that these researches are very obscure and uncertain, and you will allow, not so agreeable as an ode of Hafez, or an elegy of Amr'alkeis.'

It is easier to rescue Jones from the philologists than to replace him among men of letters. The mass of his writings were, by their very nature, superseded within a few years. The translations from Sanskrit were pioneer work, performed under conditions of heroic difficulty, without grammars or dictionaries, and under the tuition of native scholars who were often themselves bewildered. The *Sakuntala* has had the longest fame, partly because of its connexion with Goethe.<sup>1</sup> No one who has met with Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *Golden Odes* will want to read a prose translation of the *Moallakat*, and even the *Institutes of Manu* are now consulted in another and better version. As for the Poems, though they deserve more attention than they receive, they belong very definitely to their period, and are best appreciated in relation to the author's general activities; in fact the wide and enduring influence of his work is due chiefly to miscellaneous writings such as the Discourses to the Asiatic Society.

Recent histories of literature, though they still find room for James Macpherson, omit even the name of Sir William Jones, whose influence on poetry and public opinion and general culture has been both more extensive and more permanent. It is not an exaggeration to say that he altered our whole conception of the Eastern world. During the eighteenth century the only Oriental book widely known was the *Arabian Nights*, and few would claim that it did much to promote our understanding of the people and civilization of the East. From the beginning, it was escorted by travesties (Hamilton died in 1720) which emphasized the grotesque and incredible and neglected the humaner elements. There was fun in Bagdad, and it was appreciated in London; it was left for Jones to tell us that there was poetry in Shiraz.

The roses of Bendemeer are faded now, and Byron's Levantine Paradise

Where the bright wings of Zephyr oppressed with perfume  
Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in her bloom

reminds us of Clarence Bulbul and Bedwin Sands who (according to Thackeray) wrote in the *Annuals*. If we were compiling a thesis on the influence of Jones we could collect most of our material from footnotes, ranging from Gibbon (1776) to Tennyson (1827) and including *Vathek* and *The Curse of Kehama*.

<sup>1</sup> 1789, translated into German 1791. The *Vorspiel* to *Faust* was suggested by the Prologue.

George Borrow, who was never quick to acknowledge a debt, shows familiarity with both the *Works* and the *Life*. It is safe to conjecture that his disordered polyglot ambitions<sup>1</sup> were in emulation of Jones, who knew some thirty languages but was not inclined to boast of the matter.

In the jargon of last century Orientalist poetry was styled 'romantic', in the jargon of to-day it is denounced as 'escapist'; but Jones himself, far from revelling in the remote and exotic, takes every opportunity to associate the East and the West. He compares Firdusi with Homer, Hafiz with Petrarch and Shakespeare. His treatment of Islam and Hinduism shows a similar absence of condescension or patronage. Here, too, he is more eager to note resemblances than differences. A hundred years of anthropology and comparative religion have made this attitude so familiar that Jones's originality passes unnoticed, for instance, in his discussion of the Greek and Hindu gods, or of the mystical poetry of the Persians. His objective and courteous treatment of Indian religion was not universally approved. The missionaries held the simple view that all non-Christian religions were the direct work of Satan: the *philosophes*, the materialists, the men of the world, dismissed them as barbarous. Lord Macaulay, having grown out of the missionary into the rationalist, is doubly contemptuous.<sup>2</sup> Macaulay came to India about fifty years later and his Penal Code is as important in its way as the legal work of Jones himself. The two men had a great deal in common and would provide an amusing study in parallel lives; abnormal memory, distinction in classical studies, political zeal, law, India, poetry, and also courage and integrity. But the differences are notable. Macaulay took with him to India the whole of Greek and Latin Literature and a good part of European. He learned no Asiatic language and apparently read no translations. There is an illuminating story in the autobiography of Max Müller with reference to a proposed

<sup>1</sup> Borrow names, in this connexion, Whiter and Mezzofanti.

<sup>2</sup> 'The effect of this education on the Hindoos is prodigious. No Hindoo, who has received an English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his religion. Some continue to profess it as a matter of policy; but many profess themselves pure Deists and some embrace Christianity. It is my firm belief that, if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolater among the respectable classes in Bengal thirty years hence. . . . I heartily rejoice in the prospect' (T.B.M. to his father, Oct. 12, 1836).

School of Oriental Studies. Macaulay asked him to an interview, explained at some length that all Oriental literature was trash, and dismissed him with thanks for a pleasant conversation. It is to be regretted that the Indians were despised for their faulty English, and even, on occasion, for their ignorance of Greek. Jones was the finer spirit, but, unhappily, he had no Trevelyan.

*The Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Correspondence of Sir William Jones*, compiled by Lord Teignmouth (Sir John Shore), were published in 1804 and passed through three more editions. The value of the book lies mainly in the letters, and particularly in those to Reviczki dealing with Persian matters; its defects arise from a lack of sympathy with Jones's liberal views in religion and politics. Teignmouth was one of the Clapham Sect, and on his return to England he gave all his time and energy to the work of the Bible Society. Many passages in the biography have the tone of a tract, and there is grave suspicion of *suppressio veri* and of *suggestio falsi*. A hasty reader would hardly surmise that Jones was a friend of Gibbon (the infidel historian is not mentioned), Wilkes, and Franklin.<sup>1</sup> A passing reference to Diderot ('his works I have never read') involves a half-page of denunciation, and the name of Boudh is glossed 'the author of a system of philosophy which labours under the imputation of atheism'. Jones himself was reticent on religious subjects, and both his taste and his temperament prevented him from using the Evangelical vocabulary. It is enough to say that in his view of world history the prophetic and historical books of the Bible hold an important place, that he never fails to write with respect of the creeds of the East, and that he frequently uses vague but generous phrases such as 'the pure and primitive religion' and 'the oldest and perhaps the noblest of religions'. It is not surprising that William Taylor of Norwich believed 'Had Sir William Jones been the founder of a new sect, he would have taught the religion of Herder'.

Jones's political opinions were less easily concealed or distorted. Writing during the violent reaction from the French Revolution, Lord Teignmouth shows a natural embarrassment, but can do no more than suggest that 'the doctrines of Locke on Government, which it would once have been heresy to deny, no longer com-

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Jonathan Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, was the father of Lady Jones. He was Franklin's most intimate friend in England.

mand that implicit acquiescence which they once almost universally received'. Brought up in Whig orthodoxy, Jones may be said to have moved steadily towards the left. His devotion to 'our excellent constitution' is a frequent topic of his early letters and provided a theme for his projected epic *Britain Discovered*, which was to culminate in the marriage of Britan, representing royalty, with the nymph Albina, representing liberty. The beginning of his disillusionment can be related to his first contact with practical politics, a Northampton election in 1767. 'He was not regardless of the deviations in practice from the theoretical perfection of the constitution in the contested election, of which he was an unwilling spectator.' In 1780 he was invited to stand for the University of Oxford, but withdrew in the face of determined opposition arising from his views on slavery and his attitude to the American question. The last straw was the vigorous *Ode to Liberty* in Latin alcaics, partly paraphrased from Collins, but with explicit reference to the justice of the American cause. Two years later in a speech at the London Tavern, Jones appears as the advocate of reform, urging 'that the spirit of our constitution requires a representation of the people, nearly equal and nearly universal'. His prestige as a distinguished legal authority and his independence of party ties gave additional importance to his opinions and the speech was widely circulated. On at least two occasions he risked and defied the threat of a prosecution, and his farewell to English politics was in a daring 'Dialogue between a Farmer and Country Gentleman on the Principles of Government'. He had no pleasure in political controversy and maintained friendly relations with many who held opposing views, but even in the Club there were sometimes sharp differences, and on his arrival in India he looked forward to an escape from such anxieties. 'My dialogue contains my system, which I have ever avowed and ever will avow, but I perfectly agree (and no man of sound intellect will disagree) that such a system is wholly inapplicable to this country, where millions of men are so wedded to inveterate prejudices and habits, that if liberty could be forced upon them by Britain, it would make them as miserable as the cruelest despotism.' He followed with concern the course of affairs in France, on which his views were those of his Harrow friend, Dr. Samuel Parr. In the last of his published letters he writes: 'Of European politics I continue to think as little as possible;

not because they do not interest my heart, but because they give me too much pain. I have good will towards men, and wish peace on earth; but I see chiefly under the sun the two classes whom Solomon describes, the oppressor and the oppressed. I have no fear in England of open despotism, nor of anarchy. I shall cultivate my fields and gardens, and think as little as possible of monarchs or oligarchs.'

Jones's early reputation was not associated with his political and religious opinions: it was based entirely on his knowledge of Oriental languages and primarily of Persian. In 1773, when he was elected to the Club, he was described as 'the elegant author of the *Persian Grammar*', and though the epithet might appear no more than a customary compliment, it offers some explanation of his success. An introductory manual, even of a little-known language, is not the obvious road to fame and is rarely allied to elegance, but this is not a skeleton grammar with useful phrases. It could more fitly be described as an introduction to Persian poetry, and the illustrations are taken almost wholly from Hafiz. The long Johnsonian introduction is a manifesto in praise of Oriental literature, and a severe criticism of those responsible for its neglect. 'The state of letters seems to be divided into two classes, men of learning who have no taste, and men of taste who have no learning.' The moment was certainly opportune. European relations with India had made a knowledge of Eastern languages useful and profitable, and Warren Hastings himself had appealed for the encouragement of Persian studies. But the spirit of the age was also favourable in a wider and nobler sense of interest. Those were the golden days of 'the common reader'; the pedants had been expelled and the specialists had not yet arrived to replace them, while a homogeneous educated class was stirred by an almost unlimited curiosity which men of learning were willing and even anxious to satisfy. The seventeenth century had produced several distinguished Oriental scholars, and the Laudian chair of Arabic was made celebrated by Pococke and Hyde, both of whom collaborated in Brian Walton's *Polyglot*, 1657. Arabic was approached through Hebrew and the original theological bias remained evident. There was no direct interest in the poetry, and Hyde quotes Hafiz and Omar Khayyam only by way of exploring the ancient religion of the Persians. In Jones's *Grammar* and in his various essays and commentaries we find the first recognition

of Islamic *belles lettres*, and his attitude is scientific and secular. His initiation into these studies can be called accidental. In his last years at Harrow he learnt the elements of Hebrew, probably (the biographer is discreet) in the hopes of settling his adolescent doubts by reading the Scriptures in the original. He found the language easy but not exciting, and passed on to the neighbour field of Arabic, and so to Persian. His life was permanently changed by his first reading of Hafiz, which acted on him as the *Faerie Queene* on Keats, and for about six years he was engaged in advocating the claims of Eastern poetry, in the hope of raising up students and translators. No doubt he was encouraged by the widespread feeling that the Olympian mythology had been worn out. Dr. Johnson was of that opinion, and so was Goldsmith, who, in reviewing Collins's *Eclogues* draws attention to 'Asiatic magnificence and manners' as a possible field of poetical imagery. 'I cannot but think', writes Jones, 'that our European poetry has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images, and incessant allusions to the same fables.' The popularity of the Erse Fragments, unchecked by controversy, had encouraged Thomas Percy in his search for remote treasure; China and Spain, the Runic and the Arabic, even the Bible (a new translation of *Solomon's Song* in a shilling pamphlet) could contribute. 'Then I have myself gleaned up specimens of East Indian Poetry, Peruvian Poetry, Lapland and Greenland Poetry, and inclosed I send you a specimen of Saxon Poetry' (Letter to Evan Evans, 1762). In such an atmosphere the *Persian Grammar* attracted favourable notice, and especial praise was given to the closing pages which held *A Persian Song*. It was Jones's first appearance as an English poet, and nothing in his later work came near it in popularity. His hope that the gentry and nobility would take up Persian studies and apply their leisure to verse translation was not fulfilled; Fitz-Gerald, eighty years later, is the solitary convert, and it was certainly from Jones's *Grammar* that he made his first acquaintance with the language. Perhaps we may add to Jones's titles to fame: *genuit Fitz-Gerald*.

*Poems, consisting chiefly of Translations from the Asiatic Languages* followed, in 1772. This is a hasty compilation, hardly worthy of its description; the most striking poem is the *Persian Song* and there is only one other straight translation from the Asiatic, *A Turkish Ode of Mesihî*. The rest of the book is padding, some

*juvenilia* of little value, two pieces from the Italian illustrating the affinity of Persian and European poetry, and an *Elegy* ingeniously put together from fragments of Arabic. Of the two prose essays, the more important is *On the poetry of the Eastern nations*. This is the only volume of verse which Jones produced; to estimate his claims as a poet we must take into account the occasional work of his later years, collected in the posthumous editions. For the next decade he gave his attention to the study of law, and the volume of 1772 is described as a farewell to the Muses; but we have three poems expressing his political ideals, influenced by classical models and untouched by the East. During his residence in India he wrote little verse of importance except the nine *Hymns* based on Hindu mythology. He intended, on returning to England, to complete the epic planned long before; he went so far as to revise the scheme, introducing a machinery of Hindu gods, and substituting blank verse for the smooth couplets of the early draft.

Through his inclusion in the great collection of Chalmers, Jones was officially recognized as a 'standard poet', and attractive reprints of his poetical works in 1816 and 1818 are evidence that he was accepted. In the revaluation of poetry that coincided with the rise of Tennyson, he sank into obscurity, and the Victorian selections such as Palgrave and Ward ignore him entirely. The *Persian Song* reappeared in 1926 in the *Oxford Book of Eighteenth-Century Verse*.

Mrs. Thrale has preserved an Ode on Saul and David written by Jones at the age of thirteen. Before leaving Harrow he had written extensively in English as well as in Greek and Latin, but the chief interest of these early verses is in their evidence of his taste and reading. Of all English poets Jones is probably the least spontaneous. Translation, imitation, paraphrase, *cento*, parody, and retort, all these are represented in his slender collection of verses, and if we withdrew these there would be very little remaining. His early devotion was paid to Gay, Pope, Gray, and Collins, all of whom he imitated with competence. At the time he wrote the *Grammar* his admiration of Pope's verse was higher than in later years, when the influence of Milton is more evident. He praises Spenser, both the pastorals and the *Faerie Queene*, he knew Drayton, and (unusual at that date) he preferred Shakespeare's sonnets to those of Petrarch. In his mature poetry the

manner of Gray and Collins blends with that of their Greek masters and the diction tends to be Miltonic.

Let us examine the long famous *Song*:

*A Persian Song of Hafiz*

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight;  
And bid these arms thy neck infold  
That rosy cheek, that lily hand,  
Would give thy poet more delight  
Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,  
Than all the gems of Samarcand.

Boy! let yon liquid ruby flow,  
And bid thy pensive heart be glad,  
Whate'er the frowning zealots say:  
Tell them their Eden cannot show  
A stream so clear as Rocnabad,  
A bow'r so sweet as Mosellay.

O! when those fair perfidious maids,  
Whose eyes our secret haunts infest,  
Their dear destructive charms display,  
Each glance my tender breast invades,  
And robs my wounded soul of rest,  
As Tartars seize their destined prey.

In vain with love our bosoms glow:  
Can all our tears, can all our sighs,  
New lustre to those charms impart?  
Can cheeks where living roses blow,  
Where nature spreads her richest dyes,  
Require the borrowed gloss of art?

Speak not of fate—ah! change the theme,  
And talk of odours, talk of wine,  
Talk of the flowers that round us bloom:  
'Tis all a cloud, 'tis all a dream;  
To love and joy thy thoughts confine,  
Nor hope to pierce the sacred gloom.

Beauty has such resistless pow'r,  
That even the chaste Egyptian dame  
Sighed for the blooming Hebrew boy:  
For her how fatal was the hour,  
When to the banks of Nilus came  
A youth so lovely and so coy!

But ah! sweet maid, my counsel hear;  
 (Youth should attend when those advise  
 Whom long experience renders sage)  
 While music charms the ravish'd ear,  
 While sparkling cups delight our eyes,  
 Be gay; and scorn the frowns of age.

What cruel answer have I heard!  
 And yet, by heaven, I love thee still;  
 Can aught be cruel from thy lip?  
 Yet say, how fell that bitter word  
 From lips which streams of sweetness fill,  
 Which naught but drops of honey sip?

Go boldly forth, my simple lay,  
 Whose accents flow with artless ease,  
 Like orient pearls at random strung;  
 Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say,  
 But Oh, far sweeter, if they please  
 The nymph for whom these notes are sung!

This poem continued to be admired for some sixty years. H. F. Cary (*London Magazine*, 1824; *Lives of English Poets*, 1846) may be taken to represent his contemporaries in describing it as 'one of those pieces that, by a nameless charm, fasten themselves on the memory'. The charm may not be obvious at the present day, but analysis will show that the nature of its appeal was similar to that of many popular lyrics, both of the boudoir and of the music-hall. The first essential in this kind is the magic carpet of a place name, Shiraz, for instance, or, within recent memory, Innisfree. It is a long way to Tipperary, and it is probably about as far to Innisfree; a little vagueness is even a help to the poetic mood. 'Lads knew trouble at Knighton when I was a Knighton lad', but we know nothing about Knighton except that it is somewhere in the West; alter it to Brighton, and the poem crashes. The next essential is a good tune, preferably a new one but not difficult. To be strange all along the line is to court defeat, and the diction must be immediately intelligible, both words and syntax. 'A youth so lovely and so coy' passed as poetry in 1772 precisely because it was 'poetical'. Few readers are likely to have remarked that the line was pure Waller:

Like Phoebus sang the no less amorous boy,  
 Like Daphne she, as lovely and as coy.

Even so in *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* we pass from the alluring title to the easy cadence of 'I will arise and go now . . .', and perhaps only a few readers in the nineties were aware of having heard the phrase every Sunday.<sup>1</sup>

As a translation the *Song* is open to serious criticism. The rhyme system and the stanza are remote from those of the original, and there is no approach to the rhythm. The matter of the poem has been inflated by exactly a half. This may be clearly seen from the close version by Walter Leaf:

An if yon Turk of Shiraz land this heart would take to hold in fee,  
Bokhara town and Samarcand to that black mole my dower should be..

This particular ode of Hafiz is more than usually incoherent, and what unity it possesses comes from the rhyme which is the same throughout and occurs ten times. There are twenty-seven rhymes in the translation, none of them being repeated. As for the rhythm (*amatores puellarum*) Jones has fallen back on the familiar lilt of the octosyllabic. To the English ear spondees can only be recognized at long intervals, and a poem to the tune of

He served five years in Hong-Kong jail

would appear to lack flexibility. But it is a movement with a dignity of its own, and passing from Arabic into Hebrew it was adapted to the noblest use in *Adon Olam* and other medieval hymns.

The rhyme-scheme *abcabc* is a novelty. Jones apologizes for it: 'the reader will excuse the singularity of the measure which I have used, if he considers the difficulty of bringing so many eastern proper names into our stanzas'. A few later poets have used the form without this justification. Nott and Mangan may have felt that there was something genuinely Persian about it. Byron uses it in one of the best of his early lyrics:

Remind me not, remind me not,  
Of those belov'd, those vanish'd hours,  
When all my soul was given to thee;  
Hours that may never be forgot,  
Till Time unnerves our vital powers,  
And thou and I shall cease to be.

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne, whose knowledge of the Bible was not shared by most of his admirers, has poems opening with 'By the waters of Babylon', 'Couldst thou not watch with me', 'All the bright lights of heaven'.

In two poems of Swinburne, *Itylus* and *Oblation*, it is transformed from an experiment to an achievement.

In *An Ode of Jami* Jones gives us the first specimen in English of the Persian form known as *ghazel*. The ode he selected is short, exactly sonnet length, but the rhyme has seven repetitions, and we are not surprised that he found no followers. The *ghazels* of James Clarence Mangan (c. 1840) are imitated from the German of Rückert. In Shelley's song *From the Arabic* the extension of the first rhyme may have been caught from Jones: it has the genuine Persian accent.

My faint spirit was sitting in the light  
Of thy looks, my love ;  
It panted for thee like the hind at noon  
For the brooks, my love.

More doubtful, as it occurs in a poem not otherwise oriental, is the origin of the internal signature in

Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind  
Than calm in waters seen.

The name comes exactly in the right place, according to the Persian convention. The *Jami Ode*, for instance, closes

A roving stranger in thy town, no guidance can sad JAMI find  
Till this his name, and rambling lay, to thine all-piercing sight he  
brings.

There is a similar signature in 'Robert Browning, you writer of plays', but I hesitate to treat this as more than a coincidence; and it is most unlikely that Cowley knew anything of oriental technique when he wrote

The wise example of the heavenly lark,  
Thy fellow-poet, Cowley, mark ;  
Above the clouds let thy proud music sound,  
Thy humble nest build on the ground.

The name of Mangan raises the general question of *Gul*. We have no need to import roses from Persia and Cashmere, and perhaps the facile orientalism of the Keepsakes did no more than stimulate home production. Throughout the nineteenth century, and especially on the lower slopes of Parnassus, there was an orgy of roses, and in the later years it was necessary to repeat the dose to secure an effect. Dowson has been blamed for extravagance in flinging 'roses, roses, riotously with the throng'. He was not the

first; Browning, Henley, and even Matthew Arnold are precedents, and among his contemporaries no one was more iterative than the youthful Yeats. The *Eternal Rose* and the *Secret Rose* are part of the Celtic twilight and there may be some authority for them in Irish poets of long ago; but Yeats's immediate precursor in this symbolism was Mangan, and it is Mangan as orientalist who rioted in roses. Jones's *Turkish Ode* is a pleasant list of Epicurean commonplaces, with the refrain

The smiling season decks each flowing glade.  
Be gay: too soon the flowers of Spring will fade.

Mangan offers what purports to be a version of the same ode:

In, in at the portals that Youth uncloses,  
It hastes, it wastes, the Time of the Roses.

And there are ten more stanzas each with its several rhyme (Moses, woes is, reposes, &c.). His Eastern poems are mostly transparent inventions and he had little if any knowledge of the languages, but he had picked up, from Jones among others, certain scraps of information, and he knew that to the Sufi a rose was something more. His crowning audacity is a poem of twenty-seven quatrains, *The Hundred-leafed Rose*, on that single rhyme, sultry with Islamic allusions and a pretentious air of mystic wisdom. Recent scholarship has emphasized the Pre-Raphaelite contribution to the early work of Yeats: the pseudo-oriental is at least as important, and more enduring.

During the years 1774-84 Jones was deeply engaged in law and politics. In 1781 he produced (it was printed at Strawberry Hill) *The Muse Recalled*, an Ode on the nuptials of Viscount Althorp and Miss Lavinia Bingham. For five years, after his short residence in Oxford, Jones had been Lord Althorp's tutor and he looked forward to a political career for his young pupil, who was to 'emulate the fame Of Roman patriots and the Athenian name'. The second Earl Spencer is remembered now for the great library he collected; it was his son who carried to victory the Reform Bill of 1832. The Ode is a Pindaric, not without grace and power, but the personal names (as in Dr. Watts's elegies) strike a grotesque note. The entry of the bridesmaids has historical interest.

O rise! O leave the sacred shrine,  
For they, who all thy nymphal train outshine  
*Duncannon*, heavenly muse, and *Devonshire* invite.

A few weeks later Jones printed a lofty Ode which was long remembered in democratic circles and which deserves to be remembered for its own sake.

*An Ode in imitation of Alcaeus*

What constitutes a state?  
 Not high raised battlement or labor'd mound,  
     Thick wall or moated gate ;  
 Not cities proud with spires and turrets crown'd ;  
     Not bays and broad-arm'd ports,  
 Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride,  
     Not starr'd and spangled courts,  
 Where low-brow'd baseness wafts perfume to pride.  
 NO :—Men, high-minded Men,  
 With powers as far above dull brutes endued,  
     In forest, brake, or den,  
 As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude,  
     Men, who their *duties* know,  
 But know their *rights*, and knowing, dare maintain,  
     Prevent the long-aimed blow,  
 And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain :  
     *These* constitute a state,  
 And sov'reign Law, *that state's collected will*,  
     O'er thrones and globes elate  
 Sits Empress, crowning good, repressing ill ;  
     Smit by her sacred frown  
 The fiend, *Discretion*, like a vapour sinks,  
     And e'en the all-dazzling *Crown*  
 Hides his faint rays, and at her bidding shrinks.  
     Such *was* this heaven-loved isle,  
 Than *Lesbos* fairer and the *Cretan* shore ;  
     No more shall freedom smile ?  
 Shall *Britons* languish, and be Men no more ?  
     Since all must life resign,  
 Those sweet rewards, which decorate the brave,  
     'Tis folly to decline,  
 And steal inglorious to the silent grave.

If these verses remind us of Matthew Arnold, it is not only, or mainly, by the cacophony of the opening line. 'Who prop thou ask'st . . .' is no better and is soon pardoned by the intelligent reader. The metre is apparently original. Like that of Marvell's Ode it has a classical solidity, and recalls 'Sic te diva potens Cypri' without the pedantry of imitation. The measure has not often been used by later poets ; Mrs. Hemans, at her best,

Leaves have their time to fall  
 And flowers to wither at the north wind's breath,  
 And stars to set—but all,  
 Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death.

Emily Brontë, in her *Last Lines*,

No coward soul is mine,  
 No trembler in the world's storm-troubled sphere;  
 I see Heaven's glories shine,  
 And faith shines equal, arming me from fear.

*An Ode in imitation of Callistratus* owes its suggestion to a striking passage in Lowth's *Prelections on Hebrew Poetry*. These lectures, published in 1753, had wide popularity both in England and in Germany, and are remembered for their influence on Herder. In his first lecture, illustrating 'the amazing power of lyric poetry' and its relation with public virtue, Lowth quotes the song of Callistratus, and comments 'If, after the memorable Ides of March, any one of the tyrannicides had delivered to the populace such a poem as this . . . the dominion of the Caesars and its adherents would have been totally extinguished: and I am firmly persuaded that one stanza of this simple ballad of Harmodius would have been more effectual than all the Philippics of Cicero.'

Verdant myrtle's branchy pride  
 Shall my biting falchion wreath:  
 Soon shall grace each manly side  
 Tubes that speak, and points that breathe.  
 Thus, Harmodius, shone thy blade;  
 Thus, Aristogiton, thine:  
 Whose, when Britain sighs for aid,  
 Whose shall now delay to shine?

The names of Wentworth, Lenox, and Fitz-Maurice, are then proposed as deserving of equal if not superior glory:

A hero's crown  
 Let th' Athenian patriots claim:  
 You less fiercely won renown,  
 You assum'd a milder name.  
 They through blood for glory strove,  
 You more blissful tidings bring:  
 They to death a Tyrant drove,  
 You to fame restored a King.

Rise, Britannia ! dauntless rise !  
 Cheer'd with triple harmony,  
 Monarch good, and Nobles wise,  
 People valiant, firm, and FREE.

Political poetry has not often been composed with such dignity and sincerity, and with such an absence of hatred and contempt.

The nine Hymns to Hindu divinities which Jones composed in India were received with admiration, and are highly praised in the contemporary tributes.

The astonish'd East unfolds her mysteries ;  
 Round her dark shrines, a sudden blaze he showers,  
 And, all unveil'd, the proud Pantheon towers.

Yet it may be doubted whether they were to any great extent understood and appreciated, and it is a very long time since they were quoted or even commended. There has never been a wide-spread interest in Hindu theology among the English public. The enormous number of proper names, unfamiliar and unadaptable, words over which scholars will dispute and laymen stumble, act as a thorny barrier. During the long period in which English has been studied in India, no native scholar or poet has become an efficient interpreter. Toru Dutt, whose translations of French poetry are faultless, failed to interest us in the legends of Hindustan, and the enlightened theologians and devotional writers of a more recent date are inclined to ignore mythology. Jones's *Hymns* are not translations, but composite works with matter from many and varied sources, including the Bible and Plato. They show great technical accomplishment and contain the best of his poetry and the deepest of his philosophy. The *Hymn to Narayena* is in several ways the most attractive, and it has the additional interest of having appealed to Shelley both by its form and by its thought.

*A Hymn to Narayena*

Spirit of Spirits! who, through every part  
 Of space expanded and of endless time,  
 Beyond the stretch of lab'ring thought sublime,  
 Bad'st uproar into beauteous order start,  
 Before Heav'n was, Thou art ;  
 Ere spheres beneath us rolled, or spheres above,  
 Ere earth in firmamental ether hung,  
 Thou sat'st alone: till through thy mystic Love  
 Things unexistent to existence sprung,  
 And grateful descant sung.

What first impelled thee to exert thy might?  
 Goodness unlimited. What glorious light  
 Thy power directed? Wisdom without bound.  
 What proved it first? Oh! guide my fancy right;  
     Oh! raise from cumbrous ground  
     My soul in rapture drowned,  
 That fearless it may soar on wings of fire;  
 For Thou, who only know'st, Thou only can'st inspire.

Who can fail to recognize in this exordium the style and measure of the *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*? The subject of the poem is the Creation. The Absolute Being gives rise to a Creator, who produces the world of appearance or illusion (*Maya*) which we mistake for reality. In the final stanzas we have a description of the visible extended world, and an affirmation of faith on the part of the poet. It is for students of Shelley to examine the bearings of this poem on such flashes of metaphysics as 'The painted veil which those who live call life' or the 'dome of many-coloured glass'.

Omniscient Spirit! whose all-ruling pow'r  
     Bids from each sense bright emanations beam;  
     Glow in the rainbow, sparkles in the stream,  
     Smiles in the bud, and glistens in the flow'r  
     That crowns each vernal bow'r;  
 Sighs in the gale, and warbles in the throat  
     Of ev'ry bird that hails the bloomy spring,  
     Or tells his love in many a liquid note,  
     Whilst envious artists touch the rival string,  
     Till rocks and forests ring;  
 Breathes in rich fragrance from the sandal grove,  
     Or where the precious musk-deer playful rove;  
     In dulcet juice from clust'ring fruit distils,  
     And burns salubrious in the tasteful clove:  
     Soft banks and verd'rous hills  
     Thy present influence fills;  
     In air, in floods, in caverns, woods and plains;  
 Thy will inspirits all, thy sov'reign *Maya* reins.  
 Blue crystal vault, and elemental fires,  
     That in th' ethereal fluid blaze and breathe,  
     Thou tossing main, whose snaky branches wreathe  
     This pensile orb with intertwisted gyres;  
     Mountains whose radiant spires  
 Presumptuous rear their summits to the skies,  
     And blend their emerald hue with sapphire light;

Smooth meads and lawns, that glow with varying dyes  
Of dew-bespangled leaves and blossoms bright,

Hence vanish from my sight :

Delusive pictures, unsubstantial shows !

My soul absorbed One only Being knows,

Of all perceptions One abundant source,

Whence every object every moment flows.

Suns hence derive their force,

Hence planets learn their course ;

But suns and fading worlds I view no more :

God only I perceive ; God only I adore.

Poetry was not with Jones the vehicle of self-expression or self-assertion ; but it is possible to reach something of his personality through the successive phases of his work—Islamic, political, Hindu. If Jones could have foreseen the coming century, there are three things that would have given him delight : the translation of Omar Khayyám, the passing of the Reform Bill, the production of *The Sacred Books of the East*. To each of these he had made his contribution, and as he cared little for fame the oblivion that has overtaken his writings would have given him neither surprise nor regret. We look in vain for a verse that bears the mark of his character and temper. Perhaps the lines he gave to young Twining are the best we can find :

Kill not the ant that steals a little grain.

It lives with pleasure, and it dies with pain.

They are from Firdusi.

R. M. HEWITT

## BALDER DEAD (1855)

### I

#### *An Interpretation*

ONE who has given up so much more of Patmore (all that is fantastic in him) than he ever expected to do, may yet say: 'At least he was sound on *Balder Dead*.' Patmore wrote to Allingham: 'The future belongs to you and me and Matthew Arnold (who has written a great little epic called *The Death of Balder*) unless we are lazy'. We must suppose that Allingham *was* lazy.

That no one would have more disliked the interpretation I am going to put on the poem than Patmore himself does not deter me from quoting his spontaneous admiration of it, for *Balder* is no more and no less great a poem with my interpretation than without.

What that interpretation is I can most quickly suggest by caricaturing it. I shall blur the outline or refine my drawing as I proceed. Balder is Christianity as it has fared among men. Lok is the critical spirit, 'the all-corroding, all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious inquiries'. Hoder (that innocent Judas) is popular opinion, lending its too credulous ear to the critics, or, rather, to their vulgarisateurs; he is what Chesterton called 'the vast and vague public opinion which has been prematurely spread from certain imperfect investigations'—which induce that indifference to religion which Arnold so much deplored, and under which, in his time, it seemed like to die.

If I could have offered this interpretation to Arnold himself it would have been without any confidence: I have known too many poets for that. Yet I might have pleaded: 'I am doing no more than read *Literature and Dogma* into *Balder Dead*, and what you were afterwards to write in one, you ought not to find it strange that I should read from the other.' But that he had at least the fortunes and the future of Christianity in his mind when he wrote of the death of Balder, and of his future, can be shown as rather more probable than not.

Both Froude and Kingsley in their reviews of *Poems*, 1853, had suggested that Arnold might follow up *Sohrab and Rustum* with a subject from Scandinavian mythology, and in his reading-

list for December 1853 Arnold put down Mallet's *Northern Antiquities*. But years before that he had read Carlyle, and we may be almost sure that he had read the first lecture in *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840) on Odin, the hero as Divinity, and there, in a sadly fore-shortened form he would have found the story of Balder. But what much more concerns my argument is the whole purport of Carlyle's lecture: its interpretation of natural religion, and of 'revealed religion' as part of natural religion. What, as a boy, I noticed only for its daring, I shall suppose Arnold to have read seriously:

heartfelt prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundless, for a noblest godlike Form of Man—is not that the germ of Christianity itself? The greatest of all Heroes is One—whom we do not name here! Let sacred silence meditate that sacred matter; you will find it the ultimate perfection of a principle extant throughout man's whole history on earth.

What did not then revolutionize my own religion may well have revolutionized Arnold's,

For rigorous teachers seized his youth,  
And purged its faith and trimm'd its fire;  
Show'd him the high white star of Truth,  
There bade him gaze, and there aspire.

Carlyle went on:

... coming into lower, less *unspeakable* provinces, is not all Loyalty akin to religious Faith also? Faith is loyalty to some inspired Teacher, some spiritual Hero.

If for Arnold those two passages were the key-passages of Carlyle's lecture, see into what a system it builds up! It builds up into Arnold's version of Christianity:

... the great Thinker came, the *original* man, the Seer; whose shaped spoken Thought awakes the slumbering capability of all into Thought... What he says, all men were not far from saying, were longing to say; ... to these wild men he was a very magician, a worker of miraculous unexpected blessing for them; a Prophet, a God! ...

Of Odin what history? Strange rather to reflect that he *had* a history! That this Odin ... was a man like us; with our sorrows, joys, with our limbs, features;—intrinsicly all one as we: and did such a work!

... what if this man Odin—since a great deep soul, with the *afflatus* and the mysterious tide of vision and impulse rushing on

him he knows not whence, is ever an enigma, a kind of terror and wonder to himself—should have felt that perhaps *he* was divine . . . !

‘The greatest of all Heroes is One—whom we do not name here’, the *alias* suiting so well! But to come to Balder for a moment—‘Balder, the White God, the beautiful, the just and benignant (whom the early Christian Missionaries found to resemble Christ)’. That helps my suggestion.

But with ‘Christ as a man like us’, Arnold, like Carlyle, was faced with the question what hope is there for humanity. If Christ can die, if his teaching is at the mercy of the all-subtilizing intellect of the Church, of the all-corroding intellect of the critic, of the vicissitudes of history, of the enmity of the world—what have we to look forward to but the *Ragnarök*, the *Götterdämmerung*, the Twilight of the Gods, the extinction of religion, ‘the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short’, universal darkness?

. . . a very striking conception, that of the *Ragnarök*, Consummation, or *Twilight of the Gods*. It is in the *Völuspá* Song; seemingly a very old, prophetic idea. The Gods and Jötuns, the divine Powers and the chaotic brute ones, after long contest and partial victory by the former, meet at last in universal world-embracing wrestle and duel; World-serpent against Thor, strength against strength; mutually extinctive; and ruin, ‘twilight’ sinking into darkness, swallows the created Universe. The old Universe with its Gods is sunk.

Throughout *Balder Dead* the death of Balder is but a portent of the death of the Gods; the *motif* is recurrent:

Balder has met his death, and ye survive :  
Weep him an hour ; but what can grief avail ?  
For ye yourselves, ye Gods, shall meet your doom,  
All ye who hear me, and inhabit Heaven,  
And I too, Odin too, the Lord of all.

not so gladsome is that life in Heaven  
Which Gods and Heroes lead, in feast and fray,  
Waiting the darkness of the final times,  
That one should grudge its loss for Balder’s sake.

The golden-crested Cock began to crow ;  
Hereafter, in the blackest dead of night,  
With shrill and dismal cries that Bird shall crow,  
Warning the Gods that foes draw nigh to Heaven ;  
But now he crew at dawn, a cheerful note.

‘Farewell, O Balder, bright and lov’d, my Son!  
 In that great day, the Twilight of the Gods,  
 When Muspel’s children shall beleague Heaven,  
 Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm.’

‘. . . here thou liest, Balder, underground,  
 Rusting for ever ; and the years roll on,  
 The generations pass, the ages grow,  
 And bring us nearer to the final day  
 When from the south shall march the Fiery Band  
 And cross the Bridge of Heaven, with Lok for guide,  
 And Fenris at his heel with broken chain ;  
 While from the east the Giant Rymer steers  
 His ship, and the great Serpent makes to land ;  
 And all are marshall’d in one flaming square  
 Against the Gods, upon the plains of Heaven.  
 I mourn thee, that thou canst not help us then.’

He spake ; but Balder answer’d him and said :—  
 ‘Mourn not for me : Mourn, Hermod, for the Gods ;  
 Mourn for the men on Earth, the Gods in Heaven,  
 Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day.  
 The day will come, when fall shall Asgard’s towers,  
 And Odin, and his Sons, the seed of Heaven ;  
 And what were I, to save them in that hour ?  
 If strength might save them, could not Odin save . . . ?

*Sed nondum est finis.* ‘The old Universe with its Gods is sunk ;  
 but it is not final death : there is to be a new Heaven and a  
 new Earth ; a higher supreme God, and Justice to reign among  
 men.’

Far to the south, beyond The Blue, there spreads  
 Another Heaven, The Boundless : no one yet  
 Hath reach’d it ; there hereafter shall arise  
 The second Asgard, with another name.  
 Thither, when o’er this present Earth and Heavens  
 The tempest of the latter days hath swept,  
 And they from sight have disappear’d, and sunk,  
 Shall a small remnant of the Gods repair ;  
 Hoder and I shall join them from the grave.  
 There re-assembling we shall see emerge  
 From the bright Ocean at our feet an Earth  
 More fresh, more verdant than the last, with fruits  
 Self-springing, and a seed of man preserv’d,  
 Who then shall live in peace, as now in war.

‘Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to

see corruption.' How did Arnold accept that? For Balder and for Christianity he spoke :

' I attend the course  
Of ages, and my late return to light,  
In times less alien to a spirit mild,  
In new-recovered seats, the happier day.'

Arnold needed to supplement Carlyle with Mallet, from whom and not from Carlyle comes this :

' Come then ; if Balder was so dear belov'd,  
And this [this that you say] is true, and such a loss is  
Heaven's—  
Hear, how to Heaven may Balder be restor'd.  
Show me through all the world the signs of grief :  
Fails but one thing to grieve, here Balder stops :  
Let all that lives and moves upon the earth  
Weep him, and all that is without life weep ;  
Let Gods, men, brutes, bewep him ; plants and stones.  
So shall I know the lost was dear indeed,  
And bend my heart, and give him back to Heaven.'

How can one *not* read *Obermann Once More* into that?

. . . centuries came, and ran their course,  
And unspent all that time  
Still, still went forth that Child's dear force,  
And still was at its prime.  
Aye, ages long endured his span  
Of life, 'tis true received,  
That gracious Child, that thorn-crown'd Man !  
He lived while we believed . . .

Now he is dead. . . .

From David's lips this word did roll,  
'Tis true and living yet :  
*No man can save his brother's soul,*  
*Nor pay his brother's debt.*

\* \* \* \* \*

' Despair not thou as I despair'd,  
Nor be cold gloom thy prison !  
Forward the gracious hours have fared,  
And see ! the sun is risen.

' He melts the icebergs of the past,  
A green new earth appears.  
Millions, whose life in ice lay fast,  
Have thoughts, and smiles, and tears.

'The world's great order dawns in sheen  
 After long darkness rude,  
 Divinelier imaged, clearer seen,  
 With happier zeal pursued. . . .'

The quotation from the Psalms, italicized by Arnold, had already appeared in *Balder*:

On Balder Death hath laid her hand, not thee;  
 Nor doth she count this life a price for that.  
 For many Gods in Heaven, not thou alone,  
 Would freely die to purchase Balder back.

And in *Balder* the candid reader will recognize two parallels with the Via Dolorosa and the Crucifixion:

Mourn not for me! . . .  
 Mourn for the men on Earth . . .  
 Who live, and with their eyes shall see that day.  
 The day will come, when fall shall Asgard's towers.  
 wise he was, and many curious arts,  
 Postures of runes, and healing herbs he knew;  
 Unhappy: but that art he did not know,  
 To keep his own life safe. . . .

## II

### *Parallels*

I am not now about to argue that when Arnold wrote *Balder Dead* in 1853-5 he knew as much of Falkland as when he wrote his essay on Falkland in 1877. I am only going to show that Arnold's attraction to Balder was his attraction to Falkland. And this was the attraction:

To crown all, Falkland has for the imagination the indefinable, the irresistible charm of one who is and must be, in spite of the choicest gifts and graces, unfortunate,—of a man in the grasp of fatality. Like the Master of Ravenswood, that most interesting by far of all Scott's heroes, he is surely and visibly touched by the finger of doom:

If any here might weep for Balder's death  
 I most might weep, his Father; such a son  
 I lose to-day, so bright, so loved a God.  
 But he has met that doom, which long ago  
 The Nornies, when his mother bare him, spun,  
 And Fate set seal, that so his end must be.

Clarendon wrote:

At the battle of Newbury was slain the Lord Viscount Falkland; a person . . . of that inimitable sweetness and delight in conversation, of so glowing and obliging a humanity and goodness to mankind, and of that primitive simplicity and integrity of life, that if there were no other brand upon this odious and accursed Civil War than that single loss, it must be most infamous and execrable to all posterity. *Turpe mori, post te, solo non posse dolore.*

Arnold professes to find Clarendon's style here 'a little excessive, a little Asiatic'. He must have meant more suitable to verse than to prose.

from thy lips, O Balder, night or day,  
 Heard no one ever an injurious word  
 To God or Hero, but thou keptest back  
 The others, labouring to compose their brawls.

. . . his gentleness and affability so transcendent and obliging, that it drew reverence, and some kind of compliance, from the roughest and most unpolished and stubborn constitutions, and made them of another temper of debate, in his presence, than they were in other places.

. . . his disposition and nature was so gentle and obliging, so much delighted in courtesy, kindness, and generosity that all mankind could not but admire and love him.

Thou only, Balder, wast for ever kind,  
 To take my hand, and wipe my tears, and say:  
 'Weep not, O Freya, weep no golden tears!'  
 . . . and Balder now is gone  
 And I am left uncomforted in Heaven.

when thou sangest, Balder, thou didst strike  
 Another note, and, like a bird in spring,  
 Thy voice of joyance minded us, and youth,  
 And wife, and children, and our ancient home.

We know how Falkland 'would with a shrill and sad accent ingeminate the word *Peace, Peace*'.

I am long since weary of your storm  
 Of carnage, and find, Hermod, in your life  
 Something too much of war and broils, which make  
 Life one perpetual fight, a bath of blood.

Does it seem out of character that Odin should say of Balder:  
 In that great day, the Twilight of the Gods,  
 When Muspel's children shall beleaguer Heaven,  
 Then we shall miss thy counsel and thy arm?

No, for Clarendon, of Falkland, and Falkland and Balder of themselves speak in the same way:

. . . doubtless, when the day of battle comes,  
 And the two hosts are marshall'd, and in Heaven  
 The golden-crested cock shall sound alarm,  
 And his black brother-bird from hence reply,  
 And bucklers clash, and spears begin to pour—  
 Longing will stir within my breast, though vain.

Like *Balder*, the essay on Falkland rises to a climax of poetry,—Arnoldian poetry this time, not Shelleyan,<sup>1</sup> but with the same note of hope:

But let us return to Falkland,—to our martyr of sweetness and light, of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper. Let us bid him farewell, not with compassion for him and not with excuses, but in confidence and pride. Slowly, very slowly, his ideal of lucidity of mind and largeness of temper conquers; but it conquers. In the end it will prevail; only we must have patience. The day will come when this nation shall be renewed by it. But, O lime-trees of Tew, and quiet Oxfordshire field-banks where the first violets are even now raising their heads!—how often, ere that day arrive for Englishmen, shall your renewal be seen!

### III

#### 'A spirit mild'

But Balder is more than Falkland, he is a god, and if I have equated him with the fortunes of Christianity in history, Arnold in his essay on *A Persian Passion Play* has justified me.

'O death', cries the bandit-minstrel, Kurroglou, in his last song before his execution, 'O death, whom didst thou spare? Were even Hassan and Hussein, those footstools of the throne of God on the seventh heaven, spared by thee? *No! thou madest them martyrs at Kerbela.*'

These are the martyrs of Kerbela; and these are the sufferings which awaken in an Asiatic audience sympathy so deep and serious, transports so genuine of pity, love, and gratitude, that to match them at all one must take the feelings raised at Ammergau. And now, where are we to look . . . for the source of all this emotion?

'O brother,' said Hassan, as he was dying of poison, to Hussein who sought to find out and punish his murderer, 'O brother, let him

<sup>1</sup> The verse at the foot of p. 63 and at the top of p. 65 reminds me of *Prometheus Unbound* and *Hellas*.

alone till he and I meet together before God.' . . . So of Hussein himself it was said by his successful rival, the usurping Caliph: 'God loved Hussein, *but he would not suffer him to attain to anything.*' They might attain to nothing, they were too pure, these great ones of the world as by birth they were; but the people, which itself also can attain to so little, loved them all the better on that account, loved them for their abnegation and mildness, felt that they were dear to God, that God loved them, and that they and their lives filled a void in the severe religion of Mahomet.

It is a long way from Kerbela to Calvary; but the sufferers of Kerbela hold aloft to the eyes of millions of our race the lesson so loved by the sufferer of Calvary. For he said: 'Learn of me, that I am *mild, and lowly of heart*; and ye shall find *rest unto your souls.*'

FREDERICK PAGE

## THE LOVE POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY

THE chief subject of lyrical poetry has always been love—love, that is, in its more specific sense—the love of ‘lovers’, or, to use an ugly though almost unavoidable word, ‘sexual love’. In spite of the multifarious interests that have arisen and developed with civilization, the emotions connected fundamentally with the instinct for reproduction remain the most powerful of all those known to humanity. Even when circumstances have shut out any further opportunity or desire for experience on the love plane, passionate love is still the subject that most easily and deeply stirs the human heart. Probably a large majority of men and women, if they day-dreamed of a good fairy’s offering them their dearest wish, would ask for—not virtue, wisdom, power, wealth, fame—but a passionate, mutual, and happy love. Most fiction and drama show this dominating interest in love; even more may lyrical poetry be expected to do so.

Probably of the half-dozen lyrical poems we know best three or four bear on love. The most popular anthology of verse in the language, Palgrave’s *Golden Treasury*, contains nearly 300 poems. The number dealing with love as a sole or chief theme is found to be about 100.

In Hardy the occupation with love is even greater. On the publication in 1919 of the first edition of *Collected Poems*, I re-read the whole collection, classifying each piece according to its predominant theme. ‘Love’ I used in a wide sense to cover all the situations and conditions that occur in connexion with the actual or potential relations of man and woman as such. Thus, besides desire, courting, and consummation, it was held to include, in addition of course to jealousy, unreciprocated or otherwise frustrated love, disillusion, disunion, ill-mating, inconstancy, loss, and other reactions and complications. The number of Hardy’s poems to be dealt with at that time was 510. Of these nearly 200 fell into the category of Love. If account was taken of a further number of poems in which love, though not the sole or predominant theme, came in as a parallel co-dominant theme, the number was 250—every other poem.

When I saw Hardy shortly afterwards I showed him this summary. He made no comment on the number of poems in the Love column, though he did indicate some surprise at the number appearing in the second longest category—Death.

Subsequent to the first edition of *Collected Poems*, Hardy published in 1922 *Late Lyrics and Earlier*, and in 1925 *Human Shows, Far Phantasies*. These two additional volumes bring the total number of poems to over 800. On the same principle of classification as was applied before, the number of love poems is about 340. That is to say, though these two volumes were not published until Hardy was between seventy and eighty, the dominance of love themes remains constant. After his death a further volume was published—*Winter Words*—but the proportion of love poems remains virtually the same.

Moreover the supremacy of the love interest in Hardy's poetry often comes out indirectly in what is not primarily, or in accordance with the principle of classification explained above, a love poem. In *At a Lunar Eclipse* the poet speculates on the smallness of the shadow cast on the moon by our vast earth; the poem ends in an expression of wonder that so narrow an arc should be the measure of all the marvels of human existence: the climax of these marvels is woman's beauty.

Is such the stellar gauge of earthly show,  
Nation at war with nation, brains that teem,  
Heroes, and women fairer than the skies?

In another poem of which the theme is suggested by the heavens—*The Comet at Yell'ham*—the general idea is that of the pettiness of the individual's life against the 'stupendous background of the stellar universe'<sup>1</sup>: of its transience contrasted with the comparative eternity of matter. The culminating thought used to illustrate this is that, when in the distant future the comet returns, and shines again on the same scene, the beautiful and loved woman that is described as watching it with the speaker will no longer be there.

It will return long years hence, when  
As now its strange swift shine  
Will fall on Yell'ham; but not then  
On that sweet form of thine.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Two on a Tower*.

In one of the very few poems in which love comes in as a comforter, and a cause for joy or gratitude, *Before Knowledge*, the poet, while resenting the fact that during the long years before the beloved came into his life he did not know that destiny had this consolation in store for him, says that, if he had known it, he would have endured all his troubles lightly. Again, in *I travel as a Phantom now*, where a typical expression of Hardy's metaphysic enters in his

wonder if Man's consciousness  
Was a mistake of God's,

he ends with the thought that, now he has met 'her', it is a mistake that he can well bear.

Byron, in oft-quoted lines, stated that to man 'love is a thing apart; 'tis woman's whole existence'. A characteristic of Hardy's poetry is that it so often gives the woman's point of view. If we divide the love poems into those that from internal evidence must be taken to represent the utterance of a man, or of a woman, or of one that might be either, we find that the percentages in these three categories are respectively about 60, 13, 27 per cent. These figures must represent a very much larger proportion of poems that are supposed to, or might, emanate from a woman than could be found in any other male poet. But in Hardy's men no less than in his women the life of the heart and affections is generally the supreme concern. In *A Poet*—obviously a description of himself—Hardy tells us his valuation of the world's judgement, and suggests what, when after his death a last pronouncement is made on him, should be placed to his credit. On the attention and applause of the great, the rich, and the beautiful, or on the assessment of critical minds, he sets no store. But, whatever opinion is held of the spirit of his writings ('whatever his message—glad or grim'), 'it will be word enough of praise' that he gained and kept the love of 'two bright-souled women'.

The recognition of love as the supreme interest in life is definitely and directly formulated by Hardy in more than one poem. Thus in *He abjures Love* the abjurer—a man of middle-age—resolves to 'put off love' which has been

For twice ten years  
The daysman of my thought,  
And hope, and doing.

He recalls that, before love came into his life, he was careless as a child.

But lo, Love beckoned me,  
And I was bare,  
And poor, and starved, and dry,  
And fever-stricken.

Henceforth he will be free from this slavery; will no more rate

The common rare . . .  
The faulty fair,  
Things dreamt, of comelier hue  
Than things beholden.

He is ashamed and weary of the 'fears and desolations wrought in love's pursuing'. Now at last he has a clear vision, and has attained wisdom. At this point the reader might expect the thought to end on the note of a famous passage in Plato's *Republic*, where Cephalus, when asked by Socrates how he bears old age, quotes Sophocles—'Most gladly have I escaped love; I feel as if I had escaped from a mad and furious master.' But the abjurer is no Cephalus. The wisdom he has gained is that of disillusion; and even in abjuring he cannot refrain from regretting that henceforth, though he is spared pain, life will be savourless.

I speak as one who plumbs  
Life's dim profound,  
One who at length can sound  
Clear views and certain.  
But—after love what comes?  
A scene that lowers,  
A few sad vacant hours,  
And then, the Curtain.

In the passage to death, what constitutes in Hardy's poems the bitterest pang of old age is that it means being shut out from the life of passion. 'What is it to grow old?' Matthew Arnold asks in one of his poems; and he goes on to give a list of the disabilities and losses that old age brings in its train, including that 'It is for beauty to forego her wreath', but this is only one with other evils that are equal or greater. In Hardy there is frequent recurrence to the thought of old age as a destroyer of physical beauty, thereby undermining what so often in man's relation to woman forms so powerful a factor in passion—'I'amour', as distinct from the affection and friendship and tender-

ness that may, or may not, be associated with or grow out of love. In *Wives in the Sere* he describes how under the influence of joy a careworn wife shows for a swift instant the hint of some charm that 'moved her mate to choose her'. In *She, to Him* a woman muses on the future when 'in the toils of Time' her beauties will be all gone, and begs 'him', when, his 'heart conceding to mind', he is 'irked that they have withered so', to

grant to old affection's claim  
The hand of friendship down Life's sunless hill.

'*I look into my glass*' (which might be the utterance either of a man or a woman) expresses the eternal tragedy that, though the body grows old and ugly and incapable of inspiring passion, the heart may remain young and the senses quicken to beauty. The gazer, viewing the wasting skin revealed by the mirror, wishes that 'heart had shrunk as thin': then one could await death with equanimity.

But Time, to make me grieve,  
Part steals, lets part abide ;  
And shakes this fragile form at eve  
With throbbings of noontide.

Even when the picture is of young, mutual, impassioned, happy love, the lover cannot abandon himself to rapture. Always some disquieting thought intrudes. Thus *On the Departure Platform* describes a young man's last glimpse of his lover as she makes her way past the barrier to her compartment. It has been a 'fair fond day'. They have made plans for her return. Yet he is subdued by something other than the prospect of missing her during her absence. True, she will return—perhaps with that 'flexible form in the same soft white array'; but it can never be again as now. A companion asks him the cause of his sadness. He answers—

O friend, nought happens twice thus ; why,  
I cannot tell !

This is of two lovers parting. In *The Minute before Meeting* the lover is unable to enjoy a 'full-up measure of felicity' owing to the thought that in a short space of time the meeting will be over to be followed by dividing months of despondency. He would 'rein back Time', and love on for ever 'in close expectance, never closed'. And in a poem (*Ditty*), which begins with

the lover uttering a strain of grateful elation at having found a treasure who has brought such joy into his life, the sense of happiness is marred by the thought that but for Chance he might never have passed her way and known her.

The last three poems from which I have quoted are among the comparatively few where there is no description or implication of unhappiness between a couple. For the most part throughout the love poems—however varied the setting, the characters, the situation—the predominant note is of dissatisfaction, regret, unhappiness. The subject of very many of them is the death of a loved person. After the deduction of these and some others that, not coming into any of the sub-categories of my classification, had to be entered in a Miscellaneous column, the remainder—some 25 per cent. of the total—have to do with such themes as the decay of love, disillusion, severance, incompatibility, inconstancy.

Love begins with pain, or leads to pain, or ends in pain. In *Revulsion* an abjurer describes the inevitable pain connected with love even in its early and hopeful stage—

Let me then never feel the fateful thrilling  
That devastates the love-worn wooer's frame,  
The hot ado of fevered hopes.

In *The End of the Episode* the summing-up is

The paths of love are rougher  
Than thoroughfares of stones.

It is because love means so much in Hardy's scale of values that unhappiness on that plane is so intolerable. Life has potentially so much to give, but it only 'offers to deny' (*Yellham Wood's Story*).

One must be careful before attempting to make deductions from all this. An account of happiness in love and marriage does not lend itself easily to poetry. 'Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.' Nevertheless the predominance of the love theme in Hardy's poems, and within this theme the predominance of unhappiness, are striking.

Now and then the drift of the love poems is general and philosophical, the setting fantastic. An example of this is the poem *The Well-Beloved*. A lover is hastening to his wedding. As he goes along the Roman road, past the spot where once stood

an altar of Venus, and dusk falls, he is joined by a woman. At first he thinks she is his bride. He discovers she is not, but he is so overcome by her beauty and charm that he declares it is she that he must wed. His companion tells him that this cannot be. She is no mortal maid, but the impersonation of the ideal that all men dream of but never really find: 'I am thy very dream'. He turns to embrace and hold her, but she vanishes. He goes on his way, and when he reaches his destination and looks on his bride she seems 'pinched and thin'.

This poem is not in its setting typical of Hardy's work. Most of the poems are 'satires of circumstance' in a realistic setting. But, however varied the characters and circumstances, the atmosphere remains constant—an atmosphere of such gloom and frustration that there grows on one the conviction that some personal experience must lie behind this recurrent picture of unhappiness or tragedy. Do the poems, combined with such knowledge as we possess of Hardy's life, reveal anything of the nature of that experience?

When we reach the fourth volume of verse, *Satires of Circumstance*, we come to a section of poems grouped together under the heading *Poems of 1912-13*. Below this title there appears the motto *Veteris vestigia flammae*—'The relics of an ancient flame'. These three words, from a writer with Hardy's grim vision, might be expected to prepare us for a contemplative, ironical reminiscence of a past and burnt-out passion. The first poem, *The Going*, quickly disposes of that expectation, with its cry of regret, anguish, and despair.

All's past amend,  
Unchangeable. It must go.  
I seem but a dead man held on end  
To sink down soon . . . O you could not know  
That such swift fleeing  
No soul foreseeing—  
Not even I—would undo me so!

This poem is followed by twenty others. English poetry does not contain a sequence of poems uttering a more intense, poignant—at times almost unbearable—lament for a lost love.

Hardy was born in 1840. He married in 1874 Emma Lavinia Gifford. She died in 1912. *Satires of Circumstance* was published

n 1914 (Hardy being then 74 years of age). ‘*Poems of 1912–13: Veteris vestigia flammae*’—it is clear that Hardy had no desire to hide the fact that the poems refer to his dead wife. They are indeed a personal record. The poems are not arranged in any chronological order of the events referred to. They range over the whole period of Hardy’s association with ‘E. L. G.’, from the first meeting to—nearly forty years later—her death, and the survivor’s grief and ‘hauntings’ since.

She belonged to the ‘red-veined rocks far west’.<sup>1</sup> In *Places* we are told of the birth ‘in a room by the Hoe’ near St. Andrew’s Church

of a little girl of grace—  
The sweetest the house saw, first or last.

When she reaches maidenhood we have a glimpse of her cantering down Boterel Hill—

as if she must fall  
(Though she never did)—  
To the charm of all.

It would seem that it was when she was riding along the coast that Hardy first met her, and in *The Phantom Horsewoman* he enshrines the memory of her, as she, ‘when first eyed’,

On that shagged and shaly  
Atlantic spot . . .  
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

We see her, with ‘girlish form’,<sup>2</sup> dressed in an ‘air-blue gown’,<sup>3</sup>

Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed and brown-tressed.<sup>4</sup>

She is

the swan-necked one who rode  
Along the beetling Beeny Crest,  
And, reining nigh me,  
Would muse and eye me,  
While Life unrolled us its very best.<sup>1</sup>

For his proposal of marriage and acceptance we have to go to a poem not included in *Poems of 1912–13*, though it is in the

<sup>1</sup> *The Going*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Voice*.

<sup>2</sup> *At Castle Boterel*.

<sup>4</sup> *A Dream or No*.

same volume—‘*When I set out for Lyonesse*’<sup>1</sup>—one of the very few poems in the whole of his work where love’s happiness is undimmed by any shade. This is dated 1870—four years before they were married.

In *The Coming of the End (Moments of Vision)* we are told of

The housebuilding, furnishing, planting,  
As if there were ages to spend  
In welcoming, feasting, and jaunting.

We often hear of ‘E. L. G.’s’ love of the sea. When she has to leave the scenes of her youth, and is ‘in towns confined’, she pines for Beeny and Juliot, Valency’s river, Bos and Targan.<sup>2</sup>

She is fond of social gaieties and pretty clothes;<sup>3</sup> sensitive to blame and praise from her husband.<sup>4</sup> She has a passionate love of flowers

Loved beyond measure  
With a child’s pleasure,<sup>5</sup>

and she seeks

With a child’s eager glance  
The shy snowdrops brought  
By the new year’s advance.<sup>3</sup>

In *The Frozen Greenhouse* there is a description of her heart-broken dismay at finding on a frosty morning that her pretty greenhouse plants are dead—

By the breakfast blaze  
Black-faced spoke she,  
Her scared young look  
Seeming to be  
The very symbol  
Of tragedy.

As a rule, however, she is described as vivacious and cheerful, with ‘flashing facile gaiety’.<sup>6</sup> Her voice is ‘like the purl of a brook’.<sup>7</sup> She sings—alone or to him<sup>8</sup>—and plays on the piano.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is not the same evidence that this poem, and others to be quoted which also are not among the *Poems of 1912–13*, refer to her, but they almost certainly do. The only poem bearing the initials ‘E. L. G.’ is *Ditty* (see above, p. 73).

<sup>2</sup> *A Death-Day Recalled*; cf. ‘*I found her out there*’, and *A Dream or No.*

<sup>3</sup> *Lament.* <sup>4</sup> *Your Last Drive.* <sup>5</sup> *Rain on a Grave.*

<sup>6</sup> ‘*If you had known.*’ <sup>7</sup> *The Marble Tablet.*

<sup>8</sup> *His Visitor*, ‘*The Curtains now are drawn*’, *The Old Gown*, ‘*I Look in her Face*’, *On the Doorstep*.

<sup>9</sup> *The Last Performance*; cf. *At the Piano*, and *Penance*.

She likes him to sing to her<sup>1</sup>; and they sing together.<sup>2</sup> We hear of their sketching together,<sup>3</sup> and going for picnics.<sup>4</sup>

She is impulsive.

It was your way, my dear . . .  
 . . . when you'd a mind to career  
 Off anywhere—say to town—  
 You were all of a sudden gone  
 Before I had thought thereon,  
 Or noticed your trunks were down.<sup>5</sup>

The general impression we obtain is of a volatile, light-hearted woman, with a certain suggestion of childlike irresponsibility and charm—with once or twice a hint of the contrast between her careless vivacity and her husband's 'tragic, gruesome, gray gravings'.<sup>6</sup> There is a 'strange freshness' which she carries into his soul, 'that throned her from all else human, however fair'.<sup>7</sup>

'E. L. G.' died in November 1912.<sup>8</sup> Apparently her death was sudden, unexpected, calm.<sup>9</sup> He asks her spirit why she went without ever saying goodbye, while he

Saw morning harden upon the wall,  
 Unmoved, unknowing  
 That your great going  
 Had place that moment, and altered all.

This comes from the first of the *Poems of 1912-13*—in which, against a background of regret, anguish, and sometimes remorse, he recalls the past. He is surprised to discover that he misses her so much—that he is 'so undone' at her having gone

Where I could not follow  
 With wing of swallow  
 To gain one glimpse of you ever anon.<sup>10</sup>

His thoughts turn to the early days of their acquaintance and love; to the time when 'our day was fair',<sup>11</sup> and 'Life unrolled us its very best';<sup>10</sup> to rides and drives and walks; picnics by a waterfall; his sketching her; their singing together. A fine day causes him to think how she would have enjoyed a party.<sup>12</sup> A

<sup>1</sup> *An Upbraiding.*

<sup>2</sup> *By the Waterfall.*

<sup>3</sup> *Without Ceremony.*

<sup>4</sup> *Without, not within Her.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Going, Without Ceremony.*

<sup>6</sup> *The Voice.*

<sup>7</sup> *Song to an Old Burden.*

<sup>8</sup> *Where the Picnic was.*

<sup>9</sup> *Alike and Unlike.*

<sup>10</sup> *Days to Recollect.*

<sup>11</sup> *The Going.*

<sup>12</sup> *Lament.*

vet day causes him to think of rain spouting on the grave of me

who but lately  
Had shivered with pain  
At a touch of dishonour  
If there had lit on her  
So coldly, so straightly  
Such arrows of rain.<sup>1</sup>

He thinks of her ghost creeping underground to the scenes of her childhood

Till it catch the sound  
Of that western sea  
As it swells and sobs  
Where she once domiciled,  
And joy in its throbs  
With the heart of a child.<sup>2</sup>

He revisits her 'olden haunts'<sup>3</sup>; Plymouth, St. Launce's, Beeny Cliff, Pentargan Bay, Castle Boterel. He 'tracks her through the years, through the dead scenes', led on by her

To the spots we knew when we haunted there together,  
and to the time when

Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

He is back at Dorchester again, but her ghost is still with him, and he imagines her sending him a message of her care for him—

If he but sigh since my loss befell him  
Straight to his side I go.  
Tell him a faithful love is doing  
All that love can do  
Still that his path may be worth pursuing,  
And to bring peace thereto.<sup>4</sup>

He imagines her behind him in the garden,<sup>5</sup> but does not dare to turn his head 'lest his dream should fade'. She makes an appointment to meet him in the churchyard by moonlight, and promises him that

So strange a kiss  
Shall be mine, I wis,  
That you'll cease to know  
If the wound you show  
Be there or no!<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rain on a Grave.*

<sup>2</sup> *'I found her out there.'*

<sup>3</sup> *After a Journey, &c.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Haunter.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Shadow on the Stone.*

<sup>6</sup> *'I thought, my Heart.'*

He wishes he were dead, and she alive; or, better, that they were in the grave together 'folded away there'.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Poems of 1912-13*, as also in many other poems, in the same volume and in the following volumes, that probably refer to her, there breaks in occasionally a note of self-reproach. In the first poem of the sequence he regrets that in the latter days he never thought of taking her to visit places where once they had been together. In *The Walk* he remembers going for a walk before her death; she did not accompany him; she was 'weak and lame',

And I went alone, and I did not mind,  
Not thinking of you as left behind.

In *The Haunter* there is a similar train of thought. She is imagined as saying that she can no longer answer the words he addresses her: can only listen to them, now that 'he wants me with him more than he used to do'.

When I could answer he did not say them :  
When I could let him know  
How I would like to join in his journeys  
Seldom he wished to go.

In *An Upbraiding* she is again imagined as reminding him how, when she was alive, he did not care to sing with her the songs they knew; did not give her the tenderness he now feels for her, but was cold.

In *The Peace Offering* he recalls how he had failed to welcome some 'little thing' that was meant to ease what latterly

had given a sting  
To the very birdsinging. . . .  
And for all I then declined  
O the regrettings infinite  
When the night processions flit  
Through the mind!

From an opposite aspect, in *Tolerance*, he recollects how he had expostulated with himself for having 'borne with things and passed them by', but now his consolation is the memory that he had 'refrained from masteries' though his 'tolerance was disdained'.

For see, a tomb. And if it were  
I had bent and broke, I should not dare  
To linger in the shadows there.

<sup>1</sup> *Rain on a Grave.*

In a poem in *Time's Laughingstocks* called *The Division*, and dated '189-' (when Hardy therefore must have been married not less than sixteen years), we get what seems the first direct allusion to some trouble between them. A man is described as separated from a woman, on a stormy night, with 'a hundred miles between'. He wishes that it were only 'miles and weather' that severed them,

But that thwart thing betwixt us twain,  
Which nothing cleaves or clears,  
Is more than distance, Dear, or rain,  
And longer than the years!

'Division' is again the word used in one of the *Poems of 1912-3—After a Journey*—where E. L. G. is represented as summing up their life together.

Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division.  
Things were not lastly as firstly well,

and in *The Spell of the Rose* we read of

divisions dire and wry,  
And long-drawn days of blight.

In a number of the poems there intrudes also every now and then another element—a disquieting shadow, which seems to conceal some tragic mystery. The allusions are obscure. This obscurity is all the more notable in contrast with the usual simplicity and straightforwardness of Hardy's work.<sup>1</sup>

In *The Wound* he speaks of

that wound of mine  
Of which none knew,  
For I'd given no sign  
That it pierced me through.

In *The Man with a Past* he says—

I can tell it not now,  
It was long ago;  
And such things cower;  
But that is why and how  
Two lives were so.

The obscurity is often connected with some sinister but vague and indefinite spirit or figure in the scene. In *On a Heath* there

<sup>1</sup> The character of the allusions must rule out the adequacy of any explanation based merely on the incompatibility, and 'E. L. G.'s' eccentricities, established by Professor Weber in *Hardy of Wessex*.

is a meeting between a man and a woman on a dark evening. After a short description of the setting, and an exclamation by the woman, 'I fear the night', the poem ends—

There was another looming  
Whose life we did not see . . .  
There was a shade entombing  
All that was bright of me.

In *At the Piano* a man is watching a woman playing, when

A cowed Apparition  
Came pushing between . . .  
But the maid saw no bale,  
And the man no monition ;  
And Time laughed awry  
And the Phantom hid nigh.

The word 'bale' appears too in another of the poems, *The Change*, and there is again the idea of something happening that was not—that could not have been—expected—

O the doom that gave no token  
When nothing of bale saw we ;  
O the doom by someone spoken,  
O the heart by someone broken,  
The heart whose sweet reverberances are all time leaves to me.

The two persons concerned are represented as helpless and as guiltless—

Innocent was she,  
Innocent was I . . .  
Before us we did not see,  
Nearing, aught awry,  
Aught awry.<sup>1</sup>

We are told of three blows on her, 'which she dumbly endured', 'and one on me': perhaps the same deadly blow as that referred to in an early poem, *In Tenebris (I)*: 'twice no man dies'. When the trouble came he knew that

Hope never would hail again ;  
Fair days had ceased at a blast,  
The world was a darkened den.<sup>2</sup>

In *The Blow* his only consolation is to think that so horrible, so cruel, so senseless a stroke could not have been designed by even the lowest of human beings; that

<sup>1</sup> *The Man with a Past.*

<sup>2</sup> *Just the same.*

the Inscrutable, the Hid,  
Was cause alone  
Of this foul crash our lives amid ;

That 'the blow that swept us prone' is the work of the Immanent  
Over

That doth not know—  
Which in some age unguessed of us  
May lift Its blinding incubus,  
And see and own :  
'It grieves me I did thus and thus!'

In *That Moment* he refers to a tragedy's occurring when he 'came  
in' and 'heard her speak'.

What I could not help seeing  
Covered life as a blot ;  
Yes, that which I was seeing,  
And knew that you were not.

This is as far as at present one can go: here meanwhile a  
mystery must remain. Whatever, though, was the main cause  
of the 'division' between Hardy and 'E. L. G.'—whatever sig-  
nificance lies behind those vague and sinister allusions—'the  
low', 'the wound', 'the blot', the 'thwart thing betwixt us',  
the 'doom', the 'bale' presaged by a 'cowled apparition'—  
here is no doubt that—with Hardy's sense of the supremacy  
of a life of the love interest—the influence, in his consciousness,  
was profound, lasting, and pervasive. The wreck of happiness  
on this plane must have tended to concentrate his attention  
on the tragedies and ironies of love, and to accentuate the 'grim  
message' from his reading of life.

When 'E. L. G.' died, Hardy's early vision of her and passion  
and affection for her revive. The intervening years slip away,  
and he returns in memory and feeling to the time when 'life  
enrolled them its very best'. He sees her again—as we see her,  
in that magnificent memorial raised to her by his love and his  
art, the *Poems of 1912-13*—young, fair, bright-souled. And as in  
one of those poems he describes her ghost creeping back under-  
ground to listen to the sea that she loved so well, so we can  
imagine Hardy's ghost escaping from Westminster Abbey and the  
company of the illustrious to join her in a yew-arched bed at  
Melstock.

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